

TO: AD HOC COMMITTEE

RE: PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of the struggle is wherever Black people find themselves; and, in an unprecedented way, Black people find themselves in pursuit of meaningful educational experiences. It is interesting to note that people frequently deal expediently with one aspect of a problem only to seriously compound the overall problem. It is incumbent on those Black people seriously concerned with higher education to be engaged in systematic analysis and planning for the purpose of providing the intellectual context for meaningful action. Our approach must not be piece-meal. We must develop an analysis that includes all of the complexities of the total problem if we are to begin to deal with solutions of any part of it.

During the last decade of the struggle a new kind of Black

Educator has emerged on the scene, a counterpart to the rise of *a more demanding angry Black Student Community*. The impact of this new group of people is yet to be determined since there are

two seemingly contradictory forces at work. The agitation and ferment of Black students and parents has forced the educational establishment to look for consultation from the new breed Black

Educator. So we are called to school systems, colleges and universities, and to the government and foundations, private and public. These consultations normally are to obtain the most inexpensive fast solution, which in most cases is evidence of a simplistic approach to the problem. The positive move is that of the consolidation of resources toward the operational unity of the Black community. In a general sense this is represented by national conferences, and the increased concern with unity and cooperation in periodicals like Freedomways, Liberator, and the Negro Digest. But, more specifically, there is organizational form for this new unity such as the Association of Afro-American Educators (AAAE), and the Black caucus formation in many associations.

With the inevitable risk of becoming inflexible and doctrinaire, the moment demands that Black educators pull together to analyze and plan in the interest of the total Black community. We must pull together to maximize our productive energy for the Black community, and to protect the interest of our community in dealing with the institutions and agencies of the white com-

munity. Operational unity must be our key word, and the guiding principle of all of our action.

### OBJECTIVES

This proposal is for the purpose of coordinating the efforts of a commission of Black educators to evaluate the current state of higher education for the Black community and to design plans for future development. The overall objective is simply to make a clear programmatic statement to sharpen and focus the current discussions and planning about the future of Black higher education.

Specifically, this proposal is

1. to review all of the relevant contemporary material and literature on higher education for Black people
2. to assess all material and information about major new programs
3. to clarify the major concepts and questions dealing with Black higher education
4. to describe alternative institutional models for Black higher education
5. to describe alternative means to implement the desired changes
6. to engage the Black community in open <sup>✓</sup> dialogue serious about higher education

### PROCEDURES

The initial task for the work group is to reorganize ourselves

under the umbrella of the higher education commission of the Association of Afro-American Educators. The arguments to support this move are, for the most part, obvious. The AAAE will provide the framework of Black unity for our efforts, and enable a more healthy collective relationship with the Ford Foundation. Moreover, it enables us to have an organic relationship with other Black educators concerned with all aspects of Black education.

As we reorganize ourselves we ought to think of a commission of approximately 20 members. These twenty people should be chosen with a number of criteria, the foremost of which should be ones personal commitment and current work as related to the task of the commission. However, a secondary set of criteria might include Black-white institutional affiliation, geographical location, academic status, and field of study.

After we make our final arrangements with the Ford Foundation it will be necessary to move immediately to hire a staff and set up project headquarters. The foremost criteria should be that it be located in the Black community, and be in a place central to the Black community so it can give as well as receive to its

capacity.

The life of the project falls into three stages:

1. Research and writing
2. Commission consultation
3. National Conference

These three stages are chronological and all involve funding needs from the Ford Foundation.

The staff will have two kinds of responsibilities, internal and external, (the division being determined by the boundary of the Black community). The internal tasks will be to service the members of the commission and to involve the work of the commission with the total Black community. The needs of the commission initially will be informational. The staff will be expected to provide all bibliographical needs, as well as provide all commission members with relevant materials. And, as the situation calls for it, the staff will be responsible for organizing commission consultations on a small basis in different parts of the country in order that more and different Black people will be able to make a strong contribution to the work. The contacts with the

total Black community will be informational, as well as programmatic. All efforts related to the work of the commission ought to be fully informed as to the commissions work, and all mutually beneficial relationships ought to be explored.

While the primary task of the staff is internal, there are very essential tasks it must perform outside of the Black community. The basic need is to have as much information as possible about ongoing programs, as well as full information concerning whatever ways the commission determines in its alternatives for implementing the desired change.

The overall task of the staff, then, is to prepare the ~~the~~ materials and make the contacts for the commission. The basic job of guiding the research, as well as doing most of the writing will be the primary job of the commission members. The first draft of the report will be organized by the staff, but the primary responsibility from that point will be for the commission.

Each commission member will make contributions through Black working papers. They will be assigned on an individual basis. A set of papers will be needed to define the essential conceptual

framework, while the second set will be for the first draft of the report.

After the first draft of the report is completed, the second stage of the project will be held. A consultation involving all of the commission members and the staff will be held for the purpose of making final revisions in the draft of the report. This ought to take approximately one week and be held in the Black community.

Following the release of the report, a national conference on higher education should be called within the Black community in order to provide the collective context for evaluation, clarification, and the first step of implementation.



## TIMETABLE

August 11	Chicago Meeting
August 15-17	AAAE St. Louis Meeting
August 18-September 1	Finalize Plans with Ford Foundation
Fall (Sept.)	Set up Staff and Commission
Fall (Sept. - Dec.)	Staff Work
Winter (Feb.)	Commission Consultation (5 days) Finish Draft
Spring (March)	Release Report under auspices of AAAB
Summer (June)	National Conference of Black Educators to consider the report