

# 111 Predominantly Black College Heads Convene In Washington

By Lawrence A. Still  
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Calling for a revised strategy of self-help through networks and linkages of strong black institutions, the presidents of approximately 111 predominantly black student enrolled colleges convened their annual meeting of 1,500 participants at the Washington Hilton Hotel, March 26-28 to once again seek equal and fair distribution of federal and private funds for higher education.

In declaring that "a network of blacks supporting blacks reinforces invulnerability," Dr. Prezell Robinson, president of historic St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, N.C., urged churches, lodges, fraternities, sororities, civil rights organizations and "other groups interested in equality and justice."

...[to] agree on an overall strategy to assure that progress in the education of blacks — blacks on white campuses and blacks in the historically black colleges is accelerated.

Dr. Robinson is also president of the 111-member colleges National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) which sponsored the seventh annual conference on higher education here.

While expressing "pleasure that President Reagan has made increased funding to the historically black colleges 'a key element' in his fiscal '83 budget," the NAFEO executives urged "that the administration take note of the adverse impact its financial aid proposals would have on the historically black colleges... and revise them."

Referring to "the commitment of the administration to support the historically black colleges, a commitment we believe to be sincere," the association of college presidents also noted ironically that most of the increased funds allotted by President Reagan to "minority" institutions will go to predominantly white colleges.

"The proposed increase in the Title III budget (from \$120 million) to \$129 million that President Reagan cites as an example of increased support... also

pleases us," said Dr. Samuel L. Myers, NAFEO executive director, in a preliminary briefing session. Dr. Myers, former president of Bowie (Md.) State College, referred to the long standing Department of Education technical assistance program.

But, added Dr. Myers, "We note that even though Title III is specifically cited as a black college program, the program is, in fact, not exclusively for the historically black colleges."

...Of the 1,100 institutions that are expected to apply for Title III (for technical assistance to developing institutions) fewer than 100 are historically black colleges and less than a third of the funds set aside for such institutions will go to them.

Observers at the conference pointed out that the potential loss of millions of dollars in government funds is another example of the results of using euphemisms such as "minority" and "developing" institutions in legislation designed to specifically help citizens who were disenfranchised by segregation and "jim crow" practices.

As previously emphasized by Dr. Elias Black, president of Clark University in Atlanta, in testimony before Congress, the NAFEO statement declared "the major cuts in student financial aid would have a devastating impact on our (United Negro College Fund) institutions, thereby causing the minor increases in Title Three (funds) to fade into insignificance."

The NAFEO and UNCF educators referred to the controversial proposed cuts in Pell Basic Opportunity student grants from \$2.3 billion to \$1.4 billion as well as major reductions in College Work-Study programs and the elimination of the National Direct Student Loan and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant programs proposed by President Reagan.

"The proposed elimination of the Graduate and Professional Opportunity Program would deprive many of our graduates of the opportunity for going to graduate school

and would deprive NAFEO graduate schools of students," Dr. Myers added.

Although Special Service programs would be maintained at \$57 million under the President's budget, the trio of such programs as Upward Bound, Talent Search and Veterans Instruction would be reduced or eliminated also, thus slowing down the aggregate number of blacks going into higher education, NAFEO reported.

Also, "We oppose the downgrading of the

Department of Education to a Foundation. The returns from NAFEO

presidents/chancellors are 50 to 1 in favor of maintaining the Department of Education intact," Dr. Myers stated.

The majority of the NAFEO presidents believe "that the historically black colleges and the students they serve get more equitable treatment in Washington than in the states and local communities..." he concluded.

Emphasizing that

there is "no single strategy for accelerated progress toward equality in higher education for blacks," in his welcoming remarks to the 1,500 delegates, Dr. Robinson added "even today, blacks should not spurn benevolence... and coalitions... Indeed, experience in America has shown that often what has been good for blacks, has been better for others."

However, "Experience has also shown that an essential element of any strategy must be self-help," Dr. Robinson

added. "Self-help does not mean that individual blacks who have made it should attempt to go it alone. Blacks catapulted by blacks to corporate boards and tenure tracks quickly learn that to be alone increases vulnerability."

This explains why the Black Higher Education Discussion Group of educators, government executives, organization leaders and politicians was interested in NAFEO focusing on the establishing of networks and linkages of black institutions in accelerating

equality in higher education," Dr. Robinson stated.

The BHEDG scheduled a summit meeting of representatives of some fifty organizations to discuss the proposed linkage before and after the NAFEO conference in a meeting on Capitol Hill, March 25, and a summary session to consider resolutions and recommendations following the NAFEO conference, Sunday, March 28.

The NAFEO support organizations appeared to be following the lead

of the Congressional Black Caucus, which has started a nationwide campaign for support of the "Black Family" of historic institutions such as colleges, churches and community development groups.

While the revived self-help philosophy obviously calls for a solidification of black community based institutions, some conference observers questioned whether the widespread new spirit of self-reliance could lead to a rejection of integration by some organizations.

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## Reagan Policy

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ceeding \$22,900 — there is a marginal gain of 9.8 billion dollars.

President Reagan has eliminated the Child Nutrition Assistance Program that helped child care centers and schools in low-income areas purchase the kitchen equipment needed to serve hot lunches and breakfasts to eligible

low-income children and save 15 million dollars. While the army plans to spend 58 million dollars just to move and install industrial machines to defense contractors.

Certainly there seems to be a confusion in priorities when we put the needs of the armed forces above the needs of children.



CHICAGO — Mrs. Marva Collins, who opened her own inner city school and gained national recognition as a "miracle teacher," now is under fire by some critics. "I have no apologies to make," she said recently.

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