

#4 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. *Have you decided upon a college major? Yes*
If yes, what? Psychology
2. *(If the answer to question 1 is no, skip #7.) What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?*
2.5
3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*
BS in Science
4. *What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?*
I would like to work for a time in the medical field and then apply to medical school.
5. *Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?*
Yes
When you do medical school, do you plan to go on in psychology?
I would like to become a psychiatrist.
6. *While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes*
If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.
I was a Baptist, Southern Baptist. I just basically went to church. I was an usher for a time. That's about it.
How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?
I go to church pretty much every Sunday. It doesn't say that it's Baptist. It's basically Protestant.
Sunday involvement rather than additional?
Yes.
7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?*
In high school, basically the only difference is that I played sports whereas I don't here. College has offered a few more opportunities to college students, such as MSA and the resident life staff.
And you're involved in those? Did you do extra-curriculars other than sports in high school?
No.
So you substituted MSA and resident life for sports?
Yes.
8. *How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?*
Literature--basically literature that was sent to me.
Sent to you from the university?
Yes.
And how did they find you?
I filled out basically all colleges on my SAT form.

9. *To what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee?*

Not at all. I don't know any.

10. *Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student?
If yes, under what circumstances?*

Yes, I visited my senior year during February or March, I believe.

Under what circumstances?

I visited on my own.

Did you go to a Prospective Weekend or just on your own?

No.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

First of all I thought the campus was beautiful in appearance. Other than that I thought it was really --had a very hospitable feel to it, because the classes were so small and that was pretty much the only feeling I got.

Were you here for just a day?

I spent the night on Friday night.

On campus? With a student?

Yes.

Did the Admissions Office set that up for you?

It was

Really? You didn't know him before you stayed?

No.

So did you get to attend classes as well?

I went to one class.....

Really? How did you like that?

It's as a matter of fact. I haven't really taken that many History courses. I'm not really a history major. It was good to be in that class, to get a feel for how the classes are arranged.

And how was it being set up with a student to stay with, etc.?

Well, I didn't see Jack for a large part of the visit, because he had to work. But then when he came home, he took me to a fraternity party which was interesting to say the least. I had never even gone to anything like that before I came here. I didn't really like that too much. It was good to know what kind of social scene goes on.

So what was your reaction to that?

I thought that somehow, I don't know why I would think this, that fraternity parties were anomalous(?), like that was just something that happened every now and then. Like some of the stuff--I saw a guy who was just posted, drunk. I was like, poor guy, this doesn't happen often.

This has to be an exception?

Yeah, I just thought it was. I just assumed. I found out that it's not.

10a. *Was W&L your...*

I'd say, third choice.

10b. *About how many other colleges did you apply to?...*

6 or more.

What were the criteria that made W&L your third choice?

Well, it's probably--three that occupied the first space instead of W&L being #3. It's just that I wanted a small college that had a very good academic reputation and at that time that's all I cared about. And that was in a nice area.

10c. *How many other colleges accepted you?*

I think 5.

11. *What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee?*

The academic reputation was definitely one of the main contributions to me decision. Size. Graduates go to top graduate schools. That attracted me when I heard that.

Where did you hear that? The literature?

Yes. And I did like the town. I didn't want to go to a city.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

No.

So why did you---

Oh, they did offer financial assistance.

So why did you choose W&L over the other 2 in the top 3?

Well, one wait listed me and the other, it was a better financial aid package.

12. *Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?*

A lot of people hadn't heard of W&L in my family. My mom was thrilled, because she liked it. This is her first choice for me, because she knows that I belong in a small college. There wasn't a whole lot of reaction.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?

No.

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?*

Yes, with the exception of social speaking. I didn't know what I expected, but I didn't expect 90% of the people to be in fraternities. I guess I expected some sort of cliquing going on, which does go on within the Greek system.

So the big fraternity scene and party scene--

I expected parties, but I didn't expect them in a fraternity setting necessarily. Maybe in an apartment---house parties.

