

THE EFFECTS OF THE BLACK STUDENT AND THE
BLACK CULTURAL CENTER CONCEPT ON THE WSU-LA CROSSE
ENVIRONMENT - A STUDY OF WHITE STUDENT ATTITUDES

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by

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ABSTRACT

This paper is centered on one event, the phenomenon of black cultural centers and specifically the black cultural center at WSU-La Crosse, it's relationship to the university environment, with emphasis on white students' attitude and behavior towards the black student and the black center.

A questionnaire was used to obtain the data. Subjects for the study were a systematic sample of the 1969-70 WSU-La Crosse student body. Special and graduate students were not included.

Assumptions made were: (1) There existed a covert, strained black-white relationship and a negative concept of the black cultural center: (2) That discrimination towards the black student existed on this campus; (3) That students in this institution are not willing to accept more blacks on campus; and (4) Student attitude reflects the discriminatory practices of the society towards blacks.

It was hypothesized that the student population, 99 percent white to less than 1 percent black, were not ready to accept black students. Consequently, that under these conditions, the attitudes of the white students would reject the black cultural concept.

It was found that the overwhelming majority of the white students on this campus, felt the black student should not be excluded from institutions of higher learning and the corresponding total life of the college environment. However, when it came to accepting more black students on this campus, white students'

attitudes had a lower acceptance level. This is in direct contrast to what they assumed to believe and what they would actually practice. In fact, when asked directly, their willingness to accept more black students on this campus was less than 50 percent.

Acceptance of the black center produced ambivalency and mixed feelings on the white student. Only 40 percent of the sample favored the development of a black cultural center on campus.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Most students, both white and black, are unprepared by training or experience to reach across the lines of cultural differences and accept each other easily and naturally. Social intercourse is often awkward and uncomfortable; misunderstandings come easily. Race, social class, religion, values, attitudes, norms, etc., act as determinants of social distance and social behavior toward each other.

The assumption that close acquaintance of black students with white students and extended exposure to the white culture leads automatically to assimilation is ill-conceived. The realities proves more complex, despite some success. Proximity accentuates differences as often as it fosters assimilation. The facts of color and race do not change in college; how one regards them often does.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to find out what effect the black student and the black cultural center movement has had on the WSU-La Crosse campus environment and what attitudes the white students revealed. The study was to find the negative environmental areas where the black student and the environment were not congruent and to find an environment calculated to enhance the self-confidence and sense of dignity of the black student.

Need

The white university when admitting the black student just

begins its responsibility. Like any other student, he needs to be happy and socially accepted and adjusted. If these aspects are lacking, his university environment does not provide him with an identity factor; therefore, the black student may become resentful and bitter toward his surroundings.

Limitations

Subjects for the study were a systematic sample of the 1969-1970 WSU-La Crosse student body. Special and graduate students were excluded.

The study was designed for the WSU-La Crosse campus and cannot give birth to startling generalizations applicable to other campuses different than WSU-La Crosse.

To the predominantly black, Indian and Spanish-American institutions of higher learning, these results may have very little meaning or application. The study was conducted during the second semester of the 1969-1970 school year.

The most severe limitation of this study, was the unavailability of research information on black cultural centers. Current literature was limited to impressionistic writings.

Assumptions and Hypothesis

It is assumed that there is a covert, strained black-white relationship and a negative concept of the black cultural center movement on the WSU-La Crosse campus. It is assumed that discrimination towards black students exist on this campus.

It is assumed that students in the institution are not willing to accept more black students on campus.

It is assumed that student attitudes reflects the discriminatory practices of the society towards blacks.

It is hypothesized that the student population of the institution consisting of 99 percent white and less than 1 percent black, Smith, Class of 73,¹ are not ready to accept black students as a group. Consequently, it is hypothesized that under these conditions, the attitudes of the white students will reject the black cultural center concept.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. National

In recent years the black movement has collided with white institutions. This collision has brought about a new phase in black community, especially in the black student. However, this process of growing of self-awareness has not been the only development which forged a new direction for the black student on the white campus. Added to the disenchantment of black students with the college setting is a growing frustration on the part of these students at their insulation and isolation from the social explosions which are an integral part of the American racial dilemma.

Until very recently the black student's option were limited: he could reject the university and the opportunity it offered; he could deny his blackness and become as white in thought and action as his talents allowed; or he could follow the more difficult course of accepting the white man's offer of skills and knowledge, while fighting to retain his own

sense of black identity.

Two factors made for dramatic change during the mid-1960's. First was the disenchantment of many of the younger leaders of the black community with the progress and promise of integration. Second was the gradual increase in numbers of black students on white campuses (Appendix A). The message of the militant younger leaders had great appeal for these black students, despite repeated warnings against some of its excesses by many of the respected black leaders of the older generation. One such person, Bayard Rustin, a civil rights militant, has derided "soul courses and black centers for black students."² But Carmichael and Hamilton revealed the heart of the message was that blacks have a valid culture of their own, separate from and in some respects, superior to white culture; and, that to achieve their fullest human development blacks must be proud of their blackness and stop trying to become white men with black skins.³

These two factors, group solidarity that comes from increasing number of black students on campus and the growing consciousness of race pride, reinforced each other to produce the distinctively black challenge to the educational and social system of the university. As a result, a growing number of issues have been raised by blacks. They vary somewhat from one campus to another, each has its own local concerns, but there are certain basic demands that black students have made on the university in general.

