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ABSTRACT

This is the report of a conference held by the Southeast Regional Council of the American Association for Higher Education to discuss the future of higher education in that region: to identify major problems, state goals, and suggest means of achieving these goals. The 32 conferees were divided into 3 discussion groups and each of the groups settled on the race problem and equal education for blacks and whites as being the major barrier to overcome in the future. In this vein, 3 goals were established as being of primary importance: (1) to provide equal opportunity for and equal access to higher education for all citizens, regardless of color or class, insofar as they can benefit from it; (2) to eliminate racial dualism in higher education across the Southeast; and (3) to assume major responsibility for eliminating white racism, both in educational institutions and in society at large. Other problems were also discussed at the conference ranging from public support of and confidence in higher education, to developing student potential for leadership roles. It is hoped that this report will have some impact on the leaders of higher education in the various states of the Southeast region, and will result in positive steps at that level. (HS)

American Association for Higher Education

Higher Education in Black and White

A Seminar Report

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Contents

The Scene

It began the evening of June 25, 1971, a manufactured brainstorm scheduled to last 42 hours, from 6 p.m. Friday to noon Sunday. Other than sleeping, eating, and pausing for an occasional break, the 32 participants did nothing but talk, think, debate, discuss, dispute. Their topic was the future of higher education in the Southeast. Their mission was to identify major problems, state goals, and suggest means of achieving them.

The posh red and gold of the hotel where they met in Atlanta was one of those concrete and crystal cities-within-a-city, offering all of the necessities of life, and a good many of the luxuries. In fact, after they checked in, most participants did not leave the hotel until they checked out.

All but one of them came there from the 10 Southeastern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia. The exception was a black woman from New York, an executive with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. She was one of only two women participating. The other was a black librarian at a predominantly black college. Two other women, a white student and a black professor, were expected but never arrived.

Eight of the conferees were black. Aside from the two women, they included one state legislator, two representatives of educational agencies, and three representatives of predominantly black colleges. Of the 24 whites, two were faculty members at predominantly black colleges, four were journalists, two were state legislators, eight came from educational agencies and six from the faculties of predominantly white institutions. The remaining two were employed by the American Friends Service Committee and a local agency of the U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity.

They all came to the Atlanta Seminar at the behest of the Southeastern Regional Council of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). The council is one of six regional bodies recently established across the nation by AAHE. Each regional council has been asked to develop an agenda for higher education in the years ahead, taking into account the special characteristics of its own region. While AAHE headquarters in Washington is supplying staff and financial support for these endeavors, each regional council is developing its own format. Led by its chairman, James L. Wattenbarger, director of the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida, the Southeastern Regional Council decided on a three-phase project.

The Atlanta Seminar was phase 1. This report is phase 2. Phase 3 is planned as a series of subregional meetings, perhaps one in each of the 10 states, to deliberate on the issues reported here and arrive at more precise and suitable goals and strategies close to home.

In advance of the Atlanta Seminar, AAHE mailed an inch-thick packet of materials to each participant. It contained several major national studies of higher education and its problems.* The participants were asked to read these reports in advance and come prepared to talk about the prime issues in a regional, rather than a national, context.

And talk they did. After registering and settling in their rooms, they gathered for a get-acquainted reception and dinner. Saturday morning at 9 o'clock, the brainstorming began in earnest. It lasted all morning, resumed after lunch, resumed again after dinner, and continued until after 9 p.m. Sunday it began at 9 a.m. and continued until noon.

Participants were divided into three groups for the Saturday marathon. There were leaders, co-leaders and recorders designated, but each group was free to set its own agenda and follow its own procedures. While each of the groups developed its own distinctive

*In the packet were: *A First Report*, the Assembly on Goals and Governance of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1971); *Report on Higher Education*, the Newman Task Force (1971); *Campus Unrest*, the President's Commission on Campus Unrest (1970); *A Report on the Student in Higher Education*, the Hazen Foundation's Committee on the Student in Higher Education (1968); digests of five reports by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1970 and 1971); *Community and Junior Colleges in Perspective*, the Education Commission of the States (1971); *Comprehensive Planning for Post-secondary Education*, the Education Commission of the States (1971).

character, all three proceeded informally and with considerable candor.

At the final session Sunday, all three groups met as one, and each reported, aloud and in writing, the issues, the goals and the strategies it had considered the day before. There was no expectation of consensus; any idea which had been explored was to be reported. The sifting and refining were to come later, in the various states.

Sorting Out the South

Is the South really different? Are any of its problems in higher education unique? What, if anything, sets the South apart from the rest of the nation?

Group 3 of the Atlanta Seminar was in session, and a white educator from Tennessee opened the discussion by asking these questions. A veteran Southern newsman, based in Atlanta, offered this reply:

"... Go back to '57, when Harry Ashmore said 'epitaph for Dixie.' There's one way of looking at it: that the South has slowly become a part of the nation in terms of, you know, branch offices, for one thing, economics and general style, whatnot. On the other hand, there remains a different quality.

