

SPECIALREPORT

The Quality of Life of Persons of Color at Wesleyan: Recommendations for its Enhancement

The Final Report of the Presidential Commission on Racial Relations

September 19, 1991

TO: Members of the Wesleyan Community
FROM: President William M. Chace

I am pleased to convey to the entire Wesleyan community through this special supplement to *Campus Report* the complete text of the report of the Presidential Commission on Racial Relations. I appointed the Commission in February of 1990, following a recommendation from the Tri-Minority Council and discussions with faculty and students; it was charged with reviewing in a comprehensive way the situation of community members of color. The report now before you represents many months of work by the members of the Commission, who enjoyed the assistance and insight of many members of the University community, as well as the expert advice of external consultants. I urge you to read the report carefully, for it represents the best thinking of an extremely able group of faculty, students and administrators joined in the examination of an issue of vital importance to all of us.

The recommendations of the Commission are complex and far-reaching. Accordingly, I have asked the senior officers of the University to study those recommendations and to communicate to me on how best to respond to them. I urge you to do the same. That process will be completed in the near future. I will then report back to the community-at-large on the changes that will be made or proposed in University policy and practice.

I would like personally to thank the members of the Commission—Professors James Donady (Co-chair), Peter Frenzel, Oliver Holmes, Michael Lovell (1990), Stephen Crites (1991); student members Saeyun Lee '93, Lucinda Mendez '92, and Steven Spinner '91 (Co-chair); and administrators Angelique Arrington, and Janina Montero, supported by Curtis Bolden, and Frank Tuitt—for their excellent work. And once again, I urge you to read carefully the report, to discuss it with colleagues and friends, and to share your reactions with me and others in the administration.

Thank you.

August 1, 1991

William Chace
President
South College

Dear Bill,

I have the pleasure to present the final report of the President's Commission on Racial Relations. The pleasure is complex; it is satisfying to have completed our task, but the results we seek are yet to be achieved. The time, energy and insight of the individual members of the Commission contributed to our working success and to my role as co-chairman. As you know, we did utilize the expertise of outside consultants. This has turned out to be very beneficial to the Commission. It was able to hear the objective views of others concerning its deliberation. Thank you for your unquestioning willingness to support these consultations. The efforts of all concerned have produced the report and therein lies my major pleasure.

We have maintained a degree of autonomy for the Commission's activities that may have raised concerns on your part and others. We decided near the onset of our deliberations that institutional structure would be central to our report. Therefore we adopted a posture that would allow you to receive our concerns and associated recommendations as independent of your office. So too, we hope the faculty and student body will appreciate our independence.

The Commission has used a deliberative approach to reach consensus in preparing our report. I can assure you that your appointments of Commission members provided exceptional breadth of experience and varied insight into the appropriate campus venues. In addition to using outside consultants, we were informed by several reports previously produced at Wesleyan as well as ones from other institutions. In part this explains why we did not attempt to meet with all interested parties or hold a public forum before submitting our report. This approach would have delayed our report another semester. We hope you will circulate our report for public scrutiny. We are willing to discuss any aspect of the report with you and look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,
J. James Donady
Professor and Chairman of Biology
PCRR Co-Chairman

August 1, 1991

The traditions developed over the past twenty years at Wesleyan have not been conducive to a sense of community. These traditions are reflected in the structures of the University, both the codified structures seen in the regulations and the modes of operation as well as the tacit structures of informal relationships. The living patterns of the student body might best be characterized by the word "fragmentation," a word also applicable to housing, student and faculty governance, and administrative structure. Relatively large communal units (i.e. dormitories), standard at most

colleges and universities in this country, are limited largely to first-year students at Wesleyan. Those in their last three years tend to live in small units, often in houses containing from five to fifteen students. The patterns of living are further fragmented by the geographical disparity; residential units stretch from the North End to Lawn Avenue and farther south, from the High Rise on the east to In-Town on the west. Accordingly, the undergraduate living experience breaks down into small and discrete groups. The reduction of good dining facilities further limits the number of common gathering places, places which should foster close and convivial relationships. The Davenport Campus Center, designed in 1983 to serve as a center of social activity, is too small and too oddly

organized to be anything more than a way station on a cross-campus journey. The horizontal matrix of Wesleyan is reflected on almost every level of campus life, and though it adequately serves some students, it augments the fragmentation which affects nearly all the students of color.

Isolation and its attendant loneliness is a frequent theme of student life. Much of this is reflected in the climate of race relations on campus. While this climate may manifest itself here in the same proportion and intensity as it does in other places, there appears to be a more sluggish ability of our community to cope with the increasing problems because of the fragmentation and miscommunication apparently built into the University structure. The sporadic

attempts to understand and eliminate problems of race relations have been hindered by the Byzantine channels of communication, the inchoate nature of the faculty, and the weakness of central authority. While recognizing that these apparent obstacles form a large and sometimes attractive part of the Wesleyan tradition, we must stress that some changes toward a stronger administrative-faculty leadership are necessary if resolutions of some or any of the problems are to be found.

The faculty at Wesleyan has traditionally tended to break down into autonomous groups, usually defined by the department or program. Curricular development and educational policy are largely dictated by individual departments working independently of each other. Consequently, the central administration and even faculty committees such as the Educational Policy Committee have a more diluted authority, one which tends to extend horizontally across the University rather than through vertical chains of command. The resultant autonomy and strengths of small groups lend themselves to a spirit of independence valued by the small groups but often detrimental to the larger interests of the University community.

The faculty has not normally looked to the central administration for leadership. Educational initiatives have been generated largely from within. The EPC, a faculty committee, screens new courses and evaluates new programs, but even its power is relatively weak when compared to departmental authority. Again, the horizontal matrix prevails. But the central administration does have control of salary matters and the authorization of new and continuing positions. However, it tends not to intervene in departmental matters.

