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From: Puerto Rican Students at Haverford

To: Students, Faculty, and Administration

Re: Some of our concerns

Date: February 22, 1972

Introduction:

Haverford has been traditionally geared towards turning out, at most, some of the finest intelligentsia in this nation and/or at least, "well-rounded, liberally educated" white males. These Haverford products, while perhaps "concerned," have served mostly to perpetuate the present oppressive system. Their education prepares them for nothing else. We, however, need Haverford to give us the skills to perform this change.

In the past few years Haverford has begun to accept members of the oppressed minorities of this nation. By no means was Haverford a pioneer in this despite its "solidly liberal tradition." These are students who, more than anyone else, need the skills to effect radical changes in their oppressed communities. Yet Haverford does not prepare us adequately to meet this challenge.

Haverford does boast of its "diverse student body" but does not realize that these new students come from different cultural backgrounds and do not hold the same views and assumptions as Haverford's traditionally white, homogenous "community." We do not want a well-rounded, white-liberal education. When the Haverford diploma is given to us the implication is that "we have made it." But actually we only have a potential ticket to white suburbia; or if anything, to make it within the ranks of the oppressor.

Once this is understood, we then might begin communicating.

If Haverford is to boast about us then it must, at the very least, give us what we need. We need to have a say in those decisions that affect our lives. The structure of this institution must change so that we leave prepared to deal with the oppression within ourselves and within our communities.

Historical Perspective

Little is known about the presence of Puerto Rican students at Haverford. Bryn Mawr has one Puerto Rican and Swarthmore--on the whole, more "open" and "liberal" than Haverford--has three. At present there are eight Puerto Rican students at Haverford, which makes this institution look like the trail blazer with respect to including minorities other than Blacks. But the truth is otherwise.

The special José Padín Scholarship--donated by a Puerto Rican--is responsible basically for the presence of Puerto Ricans at Haverford. At present there are four Padín Scholars, and four other Puerto Ricans who came as a result of the momentum created by the Scholarship and the outside work of our group. The first Padín Scholar, of the class of '71 (which included only one Black student), eventually left, totally convinced that Haverford was offering him an inadequate education. Haverford has had the luxury of having Puerto Rican students in its "diverse student body" to a great extent by virtue of Puerto Rican money.

There are only two Puerto Rican students, who are residents of the United States, present at Haverford. So limited a number is intolerable.

Considerations

Haverford must first recognize that Puerto Rican students, because they are members of an oppressed minority and of a different background, have particular needs. Ignoring the idiosyncracies of these students has de facto created an oppressive environment here.

Haverford must make an institutional commitment to educate minority group students as to their particular needs. It must provide the necessary skills and opportunities conducive to the individual development of the student and as to his usefulness vis a vis his oppressed community. These needs must be provided for in the curriculum, in the student services, in the faculty and other student resources. Haverford must guarantee that this commitment will be institutionalized in the decision-making fabric of the College, even at its highest levels.

Haverford must not only commit itself to adequately educating the minority group students but must also act on this commitment at the institutional level.

The following are more specific (but by no means exhaustive) areas of concern for minority group students, and particularly for Puerto Ricans:

1) José Padín Scholarship: There must be a total reevaluation of this scholarship so that deficiencies in policy may be corrected. This evaluation needs to be performed by the top administration with Puerto Rican students' participation in all deliberations and decision-making. We expect the latter to be only part of a general evaluation of all minority students scholarships.

2) The Spanish Appendage of the "Romance Language Dept.": Haverford must recognize the basic importance of Spanish to the adequate development of Puerto Rican and other Latin American students. Must Spanish continue to be nothing more than an appendage of the Romance Language Dept., with only one man? In this respect, Haverford is still in the 19th Century. We know of no other institution of "quality" which has a similar situation. Furthermore, Puerto Rican students must have an effective participation in the proceedings affecting Spanish. Once this effective participation is institutionalized the proceedings can continue.

3) Resources: Haverford has been notoriously negligent in providing Puerto Rican and other minority students with the educational resources they need. A superficial examination, for example, of the books, magazines and newspapers at the library confirms this. These resources must be provided in terms of the library, courses, special programs, counseling, professors, etc.

4) Under the cover of "not knowing English adequately," gross injustices have been effected towards three Puerto Rican students and many others have been excluded from admission. This excuse is not acceptable and only reflects the institution's failure to educate these students. The necessary resources must be made available to overcome a Puerto Rican student's added difficulty

in expressing his thoughts in a language other than his own. Special, effective programs must be made available to all those minority group students who need attention in English.

Conclusion:

Haverford is not adequately educating minority group students. Judging from the general feeling on campus, Haverford may not be adequately educating anyone. This institution merely trains students to perpetuate an oppressive system.

In view of these conclusions we solidly support the Black Student League statement of February 20. This statement amplifies and compliments the concerns expressed here. The BSL statement also proposes an effective course of action. We will consider it a symbolic act of good faith if the administration responds by Friday at 5P.M. with a commitment to the institutionalization of diversity. Specific reference must be made to the limited number of concerns expressed here.