"I've gotten in these futile and pointless arguments with people, which I don't even believe it's worth arguing over: Is the South becoming like the rest of the nation or is it distinct? Because obviously in some ways it's distinct. One way, it's in the South, you know? The sun's a little warmer, the oleander grows a little better, or something. And the accent remains somewhat different, and therefore that feeds on into the general cadence of life .... you know, electric eyes at the doors are set a little slower. But... is that important? Can you build something affirmative out of that difference, out of that distinction? And if you can, what? I don't know...."

A participant from South Carolina said: "I think the distinction that we can capitalize on, possibly, is that we aren't where the other parts of the country are as yet, by and large. In other words, we don't—you know, with the exception of places like Atlanta and perhaps Nashville and Miami and so forth—we don't have just massive urban problems as yet. We still are a region that is just

emerging, I think, from a rural tradition, from a tradition where people related to each other on a very personal kind of basis, on a one-to-one sort of basis. And I think even in the urban areas, to some degree, that kind of cultural tradition still remains intact.

"And it seems to me that says that we have an opportunity to maybe do some things that other folks didn't do. Maybe industrialization is bound to make us like them, with all the accompanying evils as well as assets. But it seems to me, just in terms of which way we're going, that we have a little bit of time in which we could make some very crucial decisions. I'm not absolutely convinced we *can* make them, but. . . ."

At approximately the same time, in another conference room, Group 2 heard a white educator from Georgia warn that Southerners tend to think they have more "lead time" than they have to solve the problems of urbanization. "Our lead time's been taken away from us very rapidly," he said.

The approach taken by Group 2 differed from that taken by Group 3. Instead of looking at the region whole, Group 2 began with a procedural proposal. A white university student from Tennessee suggested that the group assess the Southeast's social problems and derive appropriate goals for higher education as it moves to help solve the problems. It was only a matter of minutes before the pattern of the day's discussions emerged.

A white Atlantan proposed that the place to start would be with a discussion of higher education and race. A black Atlantan said the two "are inevitably and irrevocably intertwined." A black Mississippian said that the group clearly would have to "take into account the South's—and the nation's—major problem, the race issue, as it deals with education and society and everything."

A white journalist from Atlanta, while not disagreeing, said he believed a primary concern of the seminar should be "the public school education on which higher education absolutely has to rest. At the level on which I operate, which is the public domain, we get great feedback on the great problems of the public schools and the apparent failure of the public school system just to combat the basic illiteracy in the nation."

By illiteracy, he said, he did not mean the inability to read and write. He meant the use of these skills to develop an informed public. The dangers of an unthinking, uninformed populace are supreme in a democratic society, he said, adding:

"It seems to me that, if higher education doesn't take on this task and start to do something more specific about it than it has done in the past quarter of a century, that whatever else higher

education does is not going to be worth much. It'll be serving a smaller and smaller group of people who are serving self-interest instead of national interest."

Questions of higher education's responsibility for elementary and secondary education ("I wish we had never invented that word 'higher,' " a Florida educator said) punctuated the entire seminar, in all three groups. So did such problems as college curriculum reform, the twin crises of financial support for and public confidence in higher education, accountability in teaching and administration, the "humanizing" and "individualizing" of instruction, even the fundamental question of whether the educational system can be reformed or should be scrapped and replaced.

But matters of race dominated the seminar. As it turned out, neither the "different South" approach of Group 3 nor the "social problems" approach of Group 2 pierced to the participants' overriding concern as quickly and deeply as the approach of Group 1. After hearing some general remarks about the group's task, a white teacher from a black college in Alabama stated bluntly that the single main problem of higher education in the Southeast is "the problem of disparity of opportunity" between blacks and whites. The United States, he said, promises equal opportunity to all and uses education as the equalizing instrument. But in the predominantly black counties of Alabama, and probably in Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi as well, only about five per cent of the black youths go to college, he said. Universities and colleges are the only institutions which can do anything about this problem, he explained, and it is "a responsibility of the profession of education" to do something about it.

Early dropouts from school, "with no hope, no motivation," present "an almost impenetrable situation. If you wait for the state governments—the state governments don't give a damn. I mean, they don't want to do anything about it. In fact, that's part of the system." Alabama's public universities and colleges have "considerable influence" in the state if they choose to use it, he said, and colleges in the South have "an inescapable responsibility to make this one of their first pieces of business."

Faculty, administrators and students form "a great army of people who can do something about this if they make up their minds to do it," he said. This statement prompted a black educator from Atlanta to ask, "Do we really care? When I say 'we,' I'm thinking in terms of the general populace. Do we really care? The evidence would suggest that not many really care. . . ."

