

Memorandum for the Files
July 30, 1970

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Brief Resume' of Visit of the Civil Rights Commission Staff

The Civil Rights Commission staff present were Mr. Justice Moore, Mrs. Delores Tripp, Mr. Harry Wright, and Mr. Owen Pearson. Mr. Moore was the chairman of the session.

Mr. Moore indicated that this was in the category of a conciliation session regarding the issues which were presented and investigated as a follow-up to the formal complaint filed with the Civil Rights Commission. He went on to say that if they find that there exists a basis for the allegations, there is this conciliation session. In their opinion, there is a basis for having such a conciliation session.

He went on further to say that they are prohibited by law to disclose any content of our discussion. No record is made of this conference. He said that they would report to the Civil Rights Commission that they met here at Northern Michigan University and will tell them who was present and that the investigation results were discussed and the kinds of actions and recommendations presented.

Mr. Moore then stated explicitly that there was clear evidence that Northern Michigan University was making a successful effort to resolve the problems which apparently exist.

Mr. Moore then began to go through the allegations one by one. With reference to discipline, he indicated that they were mostly concerned with the Charles Griffis case and the apparent bias and discrimination in the action of the Student Judiciary. They concluded that there was discrimination in their decision. They read substantial quotations made to them by students, and upon questioning by myself they indicated and admitted that all they had was that one side of the story and that they did not look further into the issue. They were very clear and explicit about this particular point making certain that everybody understood that they were reporting what was told to them and were not presenting this as undeniable evidence. In any event, however, they do have this in their files, and I pointed this out to them.

With reference to the implications of this conclusion, there was discussion of the Student Code of Conduct and the judiciary process document. They had in their possession the May draft, and we pointed out that there was a July 14 revision of that draft.

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They are recommending that there be established a review role for the Human Rights Commission of all judiciary and appeal actions. This recommendation further implies that findings of the Human Rights Commission be appealable only to the President of the University.

In a discussion that followed on this point, it was generally agreed that the Human Rights Commission would have a responsibility for an appeal action with reference to bias, prejudice, and capriciousness in the action of the appeals board or any of the judiciaries.

There was another recommendation they were making, namely, that the University institute a sensitivity training program for all judiciary members. We pointed out that we do have a preparation and training program for our Student Judiciary members and that this has been carried on. I pointed out to them that if they were talking about T-group sensitivity training, this philosophically was not a very acceptable approach to it, and this is something that we would have to decide in any event.

In the second item, namely, discrimination in certain classes, they were recommending that there be established a presidential review committee for sociology, music, journalism, and home economics regarding bias and prejudice in the instructional procedures of those classes. Again, they were reciting statements made to them by several students whom they interviewed.

They further were recommending in general terms the establishment of a black studies program. Further discussion on this point indicated that they had not anything specific in mind, but this could include courses, a possible minor, or even a major in the area of black studies. Mrs. Tripp went on to admit that they certainly do not have the academic expertise and competence to speak to these points in great detail.

They recommended further that we discontinue use of the textbook, "Rise of Christian Europe," and also that there be a review of texts in English, speech, social studies, and history. Guidelines for such a review will be provided by them, and also the State Board of Education guidelines could be used.

Their conclusion specifically was that Mr. Sindwani was discriminatory in the way of his instructional procedures. Their recommendation was "that we take appropriate action with Mr. Sindwani." Further pursuit of this point and discussion of it indicated that they had in mind that we take

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the burden of telling him that he was discriminatory. When we pressed the point that they should provide us with the evidence, they declined and said this was not possible to provide. I made the obvious observation that the whole area of academic freedom was involved here, and if there were any specific charges against him, this would have to take the form of a formal hearing by the Civil Rights Commission and appropriate charges and other judgments made by them, eventually.

They again made the general recommendation that there be formal training in sensitivity for all faculty and administrative staff. This, it seems to me, represents somebody's personal vested interest or bias in the Civil Rights Commission staff. This is an impractical suggestion, to say the least, and one which is open to question on a philosophical basis as to the worthwhileness of sensitivity training.

They next turned to the off-campus housing situation. They recognized that the Board had established such a policy already. They recommended that instead of removing the name, the Human Rights Commission should try to conciliate this with the person in town. The discussion on this point, I think, clarified the point that we ought not to put the Human Rights Commission in this particular position.

They recommended that the ten-day grace period be eliminated. Mr. Jones and Dean Kafer indicated that they would look into this matter.

They recommended that we employ a full-time Human Rights Commission chairman. I agreed that this would be an excellent idea, but pointed out that this as well as other staff needs of the University are limited very clearly by the unavailability of adequate funds.

They next turned to the matter of employment. Mr. Wright had a detailed statistical analysis on the basis of which he concluded that the blacks at Northern Michigan University were in lower classifications and were receiving lower wages, and there were less of them involved in certain kinds of activities. He particularly pointed out that in our work-study program there was a lower number of black students involved. The question was raised whether a grade-point average requirement was imposed by the Federal Government in this particular area.

In the regular student employment he indicated that there was a tremendously lower percentage of blacks employed in the kitchen areas of our food service. He thought this was not very good. I then pointed out

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to him that just two years ago the Black Students Association complained bitterly that most of the black students who were employed were employed in the kitchen and that they resented this kind of employment and wanted to be placed elsewhere, which we did, and the net result is now that the Civil Rights Commission finds this to be a point of contention.

The recommendation was that we recruit blacks for regular employment quite consciously and deliberately. With reference to the resident assistant, there was discussion as to whether a minimum grade-point average should be a basis for selection, and it was agreed that this would be looked at, as well as the role that is played by the personality inventory which is taken by all applicants.

They further pointed out that the percentage of blacks was low in the National Defense Loan and the Equal Opportunity Grant areas.

The final discussion was on questions by myself and Mr. Jones as to what appropriate action would be in their opinion with reference to Mr. Sindwani. A further discussion of this simply revealed that they were uncertain of this, and they backed away almost to point zero on this particular recommendation.

JXJ:MLA