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CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY: ORIGINS OF WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR BLACK STUDIES

By

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ABSTRACT

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY: ORIGINS OF
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This thesis explores the creation in 1972 of the Center for Black Studies at Wayne State University. It seeks to illuminate events and circumstances that led to persisting problems of lower academic status and limited resources, which in turn provoked an 11-day sit-in by black students in 1989. Drawing on university documents, newspaper accounts and interviews with former administrators and students, it describes the close connections between black Wayne State students and activists in the surrounding black community of Detroit. It shows how negotiations over a proposed Black Studies program were stalled for several years by an impasse between students and administrators on the issue of student control over the program. It also argues that the center was weakened by the administration's unilateral decision to create the center without substantial student or faculty participation.

Dedicated
with love
to my wife,
Colette Gilewicz,
and our son,
Alexander Gilewicz Jones

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INTRODUCTION

On April 12, 1989, about 100 black students took over the Helen Newberry Joy Student Services Center on the campus of Wayne State University in Detroit.[1] For 11 days, the students occupied the building, which housed a variety of administrative offices, holding it as leverage in negotiations with university officials over a list of 17 student demands. That list encompassed a range of issues, including demands that the university spend more money on the recruitment and retention of black students and faculty and that the university recognize as holidays the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the anniversary of Malcolm X's assassination. But the students' central demands were that the university elevate its Center for Black Studies to full academic status, rename it the Department of Africana Studies, and dramatically increase its budget. The black students were angered by what they considered not merely neglect of the center, but active efforts by the university to dismantle it.[2] In the end, the university granted most of the students' demands, and about five months later, amid further controversy over the appointment of a department chairman, the university's Board of Governors officially created the Department of Africana Studies.[3]

In one sense, the agreement that led to the creation of

the Department of Africana Studies was the culmination of a struggle that began in 1968. Then, an earlier generation of black student activists pressed Wayne State officials to establish a W.E.B. DuBois Institute of Black Studies with full academic standing. The student activists of 1989 clearly were aware of that fact. When Wayne State President David Adamany issued a written statement the day before the protest began saying that the students' demands would "require study and deliberation," student leader Darrell Dawsey responded brusquely that university officials did not need more time because the students' proposals had been "proffered from as far back as the late 1960s."[4]

But in another sense, the confrontation that erupted at Wayne State in the spring of 1989 was the fruit of a troubled tree. The seeds were planted by the student activists of the late 1960s and early 1970s in a social soil badly scarred by the Detroit riot of 1967. That riot, in which 43 people died, stood as the nation's bloodiest outbreak of urban racial violence until the Los Angeles riot of 1992. Fears and passions stirred by the riot accellerated the flight of white Detroiters to suburban communities and the pace at which blacks were becoming a majority of the city's population. Detroit elected its first black mayor, Coleman Young, in 1973. Wayne State's creation of the Center for Black Studies in February 1972 was partly a response to pressure from black students and partly a genuine effort to expand the university's tradition of service to the troubled

urban community around it.

Moreover, the center had the misfortune of being created near the beginning of a 20-year decline in state support for higher education and at the brink of a period of extremely high inflation. When the black students occupied the student services center in 1989, the Center for Black Studies had an annual budget of $163,000, an increase of less than nine percent from the initial $150,000 budget approved in 1972.[5] In that same 17-year period, the Consumer Price Index had risen nearly 120 percent. That stagnant budget, ravaged by inflation, was a key exhibit in the students' argument that the university had little commitment to serving the needs of minorities. In that context, the agreement to give the center departmental status and nearly triple its budget to $472,500 was a big victory for the students and an important expansion of the university's commitment. But it also underscores the disparity between objective and accomplishment to note that the new department's budget in 1989 was only about $35,000 more than the budget proposed by the center's first director in May 1972,[6] and more than $160,000 lower than the budget first requested by the students who proposed the DuBois Institute in 1968.[7]

How did there come to be so wide and lasting a gulf between what the students wanted and what the university provided? It will not be possible, within the scope of this thesis, to answer that question completely; this will not be

a comprehensive history of Wayne State's Center for Black Studies. But just as the quality of an apple depends on the soil in which the tree was planted, the turmoil of 1989 was rooted in the circumstances that surrounded the center's creation. I propose, here, to explore the origin of the center and to illuminate, to the extent possible, the process by which it was created and the forces that determined its early environment.

One final but very important point: I have chosen to focus primarily on the institutional process by which the Center for Black Studies was created and therefore have resisted the temptation to delve deeply into the fiery rhetoric and passions of the period. As a result, this narrative may make the debate over Black Studies at Wayne State University seem more calm and gently reasoned than was actually the case. The emotional intensity of that time must not be understated or overlooked. My intent has been to provide a detailed description of events -- the whats and the hows -- necessary for a further exploration of the whys.

CHAPTER ONE

The 1960s earned their reputation for social turmoil. Nearly every institution of American society was being stretched in new and disconcerting ways, starting with the family, which was still in the throes of the post-World War II baby boom. That population explosion, in turn, had swelled elementary and secondary schools to the bursting point throughout the 1950s, and by the mid-'60s, the first wave of the tidal surge was crashing onto the shore of higher education.

This new generation of college students was coming of age in an era of aggitation, violence and confrontation. On an international level, the cold war, with its superpower tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, dominated world affairs and set a chilling tone for the decade with the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. By late 1964, the United States was deeply enmeshed in the Vietnam War and an anti-war movement was developing. Divisions over the war deepened and intensified as the decade -- and the war -- progressed. Eventually the dissention shook the country's political structure, prompting President Lyndon Johnson to drop his bid for reelection, sparking insurgent candidacies on the left (Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy) and right (George Wallace), and reviving the political career of

Richard Nixon.

Violence shook America on the domestic front as well. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 was the nation's first truly galvanizing public event of the television era. Although the gruesome images of Kennedy's death, captured on film by Abraham Zapruder, were not shown publicly for some time, millions of Americans did witness the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby on live television. Many millions more were transfixed through that long weekend by television coverage of the nation's mourning and the slain president's funeral. That shared mourning did several things. First, it transformed Kennedy, whose energy, charisma and idealistic rhetoric had already established him as a hero for many young people, into a martyr for the cause of youthful idealism. Second, it established the power of television to shape what Marshall McLuhan called the "global village," a world where information and images of dramatic events were transmitted almost everywhere almost instantly. This development grew in clarity and significance later in the decade as campus anti-war protesters were able to keep track of developments, not only in the war zone 10,000 miles away, but also among their fellow protesters at colleges and universities across the United States. And third, it began the process of immersing American culture in a sea of vivid images of real violence. From the murder of Oswald to the urban riots in Watts, Newark, Detroit and other cities, to the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and

Robert Kennedy, to the daily chronicles of blood and death from Vietnam on the evening news, television thrust violence and confrontation into the face of the American public.

The '60s also was a decade of movements, large numbers of people brought together by shared desire for social change. The anti-war movement was the largest and most widely recognized in the latter half of the decade but it was far from the only one. Other movements were beginning to develop around the efforts of women, Hispanics, Native Americans and other groups to change the ways they were treated by society. Each movement aimed, in one way or another, to challenge the existing social structure and its underlying assumptions, and each adopted, to one extent or another, the tactics of mass protest, civil disobedience and confrontation with authority. Those tactics had been pioneered in the '50s and early '60s by the archetype of '60s social activism, the Civil Rights Movement. That movement burst into the public consciousness with the Montgomery bus boycott, which began in December 1955,[1] and continued through the lunch counter sit-ins, freedom rides and voting rights campaigns of the early and mid-'60s. The confrontations with injustice drew a lot of attention to the protesters' tactics, and the righteousness of protest and confrontation was reinforced by the brutality -- the police dogs, fire hoses, billy clubs, beatings and killings -- with which the demands of the civil rights activists were met. The Civil Rights Movement was an inspiration to many

idealistic young people, white and black, but it also was, in important measure, a product of idealistic youth. The wave of lunch counter sit-ins that swept across the South in 1960, for example, was conceived and carried out primarily by black college students.[2] That burst of student activism eventually led to creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was the driving force in the Mississippi Summer Project voter registration drive of 1964. And the Mississippi Summer Project, in turn, was a compelling and deeply influential training ground for many of the student activists -- white and black -- who led later on-campus and off-campus movements.[3] All of these forces were churning the atmosphere of academia in 1968 when the Black Studies movement erupted on predominantly white college and university campuses across the United States. Inspired by the preceeding decade of Civil Rights activism in the South, radicalized by growing urban rebellion in the North, and galvanized by King's assassination, black students began increasingly to demand that white institutions of higher education integrate intellectually as well as demographically.

But the roots of the Black Studies movement went much deeper and much farther back than the lunch counter sit-ins or even the Montgomery bus boycott. African Americans had long placed great emphasis on education in general and on education about their own history and culture in particular. For more than half a century, black intellectuals, following

the lead of such scholars as W.E.B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson, had struggled to expand the body of knowledge about black history and to infuse that endeavor with a discipline that would achieve acceptance and respect in the intellectual world. Until the 1960s, however, acceptance of the idea that black history, black literature and black culture were subjects worthy of academic examination was limited mainly to predominantly black college campuses. A few white universities had established African Studies programs or centers, but generally those did not draw any connection between Africa and African Americans. By the mid-'60s, a few white colleges, sensitized by the Civil Rights Movement, were beginning to offer a handful of courses concerning black people and their history. But it was not until 1968, when San Francisco State College established a Black Studies department, that a formal program in Black Studies appeared on a predominantly white U.S. college campus.[4]

Given the fact that Black Studies -- not to mention black students -- were so new to the nation's white campuses, it is remarkable how quickly such programs took root. In 1967, when Harold Cruse published his landmark assessment of black intellectual history in the 20th Century, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, he made no mention of any debate over the introduction of Black Studies on white campuses. But by the end of that year, the debate was taking shape and it burst forth with great energy in the

spring of 1968, following the assassination of King.[5] Black students, who only recently had begun enrolling in large numbers at predominantly white colleges and universities, began demanding that those institutions expand their curricula to reflect a broader world, a world that included African Americans, their literature, culture and history. A few schools, such as San Francisco State, the University of Michigan,[6] and Yale College,[7] adopted or began designing Black Studies programs in the fall of 1968, but the great profusion of such programs did not occur until 1969.

Although 1969 often is remembered as a year dominated by the war in Vietnam and the anti-war protests that convulsed campuses across the United States, one study indicates that demonstrations demanding Black Studies programs were much more common. According to a survey by the Urban Research Corporation, there were 292 major student protests on 232 campuses in the first six months of 1969. Black recognition issues were raised in 49 percent of those protests, compared with war-related issues, which were raised in 22 percent of the protests. And while those black recognition issues covered a range of specifics, from increasing numbers of black students and faculty, to ending discrimination on campus, to general demands that blacks be honored by the institutions, 32 percent of the protests called specifically for more black studies courses or black studies centers.[8]

Proposals for Black Studies programs generated heated

opposition on both sides of the racial divide. White opponents often challenged the legitimacy of Black Studies as an academic discipline or argued that information on black culture and history should simply be added to existing courses in the traditional disciplines. Some black scholars also opposed Black Studies, fearing that such programs would lead to renewed segregation and undercut the struggles and gains of the Civil Rights Movement. But the debate over whether Black Studies programs should be created effectively was settled in 1969 when Harvard University, arguably the most influential leader in U.S. higher education, established an Afro-American Studies Department.[9] By 1973, more than 218 colleges and universities in the United States had established some form of Black Studies department, center or program.[10]

But the question of program creation was simply the more quickly and clearly resolved of two important debates that focused on Black Studies. The second debate raged with equal intensity among supporters of Black Studies over the question of what kind of programs should be created. There was no disagreement among Black Studies advocates about the value of education or even the importance of including in that education a full discussion of the contributions and achievements of black people. All of them shared a certain degree of black nationalism, at least in the cultural realm. King acknowledged the need for black awareness when he wrote, "The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to

American life and strip him of his personhood is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as this morning's newspaper. To offset this cultural homicide, the Negro must rise up with an affirmation of his own Olympian manhood. . . . As long as the mind is enslaved the body can never be free."[11] In that statement he does not seem so far removed from Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's assertion that

> Black people must redefine themselves, and only they can do that. Throughout this country, vast segments of the black communities are beginning to recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their history, their culture; to create their own sense of community and togetherness.[12]

And neither position seems at odds with the proclamation on education contained in the Black Panther Party's 1964 platform: "We believe in an education system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else."[13]

And yet, there developed a very strong ideological split among Black Studies proponents, a split that separated reform-minded intellectuals and political moderates on the one side from the radical and revolutionary advocates of Black Power on the other. Both factions understood the importance of education and both believed that black history and culture should have a prominent place in academia. But while the reformers envisioned Black Studies as a vehicle to

bring black culture and black people into the mainstream of the existing social and academic structure, the radicals saw Black Studies as a way to eradicate that structure altogether. In practical terms, this meant that the reformers generally supported programs that emphasized research and traditional models of intellectual rigor and achievement. The radicals, on the other hand, were more interested in social revolution and believed that traditional institutional models were useless and oppressive. They insisted that Black Studies programs must transform society by liberating blacks and other oppressed people, and to accomplish that must be committed to social action through close links with the off-campus black community.

The debate between the two factions closely paralleled the broader political struggle between the reformist, integrationist forces of the traditional Civil Rights Movement and the younger radicals of the Black Power movement. In some cases, the players were the same. For example, a pamphlet on Black Studies published in 1969 by the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund included an introduction by Bayard Rustin and articles by Kenneth B. Clark and Roy Wilkins, among others. Rustin, Clark and Wilkins were all important figures in the Civil Rights Movement and the pamphlet was consistently critical of the radical approach to Black Studies. Rustin expressed the reformist perspective most succinctly in his introduction

when he described the nature of the debate between the reformists and the radicals as a series of questions:

> Is black studies an educational program or a forum for ideological indoctrination? Is it designed to train qualified scholars in a significant field of intellectual inquiry, or is it hoped that its graduates will form political cadres prepared to organize the impoverished residents of the black ghetto? Is it a means to achieve psychological identity and strength, or is it intended to provide a false and sheltered sense of security, the fragility of which would be revealed by even the slightest exposure to reality? And finally, does it offer the possibility for better racial understanding, or is it a regression to racial separatism? The power -- and also the danger -- of "black studies" as a slogan is that it can mean any or all of these things to different people.[14]

Rustin's last question is particularly significant because it underscores the fact that Rustin and other reformists were committed -- on the question of Black Studies as on other issues -- to an integrationist philosophy.