A white journalist from Tennessee noted that the group had driven straight to the point, that the major problem of higher education in the Southeast is race relations. "Recently," he said, "I have sensed a weariness among people, white people particularly, but even among some blacks, a weariness about the whole discussion of questions of race. It's almost like, maybe analagous to, the weariness that people feel about the war in Viet Nam. They don't even read the stuff anymore. It just goes on and on and on. . . . I sense in a great many people—maybe I'm being unfair but I think I even sensed it here . . . an inaudible sigh or two around the table: 'Oh, no, God, let's not talk about that. We've been talking about that for 17 years, and God knows that's not our problem anymore. We're out of that.'

"The fact is that we're not even close to being out of it. We've hardly scratched the surface. When Viet Nam has come and gone, we'll still have racial problems that are so severe and so intense that we will constantly be threatened with our demise as a civilization because we are unable and unwilling to deal with them. And in the context of higher education I would like to submit... the general premise that higher education in our society has, in so many ways and for so many years, been unresponsive to the problem of racial division, the problem of a growing chasm that separates blacks from whites, rich from poor, that it is at this point almost impotent to deal with these problems."

By different routes and with varying intensity, all three groups at the Atlanta Seminar arrived at the same conclusion: Yes, the South is different; it remains the home of approximately half the nation's blacks, and nearly all of the predominantly black universities and colleges; its own history, from slavery through segregation, from white aristocracy through white supremacy, has linked its future firmly to questions of race.

It must be noted that not all participants were pleased with the seminar's emphasis on racial problems. Some thought there had been more progress toward solving those problems than their colleagues would acknowledge. Others thought the approach was wrong, that a full discussion of educational problems, such as curriculum reform and institutional diversity, inevitably would embrace the many facets of the racial problem. Significantly, however, there was no open disagreement over the gravity of race questions in higher education. The only disputes, in fact, were about whether the seminar would result in any positive action or just more talk.

Torn from the Soul

It is impossible to be certain exactly what—a common mood, a reasonable argument, an impassioned plea—determines how a group of diverse people will make up its collective mind. Something happened at the Atlanta Seminar, not once but three times, in three separate groups, and three collective minds reached strikingly similar conclusions. There was no doubt about what had happened. A commanding majority of the 32 participants had determined that the future of higher education in the Southeast is inextricably bound to the future of race relations in the region. But how did they reach that determination?

Part of the answer clearly lies in the fact that all of the black participants and many of the whites were convinced in advance that the seminar must deal effectively, and above all else, with questions of racial equality in higher education. It seems clear, too, that none of the participants would have failed to rank these questions high on the list of priorities.

These factors, however, do not explain why the seminar became, in the words of one participant, "virtually a single-issue conference." Perhaps the eloquence of several participants, both white and black, was the key. Several statements by blacks were especially moving, with the impact of something torn from the soul. For instance, one black educator said:

"Let us take for example the illegitimacy of most of the textbooks in sociology and history that we've subjected ourselves to in our institutions. If you examine them carefully, you'll find that there isn't, in any wise, information in keeping with the influence that black people, slavery, the plantation system, the share-cropper system have had on our society. We find that these

experiences have not been reflected. . . . So the people come out of these institutions with inadequate bases for responding. . . .

"Any white person in this country today who asks why black people are exploding, and why black people are angry, suggests something is very seriously wrong with the kind of education he or she is getting. . . .

"An incident that happened in Georgia some years ago—Valdosta, Georgia—to a woman named Mary Williams is enough to fire up any black community in this nation. It's the story of a lynching of a black man, and the wife and other relatives being present. The wife was pregnant, and she cried out at witnessing this lynching, and the mob ended up stringing her up by her neck and setting fire under her. She was pregnant and her unborn child fell to the ground from her body.

"Now, you don't need much stuff like that, you don't need to have me know much about this part of my heritage, for me to go and fire people up.

"And I'm saying that our educational system has failed us when it has not interpreted how these influences have worked to create and shape us as we are, and what we must do in order to avoid this kind of thing and correct these things that have been wrong for so long. . . . What I'm saying is the university doesn't have to get out there and be an activist . . . but *teach the whole truth*, that's the beginning. . . . I have confidence that more people will behave differently if the whole truth is known."

A black legislator:

". . . Since somehow or other you just don't put white people in a black institution, we have to develop a 'rational' reason for putting white people in Tennessee State University. Whereas, if it were the reverse, it would be absolutely logical, everyone would have understood it that way, there would be no question about it, the Nashville UT Center would never have been developed. Why doesn't somebody *say* that, for God's sake? Huh? Why doesn't somebody say . . . to hell with the white racism . . . that develops a UT Center in Nashville? Tennessee State University has been a considerable institution, developed by a black man who believed in athletics primarily, but who convinced white people to put $40 million in buildings and various other establishments out in black Nashville.

"Now then. This constitutes a brilliant opportunity for us to do what comes naturally to Americans, to build American democracy by putting white people in a ghetto. So why don't we just develop Tennessee State University? Nobody—no white liberal, no black

leader—nobody has had the gumption to say that to the total community of Nashville or of America, anywhere. . . You know, you are great men from Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Wisconsin and Chicago, and nobody has the simple intelligence to say to America: your system of values is contrary to what you are practicing. Gentlemen, in education what you are saying is contrary to what you are doing. If in the field of law we operated this way—hell, I'd starve to death. . . .

