

## #9 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?

If yes, what?

Yeah. Accounting and Business Administration.

2. *(If the answer to question 1 is no, skip #7.)* What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?

It's I think 2.8

3. What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?

BS in accounting

4. What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?

Like finally, or after I graduate?

Why don't you tell us both.

After I graduate I want to work in an accounting firm for about two years, and work for my CPA. And after that, I was thinking a long time about going to law school and maybe being a corporate lawyer or tax lawyer, but I'm not sure. Probably just getting accounting, I'm not exactly sure - I know I want to work in accounting

5. Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?

Anything besides my CPA, probably a law degree.

So really it's sort of maybe.

Yeah

6. While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes / No

If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.

Yeah. I, it was a denomination called Moravian. But it's basically Christian. go to church every Sunday. Sang, sometimes we had prayer meeting in the week. That's all, didn't do anything special.

Was there a youth group?

Yeah, it was a youth fellowship. We met about once every Friday, and most people there were in the choir too, so had choir practice after meetings every Friday.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

A lot less than I'd like. I mean, I'm just not a time management person. Maybe I should make a schedule. It always seems I have too much work on Sunday to go to church. So I don't go to church that much during the course of the year.

So you'd like it to be more, but you don't have the time.

Yeah, it's sort of my fault. I just have to make the time.

It's a challenge.

7. How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?

I didn't involve myself in any extracurricular activities that much in high school. All I had was

band, and maybe gospel choir. They had a gospel choir in my high school, and besides that was it. I'm not involved in anything here, except maybe MSA a little bit. But I hardly ever go to any of their meetings.

8. How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative

Adult friend

Peer

Other

My college counselor knew a lot about this school. Not too many people in New York City do, but he said they've got a great accounting program, so. And I went to visit the campus. I took a plane here and stayed over a weekend in March.

Was it one of those prospective student weekends?

Yeah.

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

You mean somebody who'd already graduated? I didn't know anybody who had already graduated Washington and Lee.

Did you know people who were students at the time?

Yeah. When I went over to visit the place, There were a lot of people there.

10. Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student?

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

x Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

Tell about your visit.

We got - somehow I barely remember it. I guess the only thing that made me want to go there was like the fact that people say hi to you when you're walking by. Everybody seemed sort of nice, friendly and cheerful. And they had a party the night before we left to go back home and I had a good time that night, so ..

Who had the party?

MSA. they had it in the Chavis House. It was packed. A lot of people. Fun, laughs, that sort of thing.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

I think it was my third choice.

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

- No other
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six or more

About seven.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six

All of them.

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

- Relatives wanted you to come here
- Teacher advised you
- Good academic reputation
- Good social reputation
- Offered financial assistance
- Offers special programs you wanted
- Tuition lower than similar colleges
- High school guidance school counselor advised you
- Private college counselor advised you
- Wanted to live near home
- Friend suggested attending
- Recruited by college representative
- Recruited by athletic department
- Graduates go to top graduate schools
- Graduates get good jobs
- Religious affiliation or orientation
- Size of college
- Not accepted anywhere else
- Rankings in national magazines

Not too many people go here, so if I'm disorganized I'll get more attention. People here are nice. If you're in a bigger school it's harder - It was harder for me to make friends in some of the bigger schools and colleges over my perspective weekend. I went to see the school Bingamton, in New York state. That was my first choice. It has 12,000 people in it, but I didn't feel that connected with anybody particularly. I just, atmosphere of having a lot more people around - I just don't have the outgoing personality. I guess at a smaller school it's real easy to make friends. I don't know... Aside that, the accounting program. I went to one of the classes. That was pretty much it. I never talked to an accounting professor.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?  
Financial aid. I needed the money.

So you got a better package here than some of the other places..

Yeah. I think that's it. And it's a nice social atmosphere.

12. Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?  
Most of them didn't know about the place, but they were just glad to see me going off to college. We got to see, over the summer before freshman year. We brought a lot of my relatives in a van to go check out the place. We went to Virginia Beach and Bush Garden and had a good time. It was nice. It looks nice in the summer, I guess.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?  
I didn't encounter it when I was a prospective. I mean. Not that I remember. When I came here freshman year, there's always talk about racism, some people have experienced it and you've got to be careful about it, but prospective weekend I didn't hear any of that, so.. I didn't hear anything too bad.

13. Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?  
Well it was a lot harder. I'm not outgoing, so it was a lot harder for me to make friends and that was a problem. Other than that it didn't really surprise me.

So the work was a lot harder, and it had seemed to you like you'd have an easier time making friends here, but it was not that easy?

Yeah. It's my personality. Some of it's my personality. Just, I don't know.

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

14. Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.  
How have you dealt with it?

*I guess managing my time. I like to have fun a lot. Play basketball on the weekends and watch TV and stuff. Managing my time's my greatest challenge here.*

*How have you dealt with it?*

*Just keep trying. Sometimes I do pretty well, sometimes not as well as I want to be, but keep trying. I've been trying to find different ways to manage my time. I thought about a schedule, but for now I'm just trying to wing it and it's working for me so far, so..*

*Did you get support from anybody or information from anybody about time management?*

*Yeah, I've seen Dean McCloud a few times. I should take her advice a little bit more than I do.*

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

A little bit lower. I don't know. I want to do better, and I think I still have a chance to do better. I'm not doing horribly or anything. But I'm not doing as well as I should.

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

- x Undergraduate library
- Science library
- x Computer facilities.
- x Writing Center. a lot freshman year.

- Tutors in the disciplines.
- x I try to get in Study groups. Sometimes it's hard cause I don't know the people too well.
- Public lectures on academic subjects.
- x Language lab.
- x Visiting professors in their offices. that helps a lot.
- Study skills courses

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

I don't know if many students here need a lot of tutors. I can think of some times when I needed some tutors. Probably if there were more available. I wish they were a little easier to contact when you need help. I mean, I don't think too many students here need help, but ..

You'd like more tutors available or more information about where tutors are available.

Just more information about it. Probably not a good idea to make tutors too available.

Why would that be.

I don't know. there just doesn't seem to be that much of a need for tutors here, but I don't know. I'm just guessing.

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

*Promise of earning a handsome salary after graduation,  
Interest in the particular academic discipline,  
College friends recommended this major,  
Adult relative recommendation etc.  
Other*

*An interest in accounting more than anything. I tried to - I had a lot of chance to look at a lot of classes freshman year and I don't know of anything I like better right now. Promise of a job after graduation.*

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

If yes, please describe that change.

Not yet.

Thinking about it?

Remotely sometimes, but []

So you're gonna stick with accounting.

Most likely

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

If they were my real close friends and the violation was really really cheap, no I wouldn't report it, but I mean, cheating on a test... I still don't know, I'll never know until I get in a situation, but depending on how well I know the person, if I don't know the person, chances are I will. If I do, I probably won't, I don't know.

How would you handle it then?

Probably talk to him about it. If I knew them, if they were really my friend. I'm sure there are some really serious honor violations. If it were like really really serious, I probably would report

it, but can't imagine how I'd act in that situation.

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

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

Relatively easy. They're relatively available. Have their office hours posted.

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

Not that I know of. I don't know.

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

Not much. It's not so much that I keep to my work. Everybody keeps to their work here. I'm just not incredibly outgoing. I don't like talking to people that much. I don't get to that many parties. I don't have too many friends, but I have a few good friends.

*Is that different from what it was before you came here or is that just the way the style is for you?*

It's the same way.

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

It's not that important. I don't drink that much. I drank alcohol last night at a party, and it's the first time I drank in a half year.

*What sort of social events do you find yourself going to usually?*

DJ parties at the fraternities----

*How important to you are drugs at a social event?*

Not important to me at all.

*Do you see it?*

No.

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

I never rushed. I don't know anything about fraternities, how they operate or anything else. I just go to the parties.

*What experiences do you have when you go to the parties?*

I dance, talk to a few people, hang out mainly. Some of my friends are in a fraternity.

