

23 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. *Have you decided upon a college major?* Yes.
If yes, what? Physics and engineering.
2. *(If the answer to question 6 is no, skip #7.) What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?* From what I calculate myself, not including this semester, I think it's a 3.0, 3.4 maybe.
3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*
BA
BS [science or commerce] X
4. *What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?*
Practicing engineer, nothing specific, I just want to work somewhere in that field.
5. *Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?* Yes. *Do you want to do that right away?* I mean I'll probably apply to jobs as well as grad school to see what comes through for me.
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, I was active in church. Baptist church, just -- I wasn't really that active. I did attend, but mainly my mother wanted me to. I did go to things like Sunday School. They had some weekend retreats and stuff like that I attended. But that was basically it.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington? I haven't been to church in Lexington.
7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?* In high school I did a lot more.
8. *How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?*
W&L literature X
W&L admissions counselor
Relative
Adult friend
Peer
Other X from my counselor and we talked about Washington and Lee. *Was it someone from Washington and Lee?* Yes, that's basically how I got interested in it. One of my teachers in my school looked it up and the book. *Was that the literature you were sent -- when your teacher and you looked it up?* No, we looked it up in the college almanac. *Okay, so what was the literature that you saw? Was it just stuff that was in your high school?* The literature - I believe it was mailed to them and stuff. You know, you take the SAT and every school starts sending stuff. *Is that why someone called you too, do you think?* Probably. *They just out of the blue*

called you? Um-hmm.

9. To what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee? Not at all.

10. Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student? No, I didn't.
If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on one's own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more I believe.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you? All of them except one. One of them I got waited on and in August, they told me I didn't get in. But by then, I already knew I was going here.

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

11. What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee? A big reason was my financial status at home and another reason was just the academics. I mean, I knew I wanted to go to one of the top schools. This was one of the -- I'd say one other school was maybe ranked higher than this one, that were in my choices. So, I just decided to go here. Those two factors were the main reasons.

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

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision? Well, I kind of thought about the size also. A lot of people were telling me -- at my high school we have college day and people would come back talk about their experiences. A lot of people were talking about the large colleges with a lot of people in class and they didn't enjoy that at all and it was difficult to learn and you had to teach yourself and you couldn't talk to your professors and they had TAs. Those schools that I was really considering were ones that had small student to faculty ratios. That was a big thing too. *Anything else?* Also distance. *Lots of distance or just enough?* Just enough. Also the alumni ties to -- I've heard that W&L alumni take care of their own. That was a positive thing to hear. *Is that what you heard from the literature?* That's actually something I heard from my teacher who was helping me research the school. She knew a little bit about the school, but not much. Also, the academic ranking.

12. *Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?*
Positive. A lot of my friends, they didn't go to college or they just went to the local college. So, they were excited that I was going to college. My family was the same way. A lot of my family couldn't go to college or didn't go to college. There was nothing negative about it.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?
The only thing I could really say, looking at the minority percentages -- it turned out better than I thought it would be, but still not what I would like it to be, you know, people that I met here and everything. That's the only thing. *People that you've met here?* The number of blacks here -- I thought it might be less. There are a great number of blacks. I know most of them. I guess it's alright for now. *So, you've met -- the number of people that you've met turned out to be sufficient?* Yes, sufficient -- sufficient for here, I guess.

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?* Pretty much. The classes were a little harder. I expected the social and being in the classroom and maybe being the only minority there. That's something I experienced in high school also so it wasn't that hard for me to adjust because I was used to it. It was pretty much what I expected. *And what about the social life? What about that, was it what you expected?* Well, I knew that all the fraternities were white fraternities and sororities, and I knew that the fraternities dominated that social life. So, I hadn't planned -- even if I went to a college or university that

had black fraternities, I didn't plan to join those. Not right away anyway. I may have needed some convincing but that wasn't something that I had to do when I was in college. *So knowing that the social life was dominated by the fraternities and that they were, as you said, white fraternities, does that mean that you expected not to have any social life?* No, I have a social life. I mean, I knew that if I met just a few people that I could hang around with or be friendly with, I would be okay -- because even when I'm at home, I don't have a lot of friends, I have a couple of friends that I stick to and we're together all the time. So, it wasn't -- I'm not one of these people that has to have people constantly.