"I think that we have to come back, we have to come back to a time—we have to come back to a situation where we are recognizing what is actually happening, and that we're willing to say what is actually happening. And this is important in education, in higher education, that we're saying what is actually happening in Nashville, that we're saying . . . what the powers that be are doing to Tennessee State University in Nashville, and what is happening in higher education, because what is happening in higher education is what is happening throughout the whole gamut of American society—that white America, including white American liberals, are saying we are superior, black men are inferior . . . and you know what?

"I'm one black man who's forgotten that. Man, I forgot that five years ago. I forgot that you were superior to me. You ain't superior to me no more. I'm superior to you, and I've all of a sudden realized that most black Americans are superior to you. You know why? Because most black Americans believe in Christianity, and you don't believe in Christianity. You have a separate sense of values. . . .

"The black universities have turned out men like this and that (pointing to participating black educators), and these men are 'advantaged' as hell, in a way, because they're intellectuals, they're PhDs. . . . They're not like me. Hell, I'm just an LLB. They call me a JD now, but I would be embarrassed as hell—shit, don't you ever call me 'doctor,' because I abhor that damn term. They wouldn't be embarrassed, because they're part of your society, but I'm not. I wasn't elected by them. I wasn't elected by PhDs. I was elected by people who use 'dem,' 'dose,' and 'dat,' and the reason I was elected is because they love me and because I talk like I'm talking now to white masters. You understand that? And that is America *today*. That's the reason there's a Black Caucus in Congress, in the national Congress today, that is trying to build something across this nation—not because black people hate white people but because American society is built on a sense of values that is

contrary to what it claims. It's built on a compartmentalized system of values.

"... John Kennedy said, very shortly before his death, when he came to Vanderbilt ... people who were intellectuals were abdicating their very faith, they were abdicating their very philosophy, their very religion, and this is what higher education has been doing and is doing.

"And this is the reason I was very pleased to come to this meeting, because it looked to me like that here, that here somewhere, that—I don't know how important you guys are, you know. I'm stupid enough to fool around with anybody, unimportant people—here are some people who are beginning to think about the true function of higher education, the leadership of people into the advancement of mankind.

"I don't have enough intellect, enough educational ability, enough articulateness to say what you need to say tonight or tomorrow to tell the educational community how to operate. The only thing I know is that if you tell them what Dick Nixon tells people, then we can forget about it. I'll go on back and get my son and go to South America. If you tell them what the politicians tell them, if you tell them what most educated people that I know tell them ... then I can forget about it."

Matters of Race and Class

Throughout the seminar it became increasingly clear that "the race problem" in higher education is, in reality, a series of interrelated problems, each with complexities of its own. It also became clear that the seminar participants generally believed that these problems were intertwined with the fundamental problem of class distinctions, of economic elitism, which effectively bars many low-income Americans of all races from higher education. The participants' concerns may be grouped into three major goals for higher education in the Southeast.

Goal 1. *To provide equal opportunity for and equal access to higher education for all citizens, regardless of color or class, insofar as they can benefit from it.*

Each of the three discussion groups submitted a brief written report to the entire seminar Sunday morning, and each report singled out the elimination of unequal opportunities for higher education as a goal of the highest priority for the region. Here are excerpts from the three statements.

Group 1: "The accelerating divisions in our nation along race and class lines have become too serious to permit higher education to continue on the path of elitism and white privilege. All of our predominantly white colleges and universities, and in particular the publicly supported ones, must become servants and champions of the nation's diverse racial and social and cultural groups, and they must become truly representative of those groups in every way. Our colleges and universities are in fact instruments of social change, whether they desire to be or not. No other institutions in our society have as clear a duty to give substance to the principle of equal opportunity as our schools. We cannot fail to discharge that responsibility and hope to survive as a nation. Special

privilege based on race and class has no place in our society; it can no longer have any place in our colleges and universities."

Group 2: "Higher education generally suffers from the basic political and social problems of the region. It must: (1) develop sensitivities to blacks and to the poor; (2) reformulate the composition of managerial boards; (3) use better economic planning; (4) reconcile its isolation from elementary and secondary education. . . .

"(We must) eliminate racial and economic barriers to education for all students."

Group 3: "Goal number one. To equalize educational opportunity in the Southeast in ways that will make it possible for higher educational institutions of all kinds and at all levels to be responsive to the needs and goals of *all* students, the institutions and society."

Group 3 also submitted a separate report prepared by a Florida educator in the form of a resolution commending certain "recent educational developments emerging in the region" and urging their continuation and acceleration. One of these developments was "the deepening commitment among a growing number of people to making possible equal continuing educational opportunities for all our people appropriate to their individual aptitudes, desires and goals."

Bars to equality. Two of the major roadblocks en route to equal opportunity in higher education are institutional entrance requirements and the shortage of student financial aid.

