THE FUTURE OF BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESS

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In recent years the term "black college" has come to mean much more than coloration identification. It has meant a change in the philosophy and focus of education programs, a change in the composition of a given black college's faculty and student body.

Most of the predominantly black colleges and universities, private and public (which number between 100 and 120 depending on how they are counted), had problems in being founded; they also have had problems of continuation and survival. The U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954 which stated that the "separate but equal" doctrine had no place in our education society (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954) solved many problems, but others have been created in the aftermath. It is the purpose of this paper to project some of the future actions and developments that black colleges and universities must be involved in if they are to survive in the desegregation and integration processes.
THE FUTURE

With the effects of desegregation and integration having the impact that they have had on black colleges and universities, what will these institutions have to do in the future to ensure their survival? What kind of future is there for the predominantly black-supported colleges and universities?

There is no unanimous opinion on the future for these institutions of higher education from people of either race. Some have predicted that the black colleges and universities will be closed. Others have predicted that some will die gracefully on the vine within a few days and that they will be deserted for more strongly supported, formerly all-white institutions. Others predict that these colleges and universities will remain, but probably not with black majorities as is the case today. Many of the leaders of these institutions, presidents and chancellors, believe that these colleges and universities will become academically stronger and will provide more “relevant” educational programs as well as even greater service to the community. Others have felt that if these institutions remain predominantly black, they in fact will continue to be “dumping grounds” for rejects not strong enough to actually compete with “mainstream” colleges and universities. Others predict that these colleges will become stronger only when they are able to attract and maintain a large white student body. Still, others hope to bring about viability and enrichment through establishing more degree programs, particularly at the master’s level, in areas which are cited as vitally needed in our society today, such as early childhood education, special education, business, accounting, management, allied health, and the like.

Dr. Charles Hayes (1972), president of Albany State in Georgia, sees hope for the future. He is quoted in the Atlantic Journal of January 17, 1972 as stating “I will not preside over a dying institution and I intend to stay here. I
see this college serving on an equal par with any college in the state, and if you produce quality, the word gets around.” And in the same article Chancellor Simpson of the Georgia system is quoted as stating

these schools can compete with any other—I don’t think that they need any crutches, they don’t want crutches. . . . The Schools are essentially black because of the wishes of the people who are there, and they have every right to be there. Our policy is to provide good education and let nature take its course.

Seemingly in a reply to the chancellor’s statement, the Atlanta Journal and the Atlanta Constitution of January 16, 1972 quote Dr. James Pendergrass (1972), academic dean of Albany State, as follows “I think the Chancellor is doing all he can for us within the framework of the University System—but when you start imposing a system equity upon a base that was less than equitable you still have quite a gap.”

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1971) indicated that, in the future, black colleges and universities would have to provide more comprehensive curriculums and would have to provide instruction in more fields in which careers are opening up for black Americans; that some of these institutions would have to continue to build on available resources for the study of Afro-American history and culture; would have to intensify their efforts to obtain aid from the federal government in order to establish planning systems for the purpose of overcoming deficits in physical resources, programs, and activities; should continue to seek comparability between salaries paid (and facilities and equipment present) at predominantly black colleges and universities and predominantly white institutions within the same region and in the state-supported institutions, within the same state; should strive to establish centers for research on education for the academically disadvantaged; and should develop continuing adult education programs geared to special needs of the black community.
Various authors such as Blake (1971), Brimmer (1971), Henderson (1971), and Nabrit (1971) have concluded that predominantly black colleges and universities should create new areas of knowledge and an intellectual period among themselves that generate the needed questions about American culture and civilization; should try to approach science and technology from a new prospective, that of applied science and its relationship to solutions to the physical and spiritual problems of race and class bias; that efforts should be made to create necessary rituals, celebrations, and traditions which signal respect for and preservation of the historical record and accomplishment of black men in America in the areas of both individual achievement and mass achievement and mass cultural infusion.

In view of the shifting and demanding conditions of the black colleges and universities, major adaptations in their curriculums and programs will have to be made and tuition and other costs will have to be kept lower than other institutions if it is expected that black students should continue to enroll.