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

I can't think of any experience.

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

Phys ed classes are fun for me. I can take out my anger, let out my stress. Athletic teams—I wanted to join the basketball team, but I still don't know if I'm a good basketball player, so I never joined.

*So you go and play basketball sometimes, pickup stuff. Have you been able to find the space to do that?*

Yes.

*So play basketball sometimes with your friends. Do you use the gym for that?*

Uh-huh.

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

Go to the next question. (Laughter) No chance of this question.

So does that mean you have no opportunities for dating?

----No.

*You would like for there to have been some?*

Who wouldn't?

*Why do you think that is?*

I have no idea.. Might be my personality. It's unique.

*Actually you're not alone. Different people have different ideas about it. It's not just you. If that's at all comforting, I don't know.*

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university?*

Sometimes.

*Why/why not?*

Social life. I figure if I could just go to another college and start over or something. ---That's the only time I think about it.

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

The classes. I'm interested in learning about stuff in my major. It's pretty much my work that's keeping me here.

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

Yeah, work study.

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

I really need the money. Yeah, it's increased my satisfaction. It would be a lot better if they just gave you the money.

*So it's good in that it helps you have the money you need to have.*

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.*

To a certain point. It takes up time in my schedule. I'd like to do it, you know. The time management thing it all comes down to.

*Are you saying you would like to recruit other students for W&L?*

Yeah. I took on like one prospective my sophomore year. This guy was socially unkind to me. I hardly ever saw him in the course of the week. He was out with some kind of friend.

*He took off.*

Yeah, he had his own system when it comes to girls and all that good stuff. I just left him to do his work. We said hi and bye and all that. He's going here now.

Now we ask some background information:

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

New York City. I was born in Brooklyn, moved to Queens about 8 years later.

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

Urban

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

Urban

*Predominantly  
Black*

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

When I was in Brooklyn, I used to live with my parents. My mother and two older brothers. When we went to Queens, my father and mother got separated. My aunt and three cousins, they were with us for a little while. Then my aunt moved out. Shawn died. Now Lenox and Sheldon live with us.

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 mom graduated. I never asked my mom about this. I think she - she's a registered nurse - I think she had two years in some kind of college for nursing after she graduated from high school. My father graduated high school. I don't think he finished college, but he works for Brooklyn Gas.

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

--- a Jeep Cherokee and all that good stuff. I think some people have their own BMW. I don't think I have enough money for that, so I guess I'm about middle class.

*How do you think this has affected your experience?*

Probably be easier to get to the grocery, but other than that—It's cool to have all that neat stuff....

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?*

Nobody likes me now so I guess I'm a student. I was joking. I haven't talked to many people at this school, so I don't really associate myself with any group.

*So when you think about yourself, how do you think of yourself?*

As a student.

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.*

I wish I knew more than I did, so I could tell you. Some of them like to hang out a lot with each other, make friends with each other. They'll talk to anybody that talks to them, but they mainly hang around in a group. Others, they've got that personality, they can spread themselves out, get billions of friends. Other than that, I don't know their beliefs or political perspective.

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.*

This school is predominantly conservative. Most of the blacks here are Democrats, I'm not sure. Have liberal views, dress differently. I can't think of anything. I'm trying to improv. This is really messing me up. I don't know. Somebody has to know this question.

*The question is only for someone who has an opinion about it. If you don't have an opinion, fine.*

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



*adequate or inadequate?*

Could be a little more integrated, not just in terms of blacks but all races.

*You would like to see more numbers of more races.*

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

Inadequate. But I wouldn't want a professor to come here just because he was black. Probably would want him here because he's a real smart person who can teach a lot.

*You would want a good black person.*

It's not totally necessary.

*What would you personally like?*

I just like good professors to teach at this school. They don't necessarily have to be black or white.

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

Explain.

Inadequate. As long as they're quality administrators.

*You'd still like to see more.*

Uh-huh.

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

The MSA has been doing an alright job of that. When the freshmen come they set up times where you can talk to each other. I think it's alright.