One black educator said the excellence of a college or university is judged generally by "the level at which they set their standards." Thus, he said, to be "among the best," an institution must be "most difficult to get in, most expensive to stay in. . . ." Therefore, he concluded, people must "begin to suspect standards as a method of excluding large numbers of people from the educational process."

A primary admissions problem for the student who is culturally different is the standardized achievement test. A white journalist put it this way: "The kids in our society who are white and come from affluent homes are prepared to pass the SAT and to go to college and to do what the SAT says they can do, because that is what colleges require of them. In all our discussions today, we have not once, not once, gotten to the question of whether entrance requirements themselves need to be questioned. . . ."

Several other participants noted that the achievement tests are biased in favor of middle- and upper-class whites and do not

measure the abilities of minority group students accurately. The tests, they said, also carry a price tag which is prohibitive for students who live in poverty. "It costs $8.50 just to take the SAT," a black educator said, "and the achievement tests cost $10.50 apiece." He cited a prestigious private university in the South which requires each applicant for admission to take the SAT and three subject area achievement tests. The applicant must pay $40, often only to find out he does not meet entrance requirements.

College tuition, fees and living costs provide the most formidable hurdle to equal opportunity. Financial aid for students with great need is far too scarce, and most institutions, public and private, are increasing the student's share of the cost of his education. This trend means increased competition for available grants, loans and work-study programs, because a larger share of the student population requires assistance.

Severe as the admissions problem is for the poor and the culturally different, solving it would not mean that equality of opportunity had been achieved. Several seminar participants pointed out that the same lack of traditional learning skills which bars many from college frequently turns the "open door" into a "revolving door" through which the minority student enters and exits in rapid succession.

Additionally, some participants feared that providing access to higher education through "open door" junior and community colleges might simply train students to "fit" into second-rank citizenship, with the universities and four-year colleges producing the ruling elite. Others protested that community colleges need not be, and usually are not, terminal institutions, and that satisfactory work there will open doors to further education if the student seeks it. Nevertheless, some participants remained wary of a system which might admit the poor and minority group members in great numbers to institutions which could be used to perpetuate class differences.

Suggested strategies. The seminar did not attempt to select preferred methods of achieving equality of opportunity and access. Instead, it cited several approaches worthy of exploration at the state and local levels. The suggestions are grouped here by the problems they are intended to solve.

Admissions:

- An "open admissions" policy of some kind should operate within each state system of higher education. Some participants

thought all public institutions should eliminate entrance requirements. Others thought certain types of institutions should be designated as "entry points" into a system providing upward movement for those who seek it and qualify for it. The most frequently mentioned "entry" institutions were the "open door" community colleges and the predominantly black universities and colleges, which have a tradition of working successfully with educationally deprived students.

- Achievement tests should be eliminated as entrance requirements, or they should be revised to provide equally effective measurement of the abilities of students with different backgrounds and learning styles. And certainly no one should be barred from college because he cannot afford the testing fee.

Financial aid:

- A variety of suggestions was offered to eliminate the economic barrier to higher education. One was that free post-secondary education should be provided by the states. (Indeed, some participants doubted that open admissions could be achieved without tuition-free institutions.) Another suggestion was that the states should pay all direct costs of higher education, and students should be able to negotiate low-interest loans to cover their living expenses. Deferred tuition to be repaid by students according to their ability to pay after leaving college also was suggested, as was the development of low-cost community college systems in all the Southeastern states.
- In the awarding of student financial aid, special attention should be paid to packaging aid suitably for the individual student, so that those least able to repay loans or to work part-time will receive the largest share of outright grants. Additionally, a greater share of institutional resources should be devoted to the financial aid of minority group students.

Preparing the unprepared:

- Higher education should make a firm commitment to doing all it can to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education throughout the region, hopefully eliminating the preparation gap between rural and inner city youth, on the one hand, and white suburban youth, on the other. The efforts of higher education should be directed especially at improved teacher training, closer cooperation with public school systems, and the development of techniques for individualized instruction which will accommodate varied rates and styles of learning.
- At the same time, institutions of higher education must

assume responsibility for the success of students they admit. If students lack the necessary learning skills or lag below college-level achievement, the institution must be prepared to help them catch up. This process may be called remedial or compensatory, but under any name, it means institutions have to accept students where they are and move them forward. This implies a new accountability among educators for the progress of those they profess to educate.

Goal 2. *To eliminate racial dualism in higher education across the Southeast.*

Of all the topics discussed at the Atlanta Seminar, none matched the sense of urgency that was stirred by the plight of the traditionally black universities and colleges. The urgency sprang from what one black educator termed the "continuing proliferation of dualism" in the South. He referred to the fact that several states have moved in the last two or three years to develop branch campuses or centers of predominantly white universities in cities already served by predominantly black public institutions. In essence, the new centers were seen as catering to whites and making the desegregation of higher education a "one-way street," relegating predominantly black institutions to a lesser role than the full partnership they seek. At the same time, black and white participants who opposed the new wave of dualism were equally opposed to the "phasing out" or "whitening" of predominantly black institutions as a means of achieving unitary systems. Each of the three discussion groups addressed itself to aspects of these complex questions and derived goals reflecting their concerns.

