

Editorials

Black College Day Postponed—Or Cancelled?

Black College Day has been postponed. Will this lead to the cancellation of this important event?

In September, two years ago, representatives from WSSU, Bennett College, A&T, Howard University, Florida A&M, Hampton Institute, and several other colleges and universities gathered in Washington D.C. at the Ellipse beside E Street to support Black College Day.

Dick Gregory stated that black colleges should be run from a black point of view like Yale and Harvard are run from a white point of view. He encouraged blacks to organize campuses and understand how much power we have.

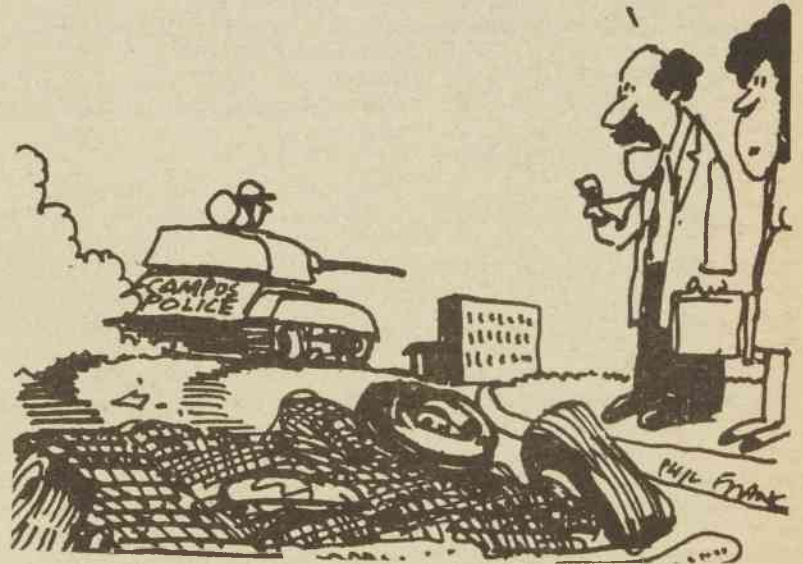
Just last September, students from WSSU were among some 3000 who marched through downtown Raleigh to recognize Black College Day. There was prayer, the singing of the National Black Anthem, and enthusiastic speakers who elaborated upon the need of black institutions, and the need of day to recognize them. It was a glorious event.

This September, there has been no Black College Day. It has been postponed. Will it go out of existence after only two years? "Don't get tired, don't give up, Black College Day is a historical day, a day we should never forget," proclaimed Benjamin Ruffin, special assistant to the governor in minority affairs. Have these ideas suddenly become trivial to us as to let such a historical day be postponed? Of course Black College Day should never be forgotten. There should always be a day preserved in its honor. We cannot let Black College Day die so easily.

As one speaker said in Raleigh last year, "If there's no struggle, there's no progress." Without black colleges where would we be? Have we forgotten that black colleges have produced such leaders as Jesse Jackson, Ronald McNair, and Alex Haley?

If we let Black College Day die, then eventually black colleges will do likewise. We should all be concerned about why Black College Day was postponed. As Dr. Arthur Thomas (vice president of academic affairs at Central State University) said two years ago at the rally in D.C. like the Isley Brothers would put it, "Say you will go all the way, so you can pass it on." We owe it to ourselves as well as future generations."

APPARENTLY IT'S
A NEW PLAN
TO DISCOURAGE
STUDENTS FROM
PARKING THEIR
CARS ON CAMPUS.



Financial Aid Dilemma Explained

Below is a letter submitted to staff reporter Audrey Manuel by financial aid director, Willard Jordan. This letter should answer many questions regarding student financial aid.

We wish to thank the students for helping us make the most of an unpleasant situation during the registration period. The delays in the processing and delivery of financial aid this year has been caused by the delay in finalizing guidelines and statutory regulations imposed by the Department of Education.