First, is the insistence that large numbers of black students be admitted with the necessary scholarship funds provided. Second, is the demand for a black studies department, with insistence upon varying degrees of autonomy and black control. Third, is the demand for separate eating and living facilities. The fourth demand, is the establishment of cultural centers for black students.

The trends of the nation-wide black movement; the support sometimes vociferous, sometimes tacit, given by small percentages of white students on various campuses; the assertiveness of black students, sometimes non-violent, sometimes violent, on local campuses, made the establishment of one of these demands, the black cultural centers an inevitable reality for decision-making authorities.

To meet the phenomena of the black center demands, the Association of College Unions "Task Force on Human Resources," adopted at the 1969 Conference the resolution of such questions as should separate centers for black students be encouraged? What are the implications for college unions, whose historic purpose in this country has been to provide a common meeting ground for all students? Should such centers, if established, be part of the union structure or in any way underwritten by general union or university funds?⁴

At the ACU-I Conference, held in Houston, Texas, March 22-25, 1970, Gary E. Frederiksen of Western Washington presented a preliminary study on the phenomenon of black cultural

centers. The study furnished the results of the existence of separate black facilities in the campuses and in the unions, and their impact as seen by union professional personnel.⁵ Some of the findings of the study are enumerated with the expressed purpose of making comparisons with the findings of the author's study: Urban institutions have more programs/facilities than do the suburban or rural institutions; institutions with less than one percent black students have fewer programs, but increase in percent of black students increase the numbers of programs/facilities; black programs/facilities are not taking blacks away from the union in most cases; these programs/facilities are giving black students more unity; campus awareness of black cultures is being enhanced; the use of the union by blacks is not being affected; 80 percent of those answering the questions feel these developments are a positive influence on campus.⁶

Whether or not the task taken by the ACU-I Conference of 1969 and the findings made by Mr. Fredericksen will result in better understanding, the need and the development of black centers in the nation's colleges and universities, is subject to further study. It is suffice to indicated this time, that this phenomenon is a direct result of black students' desire to have a relationship with black culture in the white universities.

B. Wisconsin State Universities System

From a historical perspective the first indication that

the black movement had reached the Wisconsin State Universities system was the confrontation of over a hundred students, mostly black, with the administration of WSU-Oshkosh, on November 21, 1968. On this day, the students entered the executive offices of the university president and presented a list which requested, among other things, a black student union.⁷ The inevitable result of this confrontation was violence and an estimated 102 black students (out of a total of 111) of the 11,000 student body of the university were arrested after a 15-minute outburst of damage and a three-hour sit-in demonstration.⁸ This action taken by authorities reduced the numbers of black students significantly, and knowingly or unknowingly the authorities eliminated a major factor motivating the black students, this being group solidarity. The aggressiveness of the black students as a group of the Oshkosh campus was subdued at that time.

In other campuses of the WSU system this was not the case. On the Platteville campus, on February 5, 1970, about 30 black students presented a list of 18 demands to President Ullsvik. The first demand was for a black house...⁹ In Eau Claire and Whitewater campuses, the factors of group solidarity and racial pride were also evident and the schools were feeling the pressure.

Perhaps the biggest single factor in the creation of black cultural centers was the proposal initiated by black students on the Whitewater campus and the requests made to President Carter. Sympathetic to the request plus the growing insistence by the black students to have a black cultural center on the campus, the president made a proposal to the Business Committee

of the Wisconsin State Board of Regents, to designate a room or area in the student center (of the Whitewater campus) as a social and cultural center for black students.¹⁰ As a result of this proposal, Regent Neshek moved and seconded by Regent Bennett, to establish black cultural centers on each of the state universities. With the adoption of Resolution 3301, passed by the Board of Regents in the proceedings held February 18, 1969, the establishment of these centers became the inevitable reality.

On the basis of the resolution passed by the Regents, on May 21, 1969, the Student Centers Board of the WSU-La Crosse campus designated the Ishnala Room in Cartwright Center as the black cultural center. Negotiations held after the establishment of the black center between the Student Centers Board and the Afro-American Association, an organization of black students, produced on January 28, 1970, an amendment to the Board's constitution to include an Afro-American Association Cultural Center Committee, to help programmed the facility. The final outcome was in direct compliance with Resolution 3301, which stressed that the functions of the black centers be within the structure of the existing Student Centers.

III. PROCEDURES

A systematic sample of the student population, excluding special and graduate students, was taken. Replies were counted on the basis of one reply per student, giving a return of 395 or 49.4 percent, out of 800 mailed. A breakdown by variants

and their percentages of the sample received, gave the following information: On-campus students - of 313 mailed, 135 or 43.1 percent responded. Off-campus students - of 487 mailed, 260 or 53.4 percent responded. Males represented 50.9 percent of the sample; females represented 49.1 percent.

