

## SIMMONS COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

### 1975-1976 MINORITY STUDENT FACULTY COMMITTEE REPORT

A group of 1976 graduates of Simmons did for their master's thesis a "Ten year Follow Up Study of Afro American Graduates\* of Simmons," covering the period of 1965-1975. This report is obtainable in the Simmons College School of Social Work (SCSSW) library at 51 Commonwealth Avenue. The finding of the study do not substantiate a bonafide commitment by Simmons to the recruitment and training of Afro Americans. Comments from the respondents in this study led to the following conclusions: "1). Very few were actively recruited by the school, 2). Social supports were not provided by the school 3). The issue of race was not dealt with by course instructors, 4) Course content was much too narrow, 5). Training to work with Black clients was almost non-existent outside of the Core City Program, (a time limited HEW funded project), 6). Race was dealt with adequately in field work supervision and with fellow students."

In a summary of the report the authors made the following conclusion: "It seems that Simmons School of Social Work had no interest in training Black professionals until the late sixties when external pressures came to bear with the advent of federal grants and due to CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) pressure, the School announced a policy of recruiting and training Blacks. Enrollment of Black students went from three in 1969 to fourteen in 1970, Black enrollment peaked at twenty in 1972 and has been declining ever since. The catalog states that the School is mindful of the value to both the School and the community of increasing the numbers of Black applicants. If Simmons is truly mindful of this value, it will have to make more than a short-lived token effort. The results of this study point to the following recommendations: 1) More Black instructors should be hired as full-time core faculty on 'hard' money, 2) At least one Black should be in an administrative position, 3). The School's curriculum should become more relevant to the Black experience, 4). Admissions criteria should be broadened, not 'lowered,' and 5). Financial aid should truly be distributed according to need in both full-time and part-time programs."

#### Recruitment

It must be reiterated again that the Minority Student Faculty Committee feels that recruitment of minority students remains underdeveloped. The number of minority students applying to Simmons is dropping. Last year (74-75), there were 50 applicants, this year there were only 30, a 50% drop.

It is the responsibility of the School to establish an effective system of recruiting minorities backed with monetary incentives and social and educational supports that will attract these students. This recruitment program should become institutional with the School bearing responsibility for the program rather than minority students and faculty.

We suggest that the following approach be used when sending out letters to undergraduate schools and agencies:

- 1). Send 2 letters, one to the Dean and one to the Afro American department.



- 2). An ad should be listed in the National Association of Black Social Worker's paper (NABSW) seeking prospective applicants.
- 3). Minority students attending the NABSW conference should also have a booth set up for recruiting minority applicants.

We urge that serious consideration be given to these issues.

### Scholarships

A number one problem that still exists for incoming minority students is the unavailability of financial resources. The Minority Student Faculty Committee urges Simmons to explore all sources of fundings, so that minorities can continue to enroll in this program.

In CSWE's 1973 Guidelines for implementation of Accrediation Standard 123<sup>4</sup> A\* this point is addressed. The guidelines read, "While it is relatively easy to incorporate change into an institution of higher learning in periods of expansion, the enhancement of the programs of schools of social work cannot rely on expansion as the only instrument of change...Periods of forced stability or of contraction can not be used to justify failure to search for those instrumentalities that will help to improve the professional education of social workers."

The Minority Student Faculty Committee is still very concerned with the Simmons Scholarship Committee, and their approach on informing first year minority students about their commitments to scholarships in advance.

We suggest that explicit information in writing on each scholarship grant should be given and discussed with students before they accept.

If Simmons is mindful of the value to both the School and the Community of increasing the numbers of minority applicants, it must demonstrate this concern by maintaining and increasing the number of minority students

### Faculty

For the academic year 76 77 Simmons has not hired any minority faculty. In the Spring of 1976 the only full time minority faculty member with tenure resigned. Her leaving is illustrative of a pattern whereby Simmons is unable to keep minority faculty for any length of time. At present there is one full time minority faculty member without tenure, four part time minority faculty members. Hopefully in September 1977 there will be one minority faculty member who will be switched from part time to full time.