Clark's contribution to the pamphlet was his letter of resignation from the Antioch College Board of Directors. Clark, whose groundbreaking sociological studies laid the foundation for the successful legal challenge to the "separate but equal" doctrine of school segregation, quit the board after the college created an Afro-American Studies Institute for black students only. "To encourage or endorse a separate black program not academically equivalent to the college curriculum generally, . . . is to reinforce the Negro's inability to compete with whites for real power in the real society," Clark wrote. "It is no excuse to justify

the deed by citing the demand."[15] And Wilkins, in a short essay, also assailed the idea of separatist Black Studies programs as "Black Jim Crow." In demanding such programs or racially exclusive dormitories, he wrote, black students "are opening the door to a dungeon. They do not see that no black history becomes significant and meaningful unless it is taught in the context of world and national history. In its sealed-off black-studies centers, it will be simply another exercise in racial breast-beating."[16]

But the radicals rejected the integrationist approach to Black Studies. Frustrated and angered by the intransigence of white academic institutions and what they saw as the glacial pace of change achieved under the integrationist model, the radicals increasingly defined their aims in revolutionary terms and increasingly leaned toward the use of separatist approaches they believed would promote social change by encouraging unity and self-determination among blacks. If the Black Studies rhetoric of the reformists echoed King's criticism of Black Power in Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, the ideology of the radicals was infused with the spirit of Carmichael and Hamilton's assertion that,

> The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society."(emphasis in original)[17]

In Black Power, Carmichael and Hamilton took the

metaphor of internal colonialism that had been devised by more moderate scholars -- Cruse and Clark[18] -- and transformed it into an activist philosophy. That philosophy put great emphasis on group identity, unity and autonomous action in much the same way that African independence movements had sought to shake off European colonial rule. It was, after all, the African colonial experience that had inspired the internal colonialism metaphor. Black revolutionaries like Maulana Ron Karenga and Eldridge Cleaver and radical scholars like Nathan Hare sought to apply that philosophy to academia in concrete ways. Karenga told participants at a Yale symposium in 1968 that white universities had three things to offer black people: "non-intervention, foreign aid, and civilizing committees" that would encourage humanitarian values among whites. Karenga's analysis was blunt and direct:

> What you have to understand is that you should not fool yourselves by thinking that education is an academic thing; it is basically a political thing, and it provides identity, purpose, and direction within an American context. . . . We say that we are another country -- you have to accept that. We are a colony ruled by a mother country -- that's the outside world -- we live in another world. What we have to do, then, is to try desperately to keep the outside world from imposing its authority and its value system upon us.[19]

The Black Panther Party went even farther than Karenga's demand for white non-intervention, calling for profound, radical change of the white institutions. In an 1969 article on "Education and Revolution" in The Black Scholar, Eldridge Cleaver, the Panthers' minister of information, said the

white power structure must be smashed.

> We have to destroy their power in the community, and we're not reformists, we're not in the movement to reform the curriculum of a given university or a given college or to have a Black Students Union recognized at a given high school. We are revolutionaries, and as revolutionaries, our goal is the transformation of the American social order.[20]

And in his own Black Scholar article the following month, Panthers Chairman Bobby Seale urged black students to take themselves and their Black Studies programs off-campus, "to move out and be more a part of the community, to educate the masses of people of the need to end the facist, brutal war that has been going on against black people for hundreds of years."[21]

Black students tended to align themselves with the radical interpretations of Black Studies and demand that the programs have a strong emphasis on community action. They also did not shy away from separatist concepts when they believed separatism would benefit black people. Stephen Lythcott, a black student at Antioch College, responded to Clark's criticism of the college's blacks-only program by rejecting the integrationist model that Clark championed. Black students could not afford to worry about the benefits that an integrated program might have for the whole society, he wrote, because their first responsibility was to their own growth and development.

> "[T]he major task of reorienting the Black college student, creating a new value system for him, and additionally putting his knowledge

> and skills at the disposal of the people he has forgotten in the black community -- these claims have the highest priority for us, are far more pertinent to our situation. . . . Black students have their hands full already without assuming the extra burdens of white education!"[22]

Antioch's program, Lythcott argued, was designed to break out of the either/or dilemma posed by the 1950s segregation/integration model. Clark, he said, was trying to cope with 1969 problems while trapped in a 1954 mindset.

One obvious legacy of all this debate is that there still is no clear, consistent, widely shared vision of what a Black Studies program should include, how it should be structured, and what its role is within the university. That much is clear from the divergence of names -- Black, Afro-American, Africana -- and the variety of structures -- departments, centers, programs -- that characterize the differing institutional approaches. And those programs have not uniformly thrived. In a survey of Black Studies programs undertaken for the Ford Foundation in 1987, Darlene Clark Hine traced the programs' structural diversity to their origins as a "response to political exigencies rather than intellectual and academic imperatives." She continued:

> Today it seems that no two black studies programs are alike. Their diversity is evidenced in faculty size and composition, relations with university administrators and more traditional departments, curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach.[23]

Because Black Studies programs arose in an intensely political environment and in response to political pressure

from black students and faculty, the programs' diversity may be seen as an expression of the unique interaction of individuals and institutional character that occurred on each campus. On campuses where the black students and faculty members pressing for Black Studies were influenced more heavily by the reformist ideal, we would expect Black Studies to reflect a more traditionally intellectual approach. Where the leading black advocates were more radical, we would expect the Black Studies programs to have adopted a stronger community orientation. Likewise, institutional character was bound to have an important impact on Black Studies. Universities that saw themselves as intellectually elite were more likely to adopt strongly academic programs, while those with a tradition of greater openness and community service were more accepting of programs with a stronger community emphasis.

Of the two variables, however, institutional character was by far the more dominant. After all, the relatively small numbers of black students and faculty on white campuses in the late '60s may have been able to influence administrative policy but they did not have the power to control it. Nellie Varner helped design an undergraduate black studies program at the University of Michigan in 1968 as a young black faculty member and junior administrator. She later became a U-M regent. In a 1992 interview, she said that U-M's graduate research Center for Afro-American and African Studies was designed to fit the university's

traditional and academically elite mold. She recalled that there were strong feelings, particularly among the activist black students, that the center should be more community-oriented than it eventually became. But that vision of Black Studies went beyond the university's limits. "I think that the nature of the institution and 'what was possible' at Michigan didn't allow it to take that kind of turn," Varner said. "In other words, . . . it was a choice of you're either going to do something that was in the Michigan tradition or we can't have it here."[24] The white university administrations also controlled the effectiveness and success of Black Studies programs through the allocation of institutional resources. Regardless of what philosophical model a given college might adopt, a program's ability to grow and prove itself as an academic enterprise depended in large part on the institution's commitment to the program. With adequate funding and staff, a Black Studies unit could attract the high-quality scholars and underwrite the high-quality programs that would win it acceptance and respect in the academy. Without adequate funding and staff, the most carefully conceived program could find itself diminished and marginalized.

Some of the reformists cited this possibility early in their resistence to the radical approach. Wilkins worried about "the practical difficulty that it costs more money to establish real studies centers than most colleges can afford and that qualified personnel -- black or white -- is simply

not available at this time." Activist students, he warned, "might well find themselves saddled with a poor substitute for a center, foisted on them by an administration ready to buy peace at any price."[25] And Rustin assailed the "patronization, self-flagellation, and pusillanimity" he perceived in many white administrators.

> Many of these would-be liberals feel that by submitting to the wildest fantasies of Negro students they are doing them a service, but in reality they only exhibit their lack of concern for the education of those students. And by permitting black studies to be opportunistically used for political and propagandistic purposes, they reveal their disdainful belief that the study of the Negro is not a subject worthy of serious intellectual attention.[26]

In her examination of Black Studies programs, Hine found that many of those programs had suffered from lack of institutional support or active administrative efforts "to thwart growth and development." Some programs also had been undermined, she said, by their origins as hasty responses to campus unrest, which forced them to rely on untrained directors unable to build academically challenging programs. Sensationalized media coverage of shootings that erupted at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1969 during a dispute between two black radical groups over the school's Black Studies program and a campus protest by armed black students at Cornell University that same year also hurt the image of Black Studies, she said. "University administrators who valued 'peace' and 'campus rest' had little inclination, courage or will to insist on quality," Hine wrote. "Thus,

black studies units seldom were held to the traditional modes of evaluation and scrutiny observed elsewhere in the academy."[27]

It was amid this national debate and in these stormy times for American society that the question of Black Studies arose at Wayne State University. It is important in examining the Black Studies debate at Wayne State to remember that Black Studies was only one of many controversial issues that engulfed the campus in the late '60s and early '70s. Throughout the period, Wayne State was the scene of heated protests over such issues as the Vietnam War; Black Power; the university's keeping of secret files on students; ecological concerns; Student Power Movement efforts to give students a say in university operations; the impact of urban renewal and university expansion on the surrounding community; and the efforts of student assistant employees on campus to unionize. Emblematic of this spectrum of turmoil was the takeover of the student newspaper in the fall of 1967 by radical students who changed the paper's name from the Daily Collegian to the South End. The new name was meant to symbolize the paper's broad social concerns through solidarity with the people who lived in the impoverished neighborhoods at the south end of the campus. It also implied opposition to the giant corporations, such as General Motors and Burroughs, whose headquarters were at the north end of campus. The editorial shift launched a lengthy series of running battles between the paper's staff

and the university administration.[28]

But to understand the process by which Wayne State arrived at the creation of a Black Studies program, it is critical, also, to understand the unique local environment in which these broader social forces were operating. First of all, although Wayne State celebrated its centennial in 1968, it was, in significant ways, a very new institution. William R. Keast, who was president from 1965-71, said in 1992 that the celebration was "a fake centennial . . . that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the earliest of what became the constituent institutions of what finally became Wayne State University."[29] In reality, Wayne University was created in 1933, when several unrelated small local schools and colleges were united into a single institution under the control of the Detroit Board of Education, which ran the city's public schools. The university was operated by the school district until 1956, when it was given a state charter and began shifting its emphasis to become, along with the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Michigan State University in East Lansing, one of Michigan's so-called "Big Three" research universities. The university's origins had built a great deal of localness and community interaction into its atmosphere. The transformation from a city college to a major state university that not only drew increasing numbers of students from outside the city but was shifting its emphasis from its traditional teaching orientation toward specialized research

was not universally welcomed, as Keast recalled:

> Now, when you begin to shift gears to achieve a greater degree of competence in research areas like physics or engineering, which traditionally have not been very hospitable to inner city needs and interests, tensions begin to develop as to why you're spending money on this or why you're spending money on that. You already had, of course, a large cadre of faculty members who had been in the university from earlier days and had a very different image of themself, not as one of the three research institutions in the state of Michigan but as essentially a local institution. So there were plenty of tensions within the university and the faculty and the constituent units as to what the institution should be and how rapidly it should move in different directions.[30]

But the tensions were not merely internal. Changes within the university reflected, to some extent, changes in the surrounding metropolitan area. Those institutional changes, however, also affected the way Wayne State was perceived in that metropolitan area, particularly by the black community that was heavily concentrated in the city of Detroit.

Wayne State had for years been unusual among predominantly white colleges and universities in its relatively high levels of black student enrollment. In a self-study Wayne State prepared in 1976 while seeking reaccreditation by the North Central Association, the university reported the results of a fall 1974 study of incoming freshmen. The study was part of a national survey, which enabled Wayne State to make some comparisons between itself and other public universities.

> These data show that Wayne State University continues to be exceptional in the percentage of black students admitted. Of the 764 students who

> stated their ethnic background, 21.1% are black. For freshmen at other public universities, this percentage was much smaller (3.1%).[31]

The self-study also included specific enrollment figures for Wayne State, with breakdowns by ethnicity, for each year between 1968 and 1974. Those figures show that in 1968, the university had a student body that was already 10.5 percent black (2,922 black students out of a total enrollment of 27,276). Black enrollment rose rapidly through then next six years to 6,557, or 20 percent of total enrollment.[32] The university cited those figures as evidence of its commitment to providing educational opportunities for blacks and other minority groups. Wayne State was proud of that commitment, which it traced back at least as far as the Plans for Progress, an executive order signed by President Kennedy in 1961. That order led to an October 1961 meeting, "during which institutions of higher education and large industrial firms entered into voluntary agreements to participate in the Plans for Progress Program. Wayne State University was the first university in the nation to sign this agreement."[33]

At the same time, however, the percentage of students who came from within the city began to decline. In 1966, 52.3 percent of the university's students were Detroit residents, compared with 38.8 percent who came from suburban and rural areas in the surrounding counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb. By 1975, the portion of the student body living in Detroit had fallen to 47.2 percent while the

portion of students coming from communities in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties outside Detroit had risen to 44.4 percent.[34] To a great extent, this change simply reflected the shifting realities of a growing and rapidly suburbanizing metropolitan area. But those shifting realities were deeply infused with racial politics. The explosion of suburban growth, which erupted in the 1950s, was fed largely by the migration of white residents -- and white-owned businesses -- from the city of Detroit. Although the early waves of suburbanization may have taken much of their inspiration from dreams of an idyllic, semi-rural lifestyle, there was also a strong element of rejection of the city. That was especially true in the wake of the 1967 riot when the pace of migration accellerated and the phrase "white flight" became a standard element of public discourse.

In this context, the shifting focus of Wayne State and the increasing percentage of students from suburbia was looked at with considerable suspicion by blacks in Detroit, despite the increasing percentage of black enrollment. If the riot in 1967 accelerated white flight, it also intensified blacks' skepticism about the motives of white institutions. Patricia Coleman-Burns, a black Detroit native who received three degrees from Wayne State, joined the Center for Black Studies as a graduate assistant in 1976 and taught courses there as an instructor through the 1980s, described the situation in a 1992 interview. "[M]y sense was

the university's perspective was to create a conclave in the middle of this city that was under siege, and the priority was to make it safe for white students," Coleman-Burns said. The suspicion began to grow in the late '60s and intensified through the '70s, under the presidencies of George Gullen (1971-78) and Thomas Bonner (1978-82), she said.

> "By the time we moved into Bonner, the university straight-up is saying, 'We don't want to be perceived as a place that is open to all these black folks. We want whites to come.' I remember the debates, they were public, around Wayne having to change its image from being this place where all these minorities came to."[35]

For his part, Keast remembers the strains of Wayne State being pulled in different directions by differing responsibilities and expectations. The university's status as a state research institution meant that Wayne State had to look beyond the city, or even the state, to attract students from across the nation and internationally as well.