To the extent that these two entities, the faculty and administration, form the core of the University, this core has little credibility among students of color and others who understand their situation. The climate of expectations is a gloomy one. Faith in the system has broken down. The presidency is seen as a largely reactive office with a limited means of enforcing its policies. At the same time the faculty appears uncommitted to change. A positive climate of expectation can only be effected by a strong and persistent administration working together with a committed faculty in coordinated effort to recognize, understand, and communicate with all groups related to the concerns of people of color. At the same time there must be some streamlining of administrative and faculty procedures so as to eliminate redundancy and to provide the institution with a new sense of purpose. We must work together so that we know what our goals are, and, as importantly, everybody, individuals and groups, knows exactly what the others are doing. All too often in the past few years efforts at solutions to race-related problems have unwittingly overlapped. Committees, some of them standing, others ad hoc, have duplicated the work of other groups. Sometimes reports, though made public, have not been propagated to a wider audience. Student and faculty committees such as the SAC, EPC, IPAC, and CHRR must coordinate their efforts so as to eliminate duplication. And, above all, there must be adequate communication between these groups and the larger constituent parts of the University.

It is perhaps easier for the administration to exercise leadership than the faculty, which is disparate in its interests and highly professionalized. But the faculty must be responsible for more than simply its own professional needs, curricular development, and the instruction of students. It must be aware of the cankering insensitivities of the "majority" communities and must enforce a standard of oneness, understanding, and fairmindedness both inside and outside the classroom. It must become involved with students of color in a way which may grate against its traditional conception of the student-faculty relationship. Only by accepting this responsibility can the faculty provide an academic climate which will change

and enhance the quality of life of students of color at Wesleyan.

This will be no easy task at a university where tradition of autonomy and fragmentation plays against reform and cohesion. But we believe that a stronger central leadership, one which includes both the administration and the faculty, can exercise a stronger moral force to provide the new sense of purpose. It may well be the only way of addressing the plethora of race-relations problems which are certain to characterize the campus in the '90s. The leadership of the University—and by this we mean the co-leadership of administration and faculty—must present a clear statement of the problems, develop forceful policies for change, and exercise the means of enforcement.

A structure must be established through which there is significant dialogue stretching from the highest academic administration, through the department chairs to the faculty members. How this might best be done is no doubt a difficult question. In its broadest outlines, the structure must involve a clearer line of communication and command between the President and the individual faculty member. And it is here, at the level of the individual faculty member, that students of color and the entire community would be positively affected, both in curricular matters and in the quality of their lives. Ideally, this line of communication would proceed from the President through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the academic deans, and the faculty chairs, all of whom might form an executive committee for the establishment and enforcement of new norms leading toward a climate of equality and living quality for all people of color on the campus, whether students, staff, or faculty. In this way the administrative leadership can move in tandem with that of the faculty to improve interracial understanding and respect.

The following sections deal with three primary areas of concern: the recruitment and retention of faculty of color, curricular reform, and the quality of life for all people of color at Wesleyan. Each section contains our perceptions of the problems in the particular area and our recommendations for their amelioration.

I. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FACULTY OF COLOR

During the last two years Wesleyan has experienced significant losses in the number of faculty members of color who have chosen to continue their careers elsewhere or who did not receive tenure. Although Wesleyan has a long history of success in the area of affirmative action, these more recent events have raised concerns in the community, especially among students, regarding the institution's commitment to minority faculty. Clearly Wesleyan must reaffirm its commitment and direct its energies toward attaining the ethnic plurality in its faculty that characterizes our nation.

Special efforts and procedures must be enlisted for affirmative action. These efforts and procedures must conform to legal and ethical standards of equitable treatment of all members of society. They will require commitment of energy, change in perspective, and allocation of funds.

In September 1990, the President issued a new statement on the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. This document, the Affirmative Action Plan, reflected consultation with various faculty and student committees and groups, including IPAC and Tri-Minority Council. Since the problems of recruiting and retaining faculty of color are a national issue, it is not surprising that Wesleyan's Affirmative Action Plan addresses concerns similar to those raised by other institutions. (Reports from Brown, Stanford and Yale were reviewed by the Commission.) However, Wesleyan's strong reaffirmation of commitment is just the beginning of the process.

The most important components of the process involve directing the energies of the institution toward the goals of affirmative action. In this effort Wesleyan's organizational structure and community attitudes must be changed. The administration must exert the necessary force to move the Plan forward and the faculty must resolve to implement it in order to reach its goals. Affirmative action cannot end simply with properly conducted search procedures and equity in the treatment of candidates. The process must involve extraordinary efforts on the part of faculty and support from the administration in order to carry out the Plan. The responsibilities of the Administration and Faculty are outlined in the President's plan of procedures and initiatives to implement the goals of affirmative action. The PCRR has identified several areas where administration and faculty responsibilities should be clarified. The remainder of this section identifies those areas and offers recommendations.

RECRUITMENT OF FACULTY OF COLOR

The Affirmative Action Plan correctly places recruitment review in the hands of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Such review will ensure that the plan is implemented and will allow institutional considerations to be addressed. However, primary professional evaluation of a candidate appropriately remains in the hands of the faculty of the department or program. The current Affirmative Action Plan contains procedures which may make the performance of these roles more difficult or conflicting. This should be avoided.

CONCERN 1

The Affirmative Action Plan does not contain a time line for the evaluation of our efforts in recruiting faculty of color.

RECOMMENDATION

1.1. We should accurately compare ourselves to other institutions and set target goals that can be reached within a reasonable number of years. The recently formed Faculty Monitoring Committee should be asked to work with the Equal Opportunity Officer to prepare this comparison and present its recommendations on target goals to the President and the faculty.