If the school differed from the way it seemed when you first heard about it or visited the campus, please describe how it differed. Did you cover that?

Yeah, pretty much. The social scene was different from what I expected.

Could you recap that? What exactly about the social scene was different?

Just that instead of having parties where people would get together of their own accord, it's more of a thing where people are there because they're associated with a certain house.

14. *Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.*

Just achieving. Realizing my highest potential. Working hard and trying to get the education that I came here for.

Achieving in what sense?

Academically. Socially, but not---I'm on the Residence Life Staff, that kind of social

achievement.

Service oriented. Making friends too.

So those are your greatest challenges. Which of the three would you say is the top?

Academics.

And how have you dealt with that?

Just trying to work hard, trying to stay organized, using my time wisely.

15. *How has your academic performance at Washington and Lee compared with your performance in high school?*

It hasn't been as high as high school.

16. *What academic resources have you used at Washington and Lee?*

Undergraduate library, science library, computer facilities, I haven't used the writing center, tutors, study groups, haven't really used study groups that much, public lectures, language labs, visiting professors in their offices, study skills (I haven't used any study skills courses).

Do you have suggestions for the development of these or other facilities?

Not really. Study groups--I remember a while back the MSA used to have organized study groups at certain times and none of that went on when I was here. I have wondered if something like that would be good to bring back. I don't know why they stopped doing that.

What would it look like if MSA did an organized one at certain times? Describe how you would envision that happening.

Just MSA going to the library and getting a room for a certain time. Everyone can come there. Particularly one person's having trouble with math and there are some math majors in the group.

17. *What factors contribute or contributed to your selection of a major course of study?*

I've always been interested in the sciences, and one thing I don't like about the other sciences is that they often don't seem very applicable to humans. I found that psychology is the most applicable.

It sounds like in high school you were interested in a way to get into a good medical school. Sounds like you are already thinking about medicine. Were you already thinking about psychology in high school as well?

No, I wasn't. I wasn't sure what I'd major in. I thought I'd major in something completely different.

Completely different that science?

Yeah, English or something. I came here--I just really like the psychology department.

18. *Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

No.

19. *If you saw a person or group of persons lying, stealing or cheating would you report it as an honor violation? Please elaborate.*

Yes. I don't shy away from the honor code as far as enforcing, basically because I signed a statement that said that I would. I would not condone that sort of behavior. Just from that fact alone I feel that it would be my duty to report that. And also, this isn't a place where reporting that would be considered tattling. It wouldn't be looked down upon. It would be more applauded.

*Have you had an experience with that at all? Are you assuming that that would be the case?
Have you observed it?*

I've seen that happen in certain cases.

Where someone takes the responsibility of reporting it, that they are actually supported.

Yes.

20. *Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?*

Easy to approach. *Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.*

Most of them have the open door policy, where they tell you to come if you have any problems.

You can just come and talk to them. I found that they do do that.

Have you tried often and had good results?

Yes.

Have you been able to establish close working relationships with a member or with members of the W&L faculty?

Definitely. I've gotten a lot of support in my academic endeavors here.

Describe a little bit more what that might be like, having a close relationship. You can make up what that means to you.

One professor that comes to mind is Prof. Jarrard, who I worked with over the summer. I really learned a lot from him.

Did you have an R. E. Lee Grant?

Yes.

So that would be a close working relationship, doing research together.

21. *What has been your experience at W&L with regard to social life?*

Well, I'm definitely a non-main-streamist, because I have been to 4 or 5 fraternity parties since I've been here.

And this is your fourth year?

Yes. I just thought that wasn't for me. I really don't enjoy the fraternity parties here.

Can you describe that a little more?

It's not that it's been a negative experience. It's just something that I don't enjoy. I usually try to find other ways of having fun. I hang out with my friends, I go to movies, I go to Roanoke now and then. I watch a lot of movies on videotape--exercise.

Do you feel that was satisfying to you?