> So I think the university board and the university administration, and I think it's probably true to say the bulk of the faculty and, we have no way of knowing, I would suppose a substantial number of students, did not want Wayne State University to become merely or only a community-based, overwhelmingly black institution serving only Detroit. Now, I don't think the question of admission in the university ever reached the point of such stark alternatives as that, but obviously there were, from time to time, tensions as to where the university's resources, where the university's efforts and so on should be directed or how they should be distributed so as to satisfy the variety of claims and at the same time aspirations that we in the university had.[36]

These emotional crosscurrents of university-community relations were just beginning to swirl when on July 23,

1967, the city of Detroit erupted in one of the most violent convulsions of civil unrest in the nation's history. The upheaval began with a police raid on an illegal bar early on a Sunday morning. Within hours the violence was far out of control and spreading fast over large portions of the city. Under orders from Michigan Gov. George Romney, several thousand National Guardsmen and Michigan State Police troopers began patrolling the city's streets Sunday evening to help the overwhelmed Detroit Police Department. By Tuesday, President Lyndon Johnson had sent in a detachment of federal troops from the 101st Airborne Division. By week's end, a fragile calm had been restored but at a heavy price in lives and property. The week of violence left 43 people killed, nearly 350 injured, about 3,800 arrested and about 5,000 (the vast majority black) homeless. Property damage estimates ranged from $50 million to $500 million.[37] That week of July 1967 has come to be recognized widely as the Detroit Riot. But it is significant to note that in the black community of Detroit it is still commonly referred to as "the rebellion." That phrase reflects the view of many black Detroiters who saw the violence as a revolt against an oppressive army of occupation -- the overwhelmingly white Detroit Police Department. But while the police department's history of racism and brutality was the focal point of black rage, that department was merely the most immediate symbol of all the white institutions by which black Detroiters felt oppressed.

Except for the churches of the black community, virtually all of the city's social and political structures were controlled by whites, and while there were no de jure ordinances segregating, say, public accomodations, demonstrations aimed at guaranteeing blacks equal treatment at department store lunch counters downtown continued at least into 1968.[38]

It is remarkable, then, that given the vast expanse and destructiveness of the 1967 riot, the fact that areas very close to the university were scarred, and the anger of many blacks toward all white institutions, Wayne State University emerged from the riot physically undamaged. But that lack of damage was not the result of dramatically warmer feelings of blacks for the university compared with other white institutions. V. Lonnie Peek, who was a co-founder of the Association of Black Students at Wayne State in the fall of 1967, said in a 1992 interview that while the university may have been more amenable to change than other white institutions, blacks at the time definitely considered it part of the white power structure. "The university was seen as an enemy," Peek said. "I can't downplay that. It was seen as an oppressive, white-oriented, Eurocentric-valued institution . . . Wayne State University was viewed just as the police department."[39] Coleman-Burns said black students clearly identified Wayne State as a part of the white world, albeit a part that was relatively open to them. "Wayne was an oasis," she said. "Wayne was not the world

that those of us who were black had to go back home to. So Wayne was somewhat isolated from that . . ." But at the same time, she said, the students had been thoroughly indoctrinated in the black community's deep respect for education, going back to W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington and beyond.

> Clearly, . . . the belief was that the single most important thing to move, to advance the black community was education. So they would say to us, we could come down to Wayne, we could go back into the community and they would all say to us, "What are they teaching you down there?" But they held us responsible for what we were learning. There was no way we weren't going to be educated.[40]

Keast recalled a vivid encounter with the black community's perception of the university in the strained and turbulent days following the riot. The enlightenment came in a conversation he had with several black students.

> I said to one of them, 'Has it ever seemed to you unusual that in the midst of all this rioting, burning and destruction, going on all around us, as close as two blocks away, that nothing of the kind happened on this campus?' And he looked at me with, not quite astonishment, but surprise that Whitey would be so ignorant of what the score was. And one of them said, 'Well, why the hell would we burn down <u>our</u> university?' And that, I think, conveys, far better than I could, the sense that this institution, which had been educating black students, school teachers particularly, for decades, was the principal resource that the black community in Detroit had for moving itself into either the mainstream of American culture or whatever they could make to modify it.[41]

In short, Wayne State University may have been one among many oppressive white institutions, but it had been open enough for blacks to believe they had a stake in its future.

If the university had not, as Peek and Coleman-Burns say, fully embraced the black community, it was at least, and unlike the police department, utilitarian. The emerging dialog over Black Studies, however, demonstrated that while the black community's sense of ownership may have helped shield Wayne State from the devastation of the riot, it also increased expectations for responsiveness and curricular reform.

CHAPTER TWO

On a morning in early April 1968, a large group of black students gathered in a lower level conference room of the Helen L. DeRoy Auditorium on the Wayne State University campus.[1] Not long before, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been shot to death while trying to rally support for a sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee, and the students were shocked and grief-stricken. As they struggled to comprehend the shattering news and cast about for something to do, a group of non-student community activists strode into the room. The activists were led by Kenneth Cockrel, a 30-year-old radical lawyer who was just emerging into the public spotlight. Cockrel achieved notoriety by representing black defendants involved in highly publicized violent confrontations with Detroit police. A decade later, he was elected to the Detroit City Council and at the time of his death from a heart attack in 1988, he was preparing to run for mayor. The appearance of Cockrel and his companions had a dramatic impact on Patricia Coleman-Burns, who was then a junior at the university.

> I remember sitting there feeling all bad about King and in walk these very tall, very strong folks, Ken Cockrel -- that was my first introduction to Ken Cockrel. And they walked down. They were very angry. And he chastised us because here we were crying for King, and where were we when Malcolm died? I had never heard of

> Malcolm. And I realized then that there was a lot of my education that I needed to engage in.[2]

But the incident was more than a simple lecture on the importance of black students learning about their cultural and socio-political heritage. The appearance of Cockrel and the other community activists at the student gathering represented an important force that had a profound influence on the development of Black Studies at Wayne State University: the relationship between the black students on campus and the black community of Detroit. For the message of Cockrel and the other activists was not merely, "Learn about Malcolm X." Said Coleman-Burns, "They walked in chastising us university students because the movement was in the community and what were we doing here?"[3]

That campus-community relationship was a vital one for black students and for the black population of Detroit. First of all, the black students at Wayne State were the children of Detroit's black community. But also, in a period of intense civil rights activism, those black students were an important source of energetic workers for a wide array of activist community organizations. And for the students, Detroit's black community, which was rapidly becoming the majority population of the city, was an invaluable source of emotional support, wisdom and leadership. The students looked to the black community for advice and the community expected the students to put what they had learned at the university to work in the community. This interaction was

intensified by the nature of Wayne State as a commuter institution. Detroit's black community was not merely a resource for the black students. It was, in fact, home. There was only one small dormitory on the campus, and a few more students, mostly graduate students, lived in apartments nearby.[4] That meant that most black students spent their days studying at the predominantly white institution but returned each night and on weekends to their homes in the black neighborhoods of Detroit.

The accessibility of the university to the city's large black community was a key reason why Wayne State had so many more black students than most predominantly white colleges. It also meant that black students who did enroll at Wayne State were less isolated than black students at other public universities nearby. Only 45 miles away in Ann Arbor, for example, Nellie Varner was one of just 203 black students on campus when she enrolled as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1964.

> There were so few black students on campus at that time that when we saw each other we'd speak. We didn't have to know each other. It was kind of like a country town. You walked across campus or anywhere on the street and you saw another black student you always said hi, you know. It was like, "Glad to see you here." . . .
>
> In my graduate school . . . I was the black person, you know, in my classes. There just weren't many of us at the time. There were even fewer black faculty.[5]

At the time, one percent of U-M's students were black. After a major student strike in the spring of 1970, U-M agreed to a goal of 10 percent black enrollment, but 20 years later,

the goal still had not been reached.[6] At Wayne State, blacks already accounted for more than 10 percent of the student body by 1968 and within five years black enrollment was at 20 percent. So black students at Wayne State, though still distinctly a minority, were not nearly as isolated on campus as their counterparts at other state schools.

Nor were they as closely tied to the campus. At U-M, students lived in dormitories or in apartments nearby, and because they lived at an overwhelmingly white school in a city with a very small black population, social events or other activities that addressed their particular needs, interests or concerns were largely of their own design. Because they lived on campus, the campus tended to be the focus of their activities. But at Wayne State, almost no one lived on or in the immediate vacinity of the campus. Many students commuted from neighborhoods where they had grown up and thus retained close ties with family, friends, churches, labor unions and other community groups they had been involved with for years. Moreover, for smart, young, energetic students with any interest in political or social activism, the black community of Detroit offered a vast supply of opportunities. The atmosphere, Coleman-Burns recalled, was intensely community-oriented.

> Whether it was the League of Revolutionary Black Workers or the rising Shrine of the Black Madonna or the Republican [Republic of New Africa] rap of the Henry brothers, . . . all of those, the Panther Party, all of those organizations were strong, in fact, most of them born out of the city of Detroit. So the

> other thing was, my feeling was this university didn't have anything to teach the youth. They were being taught in the movement.
>
> I mean, I think about all the meetings. . . . I never went to hear Malcolm, but many of my peers did. Malcolm came through here frequently, frequently. . . . Ed Vaughn and his bookstore and the study groups. I mean, you were politicized in the community. You didn't go to the university to get politics. You went to study groups in the community.[7]

Of course, this community orientation was not unique to the black students at Wayne State, a fact reflected in the pages of the campus newspaper, the South End. The direction of the paper's news coverage vascillated dramatically in the late 1960s as white and black students alternated in the paper's top editorial post. But in either case, the focus of the coverage was regularly off campus. For example, soon after John Watson, a black student, became editor in May 1968, a pair of black panthers appeared in the paper's masthead and the paper's content took a sharp turn toward black radical thought. The paper ran a full-page excerpt from Soul on Ice and over the year of Watson's editorship ran numerous articles about the national Black Panther Party, the imprisonment of Huey Newton and more local stories about the Detroit black community: labor organizing efforts of black workers; the New Bethel Church incident, in which nearly 300 blacks were arrested following an exchange of gunfire with police; a national black economic development conference held in Detroit. The next year, when white students became the top editors, coverage veered back toward the interests of the white radical left:

international political developments; the Vietnam war; and, more locally, the White Panther Party and the imprisonment of one of its founders, John Sinclair, on a marijuana possession charge. The South End did not ignore the Wayne State campus, but throughout the period its campus coverage was very spotty because of its editors' absorption with radical politics and community issues. Even the name, South End, which was adopted in 1967 as the paper was transformed from the Daily Collegian, carried a political message and a community orientation. The name referred to the geography of the campus and its surroundings. At the north end of campus was Detroit's New Center area, dominated by the corporate headquarters of General Motors Corp. and, at that time, Burroughs Corp. At the south end of campus was the Cass Corridor, one of the city's most notoriously blighted and impoverished areas. By naming their paper the South End, the paper's editors were consciously and emphatically aligning themselves with that part of the off-campus community.[8]

Black activists on the campus routinely consulted with leaders of the broader city's black community. Lonnie Peek was a founding co-chairman of the Association of Black Students at Wayne State in the fall of 1967. He had just enrolled in a master's degree program after two years of teaching at Detroit high schools. Early that fall, Wayne State was embroiled in a controversy over a symposium on racism that was sponsored by the university as a response to the riot that had torn the city just three months earlier.

Strenuous objections arose, however, that the university had excluded blacks in planning the symposium. The controversy led to creation of the Association of Black Students, but Peek recalled the controversy went well beyond the campus.

> During the latter part of the summer of '67, it was decided that there wasn't any community input into the formation of the Black Symposium, so community activists decided they wanted to boycott it and they organized inside of Wayne State. Right prior to me going on campus, a day prior, I had a meeting with Grace and Jimmy Boggs, Frank Joyce, several others, more revolutionary type individuals and they told me about boycotting the symposium. And I says, . . . when I get to Wayne State, yeah, I'll do whatever I can do.[9]

Peek was thrust into the public spotlight while taking part in a demonstration against the university's symposium. A white student identified Peek to reporters as a spokesman for the black students and in response to the reporters' questions, Peek said he represented the Association of Black Students with 700 members, a group he then felt compelled to begin organizing.[10] The symposium protest was the launching pad.

> [W]hat happened was that that was the first negotiation with the university. "You all go ahead and do your thing, us black students are going to do our thing." And about two or three months later, we had our own symposium. We brought in national people. . . . It was the first time black students at Wayne State had been involved in an event. That was the organizational catalyst. That allowed me to organize ABS because we had an issue.[11]

An issue that had been defined, initially, by off-campus black community leaders.

These kinds of community contacts were very important as the nascent black students organization began negotiating with university officials about the symposium and, eventually, Black Studies. The students looked to community activists for help in defining issues and developing strategies for dealing with the university. The community activists looked to the students as a force for advancing the battle against racism in the specialized forum of the university campus. Peek recalled the community influence as strong and helpful.

> Not only did you have students who interacted in the community, lived in the community and were part of the community movements, you had community activists who had direct access to the college and to the black students. So when we had an ABS meeting, we might have 200 people there and 75 of them might be community folks, who were young, who blend in. . . . And so they had input into the philosophical direction of the organization itself. So there was a marriage between the student and the black person out in the community who wasn't in college . . . and the student movement gave him a forum, too. That probably had a greater impact upon how we were thinking and how we were moving than the suspected oppression of the university. . . . [T]o be able to lift from the minds of community activists some of our thoughts and directions, I know helped me tremendously.[12]

Many of those community activists may, indeed, have been young and able to "blend in," but they were not entirely able to disappear. University officials saw them and knew they were there, though the officials may not have fully understood their connection. President Keast said he noticed the outside community people present during his early meetings with black students on the issue of Black Studies.