Students labeled themselves as having conservative, liberal, or moderate attitudes toward minority groups. Self-labeled conservatives represented 6.3 percent, liberals 49.4 percent, and moderates 44.3 percent of the sample.

The questionnaire used for this study was designed by the author in consultation with his advisor, Dr. Ideus, and was mailed in mid-March (Appendix B).

A follow-up letter (Appendix C) to the questionnaire was mailed on April 9, 1970, but no appreciative responses were made from those that had not previously answered.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The data summarized here were drawn from information gathered by the questionnaire. The information was obtained from the 1969-70 enrollment at La Crosse State University.

TABLE 1

Description	Numbers Represented
Males	201
Females	194
Under 21	230
Over 21	165
Home Environment	
Inner City	92
Suburban	135
Rural Suburban	90
Rural	78
School Sttended	
Public	325
Private	10
Parochial	58
Other	2
Contact With Black Students in High School	
Yes	134
No	261
Contact with Blacks in General	
None	18
Seldom	131
Occasional	180
Frequent	66

V. FINDINGS

To determine the attitudes of white students held toward black students and the black cultural center of the campus, the following variants were used: combined sample; on and off campus students; sex; and self-labeled attitudes i. e., conservative, moderate, liberal, of students toward minorities. Each is shown below with their corresponding numbers and percentages.

FACTORS OF EXCLUSION

TABLE 2

8. I personally would not like to have Negroes on campus.

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% AGREE	% DISAGREE	% UND
Combined Sample	N=395	7.1	88.6	4.3
On Campus (Resident Hall)	135	5.2	93.3	1.5
Off Campus (Non-Resident)	260	8.1	86.1	5.8
Male	201	10.4	85.1	4.5
Female	194	3.6	92.3	4.1
Conservative	25	40.0	48.9	12.0
Moderate	175	6.3	86.9	6.9
Liberal	195	3.6	95.4	1.0

The overwhelming majority of students reject this factor of exclusion of black students. Minor differences do occur between male and female and between on campus and off campus students. The single largest difference shows the conservative agreeing with this concept of exclusion.

TABLE 3

9. I would oppose Negro students to come to our school because their presence would make us more intolerant than we are now.

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% AGREE	% DISAGREE	% UND
Combined Sample	N=395	3.0	92.7	4.3
On Campus	135	2.0	95.5	2.2
Off Campus	260	3.5	91.1	5.4
Male	201	5.5	88.6	6.0
Female	194	0.5	96.9	2.6
Conservative	25	24.0	60.0	16.0
Moderate	175	1.1	93.7	5.1
Liberals	195	2.9	97.1	0.0

Again, the overwhelming majority of the students would reject this variable of exclusion of blacks from campus. On the average, percentages are higher. A noticeable difference can be seen between males and females. Conservatives again show the biggest single difference, although, their opposition is less higher than that of the above variable.

TABLE 4

10. Negroes should not expect to be included in the social life of our campus.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	4.0	94.9	1.0
On Campus	135	3.0	96.3	0.7
Off Campus	260	4.6	94.2	1.1
Male	201	7.0	91.5	1.5
Female	194	1.0	98.4	0.5
Conservative	25	20.0	72.0	8.0
Moderate	175	2.9	97.1	0.0
Liberal	195	3.1	95.9	1.0

Here again, the overwhelming majority of the students reject the concept of exclusion. Conservatives still are the outstanding group although, their percentages steadily rise with each new variable that is introduced. To note, there is a little confusion with the liberals who agree with the concept of exclusion.

TABLE 5

11. I do not believe a Negro student could keep up with our academic work.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	1.5	97.0	1.5
On Campus	135	0.0	97.8	2.2
Off Campus	260	2.3	94.2	1.1
Male	201	3.0	94.0	3.0
Female	194	0.0	100.0	0.0
Conservative	25	12.0	84.0	4.0
Moderate	175	1.1	96.0	2.9
Liberal	195	0.5	99.5	0.0

With this final variable of exclusion, students are closer to a unanimous consent than all other variables before mentioned. Although, the conservative group still is outstanding to the other variants, it is closer to the feelings of the others than in previous ones.

FACTORS OF ACCEPTANCE

TABLE 6

12. I think the presence of Negro students would help us all become more tolerant.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	64.6	12.7	22.9
On Campus	135	65.2	11.1	23.7
Off Campus	260	64.2	13.5	22.3
Male	201	56.2	19.4	24.4
Female	194	73.2	5.7	21.1
Conservative	25	28.0	36.0	36.0
Moderate	175	60.0	13.7	26.3
Liberal	195	73.3	8.7	17.9

On this variable a majority of the students were of the opinion that black students would help all become more tolerant. Students tend to accept blacks less than to exclude blacks from campus. Females show a significant higher degree of acceptance of blacks than the other variants. Conservatives tend not to agree with the concept. An observance is made, there seems to be more indecision by a large segment of the student population which did not exist when answering previous questions.