If the school differed from the way it seemed when you first heard about it or visited the campus, please describe how it differed. Already answered, not that I can say.

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

How have you dealt with it? Personally, my greatest challenge has been the work. My education comes first and everything else is next -- that's why I'm here. I think I've dealt with it well. If I have problems, I go in and talk to my professors. My education is number one in my mind. All the social stuff is behind me. Some blacks here, they're always drumming on that, how much they hate the school. But for me, I try not to focus on that because when you start thinking about stuff like that, like I want to transfer or whatever, that starts being on your mind more and more and it can affect your school work. So, I try to put those to the side and concentrate on my work.

15. How has your academic performance at Washington and Lee compared with your performance in high school? Well, the two aren't exactly the same, but based on what other people are doing and other schools, and the reputation of the school, I think I'm doing pretty well.

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

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Undergraduate library | X | |
| Science library | | |
| Computer facilities. | X | |
| Writing Center. | | |
| Tutors in the disciplines. | | |
| Study groups. | X | |
| Public lectures on academic subjects. | | X, I've had mandatory lectures. |
| Language lab. | X | |
| Visiting professors in their offices. | X | |

When you do study groups, do they happen spontaneously or do you help to create them? Well, I try -- whenever I have a class and I know somebody in there, if I'm having difficulty or for a test, I try, if I can, to get some people together and study as a group. Last year, there was one class and there was another student and we studied together, and my grades turned out to be higher than in all my other classes where I studied alone. *You just studied throughout the semester?* Yes. And this semester, the same thing. I know a couple of people in the same class I am and we study together and if we have a problem, we call up and work together on it. That turns out to work pretty well.

Do you have suggestions for the development of these or other facilities? Not that I can

think of.

17. *What factors contribute or contributed to your selection of a major course of study?* I knew I didn't want to do anything like liberal arts, history, or -- that just wasn't my thing. I always knew that I wanted to do something that involved math and science. That's always been my strong point in school. Engineering is a combination of math and science, so it was perfect for me. I knew that what I wanted since my sophomore year in high school.

18. *Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?* **No.**
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.* Probably. If it was something very obvious, I probably would. Some people around here might be quick to jump the gun or whatever and report something that's not fact. Being a minority, I think we have to be extra-special about that because I've heard stories about people who got kicked out of here for the smallest thing -- minority students -- at least one minority student I heard of -- it was something very small and I feel like maybe people are watching us and maybe try and catch us doing something to get us out of here. It might depend on who it was -- who's doing it -- *That might depend to you if you were to report it?* Yes. *How would that work out?* I can't really say right now because I'm not faced with the situation. Like, if it was someone I knew, like maybe it was my friend, I don't know if I could report it. *Because?* If that person gets kicked out, then that's one less person that I have here for emotional support. Some days -- when I have a bad day, I can't just go up to the average W&L student and tell them my problems because most of the time we might not have anything in common, but the few people that I do know and that I do hang around with, those are the people that might understand what I'm going through, what it's like being in my situation at this school, and if I get one of them kicked out of school, that's going to hurt me in the long run also. *What - - tell me more about your sense that you may be more subject to having people looking for things to report about you in order to get you out of here? Do you feel like the community doesn't want you here?* The community as a whole, I don't feel that -- but I know that there are certain people -- just on comments that I personally haven't heard but some of my peers have heard comments like "Why do blacks even choose to go here," and I heard that one prospective was asking her host how many black students go here because that was one of the considerations that she had for whatever school she was going to go to. It's things like that that make me watch out for myself even more, to make sure that I'm not -- *And this was a white prospective?* Yes. These are all white students. So, it's things like that that make me aware that I better watch what I'm doing. I mean, I'm pretty sure that if I did happen to commit an honor violation and somebody knew it, I'm 100% sure that I would be reported for it. I'm positive of that.

20. *Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?* Very easy to approach. I haven't had any problems seeing professors after class or during their office hours. I've had no trouble at all.