> We had quite a number of people at these meetings which were usually attended by, oh, 15 or 20 representatives of the black students. We quite regularly had people who were clearly not students. Who they were I never sought to find out. There's an unexplained, to my mind, gap in our understanding of the way in which the black students connected with black adults in unions, political parties, etc., etc. I don't understand how it all came about, what happened, who did what to whom. But nonetheless, the process was there.[13]

Black students, led by Peek, made their first formal demand that Keast's administration create a major Black Studies program at Wayne State in April or May of 1968, after the assassination of King. But it was not King's death that inspired the demand. "I'm not sure if Dr. King's assassination had any direct input in the process," Peek said. "Indirectly, obviously, it did. But . . . indirectly, as opposed to directly."[14] Keast said he believes "the impulse for the establishment of some kind of formal work in something broadly called Black Studies" began sometime in the fall of 1967, shortly after the riot. "It's hard for me to believe that it was anything more than pushed along by the assassination of Martin Luther King," Keast said. "That was a shattering event but it certainly wasn't an event that called into being a whole set of interests and activities that had not existed before."[15] Indeed, Wayne State had been facing growing pressure for several years to expand its curriculum to include more information about African American history, culture and literature. In October 1965, for example, a group of black students gathered about 800

signatures on a petition asking the university to establish a course on Afro-American and African History.[16] The petition drive, it is interesting to note, was reported in the Michigan Chronicle, a black-owned newspaper that focuses on Detroit's black community. Around the same time, a graduate course in Afro-American literature was offered, but the course was dropped when the black professor who taught it left the university. In October 1968, a young instructor named Geneva Smitherman told the South End of the frustrations she had faced in trying to revive the course.

> I wanted to teach the course but the English department said that I needed a PhD in order to teach a graduate level course. The next year it was suggested to the Policy Making Committee of the English department that I set up a 200 level course in Black Literature for undergraduates . . . We were told . . . by the committee that this was 'racism in reverse.'
>
> These are the only reasons why we don't have a course in Black Literature; the policy committee rejected the proposal each time and if presented again this year to the committee, it will probably be rejected again.[17]

Smitherman became an assistant director of the Center for Black Studies in 1974 and directed the center from 1977 to 1981.

These pressures on the university were intensified in the summer and fall of 1967 by the riot and the controversy over the Black Symposium. Eventually, in April 1968, the Association of Black Students approached Keast with a proposal that the university establish a Black Studies program. The exchange began with a letter from Peek to Keast charging that the university perpetuated the myth of white

racial superiority and calling on the university to provide $8,000 in "seed money" to help the black students develop a Black Studies program and also a "Five Year Program" to help more black students qualify for admission to college. "There is no question that a curriculum relating to the Black students is conspicuous only by its absence," Peek wrote. "We feel as though it is the responsibility of the University to assist us financially in implementing thes [sic] programs."[18] A week later, Keast and Peek met,[19] and on May 9, Keast reported to the university's Board of Governors on their discussions. According to the board's minutes, Keast said Peek asked about "the development of studies in Negro history, including the achievements and special problems of Negroes, and will provide the President with additional information on the kind of classes that he proposes the University establish."[20] That information was delivered to Keast on June 3: a six-page proposal for the Five Year Program and a 16-page proposal for creation of the W.E.B. DuBois Institute of Black Studies.[21] A draft budget followed three days later, proposing an allocation of $632,900 for the institute's first year.[22]

The DuBois Institute proposal was elaborate and ambitious, and it was suffused with the community-oriented concerns of the students who designed it. In essence, the proposal called for the creation of an entirely new college within the university, a college that would be named for DuBois, fully accredited and -- most important of all --

"under the exclusive control of the Association of Black Students." The first 10 pages were given over to a lengthy critique of the faults of the American educational system and the culture it sprang from, and a list of six criteria for determining the value of an educational institution. Those criteria emerged from the belief, asserted in the proposal, that "for such an institution to fulfill its function it must employ a radically different theory of education, a theory that will prepare the student to be an effective servant of the community." The six criteria were:

> 1. The degree to which the institution functions as a forum for the discussion of the problems that confront the community. . . .
> 2. The number of community projects that emanate directly from the institution. . . .
> 3. The number of community organizers that are trained by the institution. . . .
> 4. The number of school teachers that the institution trains. . . .
> 5. The number of "functional" intellectuals provided by the institution. . . .
> 6. The degree to which the institution functions as a center for the study and propagation of the community's culture. . . .[23]

The black students wanted the DuBois Institute to reflect those criteria by taking the traditional university structure of colleges and departments and radically reshuffling the way knowledge is organized within those departments. The institute, they suggested, would have the status of a college and would be composed of six departments. But those departments would be organized around concepts that were not constrained by traditional disciplinary limits, as the names of the departments

suggested: Community Problems Department; Cultural Studies Department; Development of American Institutions Department; Historical Development of Radical and Political Thought and the Afro-American Department; the Department of Applied Knowledge and Research; and the Department of Education. Each department would offer a range of courses and/or workshops and most of the proposed departments would cross traditional disciplinary lines. The Community Problems Department, for example, would offer courses bearing on political institutions, economics, sociology and psychology. The Cultural Studies Department would offer courses in history, black humanities, applied creative art and black literature. In some cases, it appears, disciplines would cross departmental lines. For example, the outline of the Community Problems Department included an economics course on "Labor Unions And The Black Community," while the Development of American Institutions Department was to offer a course called "Labor Union and The Afro-American."

But if distinctions between the departments and their functions were not clearly defined, it must be remembered that the proposal was a first effort to outline the scope and direction of an ambitious plan to reshape an educational institution. The students had, perhaps, a firmer grasp on the weaknesses they perceived in the existing structure than on the precise structural components that would produce the sort of education they sought. On one point, however, they were absolutely clear: Any meaningful Black Studies program

must arise from and direct its efforts toward the needs of the black community. The proposed Community Problems Department testified to that orientation in its very name, and in the fact that virtually every proposed course offering in the department incorporated the phrase, "The Black Community," in its title; e.g., "Merchant Power In The Black Community" and "The Church In the Black Community." But the extent of this community emphasis was expressed most succinctly in the description of the Department of Applied Knowledge And Research:

> This portion of the curriculum is not an area of specialized study. This aspect of the curricular structure will consist of workshops in which the student will demonstrate how well he can apply the knowledge which he has gleaned.
>
> The bulk of the workshops will take the form of community workshops as outlined in the introduction to this proposal. The remaining workshops will be Research Workshops in which the student will be required to demonstrate his ability to gather information which is essential to the functioning of the college and its various community [projects].
>
> All students will be required to participate in both aspects of this section.[24]

When implemented, the students proposed, the institute would operate with a faculty of 60, including six full professors, nine associate professors, 15 assistant professors and 30 instructors. The proposed $632,900 budget also called for at least 30 other non-instructional staff members, including counselors, secretaries, payroll clerks, coordinators, a librarian, an accountant and a full-time attorney. The aim, according to Peek and Ozell Bonds, co-ordinator for the

institute, was to establish an entirely new educational structure. "The graduate of this institute, first of all, will be able to serve the community," Bonds told the Michigan Catholic. "Black students coming out of the institute will have the knowledge to serve the community."[25] The same article quoted Peek as saying the black students rejected what they saw as the common American idea that "you measure a person's education by his pay-check." Peek added, "So we have to look at education from an entirely different viewpoint. And the thing had to be based on: How capable are you of serving your community."[26] The article continued:

> "We are talking about a new concept of education altogether; one that is much more applicable to us, one which is much more feasible, much more valid," Bonds said. "These courses are not merely black replicas of white courses."[27]

The university's opening response -- or at least Keast's -- to the students' proposal was generally favorable. In fact, about two weeks after their initial meeting, Keast sent Peek a letter urging him to submit the additional information about the students' proposals that had been promised during the meeting. "I hope very much that you will let me have it as soon as possible so that we can move forward with these discussions," Keast wrote.[28] The students' response was the lengthy proposal submitted on June 3. Although he perceived some serious problems from the outset, primarily the students' insistence that they retain control over curriculum and faculty appointments, Keast

publicly supported the institute idea and encouraged an atmosphere of negotiation between the black students and the university. "My initial reaction to the spirit and intention of this proposal, and my present view, are strongly sympathetic," Keast said in his annual report to the faculty at a December 4 convocation. "The constructive initiative taken by a concerned group of students in working out an elaborate educational proposal is, if not unique, certainly unusual, and highly commendable."[29]

In August 1968, Keast found private funds to send Peek and four other black students on a fact-finding trip to California, where they examined the efforts of several other colleges to design or implement Black Studies programs. And in September, he arranged a seminar at which the students shared their findings and proposals with members of the faculty, administrators, other students and people from the community.[30] Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit gave the ABS a $34,000 grant to underwrite planning for the institute.[31] In his December 4 report to the faculty, Keast was looking ahead toward continued progress in implementing some sort of curriculum change that would be acceptable to all.

> The next steps to be taken seem to me to be these: first we must have a faculty committee to consider the proposal in all its implications for the University, to meet with the ABS committee, to collect and evaluate faculty, student, and community opinion, to organize discussion of the proposal in the University, and to develop recommendations which can be considered by the appropriate

> University bodies. I hope to be able to appoint this committee within the next two weeks. Second, I believe we should arrange for a national conference on the intellectual, social, and institutional problems associated with black studies programs.[32]

Keast added that he already had secured a promise of funding for such a conference.

On the surface, Keast's openness to the students' proposals is surprising, given the radical nature of the changes the black students had in mind. The students were demanding a profound transformation of the institution, not merely in the content of the curriculum, but in the university's lines of control and authority. But while he was obliged to preserve and protect the authority of the university administration, Keast genuinely believed that Wayne State had to become more open and more inclusive. And despite the shift away from local roots that accompanied Wayne State's evolution as a public research institution, the university still declared that service to the inner-city community was a vital part of its mission. In his December 1968 speech to the faculty, Keast described the publication of a new brochure, "Wayne and the Inner City: A Survey of Urban Concern," calling it an "inventory" of the university's major forms of involvement with the inner city. Its basic purpose, he said, was "to provide . . . a rough index to our current performance in this critical area of University responsibility and, more important by far, to stimulate us to move farther, faster, more imaginatively,

and in new directions."[33] The university's 1976 Self-Study also describes the city as an important focus of the Wayne State's mission: "Increasingly in recent years the University has been acutely conscious of its special obligations of service to urban society and especially to the Detroit metropolitan area and its inner-city."[34] Keast said he tried to make that urban mission an organizing principle, encouraging the institution to see its immediate environment as an asset.

> One of the things I sought to do was to emphasize the need for a unique institution which took advantage of the fact that it had an urban location . . . that there were urban problems emerging more rapidly than anybody had anticipated that required research and care and ameliorating and that we were therefore in a unique position to do something about this. How far we succeeded is a different story.[35]

But many black students and faculty members thought the university's urban mission was honored more in rhetoric than in action. When they looked at Wayne State as an institution, what they saw most was fear and resistence. "The university was scared," Peek said. "It was in a volatile situation where it sat in the heart of the city with all these crazy niggers running around with dashikis and afros on. So it really wasn't sure how to respond."[36] Concrete actions, such as the creation of the Center of Black Studies in 1972, often were seen by blacks more as fearful efforts at appeasement than genuine commitments to increased institutional diversity. "Wayne State University is a university that's . . . very much afraid of, and

uncomfortable with its presence in a city that's turned majority black," said John Edward Simpkins, who was hired to direct the center soon after its creation. "This was a concession to the times and it was not a concession that was made because the university believed in Black Studies programs."[37]

A certain degree of fear and suspicion was to be expected on both sides. The riot had rubbed emotions raw. For a week the city had been convulsed in violence that most people interpreted in racial terms and that all agreed had heightened racial tensions. Only martial law and the occupation of the city's streets by the National Guard and federal troops had ended the violence. The National Guard returned briefly to the city in April 1968 after the assassination of King. Fear was on everyone's mind, and Peek did not cringe from using that fear in negotiations with the university. He told the South End in January 1969 that the university required prodding occasionally: "Whenever they balk at one of our proposals," says Peek, "We just say, 'Now look, you guys just had a riot here and none of us wants a new one, do we?'"[38] In a 1992 interview, Peek said such heightened rhetoric was partly a reflection of reality, and partly a conscious strategy because it was an effective tool in pushing the university to act. At the same time, he said, he enjoyed a friendly and constructive relationship with Keast. The problem was that Keast was not the whole university. "As usual at most institutions, the individuals

at the top may be sensitive, but as you get further down the pecking order . . . you get resistence," Peek said. "There was a lot of confrontation, hostilities at Wayne State."[39]

But the crucial point in the negotiations over the ABS proposal for a Black Studies institute was not institutional resistence to the concept of Black Studies, or even the community orientation of the proposed institute. The fundamental issue was control: the students demanded it; the university would not give it up. Keast recalled that the starting point for the black students was that, "they wanted some kind of program that they could run." Discussions continued for almost nine months, all through the fall of 1968 and into the early winter of 1969. Keast recalled those talks almost as a seminar that explored not only the students' demands and aspirations but also the history and rationale of university organization.

