

#22 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?

If yes, what?

No, not yet.

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

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

I'm thinking a BS

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

I want to do be a psychiatrist.

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

yes

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.

Yes. Well, I'm Catholic and I was an altar girl, altar server, and I sang in the choir. that's pretty much it.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

It's pretty active. I try to do go every Sunday. My roommate's a Baptist, and so I go to do her church sometimes, but I try to do go to do mine too.

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

Extremely low here, I'm trying to do get more involved here, but I'm in just two or three activities, whereas in high school I was in everything.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative

Adult friend

Peer

Other

There was this forum, Project Excellence, and it was like a scholarship day. like a college fair type thing, where you presented your transcripts and like different schools, based on your transcript, offer you a scholarship.

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

I'm not sure the man, I met a man, I'm not sure what his name was, but he just told me to do give him my transcript and you all would send me something in the mail - during that scholarship day. So he didn't really give me this long description or anything.

Was he an alum?

I think so.

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

Yes.

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

It was prospective student weekend, and I enjoyed myself. I liked it here. I felt really comfortable. Nice and small and people seems friendly to do me. Plus I also liked who I stayed with, they were pretty cool, pretty cool.

Was it a minority student weekend, specifically, or was it a regular prospective weekend?

Regular.

Were you here for several days?

Yes.

Did you get to do go to do classes?

Yes.

Did you meet with minority students?

Yes.

So, what kind of feedback did you get from students here when you were here?

Um.. Well, they said there weren't that many minority students here. They were honest with me about that. They weren't too negative when I came. They weren't extremely negative, they were just saying you're dealing with what you're dealing with in the world, and they weren't extremely negative.

Please describe your reactions to do this campus visit.

I liked the size, and I liked the people. I felt really at home here. I felt comfortable.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

I think it was like my third choice. The first was the University of Delaware. I wanted to do go the University of Delaware. And I guess Rutgers was the second.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

I think about five or six.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

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

And out of the six I got them all.

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

- Relatives wanted you to do 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 do live near home
- Friend suggested attending
- Recruited by college representative
- Recruited by athletic department
- Graduates go to do top graduate schools
- Graduates get good jobs
- Religious affiliation or orientation
- Size of college
- Not accepted anywhere else
- Rankings in national magazines

the size and academic reputation, and also I guess the money too.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

Well, I have to do be honest. I was kind of concerned, it was kinda like "Oh, there are no black people here," but when I met some black students at the weekend I felt better. I knew there were people that were similar to do myself. But other than that,...there was nothing really..

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

They were happy, they were excited. a lot of, let me think. My uncle, he went to do, well he didn't hear, not too many people knew about it within my family, but when they told their co-workers about it they were "Oh, that's a good school." So they were happy.

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

The only thing that I had heard was about the drinking, but that wasn't so strong where I was like "I'm not coming," cause I don't have to do do that.

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

Um, yes. I wasn't in for too many surprises. I mean I guess the academic transition was kind of difficult for me, I didn't know it was going to do be.. I was like, "Wow." I thought that, I don't know...

So it was harder than you expected.

It was harder than I expected, like for example, like with a chemistry course that I took , I - it was harder here. I thought that cause I'd had the AP classes that I'd be ready to do go, but it was challenging.

Any other ways that it was different?

No, not really.

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

Let me back up just a little bit, because you did mention that before you came you were concerned that there weren't black students here, much. How was that when you finally got here? How did that play out?

Well there was more than I thought, cause I thought there was no one here, maybe just one person, but basically no one, because the brochure that I had gotten, there was no one in there that was black. So, I felt better, even though there's like, maybe 30. I felt better.

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

How have you dealt with it?

I think the academics, and I think I'm dealing with it now by learning better ways to do study, and talking with my professors. Things like that, I think I'm meeting the challenge pretty well.

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

Well, it's significantly lower. In high school it was 4.5, but here it's like struggling for that 3.0.

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

- x Undergraduate library
- x Science library
- x Computer facilities.
- x Writing Center.
- x Tutors in the disciplines.
- x Study groups.
- Public lectures on academic subjects.
- x Language lab.
- x Visiting professors in their offices.
- x I spoke with Dean McCloud first term, about study skills

But you didn't take one of the courses.

Um Um, just talked to do her about it.

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

Well, I think I'm using them to do the best of my ability. They're accessible, certainly, I think.

17. What factors contribute or contributed to do 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*

I think interest, surely, and I think the earnings and the handsome salary is good too. You know you want to do make a living.

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

Yes. I was thinking about being chemistry pre-med, and then when I got into chemistry it was a rude awakening, so I don't think I'll major in chemistry. I think I still want to do perhaps pre-med, but I don't think I want to do major in chemistry.

If yes, please describe that change.

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

Um. I think I would. Yeah I would. I think I would.

Would you elaborate on that?

Like with a friend, or..? I don't know, could you give me a situation?

No, just tell me more about why you would, or how you feel about the honor system, or any elaboration that you would have to do say about the fact that you would..

