

REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
UNIVERSITY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

July 12, 1968

Foreword

Any problem concerning injustice based upon prejudice involving race, creed, or color, wherein the rights of any member of the Iowa State University faculty, staff, or student body may have been infringed upon in the scope of University operations is the proper concern of the University Human Relations Committee.

On June 28, 1968, President W. Robert Parks asked the Human Relations Committee to pursue the investigation of allegations of injustice, specifically in reference to the grievances presented on May 20, 1968, to the Athletic Council by the Black Student Organization. He also asked the Committee to take on the more positive task of building an educational effort that would help the University community to deal with the situation from which the grievances developed.

An Ad Hoc Committee was formed. It has initially concerned itself with the specific requests and grievances presented. Prompt study and response on these points are of prime importance. The Committee will engage further in inquiries that will involve other academic and social areas of the University community.

We focus for the moment--and almost entirely in this report--on the one area of athletics. We bear fully in mind that athletics is a single

aspect of campus life; a problem cited in that one aspect cannot be held in isolation. Existence of a problem in one area of a complex community strongly suggests related problems in most or all other areas.

In the report that follows, the Ad Hoc Committee concerns itself only with aspects of the athletic program that relate to problems presented by the Black students. The Committee fully recognizes the responsibility of the representatively elected University Athletic Council for policies that govern the University's intercollegiate athletics program. The Committee recognizes the appropriateness of submission of grievances by the BSO to the Athletic Council.

Grievances expressed, however, relate to matters that are the concern of the Human Relations Committee. We have tried at all times to be properly aware of the distinct areas of responsibility. Although the problems are emphasized in terms of Black student-athletes, some may similarly apply to White student-athletes. Thus some of the comments and suggestions necessarily do apply to the athletic program in general.

Committee Activity

The Ad Hoc Committee was formed and held its first meeting on July 1. Numerous sessions followed, ranging in time from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 hours each session. The Committee consulted in detail:

Members of the Black Student Organization

Athletic Council representatives John Mahlstedt and Robert Fellingner

Team physician Dr. C. V. Hamilton, Student Health Service

Director of Residence Charles Frederiksen

Coaches Glenn Anderson, Edward Gagnier, Robert Lawson, Harold Nichols, Arch Steel, and L. C. Timm

Sports publicist Harry Burrell

Athletic administrators G. C. Stapleton and C. R. Bickerstaff

All Committee sessions were recorded on audio tape when consultations involved other than Committee members. Typescripts have been made, and the original sound tapes have been retained.

The report reflects the Committee's understanding of the issues, based upon information obtained and evaluated to this time.

Ad Hoc Committee of University Human Relations Committee

Miss Margo Hannah - Student Member

Dr. Richard Herrnstadt - Prof., English - Chairman

Dr. Ellis Hicks - Prof., Zoology

Dr. K. Robert Kern - Ext. Ed., Information Service

Dr. Roger Mitchell - Prof., Agronomy

Dr. James Nilsson - Prof., Electrical Engineering

Dr. Rupert Seals - Asst. Prof., Dairy and Food Industry

Mr. Percil Stanford, Student Member

Dr. Wilbur L. Layton - Vice President for Student Affairs -
Ex-officio for staff support

Introduction

Black students on the Iowa State University campus have felt the painful effects of acts of prejudice. Prejudice is found in personal attitudes or actions, whether expressed knowingly or unknowingly. The Committee has had revealed to it instances of actions and behaviors of individuals that were perceived by the Black student as racially discriminatory and which caused deep feelings of hurt and frustration. Although prejudicial acts involving race or color clearly exist, they do not appear to derive from planned discrimination.

Allegations were made in the statement of grievances on May 20, and others were presented subsequently. Some allegations related to the intercollegiate athletic program; others implicated broad academic and social regions of the University.

The Committee recommends immediate actions that we believe will improve the relationships of the Black student-athletes and the staff in the intercollegiate athletic program. We have set out these actions, with our rationales, in the following paragraphs.

The need for change in behavior on the part of individual members of the University community is crucial.

Many habitual responses of White persons in their interpersonal relations with Black persons that once were acceptable in the social milieu are no longer acceptable.

The specific allegations against individuals were of a nature difficult, if not impossible, to prove outside the processes of the courts. This Committee assumed no role as a judicial body. It sought information from individuals, who were questioned for clarification. No examination or cross-examination has been conducted, no confrontation has been arranged between accuser and accused.

The weight of the information, as evaluated by the Committee, points to the conclusion that prejudice revealed by individual action exists on the campus. More significant, in the judgment of the Committee, is the heightened personal sensitivity awakened in individuals whose actions have been perceived by Black students as discriminatory. We witnessed profound shock expressed by those who have been accused; we sensed a willingness to review the specific actions that were--in their eyes--misinterpreted; and we have seen what may be the start of a re-structuring of attitudes that will be reflected in improved human relationships. The Committee is encouraged by such increased sensitivity.

The Committee recommends immediate appointment of a
 Black coach in football and aggressive recruiting of
 Black coaches in other sports.

