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Memo: David P. Gardner, President, University of Utah  
From: University of Utah Black Faculty, Staff and Students  
Re: Recommendations for the University of Utah Institute of  
Black Life and Culture.

Members of the Black Faculty, staff and students at the University of Utah met in the Student Union Building on Wednesday, September 19, 1973. The discussion was centered around the current thrust of the Black Institute program. Members in attendance, in addition, discussed the implications involved with the latest effort of the administration to reconstitute a search committee for the purpose of finding a director for the Black Institute. It appears that the above effort seemed to be a blatant disregard for the many hours spent by the previous search committee. Black persons in attendance were concerned about the future viability of the University's black program and were in total agreement that black people on campus share a responsibility for its future success. Thus our purpose is to submit to you some background information as regards the historical antecedence for the program, an analysis of our collective perceptions of the current status of the program and some recommendations for its future.

BACKGROUND:

In the fall of 1971, black students at the University of Utah had become disenchanted with the University, held a mass meeting and presented the then President, Dr. Fred Emery,

with a list of eleven demands. The majority of the demands were related to promises the administration had made to the students upon their arrival and were therefore legitimate. There were, however, some that were not. The demands which seem to have some legitimacy were:

1. The recruitment of black students and faculty.
2. Financial aids designated for black students.
3. Modification of existing curriculum so that it might better relate to black people.
4. The introduction of a black studies program.

It is only fair to mention that administration as well as a few departments were working on some of the above-mentioned areas. However, it seemed that they enjoyed the lowest of priorities.

The existing black faculty and staff available at the university at that time helped to mediate the differences between the students and the administration in terms of raising the black studies program to a more tolerable level as it related to university priorities. A steering committee was formed composed of black faculty, staff and students who, with the support of the administration, moved in two distinct areas.

The committee first moved in the direction of the development of a comprehensive proposal of a long and short-range plan for the implementation of a Black Institute. The proposal also dealt with recommendations for an administrative structure.

Secondly was the development of a black search committee. The charge was to find a director to coordinate the program.

#### SEARCH COMMITTEE

The search committee was composed of Courtland Robinson (who was also chairman of the Steering Committee) Shelby Steele from the English Department, Claude Steele from Psychology, Geneva Blackwell from the Minorities Center, Michael Clark representing Political Science, Charles Monson representing the university at large, Alberta Henry from the broader black community, Charles Kelly who represented the interests of black students, Anthony Gianelli from the administration, Primus St. John from the History Department and Harold Adams, School of Social Work as chairman. Peter Garcia who had been appointed as Associate Academic Vice President was of course an ex-officio member. The committee has functioned for over a year although some members have dropped out for various reasons. Claude Steele and Primus St. John sought employment elsewhere. Charles Monson and Anthony Gianelli presumably established other priorities.

One of the mechanisms by which the search committee thought to be an excellent means to attract persons to the university not only for the directorship but for permanent faculty positions as well was through the development of a black symposium. Primus St. John accepted the responsibility for coordinating the symposium. Black people were brought to the university with expertise across many disciplines. Credit was offered to

both undergraduate and graduate students through the departments of English, Psychology, History, Political Science, Social Work and Drama. Not only was the university community invited to participate, but also the outside community.

The search committee concomitantly with the symposium launched a more traditional search. Letters were sent to various institutions and individuals known to the members of the committee. Interviews were held with scholars who took part in the symposium. Committee members during their regular cause of travel over the country followed up on the letters sent earlier, interviewing people, and seeking out new resources. It is fairly safe to say that the combined effort of the committee within the past year has resulted in having contacted and screened from 60 to 70 potential candidates, either for the office of the Directorship of the Black Institute and/or as possible faculty persons for available positions in the various disciplines at the university. The major effort was first and foremost to find a director. The search committee invited and/or screened persons that were not included among the 24 or so people who came to participate in the Symposium.

It has been an exhausting job, replete with frustrations, and particularly disappointing in view of the response of the persons interviewed as it relates to their perceptions of the inherent problems as the university's method of developing

an important program. There have been some gains to be sure. The committee was able to attract a few persons who were primarily interested in faculty positions. However, the majority of black faculty, staff and students at the university are quite dissatisfied with the over-all results and quite disenchanted once again with administration. It is with this feeling in mind that we make this attempt to bring this to your attention. Below represents our analysis of the current situation as well as our collective thinking in terms of the direction that we feel the program should move. It is our hope that you will not take our analysis and our suggestions lightly, and that you move to implement them lending some credence to the genuinely good faith and past efforts that we have placed in this university.