I think the honor system is a good thing and I wouldn't want to do anything that's going to do hurt that in any way. So I would try my best to do uphold it, cause I think - It works for me, and if I told that would help out. Anything I could do to do keep it going.

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

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

I find them pretty easy to do approach. The ones the I had, they were willing to do help me, being just really nice. I wasn't really too intimidated.

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

Hmm. Yes, I guess kind of. I like my Calculus teacher a lot from last semester, and I went in his office once or twice just to do say hi. I really liked him.

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

It's been pretty good. I got to a couple of parties. I've been to maybe one or two frat parties. Sometimes the Minority Student Association, they have parties and I've been to a couple of those.

So your feel like it's successful?

Yes. Yes, I can make myself have fun.

It sounds like you haven't gone to a large number of parties. There must be some other things that you are making happen in your social life. Is that true?

Yes, I guess you could — like going out to Roanoke, the mall, or something, with friends.

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

It's not really important at all, because I don't drink.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

Not necessary.

Have alcohol been intruding in the social events, or have drugs been obvious?

Well, I think that it's obvious that alcohol — I think that's really obvious at parties. As far as drugs, I don't know too much about that. I'm sure that happens, too, but I haven't seen any.

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

I have quite a few friends that are in sororities, and maybe one or two guy friends that are in fraternities. And I go to their parties.

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

They were OK, parties.

And having friends in the Greek organizations...

I guess you could call them acquaintances, because I don't like to hang out with them on the weekends.

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

I haven't taken any physical education yet, and I'm not very athletic, so I don't do any sports. I took the swimming at the beginning of the year, and I didn't do so well in that. I passed that, so I have to take that next year, if I don't take swimming this summer. So I don't know what to say about that.

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

Honestly, I don't think there are any opportunities here for me, according to what I like. As far as African-American males, I think I would be interested in dating African-American males first, but a lot of the guys here are attached or already with somebody.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university? No*

Why/why not?

As far as the academics, it's really great here and I don't think that anywhere else I would get everything in just one package. It's small, the people are nice, the academics are great.

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

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

No.

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

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.*

Yes, I'd be willing to do that. Maybe, go to banquets and things like that to meet prospective students.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Country:

State: Maryland (Marlborough)

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

Urban

Suburban Suburban/Rural

Rural

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

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Predominantly

Black

White

Mixed Becoming predominantly black — about 70% black

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

I thought we were pretty close knit. I have a younger brother, 2 years younger than me, and we were pretty close. My sister's 5 years older than me, so we're not as close. My mother and my father.

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 sister took a couple of courses in college but she didn't finish. My father has an associate's degree. My mother is working on her associate's degree.

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

My mother is a professional beautician. My father is a retired U.S. Park Police Officer. Now he's doing some security stuff.

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 guess middle class.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

Yes, I think so. A lot of the people that I encounter are or seem to be upper class or upper-middle class. I guess it makes me feel kind of different. Like, I can't relate to some things they are talking about or the way they behave.

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?*

At first, honestly I have to say that I felt more racial, but now I feel just like a student.

What made the difference?

I guess, coming here and even though it was different, I was still coming back from a 70% black school. Even though it didn't seem that bad when I first got here for a prospective weekend, actually being in that situation it was a big change. Now I'm doing better, academically, so that makes me feel a little better. Maybe it was depression then, too.

It sounds like what you are saying is that you weren't used to it at first.

Yes.

Please explain.

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 think it's pretty homogeneous. I notice that a lot of people bond, they sit together a lot like at lunch. From the political perspective, I don't know every single person, but most of them seem pretty similar.

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.*

I think pretty different. Like I said, most people that I encounter that are black have the same views, and the(too low to hear).

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

I think it's inadequate. We need more people. I think it would be better if there were more minority students on campus. Thirty just isn't enough. What is there, 1900-2000 people on this campus? We could do a little better than that. Maybe no half or even close to half, but 300 or something.

I'd like you to say more about what difference it would make or why you think there should be more blacks on campus.

Well, I consider myself like a unique type of individual. I think I'm different. Certain things don't get to me as much as they would to other people that are in my ethnic or racial group. I think that for some students or for a lot of black students, it would be better if there were more black people here. As I said, for me it didn't seem too bad. But for a lot of people that I know, it would be reassuring to see more minority students. And I think it would improve the atmosphere here. People would become more educated about different cultures. It would be good for everybody, the whole population.

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

I think that's inadequate, as well. I only know of one that I've heard about a lot, Prof. Delaney.

Do you know him from church at all?

No.

He probably goes to a different service, but he is a devoted Methodist. So your reasoning for that being inadequate is?

I think they could bring a lot to teaching as well as to the University.

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

I think it's the very same thing.

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

Um, I think the black students here are pretty close knit, even though there are tensions within the group. Not everyone is going to like everyone just because of the similarity of being the same color. People are individuals. But for the most part, I can say that most people are pretty close knit already.

