

March ~~X~~⁶, 1969

TO THE SARAH LAWRENCE COMMUNITY
FROM THE BLACK STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

The Black Student Association and Black Faculty members of Sarah Lawrence College wish to state that though we cannot support the occupancy of Westlands at this time, we are in compliance with the following question that has been raised:

"We have been discussing diversity at great length, what are the implications of radically changing the Sarah Lawrence population? The College must address itself to the specific changes inherent in an acceptance of diversity. In addition to opening ourselves in the future to the demands of a new student population we must at this time formulate new educational goals and policies..."

In response to these issues, the B.S.A. puts forth the following agenda.

We demand that the Administration commit itself to the following:

I. Programs for Change

a. Black Studies - Social Change Program

We demand that a Black Studies-Social Change Program be created. The program necessitates an examination and revamping of the classic academic orientation of Sarah Lawrence.

Courses must be created which deal not only with the realm of academia, but the real world, as well. To this end, Black faculty must be hired who will bring expertise based on experience to the classes which they teach. The present openings in all departments for faculty, including the political science opening must be used for this purpose.

Also, toward the effective implementation of this program, Blacks directly involved in community change at a grassroots level must be immediately interjected into Sarah Lawrence life as not only lecturers and assistants, but as the permanent staff members.

We demand that a Black Coordinator, meeting the approval of the Black Student Association, be hired by April 10, 1969. His function will be to organize and provide the basic machinery for effectually altering the character and objectives of Sarah Lawrence by creating a new kind of curriculum, the Black Studies-Social Change Program, and making it a major thrust of Sarah Lawrence life.

We further demand that the Black Coordinator receive full and active support from the Sarah Lawrence faculty and administration at all times. A faculty-administration committee must be formed to this end. The Black faculty members must chair this committee. This must take place within the next two weeks. It must always work in direct accordance with the B.S.A. This committee must formulate an action agenda before Spring vacation. This agenda must include the mechanism for selecting and hiring the initial Coordinator of the program by the April 10, 1969 deadline.

This program must be functional in serving not only the Sarah Lawrence student body, but people from the surrounding Black communities as well.

These results effect a new kind of educational institution within this College.

Projecting our long range goals, we demand that the College thoroughly examine the feasibility of appointing a Black dean to take charge of the developing Black Studies-Social Change inner-College. We demand that this assessment take place in full and continual collaboration with the Black Student Association by Spring of 1970.

We are aware of the fact there is a shortage of funds, but to approach the full realization of the use of existing funds, a Black Studies-Social Change Program must be instituted at Sarah Lawrence!

b. Paraprofessionals at Sarah Lawrence:

Purpose: to provide diversity at Sarah Lawrence as well as opportunity for upward mobility among a number of residents of Westchester County, not negating the importance of continually, significantly increasing the number of Black applicants admitted directly from high school.

The program would require that Sarah Lawrence admit persons presently employed or unemployed, with no college degree and furnish them with classes that are directly relevant to their desired occupation. The Sarah Lawrence classes would lead to a Sarah Lawrence degree

Perhaps the best focus would be in the area of teacher-training. The surrounding school districts of Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, and Yonkers all employ a certain number of teacher aides as classroom assistants. Though these people may be employed in actual classroom situations for three years or more, they cannot go any further than the position of teacher aide because they have no specific training in the field.

If Sarah Lawrence opened teacher-training courses for these people as well as for Sarah Lawrence students that seek a teaching certificate, both could become accredited and the teacher aide would not simply be wasting time working in the classroom.

Examples of courses that would be relevant to both teacher aides and Sarah Lawrence students might include the following:

Urban Education

The role of the educational institution in affecting social change in urban communities

Teaching Techniques and Methods for Inner-City Schools

Child Development in a Changing America

What must child development include for the Black child, for the White child?

What about children and integration, what does it have to do with the development of the child?

The Question of Relevant Curriculum in a Changing Society

The Dynamics of Social Change in Westchester County

What is the political, economic, and social climate of Westchester County?

What can be done about the problems of Westchester?

What can the poor do?

What can the middle income and upper income communities do?

Relating dynamics of change in Westchester to national and international situation

Introductory Mathematics and Science for pre-teachers

Basic Mathematical Concepts needed for elementary school teaching

Introduction to Biology, and specialized study of aspects of biology particularly relevant to elementary school teaching

History

Black History--it should be required that every person receiving a teaching certificate from Sarah Lawrence complete a course in Afro-American History and The Black Experience.