On the basis of the activities of our search committee over the past year several recommendations are indicated below that we feel will serve the best interest of both the program and the university as a whole:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That it is not feasible at the present time to have a Director of Black Studies.

We offer this recommendation for several reasons. First, we have found through our extensive search that the position of Black Studies Director as it is currently defined is so seriously scaled down by the administration structure in which it exist as to make it virtually impossible to interest first

rate candidates. Several such candidates have openly expressed their view of the position as one that does not offer a meaningful level of responsibility nor enough administrative autonomy to make it anything more than a token position. This situation has forced the committee time and again to consider lesser candidates who in most cases have not completed their degree work and look to the appointment as one that would afford them the opportunity of continuing their own education. Such candidates are obviously unacceptable since their energies would be divided.

The position is also unfeasible at this time because there would be little real work that a director could involve himself in. The development of curriculum that deals academically with the black experience is the most immediate job that needs to be done. In this regard two black faculty members have already been employed with this part of their work load. Other black faculty are also available to assist in this effort. The director was never seen as a curriculum developer and outside this function there is almost nothing for him to do. To employ an individual under these circumstances might prove highly frustrating for him and could possibly lead to a negative experience for all. When a curriculum is developed and an actual need exists the situation would of course be different. But at present, the hiring of such an individual would only be a misuse of already limited resources.

We also mention in passing, since we have already expressed our feelings in a formal letter to the President, that we consider the continued presence of Dr. Garcia quite prohibitive to the meaningful development of ethnic studies at this university. We learned from our search that his serious incompetence scaled down the caliber of individuals available to work under him. At least two candidates rejected us precisely because of him. As a fledgling academic area, beset with an enormity of problems that go far beyond the academic, it is imperative that only those with the greatest competence be allowed to give direction.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

That a committee composed of the two black faculty members currently employed on a part time basis by the Institute along with two other carefully selected black faculty members be instituted to develop a curriculum for the Black Studies Program and to generally administer and oversee its first years development.

This recommendation is made in accord with the first. This committee would meet and designate a chairman who would coordinate its activities and serve as the individual who would be officially responsible for the Program. We make this recommendation as an interim measure until such time as there is a real need for a director. We would hope that the committee would operate in this fashion for no longer than a year's time

and that in the course of this academic year it would organize a search for a permanent director.

We would also recommend that these individuals be compensated for their additional responsibilities in the form of overload pay. The funds for this compensation might well come from the money currently earmarked for a Director's salary.

Due to the severe problems of communication we have with Dr. Garcia we would ask that this committee report directly to the Academic Vice President until such time as Dr. Garcia is replaced.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

That a black be appointed to a high level administrative position as soon as possible and that a search committee be formed immediately to find an acceptable person.

We feel that the presence of a high ranking black administrator at this university is necessary to insure the continued commitment of the administration to the unique problems of blacks and other minorities. We feel that the kind of insensitivity that has been demonstrated toward the black community in the past can only be countered by the presence of a qualified black in a senior administrative position. This university has never seen fit to do this in the past even though qualified blacks have shown an interest. We see this



as mandatory and in accord with affirmative action guidelines as well as good administrative form.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That the search committee recently formed by Dr. Garcia and Dr. Gardner to find a Director of Black Studies be immediately dissolved.

We feel it important to mention our extreme disapproval of both the manner in which this committee was formed and its composition. We feel that a committee which has a majority of individuals from outside the universities' black community can only be considered unfair at the least and a gross insult at worst. It suggest the worst kind of racial mistrust and cannot be justified in anyway. It states openly that this administration does not trust blacks to be able to search and find an adequate director and that whites and others must be called in to get the job done. We find this intolerable and hereby consider the committee defunct.

We also vehemently protest the manner in which the committee was selected. We have an acting director of Black Studies and we msintain that the creation of a search committee for a permanent director is entirely his responsibility unless he choses to delegate that responsibility elsewhere. The general principle we follow here is that the integrity of the academic unit can only be maintained if people with demonstrated

proficiency in this area are allowed to select their own colleagues. We feel that the current committee with the exception of the two blacks serving violates this principle in the most flagrant manner.

We would say in closing that our dissatisfaction does not end in Dr. Garcia. We feel that the administration generally, as exemplified by the creation of this committee, has already demonstrated insensitivity to the needs and priorities of minorities. We deeply hope this situation can be alleviated and look forward to cooperation with the administration on these recommendations.