High priority should be given to careful review of aims, goals, and parts of each institution, with particular attention to change in the social, economic, and political environment within which the colleges and universities operate. Their posture relative to the "all black" and "black" institutions should be given special attention, and more effective ways should be found for relating to problems of black people and the poor. Black institutions should explore their involvement in and their entire range of urban problems. These would include the problems of the disadvantaged, race relations, education, housing, employment, transportation, taxation, ecology, and political participation.

Henderson (1971) believes that if there is to be a future for the black colleges and universities, then the governing boards will have to be restructured as to age, sex, and race. And support by the local community must be more
forthcoming. Church-related colleges will have to rethink the role of the church as an institutional sponsor, and the presidents of black colleges and universities will have to find ways and means of spreading work and responsibility into a decentralization of authority and responsibility. Nabrit (1971) writes that small colleges might move into larger population centers, they might emphasize quality rather than quantity, and that new exchange programs for students and teachers should be initiated. That the small colleges should use the resources of large, neighboring, private and small colleges with computer-related libraries was cited as another possibility. Also, joint television usage is proposed for instruction along with electives being offered in alternate years in order to increase the range of choice in educational programs.

All in all, these writers as well as the present author believe that if there is indeed a future for black colleges and universities, that future will be provided only through the mechanism of a change from its current method of functioning. However, this change must be thoughtful and not change just for the sake of change, and it must be positive, well thought out, and not couched in fads and frills. It must be genuinely educational in nature.

As has been evident throughout the writing of this paper, the entire question on the role and significance of black colleges in the desegregation and integration process has raised a related question whether or not the black colleges are indeed worth saving, although these colleges served their purposes prior to the Supreme Court decision of 1954, and educational leaders and black professionals of American birth were trained and taught in these institutions of higher education. To be sure, the resources on which they had to operate were quite meager. Since that time, resources available, though increased, continue to signal that the predominantly black college and university continue to be a problem with a financial crisis. There is a need to upgrade
faculties. There is a need to increase facilities and equipment. There is a need to provide more capital improvements. There is a need to increase the quality of their educational program, particularly since many of these institutions are now operating with an open admissions policy.

It seems to be a pattern of public policy (even if unwritten) that more and more blacks should attend institutions of higher education. A net result of this policy, whether intentional or not, would keep more blacks "off the streets" and diminish the number of those on the welfare rolls. All of these needs and directions, of course, cost money, far more money than has been available to the black colleges in the past. With the demand that more and more blacks attend institutions of higher education, the need for educational spaces will not diminish. Indeed the need can be expected to grow. The question is, will the need fulfillment grow toward the white or the black colleges or universities? Holsendolph (1971) has stated that at least one black educator has indicated that history has bypassed the black colleges. Dr. Kenneth Clark, psychologist, past president of the American Psychological Association and member of the Board of Trustees of Howard University (an institution which is noted for perhaps the most complete graduate and undergraduate program of courses in a predominantly black school), is quoted as stating

I am not in favor of black colleges, white colleges, or colleges for those who are five feet eight inches tall. You can only have black colleges if you accept that certainty of racism... I happen to take education seriously. I think its purpose is to broaden people away from the institutionalization of racism. Education is much more important than baseball. We did something about black leagues—we now have major leagues. Why can’t we do the same with education? The question is—Is Howard a good university? Does it stimulate creativity? Not is i’ black.

Yet most of the black history and culture and the preservation of black culture is to be found in these formerly
completely black institutions of higher education. And more and more of their black students are demanding a higher education of quality. On this basis the black colleges are indeed worth saving. In further justification it bears repeating that the black college or the Negro college has provided uplift for a clientele which was not provided by the remaining portions of higher education in general. In addition to providing most of the black leaders within our society and preparing them for the jobs which society offered to them, the black college served as a social adhesive force for black people in general. Black people until recently have not had access to membership, for example, in certain social organizations such as Kiwanis International, the Lions, the Rotary, and other groups. The black college through its own service groups (mainly fraternities and sororities) and other clubs have provided a needed human outlet for the expression of social responsibility. Levels of status in society in general have been denied blacks. For example, it has been only recently that blacks have appeared on society pages of newspapers or could look forward to a picture of an engagement or wedding in the local newspaper, rather than an arrest (the latter may not yet be altogether absent). Black colleges through their own newspaper and media of communication have provided these outlets and recognitions, at least for their students. As such, the black colleges have provided a base of identity for the blacks who attended or who were in some measure associated with them. The black college has represented an instrument of social mobility for the black community in general and for the specific, immediate black community in which the college happened to be located. In today’s rapidly changing world, most people agree that the social context within which the black colleges have operated has been greatly altered, but the black college remains an anchor for black people.