CONCERN 2

The Affirmative Action Plan suggests a series of meetings between the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the department concerning the search procedures. We have concerns about the timing and substance of those meetings. They are an appropriate and excellent opportunity for issues of minority recruitment to be addressed. However, care must be taken to protect a department's authority and the procedures for carrying out the search and establishing a list of finalists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. In order to allow institutional considerations to be taken into account in the recruitment process, a meeting of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the department should take place at the earliest possible opportunity (i.e. before the position is advertised).

2.2. The discussions about the job description and advertisement should consider both programmatic and institutional needs. Where national data on available Ph.D. candidates in a field signal a problem in locating faculty of color, a broader job description and increased recruitment activities should produce a more fruitful search. The Vice President for Academic Affairs must assert such institutional consideration at the beginning, not at the end of the process.

2.3. The current procedure of evaluating the affirmative action procedures undertaken by the department should continue. Currently, departmental accountability is accomplished through the submission and approval of Questionnaire A. It is at this time that "the degree to which the search,

rooted in the pursuit of intellectual excellence, paid explicit attention to the University's minority recruitment and retention policies and its targeted affirmative action aims" must be evaluated.

We do not intend to imply in this recommendation that a final review of the recruiting process should be eliminated. The final review should address the campus visits of candidates and the departmental procedures in determining the order of ranking finalists.

NEW INITIATIVES IN RECRUITING

Recognizing the need for extraordinary efforts in recruitment and retention of faculty of color, the Affirmative Action Plan outlines creative new initiatives. These initiatives are echoed in the action of the Board of Trustees and the directives of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and have been recommended by a number of formal and informal faculty and student committees.

CONCERN 3

The newly proposed faculty positions, visiting scholars and postdoctoral fellowships will make significant contributions to the affirmative actions goals. The problem is that such efforts require sources of financial support. The major importance of affirmative action initiatives calls for new attitudes regarding such financial support. The problem is too grave to wait for funds to accumulate or outside sources to be identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Funding of new positions to increase cultural diversity in the faculty and curriculum should be given the highest priority in the future development campaign.

3.2. Where financially possible and not detrimental to development efforts, endowment "loans" should be used to accelerate the proposed new initiatives.

3.3. FTE loans against future retirements ("Bridge Appointments") should be encouraged to allow departments to take advantage of "targets of opportunity" in recruiting faculty of color.

3.4. The distribution of the three new faculty positions mentioned in Affirmative Action Plan should take into account both the pools of available candidates and the existing disproportionate distribution of faculty of color among the three academic divisions. Divisional equity should not be as important a consideration in this matter. The most important goal is to increase the number of faculty of color.

RETENTION OF FACULTY OF COLOR

Concerns about retention of faculty of color exist on two fronts; the welfare of the individual faculty member and the success of the institution in retaining and tenuring faculty of color. We must recognize the special circumstances of the faculty of color and the institution must monitor and be accountable for its retention record. Minority faculty tend to engage in an inordinate number of institutional activities (advising, committee work, programs, etc.) and their services must be recognized and placed in a broad professional context in reappointment and promotion processes.

CONCERN 4

A difficulty with the Affirmative Action Plan is that the issue of "exceptional burden" is addressed after the fact, that is, at a point when the faculty member is being evaluated and "special considerations" are being invoked. We find that the delay in recognition of exceptional service has, in the review process, the potential to create differential evaluation criteria which can be professionally detrimental to faculty of color and demoralizing to all faculty.

RECOMMENDATION

4.1. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, with faculty of academic departments and programs, must be concerned with the allocation of responsibilities and unusual burdens on junior faculty in general, and minority faculty in particular. Institutional guidelines for chairs should be developed to ensure consistent and periodic evaluation of the burdens, so that timely methods can be found to reduce or avoid the impact of those burdens on the pedagogical and scholarly activity of junior faculty. Course relief should be considered for faculty of color as a means of supporting their professional goals and reducing burdens. Attention to these matters must be well defined and applied consistently; exceptional service should always be recognized and evaluated within the broad context of institutional priorities or values.

CONCERN 5

It is important to maintain confidentiality in certain professional transactions, especially when offers and counter-offers may be the issue. Nevertheless, the institution should have in place proper accountability structures that guard against misinformation and assure the broader community that good faith discussions have taken place.

RECOMMENDATION

5.1. The Faculty Monitoring Committee should be informed on retention procedures so that it can assess the efforts of the institution and make recommendations. Furthermore, the Committee's annual and timely reports may offer assurance to the community that good faith discussions have taken place.

RECRUITMENT INTO ACADEMIC CAREERS

The Affirmative Action Plan recognizes the value of increasing the numbers of students of color entering the academic career. Departments and programs should be encouraged to find creative ways to inspire students of color to pursue academic careers. Clearly, the "pipeline" starts at institutions such as Wesleyan. The institutional commitments made on behalf of our young scholars will serve the profession and the nation. Eventually, Wesleyan will be rewarded by increased opportunities for recruitment.

CONCERN 6

The Affirmative Action Plan offers three approaches to improve recruitment to the profession. However, in each approach, additional considerations need to be stated to effectively implement these initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

6.1 The University should seek additional funds to support students in Division III along the same lines as the Mellon Fellowship, which is dedicated to the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Pipeline problems are most critical in the sciences and mathematics.

6.2. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of academic opportunity as soon as possible, therefore, it is important that the criteria and range of opportunities for summer workshops be defined and published immediately. Wesleyan does not currently have processes in place to implement this section of the plan and further delays may result in missed opportunities for interested students.