It's been--I'm happy with that. At the same time, I realized that probably at other colleges there are more positive social events that are occurring. I kind of feel like I might have missed out on some of the other things. You can have a group of people from campus and just sit around and talk, instead of drinking all the time. A lot of that doesn't go on here in my experience, except in my small circle of friends. I think if more of that went on, it would be a more positive experience.

It sounds like you felt that as a lack for you?

If I had to say one thing that was a disappointment to me, it would probably be the social scene. I feel that it's partly my own fault, because I didn't really check to see what the social scene was like. I didn't even value it at the time. I just thought I should come to college and concentrate on my work and not worry about anything else.

It sounds like you have tried to have things happen where folks get together.

I'm one of the prominent on the Independent Committee, which is a private committee. It's getting better. When it first started, we had a following. Then it kind of decreased where only a

few people would come to our functions. We've kind of revamped things, where we'll probably start to get more people.

Good luck.

How important to you is alcohol at a social event or social engagement?

I don't value it. I don't mind if it is there. The one thing that bothers me at W&L is that it's so prevalent. It's almost as though it is a problem.

Can you be more specific about that?

It's just that if you want to have a conversation, it's difficult because either they are drunk at almost every party, or there's someone who's drunk around you, making it difficult to do that. Also I think it's kind of-----to get drunk every weekend. I don't mind it at all. It's something people are going to do, but it's a pattern that occurs all the time. The kind of alcoholism where people get so drunk that they can't remember what they've done. I think it's a problem.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

Drugs I don't usually like. I've never been confronted with that. I've been around people who are doing marijuana, whatever. I don't really mind that. Again it's not really something I've had to confront. I definitely wouldn't want anything beyond marijuana. I don't really like to see marijuana used. I don't like drugs.

22. *What experiences, if any, have you had with Greek organizations on campus?*

Well, I've rushed. That's about it. I've been to 4 or 5 fraternity parties.

What was rush like?

That was a positive experience, because I got to meet a lot of people.....It was really fun. A lot of people knew where I went to high school. They had heard of my high school. When I go around campus now, there are people that I know.

So those acquaintance have maintained.

How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?

Just that rush was fine, but I don't enjoy fraternity parties.

23. *Evaluate your experiences with regards to athletic teams/athletic facilities/and physical education classes.*

I don't have any experience with athletic teams. The athletic facilities are great. I use the weight room and the gym often. Those are good. Physical education classes I have definitely enjoyed. I have taken horsemanship, ice skating, weight lifting, aerobic running and this year I'm taking racquetball. They've all been very good experiences.

How many are you required to take?

5

So that covers it. Good.

24. *How would you characterize your opportunities for "dating" while enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

Well, considering I mostly hang out with guys--it's not something that I value at this time in my life. That would probably be a bonus to having a social scene that I feel more comfortable in, but it's not really a disappointment for me. I feel at this time in my life dating doesn't play a vital role.

The questions is more specifically "opportunities" for dating. How would you characterize you opportunities for dating?

I don't think there are a lot of opportunities for anyone to date on this campus, because of the

social scene. There's opportunities for "hooking up", whatever, but if you can't talk to someone or get to know them, it's kind of hard to have a date. There are a lot of people that date on this campus.

Are you saying that there aren't events that are conducive to visiting together, getting to know each other? You can't talk?

Yes. Fraternity parties are definitely not conducive to that.

People don't invite people to have a meal together? Go in groups?

Generally what happens is all guy groups and all girl groups.

It sounds like you're saying that your opportunities are limited by the kinds of parties that happen, but also by your style.

If I really wanted to go out and get a date, I'm sure I could, but it's not really a natural sort of thing. I think of dating as, you just meet a person who you like and you ask them out, not that you go out looking for a date. I'm not really interested, but at the same time this is not the kind of environment that would allow for that sort of thing to happen.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university?* Just very briefly, at the beginning of my freshman year. I attribute that to just not feeling comfortable in the environment for a while. I didn't take it seriously, because I didn't really have any place that I wanted to go. I know that if I just found my niche here that I wouldn't want to transfer.

You didn't feel comfortable in the environment because...