TABLE 7

13. I think our students would quickly get use to the idea of accepting more Negro students on campus

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	46.1	14.7	39.2
On Campus	135	52.6	11.8	35.5
Off Campus	260	42.7	16.1	41.1
Male	201	46.7	19.4	33.9
Female	194	45.4	9.8	44.8
Conservatives	25	36.0	16.0	48.0
Moderate	175	34.3	18.3	47.4
Liberal	195	57.9	11.3	30.8

When this acceptance variable is introduced, students become markedly split as how other students would accept more black students. There is a considerably lower acceptance level of the black student on this variable than previously noted. There is also a stronger undecided shift than the previous variable. On-campus students are more accepting than off-campus students. Conservatives strikingly are more accepting than moderates. Male and female respond similarly, although females tend to reject less and become undecided more. Liberals show the highest degree of acceptance than the other variants.

TABLE 8

14. I would be willing to room with a Negro student the first year in school.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	61.5	17.7	20.8
On Campus	135	62.2	17.0	20.7
Off Campus	260	61.1	18.1	20.8
Male	201	63.7	18.9	17.4
Female	194	59.3	16.5	24.2
Conservative	25	28.0	60.0	12.0
Moderate	175	46.9	24.6	28.6
Liberal	195	79.0	6.1	14.9

Students are in the majority when this acceptance variable is introduced. On the average, they are markedly higher than the previous variable. Conservatives are markedly against rooming with a black student. Moderates tend to be low in accepting to room with blacks. Liberals, again, show a high degree of willingness to room with a black student. One deviation is noted, where females tended to be more accepting on previous variables than males, they are in contrast less willing to room with a black student than males.

TABLE 9

15. I would be willing to associate with Negroes despite the social implications.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	80.0	7.6	12.4
On Campus	135	85.9	3.7	10.4
Off Campus	260	76.9	9.6	13.5
Male	201	78.1	10.9	10.9
Female	194	82.0	4.1	13.9
Conservative	25	40.0	52.0	8.0
Moderate	175	74.3	5.7	20.0
Liberal	195	90.3	3.6	6.1

With this variable, students rallied and show a marked willingness to associate with blacks. Conservatives follow their consistent pattern and are not willing to associate despite implications. Liberals also show their consistency and continue to indicate the high degree of acceptance that has marked them from the start.

BLACK CENTER FACTORS

TABLE 10

16. Inasmuch as Afro-American studies are being implemented in many of the universities around the nation, do you see a black cultural center as supplementing our campus environment.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	32.9	25.6	41.5
On Campus	135	37.8	16.3	45.9
Off Campus	260	30.4	30.4	39.2
Male	201	29.3	32.8	37.8
Female	194	36.6	18.0	45.4
Conservative	25	8.0	64.0	28.0
Moderate	175	18.3	29.1	52.6
Liberal	195	49.2	17.4	33.3

Percentages indicate that students are largely undecided in this factor. There are some differences shown. On-campus students tend to agree with the factor whereas off-campus students are even in agreement and disagreement. Males tend to be less positive than females. Conservatives are a consenting majority in thinking the center would not supplement the institution's environment. Moderates, too, are in agreement with conservatives although their majority is undecided. Liberals continue to show consistency although at lower acceptance level than before.

TABLE 11

17. Would you favor a black cultural center at this institution.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	40.2	34.4	25.3
On Campus	135	47.4	24.4	28.1
Off Campus	260	36.5	39.6	23.8
Male	201	37.8	42.3	19.9
Female	194	42.3	26.3	30.9
Conservative	25	8.0	80.0	12.0
Moderate	175	25.7	40.6	33.7
Liberal	195	57.4	23.1	19.5

In this, the key factor, students tend to be split right down the middle on a combined basis. Some considerable differences can be seen between the variants. On-campus students are in favor of a black center while off-campus are against it. Females are in favor of the center while males are against it. Conservatives overwhelmingly reject the concept of a center at this institution. Moderates are also against the center, although not as large percentage wise as the conservatives. Liberals run in consistency and is the outstanding variant in acceptance.

TABLE 12

18. In your opinion, would a center at this institution play an education role.

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	AGREE	DISAGREE	UND
Combined Sample	N=395	48.3	30.1	21.5
On Campus	135	56.3	25.9	17.8
Off Campus	260	44.2	32.3	23.5
Male	201	42.3	36.8	20.9
Female	194	54.6	23.2	22.2
Conservative	25	20.0	56.0	24.0
Moderate	175	37.1	39.4	23.4
Liberal	195	62.0	18.5	19.5

Students tend to be of the opinion that the black center would play an educational role. But, there is also a strong inference that it would not. Marked differences can be seen between the variants. On-campus students, as a majority, are in the opinion that the center would play an educational role while off-campus students think this way too but at a considerably lower percentage. Females are also of the opinion that the center would be educational while males have a considerably lower percentage. Conservatives, running through to form, reject this notion. Moderates also are of the same opinion as conservatives but at a lower percentage. Liberals again have a higher positiveness than the other variants.

