Klan Campus Activities On Increase

College Press Service

WILLIAMSTON, MA— "I looked out to see the lawn on fire," recalls David Aiah, a security officer at Williams Col-
lege. "I could see the cross burning and a per-
son in a white sheet out there."

The cross was burning near the site of a home-
coming party held by Williams' Black Student
Union. An incident climaxed a tense period in which several black students received threatening letters allegedly signed by the Ku Klux Klan and set of an equally-tense period of campus racial anom-
osity.

The incident, more-
over, is only the most re-
cent in a lengthening series of conflicts be-
 tween black and white
students on campuses across the country. In just the last month, for example, students at San Diego State University
were provoked into a nearly-violent demonstration against administration plans to demolish their Black Communications Center to make way for a parking lot.

In the midwest, an un-
attributed quote from Muhammad Ali run in the Mankato State Uni-

versity student paper led to a special black student-edited edition of the paper. It roundly criticized campus race rela-
tions.

The series began in the east with a cross burning at Amherst College
in April, 1979. The burn-
ing, in front of a black student dorm, inspired a five-day sit-in at the ad-
ministration and a list of demands including a more aggressive affirm-

ative action policy, a separate orientation pro-
gram for black students, and a better Black Studies curriculum. It was subsequently dis-
covered the cross was erected and lighted by black students needing an excuse to voice their frustrations.

At Williams last week, the culprit was still at large. "There is still no evidence to point out whether it was or was not done by students," says Crish Roosenaard, dean of the college.

At a rally to protest the burning, however, Black Student Union co-

ordinators charged that students were indeed respon-
sible. "It is really all that racist" because a student or group of students from this college would burn a cross on campus to show their hatred of blacks?" asked senior Greg Witcher.

Witcher added the school was "institutionally racist" because of its paucity of Afro-

American study courses, its stock holdings in firms doing business in South Africa, and its failure to have a tenured black faculty member.

College President John Chandler assured the crowd the administra-
tion viewed the cross burning as appalling.

"No use of the terrible symbol of the fiery cross, whether seen as a thoughtless and insen-

sitive prank or as a malicious effort to in-
timidate, will be toler-
ated at Williams."

But in the days after the rally, vandals broke into and ransacked the Black Student Union library, and black stu-
dents reported being taunted from the win-

dows of college build-

ings.

Hate mail arrived. Student Muhammed Kenyatta got a letter that read in part: "You goddamn stinkin filthy, black skinned monkeys do not belong among a white society." It threatened to "eli-

minate" blacks.

President Chandler got a similar letter. Both were signed "KKK" and postmarked from Cleve-
land Ohio. The letters were turned over to the FBI, which says it has no leads in the case as yet.

Black Student Union leader Ray Heaton de-
scribed the campus as a "tinderbox." Chandler ultimately cancelled classes for a morning last week so that stu-
dents, faculty and adminis-

trators could calm it.

After a campus-wide forum, students split up into discussion sessions held in various class-
rooms.

The small New Eng-

land liberal arts school has been relatively free of overt racial tensions since 1969, when black
students occupied a campus building. On the sur-
face at least, Williams has made great strides. But black stu-
dents say the tensions have been there all along.

Black Student Union member Craig White notes, "There's anger and frustration. Many blacks are very disturb-
ed by the insensitivity they feel whites show to the special problems fac-
ed by black students on a predominantly-white campus."

Charges of insensi-
tivity have been com-
mon to the racial in-
cidents on a number of campuses over the last two years.

White students ap-

parently tend to believe
the most difficult racial problems have been sol-
ved. A May, 1980 study of race relations at Har-
vard found that 86 per-
cent of the black students, however, felt they didn't get enough special consideration.

A U.S. Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare study released a month earlier found that 77 percent of the black students on predomi-


nantly-white campuses felt "alienated."

Thus black students should be especially sensitive to administra-
tion actions. At Ten-
nessee last year, the closing of a black stu-
dent cultural center and the transfer of a popular

Need more than a quiet and priva-
ty that campus life doesn't offer. Also, there's daily bus service to the University, Out N. Tryon toward UNCC, left on Arrowhead Drive. From $212.

**FUTURE CPA'S JOIN OUR 44,000 CPA BECKER ALUMNI FREE INVITATION TO OUR FIRST CLASS WEEK OF DEC 15 CALL COLLECT**

Countryside

**REVIEW**

CPA

70% PASSING RATE

Then a large apartment home at Countryside could be just the thing for you. Only 3 miles from campus, Countryside offers spacious 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments with all the amenities you need, plus the quiet and priva-
ty that campus life doesn’t offer. Also, there’s daily bus service to the University, Out N. Tryon toward UNCC, left on Arrowhead Drive. From $212.

**STUDENT SPECIAL**

Furnished 1 & 2 bedroom apartments $267 and $320

Countryside

336 Blackhawk Rd. 596-2700