Group 1: "Another higher education goal in the South is the immediate, compelling need to preserve and strengthen black institutions of higher learning because (1) they have traditionally provided meaningful, productive educational experiences for . . . disadvantaged students, the obvious results of which attest to an expertise in this area unmatched by the record of all other institutions; (2) the percentage and/or actual numbers of black professionals produced by black institutions is not likely now or in the foreseeable future to be matched by enrollments of blacks in white institutions; (3) the educationally disadvantaged students—black and white—have been largely ignored except in black institutions, and continue to be; the greatest hope for integrating school systems is by expanding opportunities in those institutions which have demonstrated the ability to cope successfully with the educational challenge these students present; (4) the recognition

that black-controlled institutions exist, perform meaningful roles in our society, and have a right to survive is important both to black and white America, or should be.

"Therefore, we urge: (1) an immediate halt to the phasing out or destruction otherwise of black colleges and universities, both public and private; (2) adequate financial support that will allow black institutions to continue and to expand their role of educating the educationally handicapped while at the same time financial support is provided so that they may supply quality education for all their graduates on a par with excellent white institutions."

Group 2: To deal with the elimination of racial dualism, this group urged the development of "special competencies, missions, sensitivities for black colleges," recognition of the "differences between states" and efforts to achieve unitary systems through "work on the state public policy level and on the community action level." Additionally, the group called on higher education's leadership to "speak out" against the dichotomy between society's values and its practices.

Group 3: "Goal number two. To achieve a racially unitary system of public higher education in the Southeast, encompassing all kinds and levels of higher education (community colleges, technical institutes, four-year colleges and the complex universities)."

This group also urged that "existing predominantly black institutions should be utilized more fully and more appropriately to provide special insights and skills toward accelerating the pace of closing the racial educational gap."

Bars to achieving unitary systems. In general, the participants seemed to see two major hurdles to the achievement of racially unitary systems of higher education. The first was the lack of commitment by the states, and to some degree by the federal government, to eradicating dualism. The second was that no generally accepted definition of a unitary system has been derived. Even the NAACP Legal Defense Fund has not defined the term satisfactorily. Its representative at the seminar said several questions still must be answered. Certainly, she said, a unitary system would involve the desegregation of governing boards, administrations, faculties and student bodies, but it has not been determined whether the racial composition of society at large should be reflected in each institution or simply in the statewide public system. It was obvious that many of the seminar participants favored the systemwide approach; they clearly wanted

the existing predominantly black institutions strengthened and their "blackness" preserved.

Several factors contributed to the general desire that black institutions retain their special character: their value as a resource for training teachers for the disadvantaged, their unusual expertise in how to educate the educationally handicapped, their significance—particularly to black youth—as citadels of black leadership and centers of black culture. One participant noted that the black universities are to blacks what Notre Dame is to Catholics, Brandeis to Jews, Brigham Young to Mormons. He noted, too, that the faculties of black institutions have never been segregated, and that preserving the blackness of these institutions does not mean excluding anyone from them; it means simply that black leadership and influence will have a place in a system of higher education which draws no racial lines, pouring all available resources into the service of students and society.

Suggested strategies. A wide range of ideas as to how racial dualism might be eliminated flowed from the discussion groups. One suggested that state higher education agencies should adopt statewide plans defining unitary systems and requiring their implementation by 1973. The same group recommended that the Office of Civil Rights in the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare "move more vigorously to enforce Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as applied to public institutions of higher education in the Southeast," and that the Southeastern Regional Council of AAHE "should appoint a Task Force on Unitary Higher Education to encourage, promote and facilitate the successful voluntary transition to unitary systems of public higher education." This task force, the recommendation said, "should take the initiative to aid, consult and cooperate with private groups (e.g., the Legal Defense Fund) working to promote unitary systems of public post-secondary education."

Another group suggested that the states should "possibly encourage the black institutions to become the open admissions colleges, providing strong leverage for blacks and poor." The third group did not specify how a unitary system might be achieved within a state, but it did declare bluntly that black institutions should be recognized as a major educational resource, and should be strengthened, not destroyed.

Goal 3. *To assume major responsibility for eliminating white racism, both in educational institutions and in society at large.*

As the preceding sections of this report indicate, concern with white racism, particularly as manifested in education itself, figured prominently in the discussions of all three groups. Only Group 1, however, isolated the elimination of racism as a separate goal. From the tenor of the discussions, it seems clear that, had the seminar fixed priorities, this goal would have ranked high. Here is the way it was stated by Group 1:

"We hold our educational institutions—and particularly our colleges and universities—to be insensitive and negligent in failing to attack effectively and vigorously the problem of white racism on two obvious fronts:

- "First, the development of curricula for colleges and schools which will teach all our youth what they should know about our central social problem.
- "Secondly, the encouragement and strengthening of situations of racial desegregation and integration where minority youth and white youth come to know and respect each other.