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

Have you been able to establish close working relationships with a member or with members of the W&L faculty? There are professors I wouldn't hesitate to see more than I would

another professor just because they're more friendly. I mean, they don't act like the know-it-all in front of the class --you know, you're a student and you have to listen -- they're more interactive in class and they make me feel more comfortable about asking them a question in class or out of class. There are a couple in my major department I wouldn't feel anything at all to just go up and ask them a question and in asking that question conversation might spark about other things. So, I would definitely say that there are some that are easier to talk to and I could go talk to them about almost anything.

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

Not at the time being, I don't plan to join one. I do go to fraternity parties--last year more than this year. Last year I went to one every weekend. If I was planning social activities, it's not exactly what I would plan. It'll have to do, because party-wise that's all that goes on around here. I had an impression of what it was going to be like before I came here, so I can't really complain about it.

What would you plan, if it were up to you?

We have African-Am. base parties, like one or two a year. If we had more of those, that would be good.

How would that be different?

Basically just, the drinking wouldn't be such a big factor and the music would be more to our liking. Some of the music they play is good, some of it I just can't stand.

What sort of music would you prefer?

I like rap, R&B, all that kind of stuff. At frat parties they play that 80's music and "techno" which I don't really like. They do play some rap, R&B, pop, sometimes that's ok.

What about dancing? Is that something you want to see more of?

They call it dancing. Since I don't like it, I won't dance to it. Dancing does go on at the parties. It's not all just standing around and talking.

So when you go to fraternity parties, you just drop in with friends. Do you feel welcome in general at the various fraternity parties?

Last year I didn't know much about fraternities, so I was just going to all of them, seeing where I would like it the most. Now the ones that I do go to are mainly the houses I feel more comfortable in or I know somebody in there. Some of the fraternities, I just won't go, no matter what they're having.

Based on what?

Based on incidents that have occurred there. Just the "southern fraternities" or whatever--I just wouldn't feel comfortable there.

Did you find that out from experience or reputation?

Reputation. I haven't really gone.

Even last year?

Well, last year--they don't really have the ones I would go to. I don't like bands. I'd rather go to a DJ. Some of those houses, they always have bands. So I just don't go.

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

It's not important to me at all.

Do you drink some?

Yeah, I drink some, but I don't drink to the point where my roommates have to carry me back to my room or anything like that. I do go to frat parties and don't touch alcohol at all.

As a rule or just sometimes?

I don't need it like some people might need it to have a good time.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

I don't use drugs at all.

Is it your impression that drugs are prevalent, easily available, being used a lot or not?

It's not too obvious. I have been at a few parties where a few people were using drugs. I don't know too much about it. It's not like somebody's name's going around—you can get so-and-so from this person. Not to my knowledge. I know it's going on, but it's kept down. You don't hear a lot about it.

What is it that people are using mostly?

Marijuana.

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

Go to their parties. That's about it.

Do you have friends that belong?

I have a few acquaintances that do, people who lived on my hall last year. A few of the blacks are members. Or just some people that, I went there and met them.

So do you drop over outside of parties?

No.

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

Already covered that.

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

I'm not on any teams. Facilities are pretty nice. You can just go there and use the facilities at any time. The classes, I like them. I like the idea of having to take classes, teaches you something else.

What have you done so far?

I've only taken one - football. That was an interesting class.

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

Minimal. I guess I'm one of the lucky ones. I have a girlfriend back home. I'm not worried.

If you didn't have a girlfriend back home?

I doubt if I would find a girlfriend. The black females—it's more like friendly, a brother-sister thing. I wouldn't even try to date any of them. I guess my only choice would be to go to other schools or wait til summer.

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

Yeah, it wasn't really that I hate it here. At first it was because of my major. I wanted to attend an engineering college that's accredited by the board, but after sitting down and talking to a couple of professors about this—They explained the positives and negatives about going here. I found that I could go here for four years and still do everything I wanted to do, which includes grad school and all that. People who do graduate from here, they do get jobs. If they want to go to school, they do get placed in grad school, so I figured that some of the professors have connections also. So I figured I could stay here and get everything that I need to get.

Why was it that you were thinking about that after you were here as opposed to when you were choosing a school?

When I first came here I was going to do the 3-2 program, 3 years here and 2 years at another

school. I'd get a degree from here and a degree from the other school. After a while, I just didn't want to go through 5 years of school. Most engineering programs are 5 years. I was going to transfer to another school and just get that accredited engineering degree.