Congress is still deliberating over some of the facets of the program. The institution received its allocation letter on August 16, 1982, the date of beginning freshman registration. The allocation letter indicated that we were being funded at a 50 percent rate of what we had been notified we should receive in a previous tentative allocation letter. The financial aid staff agonized over the delays in being able to deliver financial aid awards to our students all summer. We were concerned about the anxieties of our students who were waiting to hear from us. In anticipation of hoping to relieve some of those anxieties, the financial aid staff mailed out some four or five hundred award notices to our students. Approximately two weeks before registration this was done knowing that we should be very careful not to over-extend our awarding because the institution had no endowed funds to fall back on should the federal government fail to deliver.

Please recall that in the spring semester starting January, the financial aid staff made persistent and determined efforts to get all of our students to attend workshops where they were counseled and given guidance on how to complete their financial aid applications and informed of the pending changes in financial aid regulations and their possible effect on the financial aid delivery system.

I am sorry to say that, at best, these sessions were very poorly attended. Further, we encouraged our students to write letters to their congressmen expressing their concerns about the impending financial aid situation projected for the 1982-83 school year.

If experience is a good teacher, then we should have learned from this situation that completing financial aid papers on an accurate and timely basis is tantamount to securing financial aid awards. So let us hope that in the future, we will respond in a more positive manner to this situation.

Financial aid handbooks are available in the Student Aid Office for all students who would like to have them. The handbooks summarize the criteria for qualifying for financial aid, enumerate the types and kinds of programs available and gives a time frame of which to operate, and enumerates institutional responsibility to the student and student responsibility or obligation to qualify for the program.

One of the new changes in financial aid had to do with the treatment of Social Security educational benefits, veterans educational benefits, etc. In previous years, students receiving social security benefits were allowed to use these as discretionary funds. In many instances these stipends were utilized to help support families back home rather than apply to educational cost. Starting this year, the stipend was reduced 25 percent. The period of eligibility was reduced from twelve months to eight months during an academic year and all stipends had to be counted as a resource to help pay your educational cost. So that, if a student qualified for a Pell Grant, maximum award, the total educational benefits he received for the eight month period had to be subtracted from his Pell Grant. In most instances, this completely wiped out any moneys the student was expecting to receive from the Pell Grant. This has resulted in a most agonizing situation for the administrators of the program and the students. However, it was the law and we had but to abide by it.

As a standard procedure, all students interested in applying for financial aid each year will have applications available to them in the financial aid office in January of each year. However, since deliberations are still going on in Congress relative to the 1982-83 school year, there may be a slight delay in the delivery of the applications. In an attempt to facilitate registration, arrangements were made to give students credit extensions by the

business office so that they could complete their registration. The financial aid staff worked diligently with the business office in helping them determine students who were eligible for these extensions. Our staff surveyed the application files of our students to determine if we could safely make a projection as to what students would actually be eligible for financial aid pending the completion of incomplete files or corrections of inaccurate information in files. Based on our recommendation, the business officer extended the courtesy of allowing them to complete registration. In order to protect all concerned, a time frame of sixty days was given to each student as a grace period to complete all necessary documents and information needed to qualify for the financial aid award. Please be aware that if this is not done within that time frame the student may be subjected to suspension from the university. It is my fervent prayer that all students will be getting about the business for which they came here.

Please remember to put the academics first. The successful completion of courses undertaken could mean the difference between returning to school next year and having to drop out. The Department of Education is coming down hard on students who are making unsatisfactory academic progress. Please refer to our

satisfactory academic progress policy in the student handbook. To this point in time it was an institutional prerogative to produce its own satisfactory academic progress statement. However, there are several bills pending in Congress proposing to set a national satisfactory academic progress statement for all institutions. In these proposals, a student must maintain a "C" average for all courses taken. "If a student fails to maintain a "C" average, he is placed on a semester of probation and if a "C" average is not achieved, the student becomes ineligible. He would have to again earn a "C" average for two consecutive grading periods before being reinstated." However, the measure does allow for extenuating circumstances as determined by the school.

I'm happy to inform you that, as a result of the override of the presidential veto by Congress, all Pell Grant awards will have to be recalculated and for many students this will mean a larger award.

Here's hoping for all students a very successful and profitable academic school year. We shall endeavor to keep you current with information relative to financial aid through periodic articles in "The News Argus".

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