"In addressing the problem of racism in our society, we urge our colleges and universities to take the following steps:

- "To inspect their own course offerings in social studies and humanities to see to what degree their own students are being honestly informed as to the realities of minority experience in the USA.
- "To change their own course offerings, in both content and form for real social experience, to assure their students an honest and vivid sense of the pervasiveness and effect of racial prejudice.
- "To help local primary and secondary schools to study and change the course offerings and interracial experience of their students.
- "To develop a genuine, honorable and open interracial institutional mix—faculty, students and administrators—on their own campuses."

Other Major Concerns

While matters of race and class set the tone of the Atlanta Seminar and permeated the discussions there, the participants were not unmindful of the many other problems which beset higher education in the region and across the nation. The goal statements in this section represent an attempt to summarize the major non-racial concerns of the Atlanta Seminar participants.

1. *To restore public confidence in and support for higher education.*

Several reasons were advanced for the widespread loss of confidence in higher education. They included: the animosity of blue-collar workers toward costly institutions which largely exclude the laboring class; general belief that college administrators are incapable of administering the institutions wisely, particularly in light of the campus violence and disruption of recent years; disenchantment with "rebel" students; taxpayer resentment of the soaring costs of higher education; the failure of universities and colleges to be more accountable for their "products."

Whatever its causes, the loss of public confidence was seen as a major factor in the growing financial crisis in higher education. There was a general feeling that, despite inflation and unemployment, the public would be able to provide adequate support for higher education if it chose to do so. Thus, restoring public confidence was considered not only desirable but essential. Still, there was considerable agreement among the seminar participants that the public had a point. They saw the improvement of higher education in a variety of ways as imperative if public confidence is to be restored.

2. *To make higher education more precisely accountable for its performance in teaching, allocating financial resources, and administering campus affairs.*

Suggestions for increasing higher education's accountability were numerous. Some dealt with the modernization of campus administration and decision-making processes: the development of computerized management information systems, the involvement of all constitutent groups (students, faculty, administrators, alumni, community) in the setting of goals and objectives; the use of a "systems approach" to institutional management and resource allocation; and the development of policies and practices which would "build in" mechanisms to insure that the institution is responsive to individual and societal needs.

Other suggestions dealt specifically with the accountability of the teaching faculty. Chief among them was the suggestion that, when a student does not learn, the failure should be attributed not to the student alone but to the teacher. Other suggestions included the use of existing individualized instruction systems, the development of more such systems, and the increased recognition of individual learning styles.

3. *To view all education, from kindergarten through graduate school, as a whole, with each level strengthening the others.*

Many participants expressed deep concern over the isolation of higher education from elementary and secondary education. They urged dramatic improvement in the training of teachers for all levels of education, but particularly for the public schools. One group stated that improved college training of elementary and secondary teachers would have the effect, ultimately, of producing high school graduates better prepared for college entrance.

Several participants noted that higher education's responsibility for other types of education embraces not only the standard institutions but basic education for adults in rural and inner-city neighborhoods, and continuing education for all citizens as well. One participant said that the complex university is better suited than any other institution to see that education is extended to all those who need it.

4. *To improve state-level planning and coordination of post-secondary education in order to provide a diversified system which offers suitable options for students of all kinds.*

Several participants felt that, whatever their interests and abilities, all students should have post-secondary educational opportunities, and the state is responsible for seeing that appropriate alternatives are available to them. State planning should be comprehensive, encompassing the liberal arts and sciences, graduate and professional schools, vocational schools, technical institutes and two year colleges. Within each institution, as many alternatives should be available to students as that institution's mission and purposes permit.

Other suggestions included the exploration by state planning agencies of post-secondary educational opportunities outside the existing institutional framework—a television college, for example, or a degree-granting facility which merely examines and validates the student's independent mastery of subject matter, or awarding degree credit for internships in the "real world" off campus. Additionally, the state planning agency should assume the responsibility for providing access to higher education to students of all races and economic levels, and for devising an "open" system which may be entered and reentered at various points and at different times throughout the student's life.

These other aspects of comprehensive state planning also were touched on: the need to determine how to use a state's institutions of higher education in the drive to provide adequate health care for all citizens; the urgency of providing increased student financial aid, and of deciding whether—and how—the state should come to the assistance of private universities and colleges threatened with financial disaster.

5. *To encourage curriculum reform and innovation in higher education in order to prepare each student for a lifetime of learning and adapting to change.*

Many at the seminar felt that, although changes are under way in college curricula throughout the region, there remains considerable resistance to change. Others felt that the change that is occurring is more cosmetic than fundamental. To clear the way for meaningful, constructive change, some participants suggested that states should provide "risk capital" for curricular experimentation, that each state should develop experimental colleges, and that a regional clearinghouse should be established to disseminate the results of innovative efforts.