> My objective was to make clear that we could not have any part of the university in which the program was designed exclusively by, the faculty was both chosen and appointed exclusively by a group of students, or indeed by any other limited group, however well-qualified. You do not have a school of social work or a school of pharmacy on the basis of the wishes of the people interested in the school of pharmacy alone.[40]

By early January 1969, Keast had made his point clearly enough that the ABS abruptly announced it was halting negotiations aimed at creating a Black Studies program on the Wayne State campus and would seek, instead, to establish the DuBois Institute off-campus in the community. The

announcment took officials by surprise, both at Wayne State and at the University of Detroit, operated by the Roman Catholic Church, where parallel negotiations had been under way. Peek charged that both universities had been "dragging their feet" on the issue of a Black Studies program.[41] Keast issued a non-committal statement expressing Wayne State's willingness to consider "the question of possible relations between the University and the Institute."[42]

Looking back, Keast said, the students' decision to focus off-campus may have been "a natural consequence" of the clash of differing traditions and attitudes, "namely the traditional notion of the way in which the university operates . . . and the perfectly understandable desire on the part of this group of activist students to have a program they could call their own."[43] Peek said the students' decision was ideological, a choice to embrace the community self-determination philosophy of black nationalism that was very much in step with Carmichael and Hamilton's call in Black Power for black people to assert their own definitions. The argument for moving off-campus, Peek recalled, was:

> Why would we put a Black Studies institute inside a racist, honky university when we can establish it in the community itself and make it a credit that can stand on its own two feet? That was the philosophical position, which I disagreed with at that particular time. I always thought that the best way to change institutions was from within. So I thought it would have a greater impact from inside of the institution itself. But the sentiment was very strong in there

> from the nationalists, the Africanists. So I was but one vote.[44]

And so, armed with the $34,000 grant from the archdiocese, the black students set about trying to design and organize their own Black Studies institute off-campus. The effort was complicated by some internal dissention. When the students announced their decision to focus off-campus, they also announced that James T. Daniels, an instructor who taught courses at both Wayne State and the University of Detroit, would head the center. But the ties between Daniels and the institute lasted less than two months; by late February 1969, the students fired Daniels citing unspecified statements in his resume that they said could not be confirmed.[45] Ozell Bonds, one of the student leaders, took over as director and within a few months, Peek left, after a falling out with Bonds and others involved with the institute.[46]

But the institute and the students working to get it off the ground never entirely broke their connections with Wayne State and the university administration. "I think one of the things that happened was the realization that we really can't do this thing completely by ourselves," Peek said. "We need to have some relationship with the university."[47] From the university, the institute hoped to draw students, instructors and, most of all, academic legitimacy. If an agreement could be reached that would enable people taking courses at the institute to transfer course credits to

accredited degree programs at Wayne State, the institute's credibility would be established. Credibility also was needed to promote fundraising, and a tuition-sharing agreement with Wayne State could open the doors to a steady source of income for the institute. The university stood to gain as well from some sort of association with the institute. At stake for Wayne State was not credibility with potential funding sources, but credibility with Detroit's black community. The university did not want to appear insensitive to the interests of black students and was feeling significant pressure from black community leaders to work out an agreement with the institute. On July 16, 1969, a group of 13 black state legislators, all from Detroit, urged Keast to accept four guidelines for a relationship between the university and the institute: that the institute's courses be accepted with accreditation; that instructors for the courses be institute personnel; that Wayne State accept economic responsibility for the courses; and that Wayne State courses and facilities be open for use by institute students and personnel.[48]

In fact, discussions between university officials and institute organizers continued almost uninterrupted by the black students' abrupt shift in focus in January 1969. Two weeks after the students' announcement, Mildred Peters, secretary of the University Council, the faculty governing body, sent Keast a memo informing him that the council's policy committee had passed unanimously the following

resolution: "We recommend the prompt establishment of a liaison body to work with Mr. Daniels and the Black Institute." Peters also expressed the committee's feeling that, "This should be a liaison body authorized to speak for the University, acceptable to members of the Black community and still have among its members representation from the hard core academics." Normally, such a liaison task might naturally have fallen to the committee itself, but Peters alluded to the awkwardness involved in negotiating sensitive race-related issues. "It seemed to be the concensus of our members that the Policy Committee is too large a group to carry forth what is needed here and because of our pallor may not be able to meet all the criteria that we have enumerated," she wrote.[49]

The committee was duly appointed and had its first meeting with Daniels on January 29. In a February 3 letter to Keast, Daniels responded to the discussions of that first meeting with a 15-point outline of how the institute would be structured. The letter indicated that the institute hoped to raise $2.5 million over a two-year period and had already begun approaching potential funding sources, such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, New Detroit Inc., the Archdiocese of Detroit and local financial institutions. But while the letter emphasized that the institute would be independent, it also made clear the expectation that the university would provide substantial support. For example, the institute would be responsible for

recruiting its own staff and raising its own funds, but those funds would be "earmarked for the Institute and payable through the university." Permanent staff of the institute would be "appointed in consultation with university officials" and the institute would set the curriculum and "make certain, in consultation with the university, of the sufficiency of its contents for credit towards a university degree." The institute would have sole responsibility for and authority over non-credit courses that would be open to the community in general. The letter also requested another meeting with the university committee at which the first agenda item would be, "Finances being made available to the Director for the establishment of an Institute of Black Studies."[50]

Daniels' letter was forwarded to the university's lawyers. On February 18, General Counsel Richard Strichartz sent Keast a four-page legal analysis of Daniels' proposals. Strichartz told Keast that the university could not legally enter into the kind of agreement outlined in Daniels' letter because it would amount to a delegation of authority in violation of the state's Constitution. The proposal, the memo said, would require the university to give operational money to the institute, act as a conduit for admission to the institute, and agree to grant university degree credit for institute courses while the institute retained exclusive supervision and control over its operations. The memo concluded:

> The thrust of this proposal as revealed by said letter and Guidelines is a request that the University establish and support, at least in part, a separate institution of higher education over which it will have no jurisdiction and control.
>
> Since the Constitution of the State of Michigan provides that the Board of Governors must have control over the use of its funds, and since the Board of Governors' jurisdiction and power to operate an institution of higher education can not be delegated to third parties, it is the opinion of this office that the letter proposal can not be performed or the subject of agreement by the Board of Governors or the executive officers of the University.[51]

In late February the ABS ousted Daniels and Ozell Bonds took over as director of the DuBois Institute. Talks between the institute and the university continued and Bonds gave the university a revised proposal. But the revisions did little to resolve the underlying issue of control. Strichartz wrote a new memo to Keast's staff on April 22 stating that Bonds' proposal "has many of the same deficiencies" he had identified in his analysis of the earlier proposal by Daniels. Strichartz pointed out in the new memo that the proposal to have the university offer course credit for programs taught by the institute, which was itself not accredited, could jeopardize Wayne State's accreditation. Moreover, he said, the university had to resist the assertion that the issue of the institute's academic program was not germane to discussions on the proposed agreement. It certainly would be germane in relation to whether the institute was an accredited institution of higher education, Strichartz said. "We must also be very clear that we cannot

enter into a relationship with an institution which in itself, while seeking to create a black awareness through black studies, would be discriminatory in not admitting other races or ethnic groups," he wrote.[52]

In June 1969, the DuBois Institute issued a progress report. The seven-page document, which appears from its final paragraph to have been part of an appeal for continued funding from the Archdiocese of Detroit, focuses mainly on the philosophical transition that led the black students from their initial proposal for a Black Studies college within the university to their most recent design for an independent institute. But while the report describes substantial philosophical development, it also makes clear that in practical terms, the institute's organizers found their situation little changed from a year earlier. Included in the report are two lists: problems that have been solved and problems that remain to be solved before the institute's opening, then scheduled for September 29, 1969 -- just three months away. The problems that had been solved involved the institute's governing principles, administrative structure and curriculum structure. But the list of remaining problems is most telling. It included: acquisition of initial operating funds; finalization of site; orientation and selection of faculty; and finalization of the relationship between the institute and Wayne State University.[53]

Meetings between leaders of the institute and university officials continued through the summer. An ad hoc committee,

with a relatively fluid membership that included Bonds, Peek and several other representatives of the institute, as well as Winfred Harbison, Wayne State's vice president for academic administration, and several deans and faculty members, met at least three times in July and August of 1969. Minutes of those meetings indicate that both sides were still actively working to develop some sort of mutually beneficial joint program. Most intriguing is a proposal outlined in a July 31 meeting by Sidney Dillick, dean of Wayne State's School of Social Work, whereby the institute would essentially have been established within the university to be spun off as an independent body when the necessary source of outside funding could be found. Under this proposal, the institute and the university would have worked together to establish the courses that the institute considered to be the core of its curriculum.

> These courses are to be taught at Wayne State University by faculty substantially selected by the W.E.B. DuBois Institute and working in collaboration with Wayne State University faculty, with substantially all costs being assumed by Wayne State University. This will give black studies a program-in-being, and on the basis of this phase 1 the plan is to negotiate Foundation financial support for the W.E.B. DuBois Institute to become financially self-sustaining and independent, in which case the black studies program will move into phase 2 or Plan B.[54]

But the minutes of two subsequent meetings reflect little progress toward implementing the plan outlined by Dillick, or any other plan, for that matter. At an August 21 meeting, which appears to have been the last of the series, Bonds

said: that Ford Foundation officials were "respectfully awaiting a more detailed submission" from the institute before making any funding decision; that further discussions on an agreement between the university and the institute would have to wait until the institute was adequately organized, probably by February 1970; and that the institute did not expect to seek accreditation for four to five years. The minutes conclude with a notation that was not promising: "Mr. Bonds suggested, and the committee agreed, that no date be set for the next meeting and that another meeting be called whenever Mr. Bonds and/or Mr. Harbison decided there was something urgent to be discussed."[55]

The institute set about getting itself better organized, setting up a board of directors that included Keast and two other university representatives, and continued with its search for outside financing. But the search proved fruitless. Keast recalled that small amounts of money, "some spare change," were found from various sources and a few supplies, such as some old desks, were scrounged from the university. Major funding sources, however, were never found. General Motors Corp. considered a funding request for six months or longer before turning it down, and another longstanding request to New Detroit Inc. brought nothing.[56] By early 1971, the institute was a fading dream. "I think what happened with the institute is that the funding apparatus was never ever locked in place," Peek said. "I don't recall anything ever coming after the

Archdiocese's $34,000."[57] Discouraged by the lack of financing and the lack of substantive progress some of the institute's organizers headed off in different directions. Peek, who took a teaching post at the newly organized Wayne County Community College in the fall of 1969 and developed a Black Studies program there, was the first to leave. But by January 1971, even Bonds admitted his discouragement in a letter to Keast, in which he despaired over the institute's inability to find significant financial support. At that point, however, there was little more that Keast, who had always been the institute's main supporter in the university administration, could do to help. He had announced his own resignation as Wayne State president in September 1970 and was preparing to leave the university at the end of June.

Looking back, Keast said, the black students' aspirations may have been more elaborate than necessary, but in any event, ran into a brick wall when it came to raising money. Only one potential funding source was overlooked, Keast said, but that, ironically, was the black community of Detroit.

> I don't think that we ever made a serious effort to tap the resources of the black community. I think that was a mistake. If indeed we neglected that, that would have been a mistake. I have no recollection of our having attempted. I'm not sure at that time there was even a logical place in which to go look. You could have gone up to Motown or something like that, but I don't recall any conversations about how to get the black community behind this effort and get them to put some dollars in.[58]

In the end, the W.E.B. DuBois Institute of Black Studies fell victim not simply to a lack of money, but to an unresolved, and perhaps unresolvable, conflict over power and purse strings. As long as the students who launched the institute insisted on autonomy and black community (i.e., black student) control, the university could not legally finance the institute in any significant way. To reach an agreement that would assure financial support from the most obvious, and, in fact, most willing, source, the university, the institute's organizers would have been forced to abandon the concept of community self-determination that was a fundamental principle of the institute's organization and educational philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

In late January 1969, about two weeks after the Association of Black Students announced its intention to set up a Black Studies institute off campus, Keast sent a letter to Professor Alvin W. Rose, asking him to take over as chairman of Wayne State's Faculty Committee on African Studies.[1] Rose's appointment was an effort by Keast to breathe new life into an effort that had begun awkwardly. The committee was created in the spring of 1968, about the same time the black students presented their first proposal to the university, to study the possibility of creating an African Studies center at Wayne State. The committee grew out of the interest of faculty members who specialized in or had some affinity for scholarship related to Africa. Keast initially appointed as chairman Louis Friedland, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and the committee held some brief discussions that spring. By the fall of 1968, however, Friedland had begun an extended absence from campus and had appointed Professor James Christensen, chairman of the Department of Anthropology, to fill in as acting chairman of the committee.

Neither appointment sat well with some committee members. On November 18, Rose and three others from the committee (Oliver Osborne from the College of Nursing,

Audrey Smedley from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and Kenneth Wylie from the History Department) met with Joan Rogin, an assistant to Keast, at Rogin's invitation to discuss their concerns.[2] The four professors began by expressing considerable surprise that an African Studies brochure had been printed without them being consulted. The brochure, they said, seriously misrepresented the university's progress toward establishing an African Studies center when the interested Africanists themselves had reached no decision on what sort of center, if any, should be established. The professors also expressed bewilderment that Friedland, who lacked any African specialization, had been appointed chairman of the committee, and they felt that Friedland's selection of Christensen, whose leadership they did not consider constructive, as his stand-in was improper because Keast had chosen specifically not to appoint him in the first place. All four felt the committee's chairman should have a background in the problems, history and aims of various African Studies centers. Moreover, they strongly disapproved of the exclusion of students from planning for the center; Friedland had been adamant that student participation was inappropriate.

Keast's letter asking Rose to take over as committee chairman two months later suggested that Rose's appointment was an effort to relieve Friedland and Christensen from excessive burdens on their time. But the move probably was

aimed at least equally at resolving the problems Rose and the others had raised with Rogin. In a subtle nod to the concerns raised about the leadership of Friedland and Christensen, Keast offered to meet with Rose and the committee, but added, "I believe that the African specialists should be the principal determiners of the kind of African Studies Center that is appropriate to the University."[3] Rose, who was a black professor of sociology, was certainly an African specialist. He had spent a year as a visiting professor at Lovanium University in the Congo, a year as United Nations senior advisor to the Congo on social affairs, and a year as visiting professor at Haile Selaissie I University in Ethiopia. Keast's charge to Rose was twofold: "To determine what the character of a Center for African Studies at Wayne State University should be and to recommend the specific steps that are required to establish such a Center"; and to recommend a budget to support the committee.

Rose responded with a long letter of acceptance that laid out a five-phase approach to launching an African Studies program that projected administration approval of a preliminary proposal by June 1969. Revisions and efforts to win financial support from the federal government and private foundations would continue through the summer. Arrangements with cooperating African universities and active promotion of the program would extend through the 1969-70 academic year with the program to open in September

1970.[4] Rose also requested a reduced teaching load to enable him to handle the committee's work and money for travel, specifically to a national meeting of the heads of university African Studies programs. Keast gave his enthusiastic support, authorizing the travel request from budget of the President's Office and telling Rose he was delighted with the plan. "I am pleased with the timetable you have established . . . and hope very much that your work can be accomplished within this framework. I look forward to having the Committee's recommendations and proposed budget in the near future . . ."[5]

For Keast, the African Studies Committee was simply another front along which to press the effort of opening up the university. He was personally committed to changing the institution by making it more reflective of the nation's and the world's cultural diversity.