Do people do 3-2 very often?

No, not very often.He was telling us, "I can get you in." He was telling me..."just have a minimum GPA and take these courses and I can get you in." Right now I have the GPA and am on track for all the courses, so I should just stay right here and do whatever.

Why/why not?

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?

The only reason I would get a job is for the money.

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've kind of done that this year. I know 3 of the black students who were accepted here. I know them personally. I want to get the numbers higher, so I'm doing everything I can to get black students here. Whenever there are students coming, I always host if they need me. I talk to them.

So you would like people to come here. You encourage them to come here.

In a way, I want to tell them to go somewhere else where you'll have a social life. If this school was by a major city, like D.C., I would have other things to do, but it's in Lexington. The closest major city is Roanoke and that's 45 minutes away. I want to tell them to go somewhere else where they'll have more to do, but at the same time I want this school to improve by having more minority students here, different people getting in here. Since I'm going to be here, I really want to see the numbers increase and people be more tolerant towards blacks. If the numbers get higher, then the people that don't want blacks or don't really know anything about blacks, they'll be forced more to see blacks. More often there'll be a black in the classroom. More experiences for them to know we're just human too, like everybody else. We can do the same things they can do.

So how do you handle it when you're talking to a student and you'd feel like you'd want to say, don't go here because there's no social life, but go here because I want you to. What do you tell them?

If they ask me about social life, I tell them about fraternity parties - we go. Watch TV.

Sometimes go to Roanoke. I don't lie and say we have so much fun every weekend. I tell them exactly what it is, and I tell them the major reason why I'm here is academics. I just let them make their own decisions. If you want to go to school for academics and you want to get a job when you graduate, you should come here. If you want to go to school and party and do all these things, well you can do things here, but if you want to go to school and party and all that stuff, then maybe you should go somewhere else.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Country: USA

State: Maryland

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

Suburban

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

Suburban

Predominantly

Mixed

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

Mother, father, brother & 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?*

Mother went to a 1 year business program. My father went to 1 or 2 years of college. That was it.

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

My mother works for the government. My father worked for—I'm not sure. He passed away when I was in 10th grade.

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

Lower. Just based on the kind of cars they drive, I know they're not getting much financial aid.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

Hasn't affected it all. Some people I do know who might be of the higher class, they don't try to say I'm better than you. I haven't really come into contact with anyone who tried to use their social status to think they're better than you. Most people don't even talk about that.

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?*

Black.

Please explain.

When I'm walking on the Colonnade, they see a black before they see a student. A few times I've had people ask me if I was even a student here. I'm wearing a backpack. If I wasn't a student, why would I be walking down the Colonnade at 9 o'clock in the morning? That kind of stuff. I've been here for 2 years & people call me other people's names—other black students. They think we're all related..

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.*

For the most part, I feel we might all be from the same social class position. A lot of students are from Maryland and Virginia - a lot of the black students. We've all more or less grown up in the same situation, the same type of situation, not used to coming into an all white setting. Racial identification—most of us acknowledge that we're black. There are a few that don't. I don't

understand. Political perspective—for the most part, most of us are Democrats. I don't get involved in politics. Growing up, both my parents and everyone I know was a Democrat. Just because we're black doesn't mean we'll all get along. There are blacks who don't get along on this campus. There are cliques, mainly with the females. They said hi to each other, but behind closed doors, they talk about each other. Personally, I'm friendly to everybody. I don't believe anyone has anything against me. Everybody's friendly to me. I've been with groups of females who'll sit there and talk about the other group. The other group will sit there and talk about this group. Even some of the males, they'll talk about these females in this group. I'm friendly with everybody.

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, racial identification, obvious. Social class, I would say that not all the white—higher social class. Political perspective, I would say they're Republican, based on the Mock Con, Republican senators. Most blacks are Democrats.

So are you saying that most black students and white students are different?

If you analyze their backgrounds, I would say they're pretty different. On a personal level, there are differences, but at the same time there are some white students that...not really relate to but who understand what the black students are going through. Most of the white students I know, they are the ones I feel comfortable around and hang around, they feel the same way about the situation here that I do. That the school needs more diversity. The school needs a change. Most of the people around here are the same. Everyone dresses the same, they talk the same, they look the same. They would like more diversity. Not just racial diversity, but social diversity also. People from different types of backgrounds.