6.3. Inviting minority faculty for short visits or programs on campus is an opportunity that could be implemented quickly. Sources of support and request processes need to be defined and advertised so that the community is informed of the opportunities.

6.4 Finally, a greater role in mentoring students of color should be undertaken by the majority faculty. This is a tangible way that the extraordinary burden on faculty of color can be shared with the majority faculty. This responsi-

bility should be undertaken in recognition of its value to the students, fellow faculty members and the profession.

II CURRICULAR REFORM

The racial and ethnic diversity of the Wesleyan community is among its richest resources. If the community and each of its members is to reap the potential benefit of this resource, one of the matters that needs careful attention is the reshaping of Wesleyan's educational program to accommodate its diversity. For teaching and learning are central to the many things we do here. All of us can profit from the diverse social experience and cultural history represented on this campus to the extent that it is reflected in what we teach and learn and in how it is taught and learned. In particular, our concern here is to explore ways in which administration, faculty, and students can coordinate their efforts to reform the Wesleyan curriculum so that it will reflect the social experience and cultural history of such under-represented constituencies as African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latinos.

Stirrings toward curricular reform are in the air these days, particularly under the promising but still rather ambiguous label of Multiculturalism. One aspect of what is being discussed under this label is the effort to make the curriculum more responsive to the actual composition of the Wesleyan community, and that effort is what we seek to address here. We have two related aims: First, to make the curriculum less alien to minority students, more reflective of their ethnic interests. It is not enough to admit minority students to a program of study that in its content largely ignores the cultural heritages they represent. The second aim is to convert the "problem" of Wesleyan's diversity into an opportunity for all of us, by a curricular reform that values it as the rich resource it is.

Wesleyan's commitment to excellence undergirds any constructive reform. None of us will tolerate any compromising of academic standards or dilution of the academic integrity of courses. But excellence is not sustained simply by refusing to change. A curriculum continues to be excellent by being periodically reshaped to reflect changing realities. As the 21st century approaches, for instance, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans will constitute one-third of the nation's population. An education that prepares students for citizenship and careers in a time of dramatic demographic change will provide a carefully cultivated understanding of these communities. Wesleyan is fortunate that its diverse student body, faculty, and administration reflect this larger social reality to the degree that they do. Insofar as continued progress is made in this respect, the social experience of interacting with one another on this campus will contribute more fully to the educational goal of preparing students for participation in a pluralistic society. But this social experience needs to be informed by an educational program that in its content and methods is designed to deepen every student's insight into the ethos and cultural background of his or her fellow students. That is an intellectually challenging initiative, requiring some new dimensions of critical thinking on the part of students and faculty alike.

There are many priorities that must be considered in any thoughtful reform of the curriculum. The reflection of our ethnic diversity ought to be high among these priorities. It is not a band-aid to cover a minor deficiency in an otherwise healthy curriculum. It is not a stick with which to beat down other priorities. Its integral incorporation into the urgent work of curricular reform needs to be long-range, nuanced, and structural. The concerns and recommendations of this section are offered in the hope of

contributing constructively to this process.

CONCERN 7

In order that curricular reform be successfully developed, the administration must provide committed and continuous encouragement and financial support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 We recommend that the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs regularly voice their commitment to the value of reflecting ethnic diversity within the curriculum at trustee meetings, division chair and faculty meetings, commencement and convocation. Expectations for the faculty, students and administration should be addressed at these public meetings.

7.2 In making ethnic diversification of the curriculum an institutional priority, the Administration should provide material incentives to departments and faculty that serve this aim. For instance, faculty who wish to develop new courses or revise existing courses with this aim in view should be given released time or summer grants for the purpose. The successful mounting of such courses should be given appropriate weight when these faculty are considered for merit increases or for tenure and promotion. Their departments should be compensated with permanent or visiting appointments. Consultants from other departments or from off-campus should be employed to aid in the development of such courses and in the reshaping of departmental curriculum. Library holdings on the history and culture of minorities should be increased.

Such changes will require some organizational and procedural adjustments.

CONCERN 8

Educational reform will require clear channels of communication and recognized centers charged with primary responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The President should assign the Vice President for Academic Affairs the responsibility and accountability for addressing these issues of curriculum reform with the faculty and implementing directives to the faculty.

8.2 The Office of Academic Affairs should supervise the establishment of a permanent subcommittee of the EPC charged with the implementation of this curricular initiative and should monitor and support its work. This Subcommittee on Ethnic Diversification of the Curriculum (SEDC) shall be composed of six members, two from the EPC and four members of the faculty who have a special interest in this initiative. The SEDC should be formed during the Fall term, 1991, and appointed by the EPC and the Office of Academic Affairs to staggered three-year terms, for the sake of continuity: four members of each year's committee will carry over to the next year, together with two new appointees.

8.3 The SEDC will coordinate its work with that of a subcommittee of the SAC on race relations in campus life and the Faculty Monitoring Committee on the recruitment and retention of minority faculty. These three subcommittees will constitute an umbrella committee addressing all aspects of racial and ethnic relations at Wesleyan.

8.4 The SEDC will direct the reform of the curriculum in at least two respects, as detailed below: it will stimulate and supervise the development of specific courses, and it will oversee the reshaping of the curriculum of Wesleyan departments and programs generally.

CONCERN 9

Courses must be developed that would centrally address the historical experience of minorities represented at Wesleyan. They must be strategically deployed in the curriculum so as to be accessible to a maximum number of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Specific courses with this orientation, for instance in the arts or literature or social sciences, should be offered each year and incorporated into Wesleyan's program of general education, beginning in 1992-93. Every student at Wesleyan should be expected to take at least one of these courses during his or her Wesleyan career as one of the nine courses that fulfill general education expectations.