Additionally, a greater share of higher education's resources should be devoted to educational research and development at the national and state levels, and to institutional research at the

campus level. One specific target of such research was stated as follows: "Find educational methods to integrate knowledge and human values; reconcile intrinsic knowledge and compartmentalized values with real human needs."

6. *To improve instruction by tailoring it to the needs, interests and learning styles of individual students, and by emphasizing success rather than failure.*

One group said that educators must "recognize the uniqueness of each individual and that learning is an individual matter." Today's student, the group said, should not be subjected to the constant threat of failure; he should be encouraged instead with the promise of success within the scope of his own abilities. This means, the group continued, that education must be "humanized" by eliminating punitive grading systems, assuring the academic freedom of students as well as faculty, and providing for student participation in institutional governance.

Another group called for the rapid implementation of existing systems of individualized instruction, the improvement of guidance and counseling at both secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of optional means for the student to reach his educational goals.

7. *To identify and develop student potential for leadership roles in public affairs, regardless of course of study or future vocation.*

The prime concern here was that preparation for civic leadership should be as available to future electronics repairmen and auto mechanics as it is to future lawyers, teachers and business executives. Otherwise, graduates of the universities will step more easily into leadership roles than those who graduate from four-year and two-year colleges, technical institutes and vocational schools, and higher education will be helping to perpetuate class distinctions.

Suggested strategies included: establishing courses in citizen participation and public affairs at four-year and two-year colleges; increasing the use of minority group leaders as resource persons on the campuses; establishing internships for students with citizen groups and political activists; and encouraging student involvement in public affairs.

Epilogue

It was midafternoon Saturday. The hours of talk were beginning to weigh heavily. The pre-dinner break was coming soon, and it would be welcome. But about that time a white Tennesseean who had cast himself in the role of devil's advocate all day questioned whether this meeting was not, after all, simply another exercise in academic issue probing.

Protests arose from several members of the group, and it was apparent that a majority either believed that the Atlanta Seminar would influence the future of higher education in the Southeast, or hoped that it would. "If I didn't personally have the feeling that the group assembled here had the potential for effecting some long-range change in the Southern region, I wouldn't have come," one of them said. Another said the seminar "better have impact" if the region is to prepare its youth for the 21st century.

As it turned out, all three groups were action-oriented. They wanted to have deeds more than just talk. Two of the groups proposed specific action to be taken by the seminar. Group 3, as mentioned previously, urged that the Southeastern Regional Council of AAHE appoint a Task Force on Unitary Higher Education.

Group 2 made this recommendation: "Under AAHE or other leadership, develop a regional educational and lobbying movement to further the intertwined causes of educational reformulation and social change. Employing a model similar to Common Cause, the group should: (1) bring together concerned individuals and groups from student, black, poor, faculty, political . . . constituencies; (2) work educationally and politically to translate idea to reality in dealing with the region's educational and social problems; (3) provide a communications network and independent political base for coordination and advancement of grassroots reforms; and (4)

provide a distinctively Southern strategy (in a positive sense of the phrase)."

Against this background, a call for the creation of a regional task force, adapted from Group 3's proposal, arose at the final session of the seminar Sunday morning. Chairman Wattenbarger ruled that it would be out of order for the seminar participants to vote on such a measure, but said he would refer the proposal to the Southeastern Regional Council for consideration.

So the thirst for immediate action was not quenched. But there remained the hope that this report would have some impact on the leadership of higher education in the various states and result in positive steps at that level. And if that should not happen, the alternative expressed by the devil's advocate carried some hope of its own: What each participant learned in Atlanta might well affect his performance, reshape his attitudes, redirect his influence. And perhaps that alone would be ample reward for a weekend of nonstop talk. One white educator, late Saturday afternoon, related an experience which indicated that might be so. He recounted the amazing success story of an experimental program for minority students, conducted by a university in the Northeast.

"The success," he said, "was almost phenomenal. Something like two out of 120, in the first year, failed out. And they didn't really fail out. They decided they didn't want to stay. It's almost too high, because you almost expect more people to change. And trying to analyze it myself, I think that the reason why it was successful was one man.

"He was totally dedicated to this, and got a staff around him. What happened was that he was a great man and a great teacher, and he attracted other great people and great teachers, and they managed it. I don't think they used any extraordinary techniques. They were devoted to these youngsters. They gave them time and affection and love, and the youngsters responded, and made it. . . .

"And I think, perhaps when you get right down to it, that you can make all the systems you want, and . . . I agree . . . that the system seems to militate against it, (but) I still think it's possible to get this in a system. And there are youngsters coming out and beginning to teach who feel this way—not all of them, but so many of them. . . .

"I do really believe there's hope. But it is hope derived from the dedication of individuals who are willing to give themselves. . . ."

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The Council will sponsor a series of meetings throughout the Southeast in 1972 on issues raised in this report. For information on these meetings write

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