So the University doesn't need to, is that what you're saying?

It's not that they don't need. They can, but I don't think it's as necessary as bringing more black students and black professors.

If not, why not?

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

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

Yes, significantly. Mainly because the Minority Student Association meets there, and I go there for the meetings, of course. I don't just go to the Chavis house to relax or anything, but just to know that it's there is reassuring.

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

Just knowing that there's somebody or a group there that you can go to and relate to is good. That's the role it plays, just knowing that I can go somewhere and talk about my problems or how I feel and feel comfortable that there is somebody that knows what you're going through.

How are the meetings?

I think they're pretty good, pretty organized. I like the President, she's pretty organized and she works hard.

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?*

Yes, I do. I think it's important. And I think it's also important that it's presented as honestly and correctly as possible.

Have you taken enough humanities and social sciences to have an opinion about whether...?

No. But I've had one or two friends, and I have said something about it. They were making statements about that it wasn't what they expected and it wasn't adequate.

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

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

I feel just like a regular student in all my classes.

If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties?

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

Is that with Dean McCloud? I'm not sure about that. Um, I guess you could just go to her with any problems that you have, if you just want to talk to her about anything that's going on, regarding your adjustment here at W&L or what's going on at W&L.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

Not really. I think she's pretty accessible. I haven't gone much.

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.)*

I think it's my roommate. She's pretty supportive. She understands what's going on. I can talk to her if I'm feeling down. My family, even though they're not here on campus. My roommate is black.

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

I think the majority of my friends are black. I'm trying to become more diversified now. I am getting more involved in activities. Like, I'm in the wind ensemble now, math class, different classes, you start speaking to people.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself? Directed against me, personally?* No. I can't pinpoint anything and say that something has happened to me, because that would be lying. I don't know of anything I could say. No specific behaviors.

What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment). Who was responsible for that behavior?

Individual students

Student groups

Greek

Non Greek

Faculty

Staff

Security

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?

Yes, I do. I don't think there's hate going around, people saying they hate black people or anything like that. I don't think that kind of thing is going on here, but I think there's a lot of ignorance. And I think there's things that people don't know and they don't understand, and people tend to generalize a lot, and stereotype — they're always going to have that. Here everybody's the same, very homogeneous, or at least from the same economic background, it seems like. So there's a lot of ignorance.

How is that manifested?

I guess just not being educated. Well, my friend was saying that somebody was talking to them about "our" music. I went to a party one time and I asked the DJ, who was white, if he had a song. He said, "No, I don't play that kind of music." [That shows] generalizations, a lot. People who feel that if you're here, you must be on scholarship. So many things that go on, I can't really pinpoint right now, but you can sense it's there. People who say to you, "Why would you say that?" Ebonics, when that was the big thing here, they kinda went overboard with that. I read the Spectator, sometimes, or that monthly magazine that comes out, things in that that shows the generalizations.

If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

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 too much about these committees, like personal run-ins, or anything. But I guess I would say they're treated the same, as far as I know.

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

I think so.

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 know how open they are to black students, but sometimes the articles seem pretty biased. But I think I knew someone who is black and a journalism major and who wrote for one of these publications.

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

Sometimes it seems a little sarcastic.

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 think they're similar. I think certain things are similar. Black students have to endure more in terms of adjustment here, the atmosphere is just so different, everyone here is the same, like I said. Black people are just different and have things they have to get used to.. But I think people are people and there are certain things that binds together, certain things that everyone goes through.

I want to clarify something. You said that your first year here you thought there was nobody here that was black, and then.....[can't hear, volume way too low]...so that was reassuring. Then you said something that indicated the adjustment to was pretty tough at first.

Because, like I said, I wasn't in that situation — you don't know how you'll handle a situation until you're actually in that situation. So when I got used to that situation, it was kind of an adjustment. I had to get used to being here, being the only black student in my classes, so now it doesn't bother me because I'm doing better academically.

Is there any way that you could describe.....?

I felt that sometimes I'm just a black kid. People didn't purposely make me feel ostracized or anything. They didn't seem that they would go out of their way to do that. But there were some people who didn't want to speak to me. The speaking tradition on the colonnade, not everyone speaks. Some people don't want to speak or look in your direction. There are just things. No one has come out and said anything negative to me. But I've heard comments. When you see the Confederate flag. That doesn't particularly offend me but it offends a lot of my friends and they see that as racism.

It sounds like some of the things you are saying are the kinds of things where you say something and you don't know how.....

Yes, exactly. That's another thing that's confusing for me. Sometimes it's kinda hard to say that people here are just like that, or that it is a racist thing. You can't really tell.

- *47. Sex F
- *48. Age? 18
- *49. Year in college? FRESHMAN
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]?
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN
52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race? African-American,

although I most automatically say “black.”

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

I just hope that people try to get to know others a little better and stop making generalizations, I guess on both parts, both black and white. Like, I hope that they can improve the enrollment here, bringing more minority students here, and more professors.