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

Inadequate by far. They publish 3% but it's not really - it's 2%. Based on last year's freshman enrollment, that was terrible. 10 students of color, only 4 of them were African American. That was upsetting. Not that there were 6 people from other countries, but just that number was so low. Statistically, the people that aren't Af-Am, they don't really count as Af-Am students. It's false information.

Do you think that was conscious...

I think that what they thought was they're black so it didn't matter where they were coming from, they're black students. They haven't experienced the same thing that we have growing up in America. One of the students here, she's black but her parents are from another country, like some of the students come from Jamaica and that area. They don't care where they go. They just want to come to America. I don't know if it's true, but they haven't gone through the same things we have.They don't consider themselves part of MSA. They consider themselves international students. Right there, they're telling everyone they consider themselves different from us.

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

They need to do everything they can to get more black professors and staff in here. One professor, one administrator—it's sad. The black students here don't have a higher figure to look at. They need more role models—more diversity at all levels.

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

Explain.

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

I know when I came here—I got here on a Saturday and that Sunday they had a black reception...I don't know if that's done through the school or the MSA. That was a positive experience.

Should there be more or are you happy with that?

If it's not done by the school, we'll do it on our own. Last week we had a meeting with a few of the deans including the dean of admissions, we were upset about the minority recruitment weekend being taken away.

When did that happen?

It was last Thursday. Oh, when did they take it away? I'm not sure. They just said they didn't want students to be here over the weekend because of the weekend and all that. I didn't understand it. Every other university in the world, they have Black Weekend. All the students come in and meet each other. I don't understand why they would take it away. The drinking part of it—on those weekends we throw our own parties and alcohol isn't allowed. That doesn't even come into play. In April there's an open house for all accepted students. We came up with our own plans to have our own thing, like our own black accepted students weekend. ...have our own party for the black students. This was accepted students, not prospectives.

How was the meeting?

It turned out pretty well. There were a lot of questions about the recruitment process. They mainly recruit students out of the DC area because the DC area is..... There are also areas—Atlanta, Chicago, New York --where there are equally qualified blacks.

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

Last year I just went down there to watch TV. A couple of black students live there—3 right now. I don't think it's big enough. The International House, it houses more than 3. I believe it houses 8 to 10 students. We should at least have a house of equal size I believe. One of the bedrooms is so small that no one would want to live in there. So there's really only 3 bedrooms in there. Besides a meeting place for activities, that's about it.

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

Not really. MSA doesn't really do anything. We're not taking action to change the school. It's more like a social group. We might throw a party. We threw our second party last night of the year. Besides that we haven't done anything. Just fun. I don't know what the purpose of it is.

So how did this group of you get together to create this meeting....? Was that outside of MSA?

Yeah, some black students got together and formed a new group. It's called Black Students for Campus Change. We got tired of people saying "The MSA is not doing anything." We just didn't want to sit around and have them bring in 10 black students again. We decided it was time to stand up and let the administration know how we felt about things. We had the support of Dean Manning in forming that group. We used his authority...Dean Howison, Dean Hartog...We met with the treasurer of the school.

These were separate meetings?

I think we had 2 or 3 meetings. We just sat down. We had an agenda written out.

Are you going to have more meetings?

Yeah.

Do you see yourself as a group that's going to continue?

Yes. One of the topics that came up in that group was the Chavis House. We try to push for a new facility or at least renovating the Chavis House. It's in terrible condition. Or making it bigger to accommodate more students. That was one of the first issues that we had. This all

came up out of housing, when they changed the policies so where sophomores had a preference. Last year we had to do all this fighting to get where we are now. Then we have to do it again.

What was the fighting last year about?

Last year they had the lottery thing. Sophomores were required to live on campus. Everyone was trying to get in Gaines and Woods Creek. This year freshman have preference in Gaines, so we're all having to move to Woods Creek. So we'll know we have housing. If you try to stay in Gaines, there's a chance you wouldn't get....Some of the other classes, they had to do this every year.....A lot of people want....they're in a fraternity or sorority. They can afford to pay their rent, have an apartment in town. We don't have that option.