Partly because of the social scene but partly because, probably because I was away from home.

Because it was new?

Uh-huh.

If yes, what factor(s) influenced you to stay?

That I did find my niche, that I got my friends. I joined MSA and I started getting involved.

26. *Have you had a paid job on campus (including work-study)?*

Yes, at the library.

The whole time?

I got my job winter term my freshman year.

As a work study?

No, just a regular job.

If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?

Yes.

You want to describe how.

Just because it's given me another way to interact with people. I've met a lot of people from work. People see me outside of class at the library.

Are you at the front desk most of the time?

Yes.

So you chat across the desk with folks in the evening?

Yes.

27. *Would you be willing to recruit other students for Washington and Lee either as a student yourself or as part of an alumni program? Please elaborate.*

I have actually been involved in programs like this. When I tell people about W&L, I tell them about my experience and I usually tell them honestly that if they value a social scene that's non-

Greek, they probably wouldn't like the social scene here. Academically, W&L is the tops. It's my belief that that should be the priority when a person comes to college anyway.

So, yes you have been willing and you give details.

Yes.

Now we ask some background information:

28. *In what geographical location did you grow up:*

Country: US

State: Pennsylvania

*In what type of **area or community** did you spend most of your growing up years?*

Rural. It's a suburb of a suburb. An hour from Philadelphia.

29. *Describe the type of **high school** you attended.*

Suburban

Predominantly

White

Was it large or medium sized school?

500

Public or private?

It was a private school.

Which is why sometimes people know about it. Was it in your neighborhood or area?

Yes, I commuted. It was 10 minutes away. It was a boarding school, but I didn't go.

30 *Please give the kin relationship(s) between you and family members in your home when you were growing up.*

There was my father and mother and my sister.

31. *What was the highest level of education achieved by your parents, guardians, or others with whom you lived when you were growing up?*

My father went through college and my mother just graduated from high school.

What are the occupations or professions of your parents or guardians?

My father wasmy mother works for Bell Telephone. She's a Maintenance Administrator, that's her official title. My father passed away 3 years ago. He was working for AT&T.

32. *As compared to other W&L students, how would you characterize your overall social class position (based on parents' education and family income)?*

I would imagine that most W&L students are probably more--slightly higher. I mean, 3 years ago I would be on the same level, but now I'm slightly lower than they are.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

Not at all really.

33. *In general how do you think about yourself first at Washington and Lee -- as a member of a particular racial/ethnic/national/gender group, or as a student?*

As a student first. Probably gender and then race. Actually race and gender are prob. about

equal. That's just because not joining a fraternity is dependent on my race. That was prob. a factor just because it's the kind of environment where you would like to have someone to identify with and race kind of dictates who you can identify with. There aren't any other blacks in fraternities really.

Race dictates that from the outside or inside?

Who is in the fraternity?

Is race dictating it from the outside, by what your opportunities are, or from how you see yourself from the inside?

I look at myself in a certain way. But the fraternities are unique situations--a kind of brotherhood, you bonding with someone at that level would require certain familial sort of feeling. Most of my friends are white, but in the fraternity environment, it seems like race would become more of an issue. I just feel uncomfortable being the only black person in a pledge class. I can't really tell you why that is. I've never really felt that before, because I've always been in predominantly white groups. Maybe I've been influenced by the stereotypes of southern fraternities that would make me not want to be involved.

But you didn't know about southern fraternities before you got here, so that wouldn't be the reason, right?

Yeah. I really don't know why. I just--I was very close to pledging. I would've been the only black person, but...

You just got finished saying a little bit ago, I think that race was the major thing that held you back? Not held you back but influenced your choice.

I really shouldn't say that--not race.

Well, say it if that's how you feel.

