

# HMMM... Is BSM Approach Correct?



## Wonderboy!

I wonder if I can praise the Lord in my house?

I wonder if white people can eat chicken and watermelon?

I wonder if I got to be from New York to wear a Yankees baseball cap?

The reason I ask this is because I also wonder if the only way I can learn about African culture is in a building that is labeled, THE AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER.

The hottest topic on campus is fueled by the debate on whether the Black Student Movement should receive a free-standing building to call its very own. The BSM feels it

needs to get out of the confines of the Student Union and obtain a building they can call their own.

Well from first analysis this seems like a pretty chill idea. I mean, yo'... it will be a place that black students can call their own and where they will be able to say, "Hey, this feels like home."

But if the BSM is going to do it, then it needs to do it right!

I mean, just don't have pictures of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King on the wall. Instead, have a public address system that continually plays the sounds of tribal rituals and exotic festivals. Have a few lions and giraffes running around the joint to really provide that atmosphere of the Motherland. Everyone should dress in nothing more than two bath towels and it would be a complete disgrace to allow any shoes on the premises.

A little far fetched... as usual.

But this is to point out that we must not become so engulfed in the belief that we need an African Studies building because we are African descendants. If that was the case, we would need campus pubs and taverns for the Irish students. We would need a boxing gym for those turbulent Italians. We'd also need to have barns for all

those red necks on campus like Paul Har... never mind.

Let us realize that I can take AFAM 40 in Greenlaw, Murphy, or even in the Pit, for that matter. The class setting is not the thing. If that were the case, Astronomy would have to be taught at NASA with frequent visits to Pluto and Jupiter for the lab requirement.

Let us also come to terms with the fact that this is not so much a "black" thing even though it will enhance black pride on campus.

The free-standing building should be a cultural thing that is open to all races. This means that when a white person enters, he or she should not be eyeballed. Instead the white kid should be embraced and educated about what it means to be African, not black—there is a difference!

Now, a multicultural center would be ideal. We talk about race relations—what better way to increase racial bonds than having a building that houses aspects of all races.

This seems logical to me. I mean, don't you think a multi-cultural center would receive more support that would in turn help the efforts of the BSM as well by bring cultures together?

And besides, Howell Hall is a good sized building that could easily accommodate more than one group. Perhaps designate one floor for the BSM that could be decorated to instill pride, dignity, and point out the "African Way," if you will. The other floor could house, possibly, a center for Asian students where their eastern affiliations could come to surface. These are merely suggestions to show the potential of a multi-cultural center.

Now, if the BSM really wanted to make an advancement in the black community, it would concentrate its efforts on the housekeepers' situation so they may enjoy the security of a free-standing house, instead of tolerating the hassles that goes with renting an apartment.

The BSM must be careful with its approach towards achieving its goal.

I know times have changed but there is no way to prevent harassing phone calls, threatening letters, and who knows what else.

Not at all trying to be an accommodator like our friend Booker T. Washington, but the BSM must take precautions to make sure that it allows sleeping dogs to lie or else stand the chance of awakening a rottweiler!

I am not overlooking the racial tensions that exist but the situation we are faced with is much different from what guys like Malcolm, Martin, and our parents were faced with.

If you don't believe me, ask Chuck Stone—a man with eons of ethnicity who really knows what time it is!

Now, I'm sure the BSM is not trying to create its own civil rights movement or perhaps a *March on Franklin St.*—is it?

Hmmm... Perhaps the best way I can explain my point is to compare the BSM as possibly having the "emancipated slave mentality".

This mentality shows how the slaves, rightfully, demanded freedom from the clutches of slavery. Upon receiving it, however, they found themselves with no land, no viable skills, and facing a dead end.

This is to not to say the BSM shouldn't pursue a free-standing building. Instead, the organization should make sure all options are weighed and every avenue is explored before it finds itself demanding more than 40 acres and a mule. Peace Y'all???

Wonderboy (a.k.a. John McCann)

## Number of racial harassment incidents on the rise

from page 5

we would get some information," said Latham, whose search into possible leads turned up negative.

While University policy states that racial harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, it has not stifled the number of incidents that occur each

year. Since 1989, the year the University first began keeping statistics on the number of racial incidents reported, the numbers have increased significantly.

According to Assistant Dean Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, only eight cases were reported in 1989.

In 1990-91, there were 22 cases reported.

"From the cases I have seen so far and the number of students whom I have spoken with, I would say that number is rising," Anderson-Thompkins said. An official count will be available in June.

The increase is not only because students are reporting incidents more, but due to events on campus like the struggle with the BCC, Anderson-Thompkins said.

"After certain programs on campus, like Race Relations Week or a series of marches or protests regarding some controversial issues, the numbers increase," she said. "I do think there is a correlation there."

While Sturdivant and Browning

do not know why they have become the targets of harassment, both say they aren't moving out of Hinton James.

"They aren't getting the satisfaction of getting me out of here," Browning said. "If they have these types of prejudices, they should keep them to themselves. Once they resort to racial harassment, they can be sure I'm going to take some type of action."