9.2 Grant support should be sought to encourage faculty to develop new courses or to revise existing courses for this purpose. Students might also be employed, with appropriate support, to share in the planning of such courses and perhaps to serve as TA's in them.

9.3 The SEDC (see 2.2 above) should be authorized to supervise this part of the general education program, in cooperation with the EPC and the academic deans, recruiting faculty and students to plan these courses, and making sure that attractive options and an appropriate spread of subject matters are available each year.

CONCERN 10

The provision of specific courses centrally concerned with the cultural experience, history, literary and artistic expressions, etc., of minorities, however, is only one side of this curricular reform. Perhaps the larger problem is to shape the entire curriculum so that it will be more sensitive to the concerns of those courses. It will be important to define clearly where in the structure of Wesleyan the problem can be most effectively addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The locus must be in the departments and programs of the University. For there is no general guideline that could direct the way these aims could be achieved across the entire curriculum. It is a problem that needs to be on the agenda of every department and program, for only the faculty in each specific field can decide how the general objective can most effectively be achieved in the program of that field. For this task the imagination and commitment of faculty in each field needs to be enlisted.

10.2 Here the importance of the recruitment and retention of minority faculty in as many departments as possible is obvious. (See Part I of this report.) Faculty whose situation makes them especially sensitive to these issues can offer leadership in helping departments understand how they might proceed. It is not only that their own teaching might most directly reflect these concerns, their collegial relations in the department or program can help to influence other faculty in shaping its curriculum in the way that would be appropriate to the particular field. Minority faculty have already made important contributions to their departments in this respect.

10.3 In some fields it is fairly obvious what can be done. In other fields the issue is more subtle and elusive. Not every course can reflect minority interests in an uncontrived way, but in the departmental program as a whole some imagination can produce valuable innovations. In departments in which there are not minority faculty or other faculty with experience in this particular effort to guide the department, or where there is the will but not much clarity about the way, the administration might consider employing outside consultants with some experience at other institutions in gently reshaping the program in a specific field.

10.4 Leadership in this particular aspect of curricular reform should be rewarded when candidates are under consideration for retention and promotion. It is not a marginal issue, and should not be so treated by departments.

10.5 The SEDC, with the active support of the Office of Academic Affairs, should charge each department and program with the task of studying and implementing appropriate steps in this effort, beginning in the Spring term, 1992, and should secure any aid needed by any department or program. It should also monitor the progress made by each department and program, requesting progress reports during the Fall term, 1993. It should continue to monitor

progress on an annual basis.

CONCERN 11

Wesleyan must encourage students of all races to take classes which will broaden their cultural awareness and understanding of one another. There should be specific roles for both administration and faculty to facilitate this process. Methods for implementation should be developed which will be accepted and supported by students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 We recommend that a listing of all courses which specifically address multiculturalism be included in the next student course selection book for registration. In this way, students will be fully aware of all available courses currently being offered and those which will be in the future.

11.2 These courses should have some notation next to them in the course catalog and course selection book which will enable each student to be aware that it will satisfy the general education expectation.

11.3 All student advisors (faculty and resident) should be made aware of these expectations and counsel students accordingly.

III QUALITY OF LIFE

The CHRR report of 1989 clearly stated for the Wesleyan community the proposition that there had been "a substantial erosion of majority sensitivity about matters of race, accompanied by growing indifference to past and present racial injustice." Shortly after the CHRR report, the national media started to note an increase in racial violence across the nation, especially on college campuses. Unfortunately, the CHRR had been prophetic in its evaluation of the national as well as the campus mood on the issue of race relations. Moreover, its conclusions were further confirmed by the Carnegie study, *Campus Life: In Search of Community*, (1990), which also commented on the "deepening polarization along racial and ethnic lines" as colleges and universities have abdicated in the last few years a responsibility to push "aggressively to broaden opportunities for historically bypassed students." Ernest Boyer writes in this report: "Sadly, this sense of urgency has, in recent years, diminished and the nation's colleges and universities have largely failed to promote sustained leadership in the drive for equality of opportunity in the nation. Rather than push vigorously their own affirmative action programs, aggressively recruiting minority students into higher education, they turned to other matters, and a historically important opportunity to advance the course of human justice was ... lost." (p.25) Wesleyan's privileged position of innovation regarding issues of race and educational access made it somewhat complacent in the last few years and, accordingly, there was an absence of community response to the warning signs of the 1989 CHRR report. Wesleyan has lost ground in leadership of race relations and in the quality of life issues for people of color in educational environments; it cannot afford to lose further ground.

The strain that most Wesleyan students encountered during the Spring of 1990 had a negative effect on their academic and intellectual lives and was not conducive to learning and growth. While we do not wish to downplay the effect events of the Spring of '90 had on students, most students of color deal with insidious, more subtle forms of racism and conflict every day, both inside and outside of the classroom. The impact of this reality on these students is rendered all the more negative because many of their white peers and professors are unaware of it. Consequently, students of color are repeatedly forced to explain, justify and describe painful experiences. All of this may cause them to doubt themselves as well as the impact of their experiences.

They tend to encounter "Spring '90" issues each day. These issues are no less detrimental to their academic and intellectual lives than the spring of 1990 was to their majority counterparts: these issues directly infringe on learning and personal growth. If as an institution we are unable to address properly the everyday problems of race relations that persist on our campus, then we will continue to be confronted with explosive, destructive situations. We will continue to act in reactive modes and, more importantly, we will be amiss in our mission as an educational institution to impart knowledge effectively and to help our students accept and embrace differences and change.