TABLE 13

19. Would it play a social role?

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% AGREE	% DISAGREE	% UND
Combined Sample	N=395	62.8	15.7	21.5
On Campus	135	62.2	13.3	21.5
Off Campus	260	61.5	16.9	21.5
Male	201	58.2	18.4	23.4
Female	194	67.5	12.9	19.6
Conservative	25	40.0	24.0	36.0
Moderate	175	55.4	20.6	24.0
Liberal	195	72.3	10.3	17.4

Students in a majority are of the opinion that the black center would play a social role. Contrasting differences show the females as being in more agreement than males about what function the center would play. In a deviation from previous patterns, conservatives take the opinion that the center would play a social role. Liberals become closer to an overwhelming majority in seeing the center as playing a social role.

TABLE 14

20. In your opinion, do you feel a black cultural center on a college campus is being used by Negro students as a means of:

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% FOSTERING A SEPARATE MOVEMENT	% SEEKING IDENTITY & SOURCE OF PRIDE	% ESCAPING FROM REALITY	% UND
Combined Sample	N=395	26.8	45.1	3.8	29.1
On Campus	135	25.2	54.8	2.2	17.8
Off Campus	260	27.7	40.0	4.6	27.7
Male	201	31.3	38.8	5.5	24.4
Female	194	22.2	51.5	2.1	24.2
Conservative	25	44.0	28.0	4.0	24.0
Moderate	175	33.3	38.9	6.3	24.6
Liberal	195	21.5	52.8	1.5	24.1

On this factor, a quarter of the students are of the opinion that blacks are using black centers as a means of fostering a separate movement. Less than fifty percent see the black center serving the black student as an identity and source of pride for blacks. A minimal minority think the black student is using the black center as escaping from reality. Another quarter remains undecided. On-campus students, females, and liberals are the most favorable toward thinking the black student is using the black center as identity and source of pride factor. Off-campus students, males, and moderates show similar responses on the identity factor. They are also of the opinion as the above three but are considerably lower percentage wise. Conservatives are of the opinion that the black center is being used to foster a separate movement.

TABLE 15

21. Should a black center be made part of the Student Centers' structure at WSU-La Crosse?

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% AGREE	% DISAGREE	% UND
Combined Sample	N=395	38.7	32.1	29.1
On Campus	135	48.1	20.0	31.8
Off Campus	260	33.8	38.5	27.7
Male	201	33.3	41.3	25.4
Female	194	44.3	22.7	33.0
Conservative	25	12.0	72.0	16.0
Moderate	175	28.0	36.6	35.4
Liberal	195	51.8	23.1	25.1

Students become markedly split with this variable. Indication shows a pattern seen previously. On-campus, females, and liberals are considerably in favor in having a black center within the centers' structure. But, the alliance formed previously by off-campus, moderates, and males are not in favor of this. Interesting enough, on-campus students have been consistently more accepting than off-campus students. Conservatives towing the line are in strong disagreement in having a black center as part of the Student Centers' structure.

TABLE 16

22. Would you favor a center that is supervised by:

VARIANTS	N= NUMBERS	% NEGROES ALONE	% WHITES ALONE	% AN INTEGRATED GROUP	% DO NOT FAVOR A CENTER
Combined Sample	N=395	8.6	0.2	65.5	25.6
On Campus	135	9.6	0.0	74.8	15.5
Off Campus	260	8.1	0.4	60.8	30.8
Male	201	8.5	0.5	58.2	32.8
Female	194	8.8	0.0	73.2	18.0
Conservative	25	4.0	4.0	20.0	72.0
Moderate	175	6.9	0.0	62.9	30.3
Liberal	195	10.8	0.0	73.8	15.4

It is shown that students support a black center that is supervised by an integrated group of students. Similar patterns for support of the establishment of a black center can be shown in the alliance of on-campus, females, and liberals. They have consistently been higher on the favorable level than has the off-campus, males, and moderates' alliance. Conservatives, keeping to form, overwhelmingly rejects the black center concept.

TABLE 17

23. Should the center be underwritten by:

VARIANTS	N=	%	%	%	%
	NUMBERS	STUDENT ACTIV.	UNIV. BUDGET	IND. DUES, GIFTS ETC.	NOT SUPPORTED AT ALL
Combined Sample	N=395	22.3	31.9	24.8	21.0
On Campus	135	23.7	38.5	22.2	15.5
Off Campus	260	21.5	28.5	26.1	23.8
Male	201	20.9	26.4	23.7	29.3
Female	194	23.7	37.6	26.3	12.4
Conservative	25	8.0	00.0	36.0	56.0
Moderate	175	13.1	29.1	31.4	26.3
Liberal	195	32.3	38.5	17.4	11.8

Strongly divided on this matter, students' support is marginal when having the opinion that the black center be underwritten by the university budget. The fact that this factor strongly divides students can be correlated to their strong division on the matter of having the black center be made part of the Student Centers' structure. Observed is the alliance of on-campus, females, and liberals. They have the higher supportive position of having the center underwritten by the university. Their support can be seen by their low percentages in the not-supported-at-all-column. The alliance of off-campus, males, and moderates is partially broken. Males indicate a more non-supportive attitude than the other two. Off-campus students are marginal in their support of having the center be underwritten by the university. Moderates, on a marginal basis, are of the opinion that the center be

underwritten by individuals, dues, gifts, etc. Conservatives continue to be the outstanding variant in a non-supportive role.

