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[Memo from Alice Ilchman to the Community, March 28, 1989]

Alice Stone Ilchman
Sarah Lawrence College

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concerned
Students of Color
Sit-In Issues

SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE

March 28, 1989

The President

To: The College Community

From: Alice Ilchman *A. Ilchman*

I write to tell you of the progress we are making in addressing the issues which disrupted the campus in the weeks before spring break. It was an unsettling period for most members of our community, regardless of our individual views and positions. We need now to make common address to these issues.

A team of faculty and administrators is meeting with a designated group of students to seek resolution of the issues. The faculty and administration team includes [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The Concerned Students of Color have likewise designated a team of seven. Two meetings have taken place.

These issues are now being, or will be, considered in good faith in all the forums in which the college conducts its business-- faculty-student committees, Student Senate, in the administrative offices where responsibility is placed, and within the Board of Trustees. It is important for a democratic community to take into consideration the full range of views and concerns of all its members. Not all of us will agree. Even a commonality of assumptions may not bring congruence of views.

Working out the claims upon the College and its resources to support opportunities for particular groups of students and faculty and for all students and faculty is the task of the days ahead. These conversations must go on in an environment that recognizes that the College exists to promote and encourage free inquiry and a free exchange of ideas. Such an environment depends on trust and openness, a respect for each other's ideas and a tolerance of differences in views. It depends crucially on adhering to the standard of community responsibility outlined in the Student Handbook to assure that the college's teaching and other activities go forward unimpeded.

There is a second task for us in the final seven weeks of college. A number of significant questions about cultural sensitivity and justice have been raised. Some of these questions challenge our assumptions and call us to seek greater understanding of ourselves and our society. We can profit from the insights gained from historical and contemporary intellectual perspectives. A variety of voices and views is as appropriate here as it is in the pluralism of the enhanced curriculum. Throughout the remainder of the semester you will be invited to explore these questions in an assortment of forums. Watch the Calendar for notice of these opportunities. If you have ideas for presentations, speak with Bob Cameron.

Finally, I hope that before the spring is out we will have an agreement on the points that most of the community can support to enhance our college. Not all change is appropriate; not all change can meet the expected pace.

Colleges are places where we think things through, where coercion is an unwelcome intruder. Seeking to make our college better and stronger-- hence providing a constructive mirror to our larger society -- is not just an agenda for the spring, but for the years ahead.

ASI/lk