

Negotiating Team of
Concerned Students of Color

SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE

May 3, 1989

To: The College Community
From: George B. Adams, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

The Concerned Students of Color met yesterday in my office with the Executive and Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty/Administration Negotiating Team for a frank and constructive discussion.

At the meeting, the Concerned Students of Color presented six proposals for discussion: 1) the appointment of an administrator for multi-cultural affairs, 2) the establishment of an endowed teaching chair in multi-cultural (non-Eurocentric) studies, 3) the establishment of a permanent multi-cultural lecture fund, 4) the need for a College-wide racial sensitivity program, 5) the establishment of a center for people of color, and 6) expansion of the faculty to allow for a) additional regular (tenure-track) appointments of faculty of color (beyond the College's commitment this spring to six such appointments in five years) and b) an increase in the number of appointments in race-specific areas (beyond the College's commitment to four such appointments).

In considering these six proposals, the Executive and Finance Committee made clear that there is an important distinction between proposals that have been considered and endorsed by the faculty and administration and those that have not been fully discussed and/or resolved within the regular decision-making channels of the College. This distinction is based on our conviction that matters of academic and administrative policy are initially within the purview of the president, the deans, and the faculty. Such matters should be considered by the trustees only upon recommendation of these groups, and then only if they involve major changes in policy or represent substantial new claims on funds.

Within this context, and following yesterday's discussion, the Executive and Finance Committee is prepared to recommend that the full Board of Trustees consider two of the six proposals at its meeting on May 12, since they have already been considered favorably by the faculty and administration:

Endowed Chair: This rotating teaching chair, which is endorsed by the Concerned Students of Color and the faculty and administration of the College, would provide the opportunity to bring to the campus outstanding scholars in multi-cultural studies, for terms of up to three years. Establishment of the chair would require raising \$750,000 in endowed funds.

Permanent Lecture Fund: A \$10,000 fund to support lectures and similar programs on racial and cultural diversity is in place for 1989-90, as recommended by the faculty in its statement of March 15, 1989. A proposal to permanently endow the fund has been jointly approved by the faculty and the Concerned Students of Color. Establishment of such a permanent fund would require raising between \$130,000 to \$175,000 in endowment, to yield an annual income of approximately \$8,000 to \$10,000.

It is our hope that the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Office of College Resources and the trustee Steering Committee for the Walrus campaign, will reach a favorable decision on these two proposals at the May 12 meeting.

In addition, we have asked that the scope and appropriateness of the other proposals discussed at yesterday's meeting be considered in full by the proper members of the faculty and administration. Before negotiations were terminated, the racial sensitivity program had been agreed upon by the faculty and administration, but there were details to be worked out; discussions had begun about the new administrative position, but had not been completed; there had been no discussion of the center for people of color; and the issue of the number of faculty teaching race-specific courses had not been resolved. If further consideration results in recommendations that fall within the purview of the Board, we will act upon them as soon as feasible.

We very much hope that discussions between the Faculty/Administration Negotiating Team and the Concerned Students of Color will resume as soon as possible to address the items that had not been discussed or were not fully resolved before the termination of negotiations. We believe that significant progress has been made, particularly in the commitment to make the appointments of six new regular faculty of color the highest priority of the next five years. We are convinced that open and constructive communication between these two groups -- and all those within the entire College community who are committed to our common goal -- will pave the way for further progress and action.

At the conclusion of yesterday's meeting, the Concerned Students of Color asked for a response on all six of their proposals by Tuesday, May 9. We were able to assure them that the Executive and Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the proposals for the teaching chair and the permanent lecture fund would be considered by the Board on May 12. Because of the need for further discussion within the faculty and administration on the remaining four proposals, however, we explained that a response would not be possible until that discussion has taken place and the Board has received and met to consider the recommendations of the faculty and administration. We urge the faculty and administration to move as quickly as possible to begin full consideration of the remaining proposals.

We understand the urgency felt by the Concerned Students of Color, particularly by those who will graduate this year. We hope that they understand that our concern is real and that the agenda they have initiated will have our prompt and full attention.