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[Concerned Students of Color Revised Agenda, April 23, 1991]

Concerned Students of Color, Sarah Lawrence College

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CONCERNED STUDENTS OF COLOR--REVISED AGENDA 1991

In 1989, Concerned Students of Color (CSOC) submitted a proposal that challenged Sarah Lawrence College; at that time, our community was forced to examine its deeply imbedded institutionalized racism. This proposal began a school-wide reflection about the lack of awareness towards inclusion and "diversity" in every aspect of life at Sarah Lawrence College. Though some progress has been made, SLC continues to nurture and accommodate racism under the pretense of "liberal" reform. This college has committed a grave injustice by allowing every member of its community to remain ignorant.

We, Concerned Students of Color, are again urging Sarah Lawrence College to examine the values of this institution. This college claims to reject racism in all its forms. This statement will remain false until there is permanent structural change, for which our proposal is the most effective means. We are outraged that so much rhetoric and supposed concern has produced little significant action. However, CSOC exists to work to make this institution a truly "diversified" community.

FACULTY-- Although Sarah Lawrence has achieved a level of faculty of color greater than it has ever been in the school's history, the virtual absence of Latino and Asian faculty and the guest positions of a large majority of the African-American faculty, make it clear that Sarah Lawrence has not yet committed itself to change that will be long-term and structural.

We therefore propose the following:

- 1) That all faculty of color currently in guest positions be moved to tenure-track positions, and
- 2) That the college commit to hiring **no less than** three (3) African-American faculty, (3) Latino faculty, (3) Asian-American faculty, and one (1) Native American faculty member within three years. Of these ten new positions, four of the faculty should teach non-race specific courses.

CURRICULUM-- The curriculum of Sarah Lawrence does not adequately represent the experiences and contributions of people of color. All too often, 'American' in history and literature courses means European-American. All too often, European colonization is discussed with reference to the perspectives of the colonizer rather than the colonized. Although we do wish to maintain and expand the course offerings in African and African-American, Latin American, and Asian studies, we cannot stop there. The Sarah Lawrence curricula cannot continue to marginalize our histories and cultures.

Many faculty members are resistant to appeals from students to make their courses more inclusive because they feel that they are not well enough educated in those areas in which their courses are lacking.

The courses that have been added in African and African-American, Latin American, and Asian studies (there are no courses in Latino or Asian-American studies) are positive steps, but they are not enough.

Additionally, the library resources are inadequate for future course development and current conference work involving the study of people of color.

Finally, the curricula of those faculty teaching subjects other than those mentioned above are not yet adequately diversified.

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Therefore, we propose the following:

- 1) That a permanent fund be created for the expansion of the library in the under-represented area of works by and about people of color,
- 2) That all faculty members are encouraged to review their courses and, when appropriate, include the voices of African, Latin American, Asian and Native American peoples. We want this institution to support faculty's education as well as the students',
- 3) That the college support the faculty's education in the form of the creation of a permanent fund for extensive faculty development for those faculty members that wish to revise their curriculum, and,
- 4) That more courses dealing specifically with African and African-American history and culture, Asian (particularly modern) history and culture, Latin American history and culture and Native American history and culture be added into the curriculum. Finally, there is a complete absence of courses on Latino/Hispanic-American and Asian-American history and culture, and we urge the college to bring these studies into the curriculum.

MULTI-CULTURAL DEAN-- In 1989, the Faculty and Administration Negotiating Team responded to the CSOC demand for a Multi-Cultural Dean with the promise that they would "restructure particular administrative offices to ensure support for the specific needs of students of color." During the past two years, it has become clear that the response of the negotiating team, which adds the duties of the multi-cultural dean to a group of administrators with other duties, is inadequate. Although the Committee on Racial Diversity has done much for the enhancement of lectures and activities on this campus, it has inadequately dealt with issues of racism, as well as other issues pertaining to the people of color in our community.

Therefore, it is imperative that an administrative position be created to:

- 1) Serve as an advocate for students of color, and,
- 2) Work in conjunction with the college's standing committees to insure sensitivity to multi-cultural issues.

HEALTH SERVICES and SECURITY-- Sarah Lawrence College must be sensitive to the special needs of students of color. We are concerned with the lack of support systems for students of color on this campus. We stress the importance of this support for the retention and future enrollment of students of color.

As a result of the proposal submitted two years ago, some changes have been implemented. However, we are calling for a review of and additions to the system in place.

Health Services-- Two therapists of color were initially hired. By the second year, only one remained. This allowed for in-accessability, depriving a number of students of a service that they were in need of.

We propose:

- 1) That two (2) additional therapists of color be hired in the next three years, and,
- 2) That spaces be reserved in the schedules of these therapists for students of color.

Security-- We are again concerned with the lack of sensitivity that has been shown toward people of color by SLC Security. Guests of students, as well as students themselves, have continually been harassed because of this lack of sensitivity and respect.

We propose the following:

- 1) That a re-evaluation of the ineffective sensitization of security take place, and,
- 2) That students of color participate in the review and revision of this sensitization process.

FLIK and COLIN WORKERS-- We would like to address the poor working conditions, and the lack of institutionalized concern for the staff members at Sarah Lawrence College. The majority of the people who work in the Food Service and Maintenance staff are people of color. Although Flik and Colin are outside contracts, and the workers are not formally employees of the collage, they are nonetheless members of the Sarah Lawrence Community, and should be treated as such.

In addition to the exploitation of the workers by their bosses, the disrespect and poor treatment recieved from many of the other members of this community is appalling. Not only are many of the members of our community classist, but racism and cultural stereotypes are continually imposed on the workers of color, particularly those that are bilingual. We urge this institution to take an active role in making sure that the Staff Members of Sarah Lawrence College are treated with the respect they deserve.

We propose:

- 1) That the College work with the Flik and Colin corporations to ensure fair working conditions for our employees,
- 2) That the College work with the Flik and Colin corporations to allow the members of our community to partake in the social and educational events that happen on campus,
- 3) That the college set up a formal educational system for bilingual education, and,
- 4) That the college work with the Sarah Lawrence community to make them aware of their classism and racism.

As we stated in our 1989 proposal, by making these proposals a reality, "the SLC Community will be enriched, and will better fulfill its promise of progressive education." Please respond to this proposal in the form of an all campus mailing within one week.

Respectfully submitted,
Concerned Students of Color

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