No. It's a combination of things. I think race is a factor but only as it functions with something else. I guess it's just the kind of person I am. I don't know. It didn't seem like the fraternities were where I belonged. I guess race probably functions in that just because of my culture or how I like to have fun. I definitely feel a lot more comfortable at an MSA party and I don't really know why that is. Before I came here I didn't really party that much at all. I think just being a social scene has a lot to do with a common background and a common ideal. Even in that circle of friends...even though we are of different races, we do have a common background. In the fraternity it just dictates where I'm coming from, kind of. I don't have a lot of very close friends on campus because there are a lot of people who are like that...someone of my background. It's really hard to explain.

It is. It's a very interesting topic. So do your circle of friends, who you say are mostly white, come to MSA parties sometimes?

No.

But you have fun as MSA parties?

Yes. I think it's cultural.

The style of parties?

Yeah. I think it's that I feel comfortable--even though I didn't party a lot in high school, people in my family might have. That influenced me in some way.

You looked over the stair railing at people?

Yeah, something like that. The fraternities are just the opposite of that sort of thing. It's not about----or having fun. Alcohol is a necessity. So those things combined make it something I don't like.

34. *How homogeneous do you believe black students are on this campus? In answering please consider racial identification, political perspective, and/or social class position.*

Not at all. Most of us consider ourselves black, but I think a few of the black students consider themselves, well they are Jamaicans, and they probably identify themselves as such. Politically, we vary a lot. Probably not as much so since a few people have graduated. Since I have been here there have been people who have ranged from very liberal to very conservative. Social class positions vary a lot, too. From what I know of them anyway. There are people who are just as high if not higher than the average social class here. And the ones who are lower.

35. *How similar or different do you believe blacks and whites are on this campus? Consider the same categories that are mentioned in number 34 above and add any other factors that you deem important.*

Well, I think that black and white students are similar in the fact that we're both here to get a good education. That's the main thing that attracted us. Socially, I think we're vastly different except for a few exceptions, those black students who have pledged fraternities, who I would guess have come from a similar background as the people they have pledged with.

But you don't know for sure.

No. I've talked with 2 of the students who have pledged. They're happy with their decision. Chances are in their situation I would have been happy, too, but as I was rushing I didn't see the opportunity that they see when they rushed.

So you say that socially black students and white students are quite different?

Yes. In general, but there are exceptions. Just because --it's hard to explain how the difference is because black students go to fraternity parties a lot, too. I think that a lot of black students on campus don't feel comfortable at fraternities. Another major difference is that since a lot of black students don't pledge, there aren't the more formal events that black students can go to. When I was an officer in MSA we had an event that was sponsored by the MSA. As it is right now there are fewer formal events that black students can attend. I'd imagine that socially white students are probably more content, at least white males. White females and black students are probably equally discontented with the social scene.

Could you elaborate on that? In what way are you discontent?

Well, this is my perception. I've heard complaints, grievances of white females that there aren't sorority houses. Every time a white female wants to party, she has to go to a male's fraternity house. It's the same basic complaint that I guess black students would have. But there is an MSA house. It's the same situation. If you want to go to a party, you have to go to a fraternity house. I imagine that people would get tired of that after a while.

36. *Do you believe the size of the black student enrollment at Washington and Lee is adequate or inadequate?*

If W&L ever wants to become a different kind of school with respect to black students, the number is inadequate. Black students can come here and get an education, graduate, and go on to do whatever they want. In that way it's adequate. They can do that. I think that one of the problems is that there probably aren't enough black students. I don't know how the school can go about increasing the enrollment. It depends on what their goals are in order to answer that question.

Tell me what you mean by that.

The school functions as an academic..

That part's clear. You also said, if W&L wants to be a different kind of school..

I don't think it functions because of the cultural background whatever, participate in the social scene. There will always be a separation between black students and white students. As long as we're such a small group, it's hard to expect that such a small group can become, to kind of just be thrown together and just automatically ... because we are such of such varied, diverse backgrounds. Like I said, most of my friends are white. I had a friend here who was black, who's graduated. We're different. If W&L would like to see a situation where a black student either kind of assimilates into the mainstream of W&L, then the mainstream of W&L will have to change. Or if it admits more black students, then chances are more will go into the mainstream because there's a better chance that they'll admit students who are more like the mainstream students. Or the mainstream could change...

