

3/15/73  
Black  
Studies

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE  
TO EVALUATE THE  
BLACK STUDIES PROGRAM  
AT  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

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## INTRODUCTION

The traumatic climate which saw the establishment of Black Studies at Dartmouth and at other American colleges and universities is responsible for a generally hazy perception of what Black Studies is, can, or should be. Black Studies came out of the demands of black students for the creation of an affirmative environment for themselves in the heart of the academy and a general student demand for an end to the isolation of the academy from questions such as social justice and militarism. Hastily devised Black Studies programs lumped together social and counselling programs with curriculum expansion and innovation. In consequence, such curriculum developments were perceived, from the beginning, as adjuncts to social experiment rather than as educational reform and enrichment of intellectual inquiry. Black Studies, in short, was precipitated by black student activism, rather than by a maturing consciousness among scholars of the parochial nature of much academic inquiry.

At this time, a primary obligation for the entire academic community is to move from a stagnant view of Black Studies derived from the anguish of its birth to a sensitive perception of the implications of Black Studies to the entire academic enterprise. This new perception must be informed, however, by the realization that Black Studies, though it should not be confused by extraneous and peripheral questions, is inseparable from the presence and persons of black people, as represented by black students on campuses, for they and their history are its subject matter, and they are and will continue to be its most impassioned clientele. Neither the history of the middle passage through which their ancestors passed nor the analysis of the economic status of black people in 1973 can be faced by

black students with the distant response possible to most non-blacks, though neither of these topics should be absent from the awareness of any educated American.