Campus life, primarily for students, includes a range of aspects that impact in different, and considerable, ways on their perception of "quality of life." Several of those aspects seemed to the Commission to be especially critical, as noted in the outline below, yet the PCRR recognizes that the areas are far from exhaustive. This, the longest section of this report, will focus on the following topics:

1. The Academic Environment
 - The Classroom Experience
 - Faculty-Student Interaction
2. Student Life
 - Educational Initiatives
 - Residential Life
 - Student Governance
3. Admissions
4. Quality of Life for Staff of Color

THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT: THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Students of color cannot avoid the need to face and wrestle with issues of race in a disproportionate manner compared to their white counterparts. When students of color address race related issues in a comprehensive, thoughtful and critical fashion, they are able to create a framework that fosters their learning. However, issues of race tend not to be discussed in the classroom. In general, majority students also have few opportunities to deal with these issues in the classroom and, accordingly, the two groups cannot easily engage in a type of dialogue that promotes learning, understanding, mutual respect, or critical analysis devoid of defensiveness. If we fail to foster this dialogue, we will fail to capitalize on the opportunity to transform uncomfortable classroom situations into positive and constructive cognitive experiences. There is general agreement that the curriculum should include courses that foster open discussion in which sensitive subject matter can be addressed in depth. And yet students and faculty seem reluctant to participate in discussions that presuppose conflict or in which the participants may experience discomfort because of emotionally charged subject matter. As a community of educators we tend to ignore the intellectual and academic value of certain forms of discomfort. For students the relationship with faculty is crucial to their perception of the educational process and to their engagement with disciplines and learning processes. Clearly there is a kind of discomfort that is pedagogically effective and supportive of learning. But there is another kind of discomfort that can be a pedagogical obstacle. Discussing race related topics can lead to new understandings and appreciations of the background and history of others, leading to different forms of self-awareness. Conversely, pedagogically destructive discomfort is the result of the absence of thoughtful discussion and of students' lack of experience in the critical exploration of other cultures as well as of their own identity. For instance, we experience frequently the simplistic tendency to see students of color as spokespeople for their race. Moreover, a destructive attitude of low expectations concerning students of color adds to the fallacy that these students can only contribute to the classroom or to

the intellectual learning experience when issues of race are being discussed. Even then, their perspectives are rarely discussed openly because of an inappropriate avoidance of conflict.

CONCERN 12

Some faculty members have expressed concerns regarding their ability to evaluate and address student discomfort in the classroom. How can faculty members help create classroom environments that promote constructive discussions of "uncomfortable" topics?

RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The faculty's training and professional activity do not currently include or expect levels of expertise in facilitation, conflict-resolution, or cross cultural sensitivities. Yet the institution should find ways to stimulate faculty interest in gaining such expertise, e.g., faculty should receive information on conferences and other activities that would develop this kind of expertise; faculty should receive grant support to attend meetings or conferences that address such pedagogical methodologies. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the deans should be charged with the responsibility to disseminate the information and allocate the financial support through grants and other funding sources. They should also encourage or sponsor on-campus workshops for faculty on these and related issues.

12.2 The Educational Policy Committee must give special attention to subject matter in the curriculum that pertains to multicultural issues so that all students can develop the knowledge and the ability to analyze and critique complex cross-cultural topics. (See Part II of this report.)

CONCERN 13

Students must be helped to recognize that they are expected to engage critically in a range of issues that may be "uncomfortable," that challenge a variety of beliefs and structures of personal and cultural identity.

Jeremy Zwelling's letter which appeared in the Friday, March 29, 1991, issue of the *Argus* touched upon an area of growing concern in higher education. In his article he recounted recent personal teaching experiences which indicate that we are becoming less and less effective at teaching and preparing our students to explore new ideas and perspectives that are unfamiliar or diametrically opposed to their own, to consider theories about culture, race, nationality, or ethnicity that challenge the concept of self and identity. The institution must find ways to encourage students to learn to distinguish between discomfort that hinders their learning processes and discomfort that supports intellectual and personal growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Faculty Advisers should address this issue with new frosh in their group session and try to find opportunities to engage individual advisees in discussions about students' perception of comfort or discomfort in their courses. The regional coordinators should ensure that this topic is addressed in the Faculty Advising program. Department and program chairs should urge Faculty Advisers of majors to take initiatives to engage students in discussions of this issue.

13.2 The new-student orientation programs and the residence life program, under the supervision of the Dean of the College, should also develop initiatives that complement the efforts of the Faculty Advisers. Such initiatives should underscore openness to materials, texts and topics which may be perceived to be divisive, that may challenge beliefs or perceptions but which lead to open dialogue both inside and outside of the classroom. The residence staff should have comprehensive training on cross-cultural issues and should sponsor related programs in the residence halls.

13.3 Student leadership and governance structures, such as the WSA, should be encouraged to include this topic in their agendas. The President and the Dean of the College should support any efforts that contribute to the discussion of

how students at Wesleyan encounter and engage the academic environment vis-a-vis their own cultural heritages.

THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT: FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION

The CHRR report of 1989 concluded that students of color feel isolated in the academic environment and stated that "ways must be found to help students of color establish relationships with faculty members who can serve as mentors." The report added: "The president should encourage the faculty to establish mentoring relationships with minority students to develop ways to promote academic excellence and a sense of intellectual and cultural self-confidence among minority students." We concur with this statement and want to emphasize that it is even more acutely valid at the present time than it was two years ago.

CONCERN 14

Faculty mentoring of students has been in recent years erratic. Faculty members must be encouraged to develop mentoring relationships with all students, but especially with students of color.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 The President, through department chairs, should instruct each department to develop a plan for implementing approaches to involve faculty with students in mentoring relationships.

14.2 The institution should seek funding for programs similar to the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship program which encourages academic and scholarly development of students of color through close faculty associations.