VI. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The evidence at hand indicates a serious gap between the beliefs and the practices of the WSU-La Crosse student body towards the concept of the black student and the black cultural center. Viewed in the overall, the population of the campus would not exclude the black student from achieving an education and partaking in the total life of a university. Their overwhelming majority indicates this when the exclusion factors are introduced. Contrastingly, when the acceptance factors of the black student were introduced, the student body was less than overwhelming. In fact, the factor of accepting more black students on campus is reviewed, students on this campus were less than accepting.

To assume a general notion that there is not enough students who understand black people because of lack of contact would be ill-conceived. Inconclusive evidence in the study did indicate that students who have had contact with blacks in school and in general, did not show any appreciative difference than those who had no contact with blacks when it came to accepting or rejecting.

A recurring theme that runs through many of the variables used is the strong ambivalence students showed toward a black cultural center at this institution. Although, the data is

not all conclusive, indications show that mixed feelings do exist about what would be the purpose of a black center. There also appears to be a pattern of support and non-support by groups which may have coincidentally have allied themselves throughout many variables. This alliance pattern can be seen when following the variants - on-campus, female, and liberal as a group and the off-campus, male, and moderate as another group. Conservatives are the outstanding group of the variants used and can be easily distinguished in the columns which are non-supportive of both black student and, especially the black center factors. An observation made, although, not conclusively, is that the allied groups may consist of males vs. females.

To indicate how ambivalent students are toward the black student and the black center, three variables are chosen for their similarities in interpretation, to show the gap between what has been referred to as belief and practice: a majority (62 percent) would play a social role (ques.19); in a lower majority (40 percent), students' opinion was that the center would play an educational role (ques. 18); when it came to favoring a black center at this institution, the students' attitudes were markedly divided down the middle (40.2 percent in favor, 34.4 percent against, 25.3 undecided). The concept of belief and practice of a majority of students that see the black center as first serving a social role, than an educational role, but would almost deny the black student the very thing they purport to support could indicate covert prejudice.

Using different variables, another illustration is given about the ambivalent attitudes of on and off-campus students toward the black student and the black center. In an overwhelming majority, both on and off-campus students thought that the black student should not be excluded from the social life of the campus. When the variable of a black center was introduced, on-campus students in a lower majority were 47.4 percent in favor, 24.4 percent against, and 28.1 percent undecided, while off-campus students were 36.5 percent against, and 23.8 percent undecided.

Using the same variables as above, ambivalence persisted in the male and female variants. While males were of the opinion that black students should not be excluded from the social life of the campus, females were more supportive on the same matter. Males were considerably lower in opinion than females about the social role of the center. Males would not favor a center at this institution while females were supportive. In each case, both variants were marginal in their supporting or non-supporting role.

On a total basis, students on the same variables would not exclude black students from the social life of the campus in an overwhelming majority. In a lower majority (62.8 percent), students were of the opinion that the center would play a social role, while only a marginal (49.2) percent would favor a center at this institution.

in using these variables, the data gathered, inconclusively does imply that many students do have a

problem between their beliefs and their practices. The consistent trend of non-support shown by male students on this campus and the data shown can be interpreted to indicate considerable discrimination and prejudice toward blacks and the black center. Most interesting is that conduct at this university may or may not conform with the individual student's own beliefs concerning the moral claims of all students to equal access to the institutional environment.

One interesting and hopeful observance is the strong ideal reference of on-campus students to the black student. They overwhelmingly reject the notion of excluding blacks from campus. One drawback they have is their reference in actual practice. Clear is the observance that on-campus students do have a more positive attitude toward the development of a black center than off-campus students.

VII. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out what effect the black student and the black cultural center concept has had on the WSU-La Crosse campus, and what attitudes the white students revealed.

Subjects for the study were a systematic random sample of the 1969-70 WSU-La Crosse student body. Special and graduate students were excluded.

It was assumed that there was a covert prejudicial attitude of the white students of this campus toward the

black student. It was assumed that a negative concept of the black center existed. It was also assumed that there were disclosed feelings about the willingness of the student body in accepting more black students on campus.

It was hypothesized that the student population of the institution, 99 percent white to less than one percent black, are not ready to accept black students as a group. Consequently, that under these conditions, the attitudes of the white students would reject the black cultural center concept.

It was found that the overwhelming majority of the white students on this campus felt the black student should not be excluded from institutions of higher learning and the corresponding total life of the college environment. However, when white students were asked about accepting more black students on this campus, they were found to have a lower acceptance attitude. This is in direct contrast to what they assumed to believe and what they actually practice. In fact, when asked directly, their willingness to accept more black students on campus was less than 50 percent.