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

Well, there was that big party - a big reason I came here. Now they don't have parties like that anymore. Chavis House, going to MSA meetings, talking to the people - I made a lot of friends in there.

*You'd like to see more parties like that one. What was that party like that was different?*

They don't have good music - nothing special - not as many people come. But there was a party last night at the Chavis House. It was nice. That was the first time since freshman year that I had a good time at the party.

*That's a long wait.*

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

Made a lot of friends. That's pretty much it.

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?*

Yeah.

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

I haven't really taken any of those courses yet. I've taken mostly business courses. I took one history course.

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

Normal.

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

The only reason I go to Dean McCloud's office is help with time management. I went over there and talked to her about some problems I had. I don't know exactly what her official role is.

*How did you know that she would be a resource like that for you? How did you find out that she*

*could help you with problems and with time management?*

Freshman year she gave us little seminars. We had to come early freshman year. She gave us seminars about time management. She gave us pamphlets.

*Minority students came early to give you a chance to get together with her about stuff. So you knew right off the bat that she was available for this?*

Uh-huh.

*How can the role of this Office be improved?*

They're doing a good job in helping students with time management. I've heard some success stories out of there. Keep that going. I can't think of anything.

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.)*

So it doesn't have to be anybody here. Or does it have to be here?

*It doesn't have to be. You can talk about in your life as a student as W&L where you get your emotional support from.*

The school psychologist.

*Sometimes he helps you, sometimes he's not so helpful?*

Sometimes I don't take the time to set up appointments with him. A lot of people go to see him. Every time I'm down I need help right there and then. I set up an appointment with him, and I meet him a week later. By that time I've sort of forgotten.

*Other than him there's not anybody on campus that you get emotional support from?*

Not anybody that I can go up to and tell them everything that's on my mind.

*So are there people that you can get emotional support from during the time you're a student here?*

My mother and father help me a lot.

*So do you call them up and stuff?*

Yeah.

*Well, thank God for that.*

*What percentage of your friends are black, what white, and what international?*

I guess 80% or 75% black. Maybe 20% white, 5% international.

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

Not on campus.

*If not on campus, have you had it elsewhere in relation to W&L?*

Not yet.

*Are you expecting it?*

Yeah, I think so. I mean I'm not looking out for it. I'd be lying if I didn't think about it a little bit.

*So it's just something that you're aware might happen. Is it because you've heard about it happening to other folks on campus or in the town?*

Some people - I think every other black person on this campus except me has experienced racism on campus. They tell me about it. I've never experienced it before.

*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?*

Not blatantly, not that I can see clearly, at least not yet.

*If not blatantly, then how?*

I don't know. Black people hang out with other black people. They talk to everybody else, too. I don't think there's anything wrong with the way it is now. I don't see any real racial tension.

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?*

I don't know about the Honor System. I've never seen a black person involved with the Honor System. I wouldn't know.

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

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.*

I don't really - I'm not interested in looking into those things.

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

I wish I could help. I just can't do it. It's like I don't know the answers to any of the questions. *That's fine. If you haven't had experience with them, that fine. You don't have to sorry. That's absolutely fine. That way we know what everybody's experience is. If you don't have experience, at least we know that. We're not saying "This person who wasn't counted, I wonder what he would have said." Anything you say is useful, even if it's "I don't know."* *So what's your feeling about the treatment of news about black students? Do you read the newspapers and stuff?*

Not the Ring Tum Phi. The Wall Street Journal.

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.*

I guess I feel more pressure to succeed. In my family they always call me the smart one. There's pressure. I always wanted to be smarter than everybody....

*You wouldn't know necessarily.*

I don't want to hear the answer, but did Brian have a lot to say about this last question? Question 46. I don't want to hear what he said.

*He had talked about this issue earlier. I don't think he had much to say about 46. But he does have some opinions. Ask him when you see him next time. Do you have anything more to say about that?*

- \*47. Sex M
- \*48. Age? 20
- \*49. Year in college? JUNIOR
- \*50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 3.00
- \*51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN

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

53. Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?  
I can't think of anything.