STUDENT LIFE: EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Since the 1970s, the population of people of color has grown at Wesleyan (e.g., Asian/Asian-American students) and there is much more diversity within the three predominant groups (e.g., in the '70s the Latino community was mostly Puerto Rican). The institutional approaches and programs that were viable in the past are no longer applicable and must be reconceptualized. These issues must be a part of the institutional planning process, beyond the immediate purview of student services where it has traditionally resided. The design of institutional approaches must be attentive to the complexities of greater diversity within "minority" groups and include consideration of national, social and economic issues and trends.

The CHRR reports have consistently included recommendations for educational initiatives intended to increase the level of awareness and sensitivity in the community at large, to improve the quality of race relations. Educational efforts have been recommended especially for certain student groups through orientation programs, residence staff training, and so forth. Educational initiatives have taken place and have been well received by the different audiences. Nonetheless, they do not seem to correspond to or to be contained within an educational structure or comprehensive plan. What are the objectives of the educational initiatives? Can the results be measured? What is the broad goal of the collective set of the educational programs? How do institutional initiatives relate to those sponsored and organized by students? These are some of the questions that an institutionally based educational effort should ask and attempt to answer in the design and implementation of programs.

CONCERN 15

Educational initiatives must correspond to or be contained within an educational structure and a comprehensive plan.

RECOMMENDATION

15.1 The Student Affairs Committee should create a subcommittee charged with the task of developing a broad educational structure and comprehensive plan to address issues of race, diversity and ethnicity. This committee should be an overseeing group with faculty and administrative collaboration.

CONCERN 16

The results of these educational initiatives should be evaluated.

RECOMMENDATION

16.1 The Office of Institutional Research, in coordination with the Dean of the College and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, should develop and implement a longitudinal quantitative and qualitative assessment of the status of students of color in the institution.

CONCERN 17

Students of color continue to participate in and contribute to institutional programs (orientation, pre-frosh weekend, Alumni programs, etc.) in a manner that is disproportionate to that of their "majority" counterparts. Moreover, they engage in a substantial number of initiatives designed to educate the larger community (open houses, awareness months, etc.) and to provide support and cultural context to their communities. This broad range of activities constitutes an exceptional burden, affecting the students' ability to dedicate themselves more fully to the academic opportunities that the environment offers. The institution must provide better support to students of color in order to alleviate some of the exceptional burdens experienced by a substantial majority of them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 The Dean of the College should identify those educational activities that students of color sponsor and organize. This information should be used to determine the areas where institutional support is necessary or appropriate.

17.2 Curricular changes and wider community participation in cross-cultural issues and activities will in time alleviate the students' perceived obligation to act as the main providers of different cultural perspectives for the larger community. In the meantime, the institution needs to articulate and implement an approach that provides students with direct support in these endeavors. We recommend that the Dean of the College and other University officers create and implement a plan to relieve students of color of exceptional institutional responsibilities.

17.3 The Dean of the College should instruct offices engaged in student services to define the range and scope of services for students of color, identify areas of improvement, and develop a plan to implement forms of support that will address retention and high academic achievement.

STUDENT LIFE: RESIDENTIAL LIFE

The residence-life program at Wesleyan has for many years concentrated its attention on the first year; educational formats and social activities have been designed primarily to ease the adjustment of new students to the campus and to the expectations of the faculty. Students in the upper classes are normally deemed to be fluent in the ethos of the University community, conversant in diversity issues, and fully able to engage each other in

conflict-free dialogue. Although this may be occasionally the case, many Wesleyan students after the frosh year fragment themselves in small living units, rarely interact across certain defined affinity lines, and do not seem to continue to seek out the educational programs that they experienced as frosh.

CONCERN 18

How can the residence-life structure have greater impact on the Wesleyan community with respect to fostering awareness of race and diversity?

RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 Under the direction of the Dean of the College, the residence life program should be evaluated and assessed on a regular basis to determine the impact of its programs on members of the frosh class especially, and on all students over time.

18.2 The process of selection and the training of resident advisers should be especially attentive to the complexities of race relations within the staff and how the staff engages such issues with new students. An annual evaluation should be presented to the SAC subcommittee charged with the design and monitoring of a comprehensive institutional plan to address issues of race and diversity. (See 15.1 above.)

18.3 The Dean of Student Life should explore the expansion of the residence life program to provide upper-class students with educational opportunities on issues of race and diversity in a manner that complements curricular offerings on these subjects.

CONCERN 19

The physical structure of the University and social patterns of students must be made to accommodate an inclusive and respectful approach to racial diversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19.1 As the Residential-Life Working Group considers the long-term housing and dining needs of the campus, it should explore opportunities to demonstrate in physical structures of the institution the multicultural, multi-ethnic makeup of the student body. Such structures could include a "multicultural center," similar to the concept used by Brown University or Connecticut College, or other possibilities that underscore the uniqueness of different cultural heritages.

19.2 The Residence Life Working Group should also consider in its deliberations the need for broad, inclusive social space for students that complements special interest groupings of living arrangements as well as of organizational and social activities.

STUDENT LIFE: STUDENT GOVERNANCE

The WSA and student groups, especially those involved in student governance and those that influence the racial make-up of student life, can and do influence the campus atmosphere with respect to race relations. Students of color need to be broadly involved in all areas of the University, but student groups also need to analyze how their policies and practices may be contributing negatively to the effective participation of students of color in the Wesleyan community. Since student groups are autonomous and independent from direct administrative authority, the Commission will not make a specific recommendation concerning this issue, but strongly urges the WSA and student groups to address it within their range of activities, to seek advice from professionals in the institution who may be helpful in the analysis and development of strategies, and to contribute actively to the institutional plan to improve race relations on the campus.

