

To Vice President Coonrod

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO  
Inter-Office Memorandum

From S.B. Rolland SBR

Subject Co-ordinator for Black Student Union

Date June 1, 1971

Professor Willard Barnes, Mr. Ron Bruce (a Black Student) and I had an opportunity to visit with Mr. Eddie Robinson this morning and again during lunch. We understand that Mr. Robinson is being considered for a scholarship to be granted to a Black who will also co-ordinate Black Student Union activities. It is our collective judgement, based on limited contact (and Barnes and Bruce have authorized me to speak for them) that Mr. Robinson is sufficiently experienced to serve in the proposed BSU position. He is both well informed and articulate. He seems flexible and could facilitate cooperation (perhaps greater interaction) among Black students and the rest of the University community. He seems to envision a program in Black studies here (whatever his role may be in shaping such a program) which would utilize existing talents and programs. We were glad to have the opportunity of meeting and exchanging ideas with him and hope, in case additional persons are brought in to be interviewed for this position that we may have a similar opportunity to meet them.

Speaking for myself and without regard to the merits of what has been done, agreed upon or implied in the establishment of a scholarship for a Black student and the concurrent creation of an office of Black student co-ordinator, may I pose a few questions?

1. Is the creation of a special scholarship for a Black Graduate student strictly an administrative prerogative?
2. Should a position that might in fact be filled by any Department in the University offering graduate work in fact be filled before these Departments are informed of the existence of such a fellowship or scholarship or position?
3. Does the position of Black Student Union co-ordinator envision a definite role in the planning and shaping of curriculum? Does it confer any authority? If the answer in either case is no, do the Black students understand this?
4. Did the Director of Intercultural Relations, the Intercultural Relations Committee (in a formal meeting) or the Faculty Council (or its officers) have any prior knowledge of or any opportunity to discuss the creation of or the nature of the position or scholarship in question? If the answer is no, then why not?

While I recognize that the whole question of "ethnic" or minority group studies and problems is a complicated one and that we should proceed with deliberate speed, it seems to me that much progress has been made in the past two years. There are many more people on this faculty who are both competent and interested in developing solutions and programs than some amongst us seem willing to admit. It is my confirmed belief that these should be drawn into discussion by a process of policy formulation involving faculty government machinery and channels. I think to proceed by "fait accompli" is ultimately self defeating.

Copies: President Hartung  
Chairman Faculty Council  
Chairman Committee on Committees

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