> [W]e had all this ferment of interest in correcting our university's, most universities' woeful inattention to the most salient aspects of the life and history of blacks in America and in the world generally. It was, and indeed remains, a pretty sparsely populated area, and every step forward is still taken against a hell of a lot of pressure. The same is true of Women's Studies and most other kinds of things that run against the grain of the established way of doing things. . . .
>
> I make no effort whatsoever to conceal my enthusiasm for this whole business. The testimony to that is the amount of time I spent on it. . . . I wanted to see something done, something happen. We had an enormous amount of energy and interest and there was a need. The question was what are you going to do and how are you going to do it?[6]

Wayne State's curriculum was beginning to change on its own

as interested faculty members began broadening the scope of their courses, but the process was extremely slow. In the fall of 1968, Monteith College, an experimental unit within Wayne State that focused on general education, began offering a three-course sequence entitled "The Afro-American Experience." The sequence was prompted by Herb Boyd, a black Monteith student who suggested the courses in the spring of 1968 and taught them in conjunction with members of Monteith's faculty.[7] The format, involving a student co-instructor, was remarkable in itself, but the effort to teach a survey sequence in African American history and literature underscored by contrast the absence of other related courses in the university. Geneva Smitherman, the only black English instructor then at Wayne State, told the South End that, "the Afro-American History class taught by Herb Boyd is the only Black course taught at Wayne."(emphasis in original)[8] In January 1969, the South End also reported that a seminar, called "Black Social Thought," was being taught by black students for the faculty of Wayne State's Department of Education.[9] It was in this context that Keast sought to encourage every option for expanding the reach of the university's curriculum. The protracted negotiations with ABS over the proposed DuBois Institute raised the unorthodox possibility of the university being able to absorb what it wanted and could appropriately use from the educational resources of an outside, autonomous institute. Rose's committee was the

conventional approach, seeking to design a specialized research center using models that already were firmly established in academia.

Rose's committee met through 1969 and into 1970, but progress was much slower than Rose had projected in his initial letter to Keast. At Rose's request, several students, including Lonnie Peek and Ozell Bonds, were added to the committee, which eventually comprised as many as 28 members. Some changes in committee membership occurred during the 1969-70 academic year, most notably the addition of several new student representatives from ABS because Peek and Bonds were no longer registered as Wayne State students. Both men, however, continued to serve on the committee -- Bonds as director of the DuBois Institute, and Peek as director of Black Studies at Wayne County Community College. Through most of 1969, the committee's efforts were hobbled, it appears, by confusion over the committee's assignment and the availability of the resources needed to support its work. According to the committee's final report to Keast in April 1970, the delays lasted into November 1969.

> For almost a year, your administration, under the excellent and wise leadership of Vice Pres. Winfred Harbison and Dean Harlan Hagman was not completely sure of this Committee's terms of references and, therefore, quite candidly asked the Committee to postpone its operation. Only last November, some five months ago, were we finally given a secretary, an office and the requisite facilities for operation.[10]

The source of the snags is not clear. Rose was not always easy to deal with,[11] but a lack of interest or commitment

in the university's bureaucracy to match Keast's eagerness for action is equally plausible. In any event, by very early 1970, nine months later than Rose first projected, the committee's preliminary report was beginning to take shape. In a January 5 letter to the committee's members, Rose noted that, "we have sorted out some ten major perameters which, if we can develop and fit together in a meaningful gestalt, might comprise a major University program in African Studies." He added that he hoped the committee would agree at its first Winter Quarter meeting, scheduled for February 19, to recommend, "the establishment of a permanent Center for African Studies."[12]

At the February 19 meeting, Rose outlined a 10-point African Studies proposal, which the committee unanimously adopted in principle as a recommendation to Keast, pending a revision that would include some suggestions for modest changes that were made during the meeting. The proposal, as outlined in the minutes of the committee meeting, included:

* an extensive international faculty exchange program;

* a Junior-Year-In-Africa program;

* creation of five faculty committees to promote teaching and research about Africa at Wayne State;

* an African languages program;

* a Michigan Consortium for African Studies;

* an annual summer African Studies tour;

* recommended improvements to Wayne State library facilities and holdings to support African Studies;

* a working relationship between the proposed African Studies program and the DuBois Institute;

* creation of a Center for African Studies;

* and a projected budget of $625,000 annually, or $3.1 million for a five-year period.[13]

Less than two weeks later, on March 2, Rose sent a letter that included an 11-page revision of the proposal to five outside experts and solicited their comments. The experts included officials with the African-American Institute, the Social Science Research Council, and Overseas Educational Services in New York, as well as Dr. Gwendolyn Carter, director of the African Studies Department at Northwestern University, and G. Mennen Williams, the former Michigan governor who was under secretary of state for African affairs in President Kennedy's administration. Interestingly, the revised proposal included an additional point, a university-community relations program, which Rose said would concentrate,

> on the strengthening of relationships between our University on the one hand and the larger community on the other hand with reference to Africa.
>
> There is a tremendous amount of organizational interest in Africa in the surrounding community and your Committee Chairman is just beginning to exploit these rich resources.[14]

Although the total proposal was very broad in scope, it appears that Rose was most interested, and most deeply involved in the proposed international faculty exchanges. It appears, also, that Rose's interest heavily influenced the

committee's direction and the proposal that emerged. The proposal called for four triangular exchanges, each involving Wayne State, an African university, and a third university from Europe, Canada, the Caribbean or South America. Rose began mining his overseas contacts by late 1969, with telephone calls and formal letters proposing the exchanges, and by February 1970 he had received letters indicating support from a dozen foreign universities: the University of East Africa; the University of Ghana; Lovanium University; Haile Selassie I University; the University of London; the University of Montreal; the Hungarian Technical Institute; Phillips University of Marburg; the University of the West Indies; the Federal University of Rio de Janiero; the University of Geneva; and the University of Belgrade. The exchange was by far the most elaborate part of the proposal, and also, by far, the most expensive, accounting for nearly 42 percent of the entire projected budget. The next most-expensive part of the proposal, in which students would have been able to spend a year studying in Africa, would have cost rougly half as much.[15]

On May 1, 1970, the committee submitted its report to Keast. The introduction referred to the report (bound, at least an inch thick with a 42-page introduction and voluminous supporting materials) as a "provisional recommendation -- subject to any revisions or modifications which you and your administration think wise." The report acknowledged that many relevant details were yet to be

developed but presented what its authors considered a "broad educational strategy" for the university.

> [W]e deeply believe we are offering something imaginative and constructive -- not an addendum or an appendage to be tacked onto the educational structure and process here at Wayne State University, but a recommendation which we think can suffuse and significantly reorient for the common good the entire University fabric.[16]

One additional point had been added to the proposal, a program of in-service institutes on Africa for Michigan public school teachers and administrators. The idea was one that already had generated some positive response from the state's Department of Education, the Detroit Public Schools and the African-American Institute in New York.

But almost immediately, the African Studies proposal foundered on the same rocks of inadequate funding that eventually sank the DuBois Institute. Within three weeks after the committee's submission to Keast, the proposal was sent by university officials to more than two dozen foundations with requests that they help fund the programs included in the proposal. Response from the foundations, however, was not favorable. Many praised the committee's effort, but none offered financial support. By the end of July 1970, the university's financing options were effectively exhausted. On August 3, Allen Hyman, director of Wayne State's Office for Research Administration, wrote a letter to Rose in which he sketched a bleak picture. All possible funding agencies had been contacted, he wrote, and

the submitted material was "exceptionally complete." But the response was discouraging.

> With regard to funding, the prospects continue to be disappointing. Of the eight "major" sources from which we have requested support for the entire program, all eight have responded in the negative. Of the twenty-two "minor" sources from whom we have requested support of some portion of the total program, seventeen have responded in the negative.[17]

The university was awaiting responses from several more, but Hyman said the outlook was not good, and his office had been unable to identify any additional potential sources of support. "I cannot help," he concluded, "but express my pessimism as to the possibility of getting the program under way this September."

The African Studies project suffered yet another setback in September 1970 when Keast announced his resignation as Wayne State president, effective at the end of the 1970-71 academic year. Keast said that his reasons for resigning were "entirely personal" and that he was suffering from "presidential fatigue."[18] But his resignation came in the wake of a controversy that had embroiled the university's rapidly growing medical school and had led, in March 1970, to the resignation of the medical school's dean and his entire office staff. Henry V. Bohm, then vice president for graduate studies and research, recalled that the year following Keast's resignation,

> was not a period when . . . new directions, new enterprises could be undertaken, other than in the medical school, which was just

> an enormous problem in itself. In other words, the Black Studies question, in terms of real substantive changes, . . . took a back burner.[19]

Although he remained as president throughout that academic year, Keast's focus, of necessity, turned toward preparations for his departure and the transition of authority to a successor. His time and energy were directed toward the daily management of the institution and tying up loose ends. He had neither the time nor the energy nor the strength (as a lame duck administrator) to push the university in dramatic new directions or launch ambitious new programs. The power void created by the announcement of Keast's intended departure was particularly unfortunate for the African Studies proposal. Keast had been the main administrative supporter of Rose's committee and his resignation compounded the economic uncertainty that had left the committee in limbo. In a letter to Rose in February 1971, Keast expressed his disappointment that his time was being "given over to many things not necessarily of my own choosing." "It is clear to me," he wrote, "that I will not be able to devote anything like the attention it should have to the comprehensive report prepared by the Committee and submitted to me last spring."[20] And in later letters to contacts at the Geneva Africa Institute in Switzerland and at the African-American Institute in New York, Rose cited Wayne State's administrative transition as reason for the delay in implementing the proposed faculty exchange program.[21]

And yet, while the African Studies program did not get under way in the fall of 1970 as Rose had hoped, the African Studies Committee did not disappear. The committee met at least once informally during the fall to talk with a representative of the African-American Institute, although there is no indication that anything substantive came of the session. Rose continued to look for ways to get an African Studies program off the ground and in December 1970 wrote a letter to Keast suggesting the appointment of a full-time director for the program, which at that point was still nothing more than the abstract proposals contained in the committee's report. Rose told Keast that the demands of his work as chairman of the Department of Sociology (a post he assumed shortly after taking over the African Studies Committee) were making it difficult for him to give adequate time to the African Studies project. He proposed, therefore, that the committee begin to screen candidates for the full-time directorship with the aim of recommending someone to Keast by June 1971.[22] Keast did not respond immediately and Rose followed his proposal with a note in late January 1971 asking Keast to appoint three new student representatives and an additional faculty member to the committee.

In early February, Keast consulted with Ali B. Cambel, executive vice president for academic affairs, who proposed a letter of response to Rose that cited the university's difficult situation in "a year of very severe fiscal

austerity" and said there was no way the university could afford a full-time director for African Studies. The proposed letter, however, urged Rose to continue serving as chairman of the committee "to insure a thoughtful holding action as we live through these hard times."[23] Keast wrote back to Cambel that he was "sure that Professor Rose will understand perfectly that our budget for this year (and probably for next year) cannot be stretched to include a salary for a Director." But while he also said he considered Cambel's suggestion of a holding action sound, he asked Cambel to meet with Hyman, Bohm, and Martin Stearns, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, as well as Rose and other Africanists on campus to see whether progress might be made in implementing at least some of the committee's recommendations.

> I believe that this whole subject area ought to be given close attention in the administration where responsibilities both for graduate and for undergraduate programs are held. I am reluctant to have such a comprehensive, multidisciplinary effort shelved merely for lack of ready money without being sure that all avenues for implementation -- even partial implementation -- have been explored thoroughly.[24]

The final version of Keast's response to Rose alluded to "the realities of our budget limitations" and mentioned his request that Cambel undertake a new review of the committee's recommendation. But it also reflected Keast's impending departure from the university and his inability to give the committee's proposal the attention it deserved. The

memo concludes with a request that Rose "extend to all of the members of the Committee my personal appreciation for their hard and extremely productive work, and, on behalf of the whole University community, our thanks for a job well done."[25] Although the letter holds out slender hopes for progress, its tone echoes with disappointment and dead ends.

But if the 1970-71 academic year brought a waning of the African Studies Committee effort, it also brought a resurgence of black student activism on the Wayne State campus. The most visible ABS leaders of 1968-69, Peek and Bonds, had moved on, first to the DuBois Institute and later, for Peek, to Wayne County Community College. But while their attention had shifted off-campus, their active participation in negotiations with the university, especially in the case of Bonds, meant they continued to dominate some of the key ABS issues through the 1969-70 academic year. In the spring of 1970, however, a new generation of ABS leadership began to emerge: David Booker and James Hood were elected co-chairmen of ABS. The black students continued to focus a great deal of their attention on activities and organizations in the off-campus black community. And demands for a Black Studies program at Wayne State still were framed in community-oriented terms. ABS "is demanding a Black Studies Program which will help Black students relate effectively to the University and society," Booker told the South End. "ABS believes that if the University controls the program it will provide nothing

important . . ."[26] In a lengthy November interview with the South End, Booker described the group's activities, most of which were community oriented:

> We are trying to get our Supermarket off the ground, since it is very much in the red, something like $50,000. It is also necessary to let black people know that they own something. At our Inner City Sub-Center, which is our community base, we have a variety of community related activities, like karate, movies, swahili, first aid classes, reading and things of this sort. We also have talent show dances.[27]

Booker also mentioned a newsletter, and a tutorial program that involved black college students working at a local elementary school. The interview included only one reference to Black Studies and that was a brief statement of support for the program Peek was developing at Wayne County Community College. But ABS also was revitalizing its efforts on the Wayne State campus. In December 1970, the group reorganized as a coalition of at least 20 independent black student groups. The aim of the newly reorganized ABS was to promote "cultural, political, economic, and social unity among black students and the community," according to Michael Alston, a member of the ABS publicity committee.[28]

To accomplish that aim, ABS set out to have an impact on the campus political scene. In this they were remarkably successful, electing in the course of the 1970-71 academic year 13 ABS members, including Booker, to the university's Student-Faculty Council, which had a total of 20 student seats. The black students recognized that the council had

little real power, but they were determined to use the council as a forum from which to pressure the university for a Black Studies department. "In a city that is predominately black it is ridiculous for Wayne not to have any real Afro-American studies program," Booker told the Detroit News. He continued:

> A black studies program has been developing for three years but never got off the ground because of lack of university support.
>
> We need an independent department to teach black studies, history, culture, literature and the black experience on a sophisticated level . . .
>
> We know the things we have in mind won't be achieved right away, but we'll inform the student body of our goals and learn the process to get our proposals approved.[29]

Booker and four other black student members of the council said that they wanted a program similar to the undergraduate degree programs at the University of Michigan and Harvard University, and that they intended to take their proposals to the state Legislature, as well as the university administration. At the same time, Peek was working to ensure the survival of Wayne County Community College by prodding the university to accept transfer credits for Black Studies courses offered by WCCC.[30] He hoped close ties with Wayne State would build credibility for the college and in the spring of 1971, after much discussion, Wayne State agreed to accept transfer credit for the courses in some cases.[31]

All of these forces -- the surviving, if latent African Studies Committee; the resurgence of student activism; continued outside pressure; the uncertainties of

administrative transition -- converged in July 1971 when George Gullen took over as acting president of the university. Gullen came to the post after five years as Wayne State's vice president for university relations. He was a Wayne State graduate and former president of the WSU Alumni Association who joined the university's administration after a 30-year career in corporate labor negotiations, the last 10 at American Motors Corp., where he had been vice president for industrial relations. He shared, on a personal level, Keast's genuine concern for social justice and institutional responsibility, but his approach was dramatically different. Whereas Keast was the philosophical scholar, lending his discussions with black students the aura of an academic seminar, Gullen was a mediator and arbitrator, steeped in the pragmatic art of the contract negotiator. Not surprisingly, his closest advisors and allies came from the same sort of background. Ed Cushman, who continued as Wayne State's executive vice president and treasurer under Gullen, was a longtime colleague and mentor of Gullen's, Bohm recalled.