In regards to more minority faculty we also feel that a proportionate number of minority field advisors should be available so that a choice exists

The Minority Student Faculty Committee feels that they should have some input in the selection of new minority faculty. The Minority Student Faculty Committee is aware of College and grant funding limitations but we encourage the administration to seek more full time minority faculty who can be available

\*Standard 123<sup>4</sup> A reads: A school must make special, continual efforts to enrich its program by providing racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in its student body and at all levels of instructional & research personnel. & by providing corresponding educational supports.

to the School and minority students.

### Curriculum

A one semester course on racism should be a requirement for all students. Its design should be similar to the one taught by Ms. Elaine Pinderhughes. Its emphasis should be on the affective, rather than the intellectual discussion of one's racial feelings, the experience should result in an emotional catharsis and ventilation of one's racism.

There were several recommendations regarding the format of Dynamics of Racism content for the 76-77 academic year. Refer to October 17, 1975 letter to the Curriculum Committee.

In the Ten year Follow Up Study of Afro Americans it was found that the issue of race was not dealt with adequately by course instructors, although it was dealt with sufficiently by fellow classmates and field work supervisors. We feel that a separate course dealing with the Dynamics of Racism is crucially needed for the Simmons faculty.

The Minority Student Faculty strongly urges the Curriculum Committee to act upon the basic required course of racism and implement it for the academic year 77-78.

There are no new courses being offered for the year 76-77. In the research sequence there will be a research project dealing with minority issues.

### Field Placement

For the academic year 1976-77 one of Simmons inner city placements will not be used for this year. The field work department is in the process of developing more inner city placements as well as offering some new placements in the North and South Shore, due to an increase of students coming from these areas.

There is no change in the process for informing students of field work placements, refer to Field Placement section of The Minority Student Faculty Committee Report 1974-1975. The majority in the School will be doing field work advising.



A social policy class task force examined how the policy of affirmative action has dealt with racism and sexism, particularly at Simmons. Just as Simmons College began to admit Blacks and other minorities in the late sixties as a result of the civil rights movement of the 1960's and the riots, so came the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This was precipitated by minorities' pointing out inequities, inequalities, and inadequacies in society; by government's perception of unrest and a need to appease; by business' perception of an economy hurt by disruption and untapped potential; and by the ideologue of The Other America, the New Frontier, and the Great Society, which would wipe out poverty. For the first time since the 14th Amendment and the abolition of slavery, government acted against racism with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In title VII of the act are the words "affirmative action" which became the name of a policy. Nowhere in subsequent laws or executive orders has the policy of affirmative action been defined. In title VII sec. 703 (j) it does state that affirmative action in no way requires preferential treatment: and in further majority views on the legislation is a statement stressing that mathematical balance is not the means of correcting abuse. Affirmative action does not mean giving preference to minorities, lowering standards, or meeting quotas. In the absence of a definition of affirmative action the task force developed its own definition:

Affirmative action is a policy based on a belief that equity is a fundamental entitlement of every individual regardless of race, sex, creed, or national origin. This means actively assuring individuals are not discriminated against. This action means actively recruiting qualified individuals, and providing opportunities to improve one's qualifications, for individuals who do not have equal access to employment and/or educational opportunities.

The task force also circulated a brief questionnaire to get a feel for people's familiarity with affirmative action and their attitudes towards it. About 1/4 of the social work school returned the questionnaires; and of

these returned, most were familiar with the concept of affirmative action, did not feel it meant preferential treatment, and supported the idea that minority students (in need) at Simmons should be given scholarships first.

Simmons College has a tentative affirmative action plan that has never been voted on, and an affirmative action committee that has never met. The Accreditation Committee Report of May 2, 1973 for the school of social work states that interest in minorities is not reflected by the financial investment of the College, which therefore places the school of social work in a non-competitive position for faculty and threatens existing minority faculty students and electives. The College provides only \$7500 in scholarship funds to the social work school. Other findings of the task force duplicated and supplemented those reported elsewhere in this report. (Further data and recommendations can be found in the Minority Student Faculty Committee files.) As the country has backed off from whatever commitment it has made to minority groups, so it appears has Simmons College.