It sounds like you were implying that if there were more people, there would be a critical mass where that group of people could be more useful to each other, because you're all so different now, such a small group. Is that what you meant?

Ultimately, that's kind of what I'm implying. But at the same time, I don't know what that curriculum has to be, what number would be good enough where we would be this group where we would all bond together. I don't know. In order for that to happen more, I think the number of black students would have to be greater.

Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?

Again, it depends on what the goal is. I received a fine education from white professors, but at the same time, I think it would be nice for there to be more black professors just for the students who are white or black. I don't think the faculty reflects the real world too well. For that reason, sometimes because there is a cultural difference, black professors could offer a different viewpoint.

Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate?

Explain.

Probably the same answer. If W&L wants to reflect more what the real world is like, probably inadequate because there are only a few - one.

37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together?*

I think that the MSA should offer more. I don't know what the university can do, but I think the MSA should do more.

Are you saying you don't know what the university could do or are you saying that you prefer to see the MSA do it?

I'm sure the university could do something. I just don't know. I've just seen in MSA where more activities like that have occurred. I would like to see an increase and not a decrease.

If yes...do you have suggestions?...

We should do more parties together. That alone, and just more activities in general in MSA. I don't, it would be great if there were some way to have the MSA combined with other campus groups, which has happened. That is usually worked out. I'd like to see...

Do you mean for specific events? What do you mean?

Well, we've had mixers with fraternities who have a lot of members who enjoy the same sorts of music, things like that.

Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Yes. It was probably the first place I went to where I truly felt welcome when I came to W&L.

On that very first visit?

No, actually as a freshman during orientation week. The vice president of the MSA at that time

came to my room and said "We're having a get-together for everyone. Why don't you come over?" That was a very positive experience. It housed the MSA meetings. It functioned as that. I've never lived there and I've never spent much time outside of MSA meetings there.

So you don't visit there or hang out there?

No.

Is that where the MSA parties happen?

Yeah. We haven't had any parties this year. Since they carpeted the floors, it's kind of not as good for parties. We have to go somewhere else. Maybe they'll have them there, I don't know.

Did they ask you if you wanted the floors carpeted?

I like it. It's a lot more homey than the creaky floors.

Is the problem that it's harder to clean?

Yeah, you don't want stuff dropping on that.

You don't want your hors d'oeuvre ground into it? I guess since you're not on the government of MSA this year that you may not know, but has the fact that the house changed influenced that you haven't had parties there this year?

No, it's that the leadership is different. It has different goals, although we're supposed to be throwing a party this month. We have done parties in the GHQ already, not this year, but maybe 6 since I've been here.

Has the Minority Student Association played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Yeah, well, I was the vice president one year, so that gave me a leadership opportunity. They definitely sponsor a lot of activities and during my freshman year, that was the main centerpoint of my social life.

38. *Do you believe that it is important that courses in the humanities/social sciences include recognition or study of works by persons of color?*

The nature of humanities and social sciences is to study the contributions of various people, definitely, it should be unbiased in that attempt. Yeah, I definitely think persons of color should be included.

If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain.

To tell the truth, that doesn't apply to me, because the college, at least W&L, is not conducive to describing people who - we don't study people, experimental psychology and stuff. My general eds. courses - that doesn't really apply to me.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*

I've always had a positive experience in the classroom. I've heard of stories where people have not had positive experiences, but I think it's partly because I take science courses mostly. It's a lot more - in a way, a lot less people oriented just because we're doing science. It's not always conducive to discussion. You just ask questions, take your notes, that's about it. There are no problems. Sometimes it's a little bit uncomfortable to be the only black person in the classroom, but again it's science. It's just a perceived insecurity.

You haven't had experiences that have been uncomfortable? When you heard stories about people having problems, what things were they discussing?

Professors have said things that they probably should not have said, using wrong sorts of words to describe people. That was the worst case scenario that I've heard. Two black students were in

there. One got angry, one took it personally. Both are very level headed people. The professor—

Was it one specific word? THE specific N word.