> They both came out of negotiating backgrounds, arbitration, mediation. Consequently, George's instincts all the way were, no matter what the hell the question was, Black Studies, anything else, let's look at the problem and split the difference. So that George Gullen, the mood of his administration, throughout his administration, was one of, there isn't anything we can't settle by discussion and negotiation.[32]

Eventually, Gullen prevailed on another longtime Wayne State hand and labor negotiations expert, Ronald Haughton, to

return from a Ford Foundation mediation project to become Wayne State's vice president for urban affairs, a new post in which he oversaw several of the university's specialized centers, including, after its creation, the Center for Black Studies. Haughton, in turn, recruited John Simpkins to direct the Center for Black Studies in the summer of 1972. Simpkins, who had two degrees from Wayne State, had most recently served as head of labor relations for the Philadelphia public schools. Gullen, thus, came to the Wayne State presidency extremely familiar with the institution and with a determinination to get things done.

The call to action on the issue of Black Studies came in the form of a long and frustrated, almost bitter, memo from Rose to Bohm about two weeks after Gullen became acting president. On March 17, 1971, several weeks after Keast's memo to Rose, a meeting had, in fact, occurred between Rose, Cambel and Hyman. This was the meeting Keast proposed to seek ways of implementing parts of the African Studies Committee's proposal. The result of the meeting was that Cambel suggested that Rose pull together a list of existing course offerings in African Studies at the university. On July 13, Bohm sent Rose a memo on behalf of Cambel asking what had become of the list. Bohm pointed out that the course list was to be combined with lists of relevant library acquisitions, research being conducted at Wayne State, and African students enrolled at the university to define "this University's present program in African

Studies," Bohm wrote. "Such a tabulation is a very necessary step in any effort we can usefully undertake in asking outside (either federal or foundation) support for further work in this area."[33]

Rose fired back a four-page memo, with a copy of the committee's report attached, outlining the committee's history and expressing his dismay at the university's lack of action. In particular, he emphasized the extensive efforts that had gone into lining up the foreign universities as partners in the proposed faculty exchanges. Those universities had been told that the committee would let them know as soon as Wayne State's administration had reached a decision on its recommendation. "It has been, therefore, a considerable embarrassment, that until your memorandum of today (except for a warm letter of congratulation from the President) the university has been silent about this recommendation," Rose told Bohm.[34] Rose acknowledged Cambel's suggestion regarding the list of course offerings, but said the committee had seen no value in merely reproducing a list that already had been compiled a year earlier. "The reaction of our university faculty committee was that this suggestion did not represent a serious commitment, a clear indication that the university really would develop an African Studies program," Rose wrote. Moreover, Rose wrote, he had been advised by Harlan Hagman, the university's dean of administration, that "at the end of the 1970-71 fiscal year, there would in all

likelihood be no budget for African Studies." Rose said he had begun, therefore, preparing to terminate the committee "with a great measure of sadness -- primarily because I am thoroughly convinced that it is a serious mistake on the part of the university not to make a serious commitment in the area of African Studies."

Less than a week later, on July 20, 1971, Rose sent another memo to a dozen people familiar with the committee's work -- faculty members, administrators, and three of the newly elected black student members of the Student-Faculty Council -- asking them to attend a July 26 meeting in the president's conference room to develop a recommendation for submission to Cambel, Bohm and Gullen.[35] Because the committee was inactive during the summer break, Rose said, he thought the responsibility for offering a recommendation "should be shared by a more or less representative cross section within the university." Rose attached copies of the memos he had exchanged with Bohm, and said Gullen was actively interested.

> On yesterday, Vice President Cambel telephoned me to say that, having read a copy of my memorandum to Dr. Bohm, Acting President Gullen and he wanted to emphasize that the University wished action in this matter without undue delay. Accordingly, the Vice President continued, he wanted me, within the limits of practicality, to offer a recommendation which hopefully the University could implement straightaway.[36]

Significantly, however, the agenda was no longer limited to African Studies. Rose told the meeting invitees that the

university administration was equally concerned with Afro-American Studies, which had been the thrust of the university's protracted discussions with the organizers of the DuBois Institute. Rose wrote:

> Our recommendation, therefore, will want to be at least two-pronged -- what to do about African Studies and also what to do about Afro-American Studies. It may be that we will recommend the immediate establishment of a Black Studies program, with a separate faculty, Director, budget, etc. Or we may want to recommend something else entirely. In any case, this is an extremely serious matter . . .[37]

The day after Rose issued his invitation to the ad hoc committee, Gullen sent him a letter encouraging the effort and calling the list of invitees "excellent." Gullen also praised the African Studies Committee report, which he had just read, and expressed his commitment to "making progress in this entire area which has two distinct dimensions, a) African Studies and b) Black Studies."[38] Gullen said he would like very much to sit in on the July 26 meeting and asked whether it would be adviseable. He added, "I want you to know and the members of your committee to know that I regret that more specific communications has not taken place between the administration and your group and that it is my intention to correct that at once."

Gullen attended part of the July 26 meeting and made some introductory remarks that Rose said, "established a positive and constructive tone which prevailed throughout the meeting."[39] The ad hoc committee focused mainly on the issue of Black Studies because a comprehensive written

report on African Studies already existed. The committee recommended that a subcommittee, consisting of three faculty members and four black students, be appointed to devise a proposal, with possible alternatives, that the university might adopt in regard to Black Studies. The group was to be given 60 days to accomplish its work and a budget of about $1,000 for secretarial help and travel to other campuses in the state that had Black Studies programs.

Meanwhile, Gullen was receiving advice from others in the university who thought Rose needed to be reined in. Louis Friedland, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, sent Gullen a memo in which he criticized the African Studies proposal as misdirected and excessively elaborate.[40] To begin with, he wrote, the voluminous report of Rose's committee dealt only with African Studies and not at all with the Afro-American issues commonly referred to as Black Studies. Secondly, the report overemphasized international considerations, such as the proposals for faculty exchanges and student travel abroad, rather than focusing on resources available on the Wayne State campus. "In short," Friedland wrote, "it is more essential it seems to me to determine what additional staff and other requirements in the form of facilities, library additions, etc. are necessary prior to the launching of any large scale program." Moreover, he wrote, Rose's report was too ambitious in scope and its proposals "beyond the capacity of the University to handle with any significant

hope of success." Attempting such an undertaking would put Wayne State in the difficult position of competing with several long-established African Studies centers in the United States for recruitment of the necessary specialized personnel, he said. "The strengthening of our own facilities and faculty, would, therefore, seem to be the first order of business," Friedland wrote.

Vice President Cambel also wrote to Gullen, but his concern was the administrative difficulty of managing Rose's activities as chairman of the African Studies Committee and also as chairman of the Department of Sociology.[41] "Presently Professor Rose deals with a variety of University officers (Messrs. Bohm, Hagman, Hyman, Stearns and with me) but sends his reports to the President," Cambel wrote. "This causes confusion and contradictions. It is no way to run a railroad." Cambel suggested that Gullen re-appoint Rose's committee with a budget not to exceed $15,000 for the 1971-72 academic year, and that Gullen make clear to Rose "that he must differentiate between his duties as Chairman of the Sociology Department and as Chairman of the African Studies Program." Gullen responded with a memo to Rose that emphasized the proper lines of authority and suggested a meeting between Rose and Cambel to "sort out the various issues" involved in advancing programs in African Studies and Black Studies.[42]

On August 20, 1971 Rose wrote to Cambel, acknowledging Gullen's request that they meet.[43] Rose wrote, "I have, in

preparation for our discussions, drafted a concrete plan of action, to be implemented immediately." Accompanying Rose's memo was a five-page outline for a proposed Black Studies Center. The center was to have a director and a minimum of four additional faculty members representing the social sciences, the humanities, education and one of the professions. Policy for the center would be the responsibility of a University Committee for Black Studies, appointed by the president and consisting of five faculty members, two representatives of ABS, three representatives of the undergraduate student body, a representative of the university administration and the center's director. The final page of the proposal included an estimated budget totalling $197,000 for the 1971-72 academic year. Rose told Cambel he had discussed the proposal with most of the people he had asked Gullen to appoint to the subcommittee, but it appears that the proposal was essentially Rose's. The black students he had consulted later sent him a memo saying they were unable to offer meaningful comments on the proposal unless Rose could share with them the information he had gathered "regarding the planning, organization, structuring, and operation of Black studies type programs."[44]

Although Rose's proposal was not immediately implemented, the university administration moved ahead quickly in its preparations for a Black Studies program. By early December, university officials were beginning to consider Black Studies as part of a more elaborate plan for

ethnic studies at Wayne State. Cambel sent Gullen a memo on December 6 that appears to be a distillation of some earlier discussions.[45] In the memo, Cambel said the Center for Black Studies "would be the first of a series of centers dealing with the various components of the so-called 'non-traditional student,' i.e., Blacks, American Indians, Chicanos, women, veterans, as well as a host of other ethnic groups . . ." After several such centers had been established, he wrote, they would "become sections of a yet to be established umbrella organization to be called the Division of Ethnic and Minority Studies." Under this plan, however, the center would not have its own faculty and teach its own courses, but would focus on research and encourage the teaching of specific Black Studies courses through the existing academic departments. Still, the center would have a director, two secretaries and a paid, 11-member steering committee of center associates, each member representing a college or school within the university. For this sort of center Cambel estimated a budget of $309,300.

It was, however, an inopportune time, in economic terms, to be undertaking any large new project. In early January 1972, the university found itself in a major financial crisis because of cutbacks in appropriations from the state and because of a federal government ruling blocking a tuition increase under guidelines of the government's Wage and Price Controls. As a result, the university released 115 faculty and staff members and sent notices to 281 more that

they would be released in June.[46] The crisis eased somewhat by April, when Gullen was able to tell the University Council that state plans for a supplemental appropriation and effective cutting of the non-academic budget had allowed the university to retain all but about 20 of the terminated faculty and staff members.[47] Still, the university clearly remained pressed for money.

But Gullen was determined to get a center established. On January 31, 1972 he took his proposal for a Center for Black Studies before a meeting of the University Council Policy Committee, which was the executive committee of the faculty governing body. The University Council secretary sent Gullen two pages of suggestions the next day, some of which (such as incorporating the council's proposed policy governing the establishment of centers) Gullen adopted.[48] On February 2, 1972, Gullen spoke to the entire council, telling them his proposal would be presented to the university's publicly elected governing body, the Board of Governors, for their approval on February 10.[49] Gullen told the council that the center would coordinate campuswide efforts to promote Black Studies and would seek to stimulate new courses. On February 9, Gullen sought and received preliminary approval from the governors' Committee of the Whole, whereupon he then wrote a letter to Rose formally offering him the job of director of the Center for Black Studies and inviting him to make a few comments to the full board meeting the next day.[50]

In his remarks at the board meeting, Rose praised Gullen's proposal for the center for its underlying assumption that the history, experience and traditions of black people were worthy of academic attention; for its intention to link the center with virtually every departmental unit on campus; and for the commitment from the top leadership of the university that it represented.[51] He said this Black Studies program would bear fruit precisely because it had sprung from that commitment, unlike programs at many other universities where young black students were forced to prod the institutions to action in the absence of leadership from the university administration. Credit, he said, was due to Gullen and Cambel:

> The facts are that the Acting President and the Vice President of this University, upon assuming office a few months ago, saw that the approximately thirty million Black people in this nation were substantially unaccounted for in the curriculum of Wayne State University -- that what thinking and programs we do have are un-coordinated, and that something must be done to correct the matter.[52]

But Rose also put three reservations on his acceptance of the center directorship: that the center office would be assigned at least one executive level secretary and one administrative officer; that the president would appoint an advisory committee that would be one-third faculty, one-third students and one-third at-large members, "including perhaps representatives from the surrounding South-Eastern Michigan community"; and, finally, the approval of an adequate budget. Gullen thanked Rose and said

he was sure Rose's objectives could be accomplished, whereupon the board approved creation of the center. No specific budget was mentioned.[53] A news release announcing the board's action was issued, in which Gullen said the university already offered 86 courses in Black Studies. Enrollment in those courses had grown 11 percent, to 2,555 students, from 1969-70 to 1970-71.[54]

Black students, however, were not impressed. At a meeting with Gullen two days before the board's action, black students angrily attacked Gullen's proposal because students had not been involved in the planning and because the center would be controlled by the university administration. ABS Chairman Duane Lewis reminded Gullen that the black students had developed close ties with black community organizations and black state legislators. "They have expressed a desire to see an autonomous Black Studies Center established here at Wayne," Lewis said. "Speaking for the Black population here at Wayne, This will not do, Mr. Gullen. We will not accept this."[55] The students also challenged Gullen's claim that the university offered 86 courses related to Black Studies; they said many of those courses cited in the in university's registration book were not open for registration. Lonnie Peek also attended the meeting and urged Gullen to increase student involvement in the plan. "I hope you move to break away from tradition," Peek said. "Since this program is to meet the needs of students, they should have an input or the program may find

a way of becoming watered down."[56] The day after the governors' meeting, the South End carried a front-page editorial signed by a black student, Gene Cunningham, denouncing the board's action. "The Center for Black Studies as approved by the WSU Board of Governors is totally unacceptable to Black students," Cunningham wrote. The editorial cited Rose's reservations on the issues of staffing, funding and the advisory committee as drawbacks.