Students showed considerable ambivalency in many of the accepting and excluding factors that were introduced. When the factors of the black center were introduced there appeared to be a large amount of mixed feelings. Students became less and less accepting of these factors.

There also appeared a pattern of support and non-support by groups which coincidentally or not have allied themselves

in this study. On-campus, female, and liberal variants show a consistent supporting pattern. Off-campus, male, and moderate variants showed a consistent non-supporting pattern.

All this may indicate that students on this campus are what Merton's "Discrimination and the American Creed" calls fair-weather liberals and fair-weather illiberals. A fair-weather liberal is the person of expediency who, despite his own freedom from prejudice, supports discriminatory practices when it is easier or more profitable course. His expediency may take the form of holding his silence and thus implicitly acquiescing in expressions of ethnic prejudice by others or in the practice of discrimination by others. The fair-weather illiberal is the reluctant conformist to the creed, the man of prejudice who does not believe in the creed but conforms to it in practice through fear of sanctions which might otherwise be visited upon him.¹¹

One hopeful observance, is the positive reference of on-campus students toward black students. One limitation they have at this time is their actual practice towards blacks. Clear also is the positive attitude on-campus students have toward the development of a black center on campus.

A major conclusion of this study is the frame of reference white students have about a black cultural center. Each of the variants used followed the same pattern of seeing the black center playing a social role and minimizing the educational role. This may indicate that white students see

blacks concerned with establishing socially entertaining roles rather than educational or other roles. This may indicate a stereotyping of the black center as serving to meet only these needs.

Despite the lack of majority support as concluded from the study on this campus, the black center can have a positive influence on the institution's community. In order that this could have that effect, the institution in total, must recognize the legitimacy that blacks need their culture to support their identity. The black center is only a part of that support. Continued programming and support by the administration and faculty would enhance campus awareness of blacks and their culture. Such support has been lacking in the past. Just knowing that blacks are here is not enough. To recognize they are part of the institution is to recognize they exist. Blacks have the same weakness that whites have and that is their achievement needs the proper recognition from those in the position of authority.

In order that this institution does not fall into the trap that has befallen many other institutions and thus isolate its black students, efforts should be made by faculty to increase the number of Afro-American courses in the school's curriculum. Many institutions come to deal in this area when blacks are at their throats and then it may be too late because courses are introduced without genuine motivation and usefulness to the student and the school. What administrators, faculty,

and students forgot, or ignored, was the institution's reflection of a dominant white culture. With the attitude that 'it can not happen here' they found themselves confronted with angry black students. Disregarded, was the strong desire of blacks to be aware of their culture aside from the white one.

The result of all this lack of insight or complete ignorance of the situation found the campus polarized on two camps. This institution must lay the ground work now. Black students will increase in numbers. What the institution has done in anticipation to accommodate these students, in terms of educational and social changes, will determine how successful the learning role of all students on this campus will be.

Efforts should be made to hire black faculty, not necessarily to teach the Afro-American courses, but to give the black student the perspective that not all teachers are supposed to be white. Psychologically it would also work on the white students. If this institution is on the search of bright black scholars, then their search is fruitless. Black PH D's are less than one percent of the total PH D's that exist in the academic community. Until recently, blacks had not attended institutions of higher learning in significant numbers thus credentials are considerably lower than whites on a comparative basis. If this institution is willing to accept black teachers who only have MA's and short term experience in classrooms, then chances are recruitment can

be more successful. If not, ten years can be a long wait, because it will take at least that time to have a larger supply than the present. Present faculty, who teach Afro-American courses and faculty who teach the social sciences, should encourage their students to utilize the black center, not only as a research library, but also as a place of dialogue.

A strong recommendation is the recruitment of more minority students. If myths which are still prevalent, are to be dispelled, white students as well as the college community, will see these students having many of the same problems all students have adjusting to university life. The surrounding community should not be the factor that will influence the decision of how many it thinks the institution can handle. This is the responsibility of the institution since it should disregard the race color or creed of the student it is pledge to educate.

Finally, and most important, is the study's findings on the mixed feelings on the part of the white students. Evidence indicates that hiring a black coordinator, to pursue the task of acting as liasion between black students, administration, and faculty is a necessary step.

FOOTNOTES

1. Smith, Norene A., "The Class of 1973: Its Backgrounds, Attitudes and Expectations," WSU-La Crosse, Not Dated.
2. Editorial, "Farewell to Soul Courses," Chicago Tribune, Sunday, February 8, 1970.
3. Carmichael, Stockely, and Charles V. Hamilton, "Black Power," New York: Random House, 1967, p. 10.
4. The Bulletin of the Association of College Unions, "The Challenge of the Black Center," Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, February, 1970.
5. Frederiksen, Gary E., "Black Separatism and the College Union: A Preliminary Study," ACU-I Conference Program, Session #21, March 22-25, 1970, p. 1.
6. Ibid, pp. 2-3.
7. La Crosse Tribune, Thursday Evening, November 21, 1968, p. 1.
8. La Crosse Tribune, Thursday Evening, November 22, 1968, p. 1.
9. Wisconsin State University-Platteville, "Blacks Present 18 Demands to President; Faculty Senate Backs 'Black House' Idea," The Exponent (Student Newspaper), Vol. 71, No. 14, Thursday, February 5, 1970.
10. AWSUF, "Proceedings of the Board of Regents of State Universities," Madison, Wisconsin, February 28, 1970, p. 3.
11. Rose, Peter I., (ed.), "The Study of Society: An Illustrated Anthology," Robert K. Merton "Discrimination and the American Creed," New York: Random House, 1967, pp. 484-485.