Yeah.

That's one story, but is that an exceptional story?

That's an exception. The thing I would perceive the black students would be –if something like that could occur on a college campus, then it would probably be gone. The magnitude of something like that happening would be the least on a campus of this nature, just because it's in the south. I think sometimes students are aware of that and are on guard.

Because it's in the south, you might expect it more and not take it seriously?

Yeah, it's just a mere perception. There is a strong southern pride here, which can be an unwillingness to identify what the black struggle is. Or to take seriously the complaints of black people. When that happens, all the black students hear about and immediately they all want something done about it.

So did you take any kind of action?

I wasn't here at that time. Or if I was, it was probably early in my freshman year.

So did the folks who were here take action?

Yes. I can't remember what happened to that professor, but I'm sure....

I'm curious. One wonders sometimes when there's a particular group that feels affected by an event and everyone hears about it within that group, the community as a whole hears about it.

That's part of what I was talking about. Maybe the community at large wouldn't care. Or they wouldn't see what the major difficulty is with that sort of thing. That's the importance of taking it seriously and being on guard for that sort of thing.

Are you saying that's the importance for the university to take it seriously? Other folks might not be taking it as seriously as you'd like them to.

Yes.

40. *What is the role of the Office of Minority Student Affairs?*

I have known it to be a place where a minority student could go if something like that were to occur. Just help with anything, help with academics or having a problem adjusting to the university. You can get tutors there.

A resource office for minority students.

Yeah.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

I can't really make any suggestions except that maybe people knew more about it. I know that everyone knows it's there, but I'm not sure that everyone knows what can be done there or how they can use it.

Everyone meaning?

The minority students and also non-minority students, because I'm sure there are times when non-minority students have to go there. I'm sure there are probably a lot of non-minority students who don't even know it exists.

You think it should be more well known so it's more available to people.

41. *From whom do you receive the greatest emotional support on campus? Do not use name(s), but please describe the person(s) in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and position (i.e. fellow student, faculty member, administrator, staff member). If appropriate, include more than one individual and describe the type of situations in which the person*

provides emotional support (i.e. personal, family, religious, etc.)

Two people come to mind. Actually one group of people—my friends who are mostly white. Up until this year mostly white. Last year I had one black friend who was in that circle of friends. He's graduated. They're all males, one female actually. They're all American. This friend who graduated was Jamaican. The other person is a professor of mine who I talk to, who is also white. I wouldn't call it emotional support, but just support in general - a dean, actually two deans and another professor. One of the deans is black, one of the professors is black. The black dean is female. The other black professor is male.

Describe the types of situations where they provided emotional support.

Probably just personal. I haven't used a lot of supports, just basically talking about academic stress, advice on certain social things, things like that.

I definitely laugh and have a good time with all my friends.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself?*

I'm the kind of person who approaches that sort of thing skeptically. I don't usually believe that people would be outwardly discriminatory towards another. That might be a good way to approach it or a bad way, but it just allows me to give people the benefit of the doubt. There was one case that I can think of—down in the gym. Maybe I was just being influenced by the people who were there, but it certainly seemed plausible that a group of black guys were playing in the gym with various W&L t-shirts, shorts, whatever and were asked if they were W&L students.

By whom?

Well, I know it's happened with Security once or twice. In this particular case that I was involved in, it was a custodian, I guess. It's just interesting to see how other people who are playing there are not being asked, when they're clearly not students. We almost clearly are. It was just obvious that we were being asked because we were of a different race. We weren't given a hard time. All of us pay to go to this school—it's ridiculous.

So you're saying that you've heard that this happens with security and when it happened to you, it was a custodian.

I am unsure about the security problem. I don't want to defend it but it definitely was not malicious in any way, whereas the custodian was definitely not being nice.

Be a little more specific for the record, so people know exactly what you mean.

In the case of security..

There was incident or more?

I can't really speak about that because I've heard several incidences. ----When the custodian was questioning us, it seemed like it was a definite attempt to not have us there, because we were black.