> Black students cannot be mislead (sic) by Administration deceptions. The "86 courses of minority interest" are phantom courses, most aren't currently offered and many never were or ever will be. Dr. Rose and the Association of Black Students stand firm. 86 dummy courses that don't exist and a Black Studies center without Black control are half-assed tricks with no effect.[57]

Black student protests against the center, in the form of rallies and additional articles and editorials in the South End, continued into the early spring. Meanwhile, Rose set about creating the center. At some point, probably in late April but the date is not clear, Rose submitted a proposed budget that called for an allocation of $53,638 to the center for the remainder of the academic year and a 1972-73 budget of $231,275. Attached were 12 pages of memoranda explaining many of the line items. The full-year budget called for, in addition to the center director, an assistant director, a research director, two secretaries, four student assistants, 12 research fellows and four visiting black and/or African professors. The budget also contemplated a symposium on African arts and a symposium on

the music of black Americans to be sponsored by the center.[58] Rose also developed an agenda for a meeting with Gullen and Cambel, probably on April 27, that ran to 15 items, one of which listed 13 subitems, and included a binder of supporting material nearly as thick as his committee's African Studies proposal two years earlier.[59] Among the agenda items were the two symposia; a proposed constitution for the center; proposed contracts for the assistant director, research director and research fellows; office space for the center; relationships with black students; the advisory committee; appointment of an executive committee; a proposal to bring Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania, to campus as commencement speaker; and updates on discussions Rose had had with a host of government and foundation officials in Washington and Lansing. It was a busy spring.

But the launching of the Center for Black Studies was not smooth. Although the center nominally opened March 1, Rose essentially was the center throughout the spring and into the early summer. And although the administration's interest had clearly been stronger in the area of Afro-American Studies (witness the "Black Studies" in the center's name) Rose continued to emphasize ideas aimed at building direct contacts with Africa. He traveled in early April to Washington, where he met with officials at several agencies involved with international economic and educational development. Within several weeks, he had won

tentative commitments from the Agency for International Development and the Michigan Department of Education to participate in a program of in-service training institutes for Michigan public school teachers, linked to a summer African tour, which had been one of the African Studies Committee's proposals.

However, the center's budget continued to be a big stumbling block. Money was needed to hire staff and initiate programs like the symposia and the in-service institutes. But in late April, Rose wrote a memo in response to a series of pointed questions from the Liberal Arts Student Board in which he told the students that, "As of now, the Center has no budget."[60] He said he expected to submit a proposed budget to the administration within a few days. This was probably the budget that projected $231,275 in spending for 1972-73. By late May, that figure had ballooned to $438,275 with the addition of the in-service project and a proposal to hire seven new Black Studies faculty members, one each in the departments of history, sociology, economics, political science, English, psychology and music.[61]

Just how far apart were Rose's ambitions for the center and the university's priorities was made clear in June, when the Board of Governors adopted a 1972-73 university budget that included just $150,000 for the Center for Black Studies.[62] The center's full-time staff, under the final budget, included a director and assistant director (who was to receive $10,000 in pay and benefits, instead of the the

$21,850 Rose had proposed) and only one secretary. The second secretary was deleted as was the research director; the money requested for student assistants and research fellowships was cut by 57 percent. The $126,000 proposed allocation for additional Black Studies faculty was gone altogether, and the $44,000 requested for the in-service institutes was trimmed to $30,000, with the notation that this money was "a minimum contingency fund" pending approval of a three-year, $430,000 grant requested from the federal government. In a memo to Rose, Ronald Haughton, vice president for urban affairs, acknowledged that the board's allocation was "essentially a skelton [sic] budget" but promised that once the center was up and running, he, Rose and perhaps others, "will get together with a view to raising additional money from outside sources, both government and private, to expand the program of the Center."[63]

It may be that Rose saw this budget disappointment coming, or perhaps he was simply frustrated that so little had come of all the effort he had put into the African Studies Committee. In any event, by late May 1972, he had decided to leave Wayne State for a position at the University of Miami the following September.[64] Over the summer, John Edward Simpkins, the chief negotiator for the Philadelphia public school district and former director of Harvard University's Center for Urban Studies, was hired to replace Rose as director of the Center for Black Studies.

Simpkins said his contact with Rose was very brief, but that he came away with the impression that Rose "was leaving here very bitter, that it had been a very bitter experience for him at the end of his career . . ."[65] And so Simpkins took over the center and brought with him a decidedly negative attitude toward Black Studies but also a determination to accomplish as much as he could with the resources available.

Simpkins was not a believer in Black Studies. His attitude was so negative, in fact, that Rose opposed his appointment at Wayne State.[66] Simpkins recalled serving on the search committee that had tried to hire John Hope Franklin to head Harvard's new Black Studies Department. Franklin turned Harvard down, Simpkins said, because they wanted him for Black Studies, rather than offering him a position in the History Department. Simpkins continued:

> And I felt the same way, that black scholars should not be put into some less-than-mainstream area of the university. . . . And Rose was quite right in saying that I was negative about the Department of Black Studies. But I told the university that, even when I interviewed. But if you're going to have one, then I thought it ought to have its own faculty.[67]

Of course, he realized, "You can't hire any faculty with $150,000." So he set about looking for ways to use the money to maximum effect. The center used about $60,000 of its budget for fellowships, mainly to graduate students, and when necessary paid various departments for pieces of a faculty member's time. Of necessity, the center's focus was much more local. About $10,000 was transferred to Monteith

College for the design of a new Black Studies seminar to be offered jointly by Monteith and the College of Liberal Arts and taught by several of the center's fellows.[68] The center also began working with students and faculty in the College of Education to develop "a pilot program for attacking reading deficiencies" at Duffield Elementary School in Detroit. That project was co-sponsored by Calvary Baptist Church and was funded by a grant from the federal Model Neighborhoods program. The center continued to work at cultivating African contacts but the effort was much diminished. The Agency for International Development turned down the funding request for the in-service institutes in 1972, but the center was preparing to revise the proposal and resubmit it for 1973. And Simpkins continued to struggle with the skepticism of the university's black students.[69]

But by the end of 1972, Wayne State's Center for Black Studies was up and running. Walking might be a better description, or even crawling, given the extremely limited resources available. The center's budget for its first full year was far below the first ABS proposal in the spring of 1968, and nearly 25 percent lower than the lowest figure contemplated by Rose in any of his proposed budgets. And as a result, the center itself was a mere leaf on the imposing new branch of the academic tree that ABS had proposed. It bore only a faint family resemblance, as well, to the ambitious programs advocated by Rose, through his African Studies committee and in his budget proposals following the

center's approval by the Board of Governors. But nearly five years after the first ABS proposal to President Keast, and more than five years after the first surge of intense black student activism began to reshape the campus consciousness, a tangible Black Studies program existed at Wayne State University.

CONCLUSIONS

In the four years of negotiation, debate, study and discussion that preceeded the creation of Wayne State University's Center for Black Studies two events had a profound effect on the long-term future of the center. The first was the decision, in January 1969, by the Association of Black Students to pursue creation of an autonomous Black Studies institute off-campus. The second was the decision by George Gullen, shortly after he became acting president in July 1971, to push ahead unilaterally with creation of a Black Studies center on campus. In the first case, the importance of the ABS action was that it underscored the inability of the black students and the university administration to come anywhere near a meeting of the minds on the issue of control over the center. Their impasse on this point delayed creation of the center at least three years into a harsher economic climate that undercut the ability of the center to compete for declining university resources. In the second case, Gullen's decision to create a Black Studies program with a minimal budget in the center format, which was clearly on the periphery of the academic structure, established the Center for Black Studies in a tenuous position in the university. Both events made it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to develop a

consensus in support of Black Studies at Wayne State.

The stalemate in talks between Keast and ABS was unfortunate and ironic, in that it left Wayne State, which had one of the largest black enrollments among the nation's predominantly white colleges, without a Black Studies program. The absence was particularly remarkable because of Wayne State's location in a city whose population was, at that time, nearly half black. But that very fact provided another ironic twist. For it was the proximity of a large black community, and the many political and social activists who lived there, that both encouraged the black students in their demands for self-determination on campus and, when that effort was stymied, provided a realistic hope of autonomy off-campus. The rhetoric of black nationalism and self-determination was strong in Detroit's black community in the late 1960s. Wayne State's black students were of that community and looked to their activist elders there for direction and counsel, so it is not surprising that self-determination was an important issue for them, especially in relation to Black Studies, which cut straight to the root of personal and cultural identity. For the students of ABS, to concede control of a Black Studies program to the white administration of a white university was to continue a system of social oppression by allowing whites to define blacks.

But control was no less a fundamental issue for the university. Student control is not unheard of in the Western

tradition of higher education, such as at the medieval University of Bologna, which was organized as a guild of students. In United States universities, however, students had long since moved to the bottom level of the power structure, beneath the administration and the faculty. Some of that structure was merely traditional and discretionary, but its core had become firmly established in the laws regulating public universities. For Wayne State, the basic principle -- the vesting of ultimate authority and responsibility in the Board of Governors, and through them the university's administration -- was enshrined in the state's Constitution. What the black students were demanding was not simply a radical change in the university's curriculum but a fundamental shift in authority over the university's functions. It is hard to see what concessions the university could have made on this point that would have satisfied both the demands of the students and the requirements of law.

It may be, as Patricia Coleman-Burns suggests, that some in the university's power structure were relieved to see ABS shift its attention toward the black community off-campus. Some administrators worried about the influence of a Black Studies program on campus not just because of the students, but because of "the power and the insistence of that community," she said.

> Could Wayne really have had a Black Studies program that was not that dominated by the community? I think they read that one

> right. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, but I think they would have been hard-pressed to maintain control. Any program. Because the movement in Detroit was so strong and so radical and so well-organized.[1]

But it is true also that Keast demonstrated a sincere determination to involve the university in Black Studies, whether on campus or off. It would have been easy enough, otherwise, for him to distance himself and the university from the DuBois Institute once ABS decided to establish the institute in the community. Certainly there would have been no compelling reason for him to become, as he did, a director of the institute. It may be that the greatest opportunity lost during this period was the idea raised during one of the August 1969 meetings between university officials and institute organizers that Wayne State create a program to be spun off later as an autonomous institute after adequate independent financing was found. It is unclear why this proposal went nowhere, but it probably fell victim to the continuing control dispute. Eventually, the institute faded out of existence and Keast departed, leaving the issue of Black Studies to Gullen.

Personally, Gullen believed strongly in the need for Black Studies to open up the traditional academic disciplines to the influence of black history and culture. In a July 1972 memo to Bohm, by then provost of the university, Gullen wrote:

> I sincerely believe that full integration is the way to the solution to much of our societal unrest. This integration will not,

> in my judgment, come on its own. It must be nourished and encouraged in every way. The Center for Black Studies can make a great difference in our University -- properly led and enthusiastically directed.
>
> I have staked much on its success. I am most unwilling to have us relegate that Center to a secondary position or to give it short shrift.[2]

And yet, his administrative style and approach to creating the center helped do precisely that. Gullen's background was in mediation and arbitration, giving him a pragmatic orientation toward getting things done. His impulse, as Bohm said, was to split the difference, to get the issue resolved. When it came to Black Studies, that meant taking an existing entity that had been stagnating (Rose's African Studies Committee), giving it a new charge (Black Studies), cranking a proposal out of a few quick ad hoc sessions, grafting on a few organizational considerations the University Council had been working on separately, and pushing it through the Board of Governors, all in less than seven months.

As Rose said in his remarks to the Board of Governors the day they approved the center, the Center for Black Studies was Gullen's idea. Rose portrayed that as a credit to Gullen, which it was, and said that the origin of the center with the top administration would ensure the center's success, which it did not. For in his rush to bring the idea to fruition, Gullen made only superficial efforts to involve students and faculty in the process. The students had almost no input and Gullen's discussions with the University

Council appear to have been much more informative than consultative. It may have been easier and faster to establish a program that way, but the result was a program that however well-intentioned, had little organized support outside a few key administrators. The faculty had no vested interest in a program that it had not helped create and Simpkins, effectively the center's first director, had to spend considerable effort in gaining the confidence of students alienated by their exclusion from the center's planning. Gullen's action may have guaranteed the center's creation, but the lack of broader support did little to ensure its survival beyond his tenure as president.

The center's isolation was compounded by its administrative structure. A center was quick and easy to establish, but because it was prohibited from offering its own courses and degree programs it lacked academic stature. The decision to create a center stemmed from the belief Gullen clearly held that Black Studies was not an academic discipline in itself, but a force to influence and provide supportive direction for the traditional disciplines. That underlying assumption guaranteed the Center for Black Studies a place outside the academic mainstream, making it far more difficult for the center to compete with the established departments for money from the university budget. And the economic situation was daunting enough already, as the faculty layoffs of early 1972 demonstrate. With the Oil Embargo of 1973, the fortunes of the U.S. auto

industry -- and with them the fortunes of Michigan and virtually every public institution in the state -- took a sharp turn for the worse, the first of several that would force frequent public budget cutbacks over the next 20 years. As Ronald Haughton, vice president for urban affairs, observed regarding the Center for Black Studies, "It was minimally funded, but all of our centers were."[3] Haughton said the center was seen by the administration as a first step that they hoped eventually would throw deep roots into the academic structure.

But Simpkins said the Center for Black Studies "was a concession to the times, and it was not a concession that was made because the university believed in Black Studies programs."[4] It was a concession that the administration was very unsure of, he said:

> I believed that those people were doing the best they knew how to do. But they didn't believe in Black Studies. They didn't know what it was, and I don't blame them for not believing in Black Studies because nobody knew what Black Studies was. I didn't fault them for that. . . .
>
> If you understand that, then you understand how you fund programs that you're not sure of is you give it something, you know, you put it out there. I believed that after a year the program deserved to get additional funding, but they started to cut it the second year. I think they cut it to $140,000. And I think they continued to cut, even after I left.[5]

Simpkins may be closest to the heart of the matter when he says that nobody knew what Black Studies was. ABS had one definition, but even that was not universally shared, as the split between Peek and Bonds and the others demonstrated.

Keast had a different view, and Rose had a vision of his own. Simpkins frankly opposed Black Studies. Gullen believed a Black Studies program was needed and found himself in a position to impose the definition he thought would be most useful and most expedient. But in his sincere effort to make the university a more open and representative institution, he undercut the progress he sought. Acting more like an arbitrator than a mediator, he slammed shut the debate over the issue of control, which was, after all, about who would define Black Studies. By dictating a definition that lacked broad support within the university, Gullen assured the Center for Black Studies a tentative existence for a long time to come.

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