

5-15-1991

[In Print, Progress report on diversity issues, May
15, 1991]

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Recommended Citation

[Unknown], "[In Print, Progress report on diversity issues, May 15, 1991]" (1991). *Complete protest and activism collection online*, Sarah Lawrence College Archives. 75.
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in print

Published by the Department of Public Relations

Sarah Lawrence College • No. 7 • May 15, 1991

Progress report on diversity issues

Last month, the Concerned Students of Color presented a statement to Sarah Lawrence, urging the College "to examine the values of this institution." The document includes a series of proposals covering faculty and curriculum, student support, health services and security, and conditions for employees of Flick and Colin who work at the College. Barbara Kaplan, dean of the College, has routed each of the proposals to various standing faculty committees and administrative offices, hoping "that this process will encourage a full examination of the issues and a dialogue that will include all of the appropriate faculty, students, and administrators."

The current Concerned Students proposal is an extension and revision of a document presented by the group in the spring of 1989. After a week-long occupation of Westlands and extended discussions with the Concerned Students, the College established a number of priorities for the next five years, aimed at achieving greater racial and cultural diversity on campus.

The central component of the 1989 and 1991 Concerned Students proposals is an increase in the number of faculty of color. At the end of the spring 1989 discussions, the College announced a goal of

hiring six faculty of color on regular contracts by the end of 1994. Since that time, Sarah Lawrence has hired five faculty of color on regular contracts. "We are pleased to be approaching the goal for faculty appointments so early in the timetable," said Dean Kaplan. The College has also hired an additional nine faculty of color on guest contracts.

The new Concerned Students proposal seeks 10 additional faculty of color within three years. In routing the proposal to the appropriate committee, Dean Kaplan reiterated the College's continuing commitment to hiring faculty of color. "We have no intention of stopping our recruitment efforts after the initial commitment is complete. No matter how the discussions of the Concerned Students proposal are resolved, the College will continue to recruit as many faculty of color as we can." As of April, 1991, approximately 14 percent of the faculty are people of color (approximately 15 percent of the students are people of color).

Since 1989, a number of new courses have been added to the curriculum: African-American history, African and African-American literature, Latin American politics and Latin American literature.

Courses in non-Western music and African art will be offered in 1991-92. In addition, a number of existing faculty (in literature, political science, sociology, anthropology, and history) have expanded their courses and developed new ones that discuss or emphasize multicultural issues.

In response to other concerns:

- a female therapist of color was appointed to Health Services in 1989;
- a black administrator was appointed to the admissions office in 1989;
- the Committee on Diversity has been convened to monitor campus progress;
- a special fund has been created for speakers and cultural events;
- workshops to educate the campus on diversity issues have been held every term since the fall of 1989.

A continuing concern, the appointment of a dean for multicultural affairs, will be resolved in the fall of 1991, when Daphne Dumas becomes Associate Dean of Studies and Multicultural Affairs.