Coaches at Iowa State express the need for a close relationship with their players. Athletes feel keenly the need for a close relationship with their coaches. This interrelationship of coach and player may be a

principal factor in the performance of both.

The Black student encounters special problems. He arrives on the Iowa State campus having spent most of his life in a Black culture. He suddenly finds himself in the midst of a culture dominated by White persons who have difficulty in fully understanding either the Black student or American Black culture. The White person's actions and reactions to Black persons are often based on unconscious assumptions. Also, the White person's actions and reactions may be misinterpreted by Black persons.

The player-coach relationship would be enriched for the Black student-athlete in at least two ways by appointment of Black coaches: (1) The Black coach can be a person with whom Black athletes can sincerely identify. (2) The Black coach can help to interpret the Black athlete to the White coach and can provide the same kinds of support, guidance, and understanding as, for example, a White Iowa coach appointed to facilitate communication with Iowa high school athletes and coaches.

Modern athletic theory, strategy, and tactics call for remarkable skill in teaching, supervision, and leadership on the part of coaches. An effective coaching staff must embrace a wide variety of competencies, beyond the reasonable attainment of a single individual. The number of Black athletes at Iowa State, along with the communication problems inherent between the Black and White cultures, argues persuasively that ability to communicate with Black players is vital for a fully developed coaching staff. In fact, the person best qualified under the present circum-

stances is a Black coach.

The same logic, of course, applies to most other academic and non-academic departments of the University.

The Committee recommends the immediate appointment of a Black counselor as an effective initial response to an expressed need.

The Committee notes with approval the steps begun to appoint a Black counselor who will hold a half-time appointment in both the athletic department and the Student Counseling Service, reporting to the Director of Athletics and the Director of the Student Counseling Service. We expect that the person appointed will be available for counseling of all students.

We request that departments review their policies in regard to the absences of athletes from class and then to provide statements of policy for the guidance of students and faculty.

We call the attention of Department Heads and Chairmen to the Faculty Handbook statement on page 37 which indicates that "Policies regarding excuses, make-up work and allied subjects are made at the department level, but the hearing and evaluating of excuses are left to the instructor involved."

The Committee believes that faculty members have an obligation to

consider participation in intercollegiate athletics as a valid reason for excused absences. Athletes are at Iowa State University for an education. They are students who, in addition, compete in athletics. Regardless of a faculty member's personal views about athletics, the University does recognize intercollegiate athletics as part of its program. The student-athlete is entitled to the same considerations relative to out-of-town trips as are students engaged in other University-approved activities.

(The intent of the BSO grievance was not to ask leniency in the sense of making coursework easier or less demanding on athletes. The grievance has been widely misunderstood. It is directed at those faculty members who will not permit athletes to make up work missed due to out-of-town trips which result in absences from classes. The BSO merely seeks the opportunity for athletes to make up work missed for reasons beyond their control.)

The Committee fully supports the principle that athletes have freedom comparable to that afforded all other male students in choice of housing.

The Committee recognizes that reasons may be advanced to support special housing policies or facilities for athletes. The arguments for requiring athletes to live in University housing are indeed compelling. But, the overriding principle seems to us that athletes be allowed the same freedom as other students. We sustain our conviction on two main grounds:

(1) Freedom of choice and responsibility for one's behavior are necessary experiences through which individuals mature. (2) Specific housing policies that now apply to athletes on football grants-in-aid directly contradict University policies that apply to male students.

The issue of freedom of choice is particularly important to the Black student. Because of race, Black students at Iowa State are confronted by real limitations in social opportunities. Efforts are being made to remove these limitations. But, the student may better deal with those limitations which remain if he has the option of seeking housing that best suits his individual needs.

The Committee concurs in and commends the action of the Athletic Council to seek a substantial increase in subsistence allowance as part of the athletic grant-in-aid.

We suggest that the Athletic Council vigorously pursue the request that has been submitted to the NCAA; and that the Athletic Council ask the Black Student Organization to help accumulate supporting data. The Black Student Organization has expressed its willingness to respond to such a request.

We recommend that subsistence checks for an athlete be made available directly from the University Treasurer's Office.

Discussion before the Committee disclosed the practice of issuance of the subsistence stipend through the coaches, with occasional withholding of a check as a disciplinary action or to assure payment of bills known to be outstanding against an athlete. (The practice is applied to all athletes.) The Committee finds this practice objectionable. The payment of personal bills, either within or outside the University, is the student's responsibility. The athlete should not be denied the opportunity to accept and to live up to his own responsibilities.

The Committee wishes to amplify the request of the Black students that they be referred to as "Black" or "Afro-American." The matter has not been well understood.

Black students feel it is time to determine who they are, how they want to be identified, and with what they want to be identified. Being recognized as Black is, in the eyes of the Black students, a positive step toward recognition as a group with a proud heritage and a meaningful future. The idea rather than the name is important.

Black people are struggling for recognition as human beings in a society which has denied that Black people are worthy of being recognized. The point is that Black people need to know who they are and need to develop pride in being Black. Once pride and awareness prevail, the Black person can begin to feel his worth to himself and to his fellow man.