Literature

Literature and Life--a course in selected readings from the literary world that would provide a broad basis for understanding the role that literature should play in the elementary school, or in any classroom situation.

Music

Children's Music--a basic approach in music, understanding music of all cultures, how to transfer that understanding to children.

Law

Legality, the Law and Social Change in the Black Community.

All Sarah Lawrence courses must be open to paraprofessionals as well as those dealing with teacher training.

It would be required that all persons receiving a Sarah Lawrence teaching certificate take at least three courses from those listed, or comparable courses agreed to by the Student Work Committee. The paraprofessional, because he would be aiming for a high degree of specialization would be required to take six courses in the field of childhood education--combine those courses with his classroom work in order to receive a Sarah Lawrence degree.

The don-donnee system is particularly convenient for a paraprofessional program because the don would be directly responsible for choosing an appropriate curriculum combination for his donee and because the Sarah Lawrence system is geared to meeting the individual's own needs, the paraprofessionals would not have to undergo the mitigating and self-defeating process of taking remedial classes. Conference would be quite important to the paraprofessional in determining the course of his studies.

There would be no grading in the program, only helpful comments or reports written by the teachers.

Funding:

Sarah Lawrence would have to solicit funds from outside sources to carry out this program. The B.S.A. feels that this kind of diversity will prove more viable for fund-raising than simply looking for more scholarship money for Black students. Although Sarah Lawrence must continue to considerably increase the number of Black students admitted straight from high school, with adequate scholarship allotments.

The funding would have to cover the ample cost of 70 new day students plus transportation money, plus the salary of one administrator (without staff)--staffing should come from B.S.A. work-study students or other students on the campus) to run the program.

Such a massive teacher training paraprofessional is greatly needed in Westchester County and will be needed for many years to come as the low income people become increasingly involved in making decisions about their own lives.

The Sarah Lawrence Nursery School should be opened to the children of the paraprofessionals and should, therefore, provide more meaningful laboratory experiences to all of the Sarah Lawrence College students that work there--SIC and paraprofessionals. The possibility of moving the Sarah Lawrence Nursery School to one of the surrounding Black communities must be thoroughly investigated by April 20, 1969. The administration must have formed a committee to make necessary and profitable changes in SIC Nursery School.

It is vital that Sarah Lawrence moves to help the economic development of the low income sections of Westchester County now or we may find ourselves a sleeping bear in the midst of the most affluent county in America whose minority people live in poverty.

This school can no longer be a hiding place. The use of educational institutions for the advancement of low income and minority groups in the area and in the nation can be one of the most powerful tools that the powerless have towards gaining self-determination.

The paraprofessional is complementary to the Black Studies-Social Change Program.

c. Admissions Policy

The administration must, at this time, initiate a new policy whereby no Black applicant will be denied admission due to financial need.

Moreover, we firmly believe that all Black applicants should be given special consideration and evaluation. The B.S.A. will formulate a list of criteria for the evaluation of Black applications. The criteria will be submitted to the Admissions Committee which, in turn, will be given a week (until March 17, 1969) to make provisions in their present policy.

An Admission Review Board, consisting of at least one Black faculty member and two Black seniors, must be instituted to examine the folders of Black applicants.

Sarah Lawrence College must guarantee admission and junior placement to matriculating students from the Cooperative College.

Twenty percent of the male students accepted in the fall must be Black. This diversity necessitates the installment of a permanent, professional Black recruitment officer.

d. Arts

In order that the artistic elements of the Black experience may exist as an educational vehicle, the existing funds for the theater, dance, and art departments must be re-directed and a special fund must be established towards the realization of a Black Arts Program. This plan must be completed and ready for implementation by April 20, 1969, at which point the plan shall be re-submitted to the B.S.A. for approval.

To these ends, we demand that Sarah Lawrence administration and faculty under the direct consultation of Black faculty and Black students create a committee to fully investigate every aspect of this program and prepare to institute a teacher-training program by September of 1969. Action agenda of this program must be completed

by the proposed committee on April 20, 1969. By that time, we demand that the committee hire a Black consultant to coordinate the initial stages of the program. This person must have had experience in paraprofessional training for education. We realize that in order to implement these demands, the College must undergo mechanical restructuring.

THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DIRECT A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT WITH REGARD TO THE AFOREMENTIONED OF THE PROPOSALS WITHIN 24 HOURS TO THE UNITED BODY OF THE B.S.A. AND THE BLACK FACULTY.