ADMISSIONS

Wesleyan and other selective institutions are experiencing increasing difficulty in maintaining a truly diverse

student population and a critical mass of students of color. The difficulty our admissions office is encountering in meeting these long-standing institutional goals is not unique to Wesleyan. It is a national problem brought about by changing demographics, worsening economic conditions and a decline in private, state and federal support. Nevertheless, these difficulties should not lessen our resolve to maintain or increase the number of students of color on our campus.

CONCERN 20

How can Wesleyan increase or at least maintain the applicant and matriculate number of students of color?

RECOMMENDATIONS

20.1 The University should develop a program to utilize more effectively alumni and alumnae of color to recruit at the national level. The Dean of Admissions and Director of Alumni Programs should involve their staffs in devising and implementing this recommendation.

20.2 The institution must have accurate data to determine why students of color do not matriculate at Wesleyan, which colleges and universities they choose to attend instead of Wesleyan, and how those institutions differ in their recruitment efforts, financial aid packages, and student services programs. The Director of Institutional Research, in coordination with the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid, should develop thorough mechanisms to ascertain why students choose to matriculate at other institutions.

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR STAFF OF COLOR

The professional life of staff of color often parallels the experience of faculty of color: they are expected to provide the "minority perspective" in committees and other student/faculty groupings. They are requested to attend and participate in a broad range of institutional activities and events to demonstrate the presence of racial diversity at the professional level. They are sought after by students of color as mentors, advisers, administrative liaisons. They are often asked to attend student meetings to facilitate discussions and mediate institutional priorities. Moreover, staff of color are also often called upon to educate, implicitly and explicitly, colleagues in their professional areas and across the institution on issues of race and diversity. The additional time and institutional involvement demands may have a negative impact on the professional development, the performance criteria, and the quality of life of those professionals. And finally, this exceptional service to the institution, which normally extends well beyond job descriptions, is not recognized or rewarded as an important contribution to a stated institutional priority. Although sensitivity and attention to issues of affirmative action are expected to be broadly shared by all-members of the community, the reality is that this responsibility in practice is primarily—if not exclusively—carried out by staff of color.

Furthermore, staff of color is mostly concentrated in student services. This is an area that is likely to continue to experience loss of personnel, thus further increasing the explicit and implicit burden for staff of color to provide adequate support and attention to the needs of students of color. The professional impact in the current and future state of affairs should not be minimized.

CONCERN 21

How can the professional environment for staff of color be improved?

RECOMMENDATION

21.1 The Office of Human Resources, in consultation with University officers, should provide the President with a comprehensive assessment of the professional environment for staff of color and develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of these professionals.

These twenty-one concerns with their attendant recommendations sum up the work of the Commission over the past year and a half. It addresses itself to the particular problems on the Wesleyan campus. However, the quality of life of people of color at Wesleyan is intertwined in national and international issues and perspectives. Though Wesleyan may appear as a small part of that picture, we would like to turn the lens in the other direction. We have identified areas of concern and offered specific recommendations where we see the possibility for substantive change at Wesleyan. We recognize the necessity for change from the most formalized institutional structure to the most personalized individual attitudes. Such a tall order could easily be excused as insurmountable. However, we must warn Wesleyan that it must come to grips with these concerns and that extraordinary efforts must be channeled toward creating a climate for change. In short, the community must be made aware that race relations must be given the highest priority if it hopes to maintain its institutional character and prestige. Change must occur at Wesleyan for its own welfare and, when it does, the lens can be reversed and the image of Wesleyan projected on the larger sphere. Wesleyan can play a leadership role in this area, if it can take upon itself the collective will to bring about change.

Respectfully submitted,

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DOCUMENTS

The following is a list of documents consulted by the Commission during the course of its deliberations. When a specific author or issuing institution is known, her, his or its name is given in parentheses.

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3. "Wesleyan University: Affirmative Action Plan," Sept. 1990.
4. "The Committee on Human Rights and Relations' Report on Racial Minority-Group Students at Wesleyan to the Members of the Wesleyan Faculty and Student body," May 5, 1989.
5. "Memorandum on Activities, Programs, and other Initiatives Related to Minority Advancement and Support to the Commission on Race Relations," (Janina Montero) Oct. 19, 1990.
6. "Report of the EPC Subcommittee on Human Rights and Relations," May 7, 1990.
7. Documents pertaining to the Committee on Human Rights and Relations' follow-up on the CHRR 1989 recommendations to the PCRR:
 - a) "The Committee on Human Rights and Relations: Report on the Committee's Study of Race Relations to the Wesleyan Faculty and Student Body," May 1989.
 - b) "Memorandum on the CHRR 1989 Recommendations

to Denise Darrigrand and Rick McLellan," (Janina Montero), Jan. 7, 1991.

- c) "Report of the Task Force on Racial Harassment and Abuse," Apr. 24, 1990.
- d) "Addendum to CHRR Recommendations to the Committee on Human Rights and Relations," (Rick McLellan) Feb. 27, 1991.
- e) "Response to CHRR Recommendations to Gayle Lackey and Jaclyn Friedman" (Daniel S. Burt), Feb. 7, 1991.
- f) "EPC Response to the Report of the CHRR to Denise Darrigrand" (Michael Brennan), Dec. 11, 1990.
- g) "Response to CHRR Recommendation for Sensitivity Training to Denise Darrigrand" (Harry C. Kinne III), Dec. 13, 1990.
- h) "Memorandum about the CHRR Recommendations to Denise Darrigrand" (William Adams), Dec. 18, 1990.
- i) "Response Letter to the Committee on Human Rights and Relations" (Denise Darrigrand), Feb. 8, 1991.
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