In short, the black college has provided a society within a larger society. The black colleges have offered to the black
minority many of the needs of social outlets which were nowhere else to be found. These were of such a nature that at least the psychological necessities for socialization were met, and as such, personal survival has continued.

The case has been made that these colleges have provided a much-needed service in the past. In all likelihood they will be needed to continue providing some of these services in the future as the transition from segregation to integration and desegregation takes place.

However, it has been stated previously that if these colleges are to survive (and some will), many changes will have to be made. If these changes occur, most of the black colleges will not be known in the future as black colleges—not in the sense of serving only blacks. It may be that a few can exist and have a separatist, all-black orientation in terms of their philosophies, and in terms of their program offerings. The private black college has the best chance for success in this area. As for others, some could exist with a known program concentration, for example, in black studies, black politics, and black economics. But in order to survive, these latter institutions will lose their identities as “all black” colleges per se in terms of the coloration and racial mix of their student body. It does not follow, however, that these “new” institutions will have to become predominantly white with only a majority black enrollment. These new colleges will have to provide white access (as well as minority access) to higher education. The current black institutions will have to change curriculums if for no more reason than to meet current demands of a changing labor market. Revolutionaries as well as pacifists, and pacifists as well as those in the middle, have to eat. And though there is concern at present over, and attack on, the work ethic, it is likely that work will be the medium for receiving monies in order to provide for the necessities of life for a long time to come.

The new black colleges (by and large) will be racially integrated. At the very least they will be further desegre-
gated. However, the integration should be a two-way street with some white institutions integrating to black institutions where mergers occur. These new institutions should not decrease their efforts to eliminate racism from our society—nor should they lose sight of nor disregard the history, culture, and heritages of their past. There is no need for these institutions to be erased as symbols of pride for black people, for they can exist within philosophies that will allow a black emphasis just as much as a white emphasis or a Chinese emphasis within education programs—all on one campus.

It seems to me that one of the major questions is not whether these black institutions have provided anything of worth in the past; it is not whether at least some of these institutions are worth saving for there are many more institutions of higher education needed in terms of spaces alone, and more educational spaces will continue to be needed for many years to come. And the question should not be whether or not to strive for integration and desegregation. It seems to me that one of the major questions that pertains to the future for the predominantly black colleges and universities, particularly those which are public, is the question of control. Who will be in immediate control of the newly shaped integration and desegregation institutions of higher education? Will there be boards of control consisting of a black majority? Will there be black chief administrators, presidents, chancellors, and teachers in control in at least a large enough number of these institutions so that the label tokenism cannot be attached? Will the blacks within these institutions continue to have role identification models of their own race? It would seem to me that these questions of necessity must receive affirmative answers, at least until all vestiges of racism, as defined by the Kerner Commission, have been erased and removed from our society.

The new black colleges and universities in this country will have to employ even more well-qualified administrators to serve new programs and to provide for new quality. These
new institutions must become involved in the business of program budgeting, computerization, system analysis, more precise evaluation, revisions on purposes and goals, accountability, and extensive use of statistical and scientific techniques such as the Q-sort and Delphi technique to bring about the convergence of opinion.