You could tell by what? Body language, tone of voice.

By the fact that we were being singled out and these sort of things just blew me away. People don't make that big a deal out of it. And it really wasn't that big a deal, except that it shouldn't have happened. As a matter of fact I was a counselor for a group of young men and they saw that.

W&L men?

There were W&L men there, but this group was actually was a teacher's group. It was showing the darker side of what things can be like.

So what about his behavior besides the fact that he asked you.

He wasn't malicious about it, it's just that he was singling us out where other groups weren't. It was almost like pleading to leave us alone and let us stay there. He was like, we don't have

anything written down that you're supposed to be here.

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

No. In fact, from the previous question, I don't want to paint a picture of W&L being an awful place for a black person, because it's not at all. I think that a lot of people here go out of their way to show that they are hospitable to all people. I've had a very positive experience, even in a racial sense. Sometimes at W&L, it can be perceived that there are people who dislike black people, but I guess I try to keep an open mind. I don't find things like the confederate flag to be a symbol of racial hate or whatever. I try not to get upset when I see things like people with their face painted like blacks. I've seen that.

In what context?

At a Halloween party. I don't think that's appropriate but I don't get upset about that. I can see how someone could get upset about it. If I were white, I don't think I'd do that. Overall, racially it's been a good experience here.

43. *Aside from the Honor System do you believe that the student Executive Committee, the Student Conduct Committee or other University judicial committees treat black and white students equally fairly?*

Yes, I think both student white and black are treated equally. Again, I've heard of one case where it seems like a student was not believed. Part of the fact that her credit was on the line might have been that she was black, not because of the committee itself, but because the people who were testifying against her probably didn't like her too much because she was black.

So that was just one example you heard about but weren't involved with.

Overall, I do not feel that white and black students are treated unequal.

44. *Do you believe that the honor system is applied in an even-handed way to black and white students?*

Yes.

45. *How would you evaluate student publications (i.e. the Ring-tum Phi, the Trident, etc.), the student radio and television stations with regards to opportunities for black students to participate.*

Black students have just as good an opportunity.

How would you evaluate them with regard to their treatment of news about black students?

It's not been unequal or discriminatory in any way.

46. *Do you feel that black students at Washington and Lee today have problems that are basically different from, or basically similar to those of whites? Please describe in what way you feel they are different or similar.*

Pretty much the same. I think black students face the challenge of trying to provide their own social activities. That's probably not the case for most of the white students, although there are a number of white students who face the same challenge. Probably a small percentage of white students do not fit into the mainstream social scene at W&L, a lot larger percentage of black students do not.

- *47. Sex Male
- *48. Age? 21
- *49. Year in college? Senior
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.618
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? American

52. *How do you identify yourself in terms of race?*

I identify myself as black.

53. *Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?*

No. It's just that I really do like Washington and Lee. Ultimately, I think that to do whatever this survey wants to do, a lot of things, not just the black student situation, the school is going to change. They'll see the minority student situations and ideas - just the black student experience will become different as the school itself changes.

How would you like to see it change?

I envision W&L becoming less homogenous as far as the kind of student that goes here. I've seen that happen already. I believe the freshman class is a lot less homogenous than my class was. As that happens, I think that the Greek system will be a little less popular, so the amount of independents will increase. Then a lot of things will happen. The social scene will change. The university's priority on getting a university center will probably change, and they'll probably do that.

You would like to see them go ahead and get a university center?

I think they should. Right now I don't know how much use it would get. I think it would be a great thing to have. Most schools have them. All of those things will contribute also.

Contribute to?

The experience that black students have at W&L. I do think it's different from what white students have. A lot of times it's not that it's worse. Black students can be just as happy if not happier here. You feel sometimes that the choices are limited socially anyway. Academically I feel that it's equal. Again, that's my main reason for coming to college was to get an education. I'm happy with the university.

What do you see as the purpose of the survey?

Just to get a feel for how black students have perceived their experience here and what they might offer - to gain insight as to what changes might be made.