

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
FROM: Marianna W. Davis, Commission Member
RE: Six Items for the Agenda of The CHE
DATE: July 3, 1975

Following through on the request of the Commission at its June 1975 meeting, I am submitting what I consider to be priorities for the current agenda of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

ITEM I STATE-WIDE COORDINATION

Toward the effort of increasing the number of learned and highly trained community leaders and world-wide leaders, it is necessary that we encourage and insist upon cooperative programs between state institutions as well as between state and private institutions, in ways that are fair and equitable. The tax dollar should be spent wisely and the private dollar should be equally accountable. Duplicating library holdings and facilities at state institutions that stand in the same geographical location as private and other state institutions is a waste of resources. I prefer cooperation not competition.

In the case of historically Black institutions, any state-wide plan in coordinating efforts should include equal access and opportunity for these institutions. In other words, a college such as South Carolina State should not be labeled as one that houses mostly underprepared, disadvantaged students.

ITEM II ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

In light of what is now known about standardized tests and the ill effects of the process of social change, admissions criteria should be studied and evaluated so that non-traditional admissions and predictive criteria can be justifiably included in admissions regulations at all state colleges and universities. My recent two-year experience in serving as one of four scholars commissioned to develop the English College Level Examination at Educational Testing Services afforded me the opportunity to become very sophisticated and objective about standardized tests.

In the process of change, the uninformed, the minority, the "victim" always suffers. This is true and perhaps shall continue to be true in our secondary schools where desegregation plans have eliminated many Black administrators, counselors, and classroom teachers. To survive a school system of "benign neglect," graduate from a college preparatory curriculum, and be accepted in a state institution, such as the Medical University at Charleston, a Black student has to be "super" and submissive. Records clearly show that more than 80% of America's Black leaders and professionals graduated from Black institutions where admissions criteria were diversified. The graduates entered major American and international universities and professional schools, graduating often times with honors. Therefore, admissions criteria need re-defining at all public institutions of higher learning. The same is true of the technical schools where students are refused entry into certain

programs because of reasons not justified nor justifiable in academia.

In-state students should have first preference in enrollment at public institutions so that they will not be relegated to one or two-year waiting lists.

Whereas black enrollment has increased dramatically in white public institutions, a careful study should be made as to the students' program choices vs. their matriculated programs of study (general studies vs. music); attrition rates of Black students - per program; compensatory programs designed for all students, but especially for students whose success levels are sharply lowered because of a traditional system that denies access to the "success ratio." Grades of "D" and "F" are but part of the system.

ITEM III CURRICULUM OFFERINGS

The curriculum in all state institutions should be altered to reflect the presence of ALL students. Course syllabi and course text-books, where appropriate, should reflect cultural pluralism so that no one group is allowed to exert covert racism upon another. This is especially true for classes such as speech, sociology, criminal justice, psychology, history, anthropology, and health. Therefore, programs approved by the Commission should conform to established criteria that correlate with the purpose and intent of Title VI, Civil Rights Act. For example, a program in Rural Nurse Care should include course work and external experiences in the mores, folkways, dialects, and life-styles of the people to

be treated. Furthermore, the teachers and trainers of such courses should have not only the unique skills to teach but also the sensitivity to help students develop positive attitudes about the human condition. As I see it, a re-definition of post-secondary education for the 21st Century may well be in order at this time.

ITEM IV BUDGETING

While I am generally in favor of the formula approach to budgeting in education, I am also quite aware of the fact that compensation in addition to the regular appropriation for our historically black South Carolina State College is necessary because of years of deprivation. Buildings are not substitutes for substantive academic programs and highly trained personnel, and this aspect needs addressing at a college whose mission includes goals that are different from the traditionally white, public, four-year college.

ITEM V COOPERATION WITH PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Whereas certain private colleges have historically discriminated against American citizens because of race or religion, others have always maintained an open policy to Americans as well as other nationalities. Toward promoting understanding, unity, and good will between state and private institutions that do not discriminate because of race, creed, color, or religion, the Commission should provide the leadership for and assurance of cooperative ventures between the two parties. Again, fairness should be the moral guide in such deliberations. Presently, there are 20 private,

four-year colleges in South Carolina; of this number, eight are located in the same city with four-year state institutions.

ITEM VI DISMANTLING THE DUAL SYSTEM IN PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Under Title VI, U. S. Civil Rights Act, post-secondary institutions are mandated to dismantle their dual systems. The Commission should set this item as its first priority, not only because of the legal ramifications, but also because of the moral principles. The Commission would exemplify leadership and integrity for itself and for our state of South Carolina if efforts were effectuated in response to Title VI without insistence from Washington.

Whatever the approach, the CHE should assure all institutions that change is necessary and that no one school shall suffer unduly in the proceedings. Furthermore, academic and non-academic positions in all institutions, including the technical schools, should be distributed so that the intent and purpose of Title VI is met. How many Black teachers are employed at white post-secondary institutions?

The year 2000 is upon us and today's students are tomorrow's leaders-- leaders in a world of many languages, many cultures, many political and social systems--where the human condition shall be the foremost concern on the planet Earth. If our graduates are to be part of this complex of humanity, we must accept the tremendous responsibility -- regardless of our backgrounds, experiences, and misunderstandings-- of assuring the best education possible--for ALL.

Marianna W. Davis