

NEWS

Black Cultural Presence Needed On White Campuses

by Kevin Washington
Assistant Editor

Black students attending the University from across the state may find their presence here much like being in a foreign country because of Black-white cultural differences, said Valerie Batts, a psychologist at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Batts, a 1974 graduate of the University, hosted a seminar called the "Black Cultural Presence on White Campuses" during Discovery which was held Feb. 23.

She said cultural differences were a source of modern racism which is not as blatant as older forms of racism. "We can define racism simply as an individual or institutional expression of superiority of one race's culture over another," she said.

White monoculturalism, which leads to racism, is the dominant form of culturalism on white campuses, Batts said. Multiculturalism is the ideal college campuses should strive for.

Batts said a strong Black cultural presence on white campuses could alleviate some of the problems of monoculturalism.

"The dilemma for us as Black people is that we are functionally bicultural," Batts explained, "but that can be a trap, because we believe that there's no reason we shouldn't get along (on a white campus with a dominant white culture). We believe racism has decreased.

"Yet, when we get papers back with a C, or we're asked to change our writing style, or we don't care to attend our dorms 'Beer Blast'...or we're shocked at finding out our roommate voted for Reagan, we don't feel very good and we don't know what to do about it."

Batts had the audience point out white and Black cultural norms which created psychological conflicts for Black students.

Some of the white cultural norms offered by the audience included getting to know professors personally; having alumni relatives; and competing on an individual basis.

Black cultural norms included refusal to disclose weaknesses to professors; the feeling of being crushed after failure; and feeling that the group or family unit was more important than the individual.

Batts said the family versus individual competition cultural norm conflict was one of the more serious problems for Black students on white campuses. "Black students feel like they are selling out if they

play the game of individualism," she said.

"It's hard to reconcile that what you do for the Black Student Movement does not get you a degree."

"When Black students find themselves in these situations of cultural conflict, they have to do something with their emotions," she said. "So they internalize the oppression of their cultural norms."

Batts offered four dysfunctional ways Black students deal with such oppression:

*system beating--taking the easiest classes because the student believes he is intellectually inferior to other students.

*blaming the system for everything--refusal to try to academically succeed.

*anti-white attitudes--turning hate outward.

*denial of Blackness--selling out one's own cultural norms and buying into those of the dominant culture.

Denial of cultural bigotry by white students is the other half of the equation on white college campuses, Batts said. Modern racism--the result--is expressed when whites give nonrace-related reasons to continue denying Blacks opportunities.

"For example, whites may say, 'It's not Blacks, it's buses,'" she said.

And rather than allow blatant racist statements to be made, whites simply say nothing. They do, however, allow racism to be expressed through several behaviors, she said. They include:

*dysfunctional rescuing--patronizing Black students who don't do the work by giving them as (which, when played with the system beater, results in new games).

*blaming the victim--setting up the student so he will fall down, then saying he wasn't qualified in the first place.

*avoidance of contact--saying there are no Black-white issues.

*denial of cultural differences--saying that 'people are people' so that one limits his acceptance of differences.

All monocultural problems can be dealt with a little bit of effort, Batts said.

First, groups of people must decide for themselves who they are, she said. That allows cultural groups to empower themselves about what they want, what they don't want and what conditions must be met before they join with other cultural groups.

Second, groups must learn to listen to each other so that they can validate each other in terms of similarities and differences.

"Those sound like simple things to do," Batts said, "But it's a process that demands some work."

UNC Launches Minority Scholars Program

More highly qualified minority applicants for faculty positions may be the outcome of a new program at UNC-CH, according to Dr. G. Phillip Manire, vice chancellor and dean of the Graduate School.

The Carolina Minority Postdoctoral Program, which began this semester, will bring in minorities for one to two years of postdoctoral work with UNC professors, then move some of them into campus faculty positions.

At a recent reception for the nine 1984-85 scholars, Manire said the pressure is enormous among major American universities for the best minority faculty members.

"For generations, large numbers of young scholars in medicine and the sciences have served apprenticeships as postdoctoral students prior to assuming faculty positions," he said.

This year's program participants are: Janice S. Dargan, William T. Dargan, Ernest C. Davenport Jr., John E. Douglass, Joyce E. Everett, Karen N. Hayes, Rupert W. Nacoste, Rose G. Snipes and Barbara A. Williams.

Academic Calendar for March

SYMPOSIUM ON SOUTH AFRICA

INSIDE APARTHEID

March 16, 1985 106 Carroll Hall Programs begin at 10:30 a.m.

The African and Afro-American Curriculum will sponsor a colloquia series during March and April. Most of them will be held in Room 02 in Manning hall every Tuesday at 4 p.m. For more details, contact Herman Bennett at 966-5496.

March 12 Prof. Colin Palmer, Chair, African/Afro-American Curriculum, will give a presentation in Dey Hall concerning Black Studies.

March 19 Prof. Julius Nyang'oro will speak on Corporatism and the African State.

March 26 Prof. Darnell Hawkins will speak on Black-White rates of imprisonment in the United States.

The Association of Women Students, the Women's Studies Program and the Curriculum in African and Afro-American Studies will sponsoring a film festival on Women (Under Islam) in Africa.

March 14 Islam: There is No God But God
7 p.m.-104 Howell Hall

March 21 Some Women of Marrakesh
7 p.m.-104 Howell Hall

March 28 N'ai: The Story of a Kung Woman
7 p.m.-209 Manning Hall

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