If admissions standards are not to be raised and if in fact the trend is toward more and more open admissions policies, special as well as regular programs for those who cannot meet higher admissions requirements will have to be provided. It does little good to admit a student who is educationally handicapped into the "regular college program." New ways of teaching will have to be found, and new kinds of teachers to teach these kinds of youngsters will have to be provided. Computerized techniques designed to provide quick data bases for decision-making will have to be installed. Management based on a participatory democracy which leads to decision-making based on participation and management information must become a reality. Yet enough leeway in administrative action must be evidenced in order to thwart overdemocratization of decision-making. Those general items and areas which will not be available for complete community participation and democratic decision-making must be spelled out, for in these times of rapid mobility it is necessary for the manager sometimes to manage quickly and within time constrictions that would not allow for a complete hearing of the case by all of the various communities on all of the issues and on all of the details concerned. However, those decisions that would fall outside the framework of complete participation ought to be arrived at (at least to some measure) in a democratic manner.

While these new institutions of higher education are restructuring their curriculums for the new world of career-oriented education, they must also identify those portions of the curriculums that in fact will have to be eliminated—and then to eliminate them. Hard cost-effectiveness decisions will have to be made in order to preserve financial resources.
In those instances where it is possible, some of the black institutions which are poorly located will have to find new locations. Some of the four-year predominantly black institutions will have to voluntarily decide that they either (1) should offer a fewer number of years (that is, perhaps become a two-year institution of higher education), or (2) should close. Other predominantly black colleges will have to give strong consideration to, and some in fact will effect, mergers with one another. This will be particularly the case in the private sector. These "merged" or joined predominantly black institutions will offer programs and curriculums jointly, thereby reducing the overall cost and enhancing the funds available for maintenance and operation.

These new institutions will have to become fully conversant with the modern technological devices available for quantitative management and decision-making, while at the same time devising both quantitative and qualitative criteria that will prevent governance from becoming mere management. These institutions will become more black with respect to specific program emphasis within them, but not completely black as concerns the coloration of their student body, and as concerns many of their teachers and administrators. In this way, cooption can be avoided, especially if control measures for black leadership are inbuilt.

BRIEF REVIEW FOR THE FUTURE

Some of the black colleges and universities have experienced a drop in the percentage of black students enrolled. Many of these capable black students are now enrolling in formerly predominantly white colleges and universities. Many of the most competent black faculty and administrators are being recruited to work at formerly all-white institutions. This latter fact to some extent has created an intellectual and leadership vacuum in the black institutions.
As a result of the diverse career opportunities for black Americans, the educational programs at black colleges and universities are in far too many cases out of step with existing needs and demands. Some financial resources, which had been formerly earmarked for black institutions by the federal government and private foundations, are being diverted to predominantly white institutions. Although there are some increases in the amounts of funding from these sources, the rate of increase has not allowed (in most instances) the gap to narrow. In the future the black colleges and universities will have to reexamine their activities in all areas that have been affected by integration and desegregation, and if they are to survive, they will have to make the necessary changes and adaptations in these areas. Some of these changes will be extremely painful; however, they must occur at these institutions if they are to remain in the known world of higher education.

Black institutions of higher education if based on a coloration basis of blackness by and large will not survive for a future. Black institutions in terms of emphasis on certain programs within the institutions, and in terms of black control at some, will survive and will be integrated and desegregated. Some black colleges and schools will close; others will merge.

One of the main considerations in reaching these conclusions is not the legal or social considerations surrounding integration and desegregation, but rather the financial base available for the support of these black colleges and universities. There is a new role for these black colleges and universities, and there is a new significance for these in the new desegregation and integration process. Should they swim completely against the tide, unlike the phoenix, they will not survive and their fire shall turn to drowning water, for the blues that they sing now would become wetter as well as bluer.

Why not serve a new kind of student in a more relevant way, in a less in loco parentis manner and in a less lock-step
manner, with an even more community service-oriented program—integrating some white students into the student body and thus into a different and black experience, eliminating some financial barriers, and in as many instances as possible maintaining competent administrative control, black and white? Why not create a diversity of integrated black colleges and universities, with such diversity-stressing programs and studies of war and peace, through literary and liberal arts pursuits, through science and technology, through professional training and developments, through vocational-technical-oriented programs? These new colleges need not be complete carbon copies of any other institution of higher education in existence, including other black colleges and universities. Those that survive indeed will not be.

CASE


REFERENCES

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