APPENDIX A

BLACK FRESHMEN ACCEPTED & ENROLLED

	1968-1969		1969-1970	
	Accepted	Enrolled	Accepted	Enrolled
Brown	56	22	165	76
Columbia	58	29	115	51
Cornell	115	60	157	67
Dartmouth	58	28	130	90
Harvard	55	51	109	95
Univ. of Pennsylvania	125	62	251	150
Princeton	76	44	126	68
Yale	70	45	150	100
Barnard	33	20	81	40
Bryn Mawr	22	10	31	15
Mount Holyoke	46	18	61	31
Radcliffe	17	14	51	37
Smith	34	19	86	46
Vassar	24	24	43	22
Wellesley	19	9	104	57

Note: Information obtained from the November, 1969 issue of Ebony

APPENDIX B

This questionnaire has been prepared by Luis R. Esquilin, a graduate student in Student Personnel Services. It is part of an environmental study concerned about present day attitudes of white students on this campus toward Negroes and the development of a Black Cultural Center. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The best answer is your honest opinion. You can be sure that whatever your opinion may be on certain issue there are some who agree, some who disagree, and some who are undecided or uncertain. This is what the questionnaire wants to find out: HOW IS STUDENT OPINION REALLY DIVIDED ON EACH OF THESE SOCIALLY IMPORTANT TOPICS? Please do not sign your name or write your I.D. number on the questionnaire.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RETURN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Students living ON-CAMPUS: Please insert questionnaire in addressed envelope and return to Head Resident AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Students living OFF-CAMPUS: Please insert questionnaire in PRE-PRINTED SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE and return AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

PART I - Descriptive information of subjects.

1. Sex

- 1. male ()
- 2. female ()

2. Age

- 1. under 21 ()
- 2. 21 and over ()

3. I would classify my home environment and neighborhood as:

- 1. inner city ()
- 2. suburban ()
- 3. rural suburban ()
- 4. rural ()

4. What type of school did you attend?

- 1. public ()
- 2. private ()
- 3. parochial ()
- 4. other ()

5. Where there any Negro students in your high school?

- 1. yes ()
- 2. no ()
- 3. did not see any ()

6. What has been your contact with Negroes?

- 1. none ()
- 2. seldom ()
- 3. occasional ()
- 4. frequently ()

7. How do you classify your attitudes toward minority students?

- 1. conservative ()
- 2. moderate ()
- 3. liberal ()

PART II - Attitudes towards Negroes.

Please read every statement and respond to it in terms of your personal agreement, disagreement, or indecision, according to the following plan:

AGREE

DISAGREE

UNDECIDED

Please indicate your choice by a check (✓) mark.

8. I personally would not like to have Negroes on our campus.

- 1. agree ()
- 2. disagree ()
- 3. undecided ()

9. I would oppose Negro students to come to our school because their presence would make us more intolerant than we are now.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()
10. Negroes should not expect to be included in the social life of our campus.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()
11. I do not believe a Negro student could keep up with our academic work.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()
12. I think the presence of Negro students would help us all become more tolerant.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()
13. I think our students would quickly get use to the idea of accepting more Negro students on campus.
14. I would be willing to room with a Negro student the first year in school.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()
15. I would be willing to associate with Negroes despite the social implications.
1. agree () 2. disagree () 3. undecided ()

PART III - Attitudes toward the development of a Black Cultural Center at WSU-La Crosse campus.

Please read every statement and respond to it in terms of your personal acceptance, rejection, or indecision, indicating your choice with a check (✓) mark.

16. In as much as Afro-American studies are being implemented in many of the universities around the nation - do you see a Black Cultural Center as supplementing our campus environment as a:
1. positive stimulus () 3. neutral stimulus ()
2. negative stimulus ()
17. Would you favor a Black Cultural Center at this institution?
1. yes () 3. undecided ()
2. no. ()

April 9, 1970

FROM: LUIS R. ESQUILIN - GRADUATE STUDENT

RE: QUESTIONNAIRE

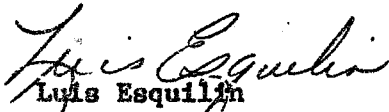
Dear Student:

This letter is to thank you for your cooperation in answering the questionnaire on the environmental study on black students and the black cultural center.

If you still have not filled out the questionnaire, I would appreciate your effort in doing so and return it in the self-addressed envelope. The validity of the study depends upon a fair response from you, the student.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,


Luis Esquilin