

Initial letter from Chapel 18 to President Strider

(As printed in the Colby Echo: March 6, 1970)

During March of 1969, "A Program of Necessary Improvements at Colby College" was submitted to the Administration in the form of nine demands. Within a matter of days these demands became proposals. Of these nine proposals which were so essential to the college's improvement, only three have been instituted. Shortly after the nine proposals were introduced a more detailed list of "Proposals for a New Colby" was submitted. These additional proposals were to be acted upon "immediately." Instead of immediate action we got Con-Con. "And meanwhile what happens to needed changes: They wait while the structure necessary for them is prepared, ie. more committees." Hence, the student body has given the committee system a year and as a result has gained nothing more than more committees.

The Student Organization for Black Unity is now taking action simply because we feel that our concerns cannot wait another year. If you recall, the last section of the "Proposals for a New Colby" stated:

The white/black racial imbalance on this campus is racist as well as discriminatory against the twelve Afro-Americans now in residence. In order to rectify this situation the following measures should be enacted:

1. The recruitment of black students who would probably require some type of remedial assistance. Such assistance could be given in a variety of ways.
 - A. Colby could establish a summer preparatory program such as those now in existence at Bowdoin and the University of Maine (Upward Bound).
 - B. Colby could endeavor to send as many incoming black students as possible to existing Upward Bound programs.
 - C. Colby could establish a transitional year or similar program to cope with the needs of these students while they are here.
2. The hiring of as many as possible Black professors.
3. The establishment, on a permanent basis, of basic courses such as the Negro History course being taught by Professor Foner this semester.
4. The incorporation of various aspects of black culture and black concerns into certain existing courses now offered in various departments at Colby.
5. The admission of a freshman class which will be at least 10% black.

Not only have these measures not been instituted, but more important, they have been completely ignored by Con-Con. Although little of substance has emerged from Con-Con, it has, at least, served as a guise for acting upon those changes necessary for Colby. But it is just as well that Con-Con "the new system for change at Colby" has not concerned itself with issues important to Black students. We doubt that we could stand peacefully and hear the endless rhetoric of this new bureaucratic system. Thus, Colby has made it impossible for us to take any other course of action but to occupy Lorimer Chapel until our demands are met.

FURTHER EXPLICATION OF THE GOALS
OF THE STUDENT ORGANIZATION
FOR BLACK UNITY

THESE GOALS MUST BE INSTITUTED
NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER, 1970

At our previous meeting with the Admissions Committee we indicated that we were giving an outline of our goals and that modifications would be made in the future.

1. Because the Administration Office has received only 78 applications from potential Black students we are altering the number of incoming freshman to at least 50. This is a reasonable number to expect.
2. As we strongly advocated earlier, Colby must officially implement a Black Sub-Freshman Week. The students will arrive Wednesday, April 22, 1970. Transportation will be paid by Colby for those who cannot afford it.
3. The point average requirement for students on financial aid must be abolished.

A single standard, on academic achievement for each class should be applied equally to all students, regardless of their financial arrangements with the college. The separate academic requirement for students receiving financial assistance shall be abolished. (In the past scholarship funds were allocated as rewards for academic achievement in secondary school with less regard to financial need. Now, however, financial aid is given primarily to students accepted by Colby though not able to meet financial requirements. While it is necessary to use academic excellence as one criterion for initial allocation of financial aid, it is unnecessarily discriminatory to require a higher academic standard for scholarship students to retain their aid, than the standard necessary to continue at Colby. The loss of financial assistance can prevent the recipient from remaining at Colby while a student who is able to pay his own way and who has a lower academic average can stay at the college. This, form of class discrimination is inappropriate to an academic institution.)
(Proposal Nine, March, 1969.)

4. A Black Studies Program is needed at Colby. The Black Studies Program would serve to revitalize the suppressed international Black experiences and achievements. If Colby is to recognize the Black Man's existence, if it seeks not to play an essential role in this suppression, it must initiate programs that will affirm that recognition. For expedience, a Black Studies Program need not be an established department. Courses dealing with the Black experience may be offered in the various departments now existing. Essential will be offerings in literature, music and art. It is, however, imperative that a Black professor be hired to teach the offerings in Black history.
5. The admission of the freshman class will be at least 10% black after the class of 1974

STUDENT ORGANIZATION
FOR BLACK UNITY