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.

Have you had many humanities or soc. science courses so far?

It's hard to stay away from them.

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

The history I took—that was European history, that was out of the question. The religion was kind of out of the question also. I have heard students talk about classes in African Am. history. Some of the white students took these courses. When they came away they had a fully different aspect. They came away with a more positive attitude about things. There are more courses in integration of black works....

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

Most of the classes I take, science and math, there's not really discussion...but in the other classes, sometimes when a sensitive issue comes up.... One student was telling me that in his economics class he was sitting there and they were talking about unemployment, about blacks are the highest percentage unemployed. This girl in the front row just turned around and looked at him. He didn't understand that, because he's not unemployed. He's in college, one of the best colleges in the nation and she was going to turn around and look at him like that.

Was it a significant look?

It was an obvious look. He was in the back of the classroom. She was in the front row. She turned all the way around and just looked at him. Sometimes when those kind of things come up, you feel eyes on you.

Looking at you like you might have something to say or looking at you in a blaming way?

I don't know—when the word black comes up, they just look at you. I can't really explain it. You can feel the eyes.

It's uncomfortable when that happens. You said you haven't encountered this problem

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

I have no idea.

It's Dean McCloud's office.

I guess support for black students. Just a couple of weeks ago, Dean McCloud invited us for dinner. That's all she's done for me.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

More interaction—every once in a while call us to see if we're doing ok. Offer us help. Get more involved with the students. Since I am a minority and I didn't even know that they existed, that shows you that there's a problem.

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.)*

Black students. There are 2 or 3 that I hang around with all the time. I can talk to them about anything and they'll talk to me about anything.

Black male students?

Yes. I can talk to them about school, about something that's happening at home, my girlfriend or anything in the world.

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

My closest friends are all black, mostly male. There's a number of whites that, I wouldn't say they're my best friends, I wouldn't invited them home for the weekend but when I see them I'll talk to them and have a conversation, laugh and tell jokes and stuff.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself? What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment).*

Who was responsible for that behavior?

Not really. I've heard stuff about security.

We have a speaking tradition but some people, when they see you, they're stare at you. If you say hi or something, they just keep walking. I know they hear you. I know they see you, because they're staring right at you. Like one time I was sitting in class and there was a white student—I was sitting facing the door and she was sitting facing the blackboard. She kicked me by accident—she kicked me kind of hard too. I looked at her and she acted like she didn't even do anything. She didn't say "I'm sorry" or "Excuse me" or anything. I thought that was kind of rude. That's about all.

Some things have been written in The Spectator. I don't know who's writing that stuff.

Do you remember specifics?

On the first page of The Spectator, something about the Lord's Prayer in ebonics. All blacks don't speak that way. Ebonics was something that came out of one place. It didn't come out all over the country. In one class something was said about picking cotton. He said is was a southern ebonics thing. I didn't think about it until another student approached me and said "What did you think about the professor when he said this?" I didn't even realize what he was talking about. Then I thought about it. It was kind of awkward. I did have a problem with one of my professors last year. I don't know if it was racial or not. Nothing I turned in was good enough for him. I went to see him. It never got better.

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?

Yeah, there's racial tension here. I know it's everywhere. This isn't society here. It's like W&L ...Where I grew up in Maryland, we had a white neighborhood and a black neighborhood, Asian neighborhood. That society of people with different ethnicities—met people who were richer than me, poorer than me. That's more of a society than this is where everyone's the same—well, not everyone. Black people look the same, dress the same, have the same ideas. This has a lot more in common. Even though society as a whole is not perfect, there are a lot of racial tensions. This doesn't represent society at all.

So it's an unusual environment, and within this unusual environment, there are racial tensions.

The world isn't 95% white. Right there that tells you that this isn't society at all.

So do you think the racial tensions here are more than in the general world because of its?

I would say that there is probably a greater tendency here—some people who come to this school have not been in the same room with a black person before...that might be greater tension. In society a person might be racist but they're not going to just walk down on the street and say "I hate black people." There's more of a probability that they're going to walk past a black person, but here a person can go all day and not even see a black person. That's not reality at all.

Do you think people are walking around saying "I don't like black people?"

Yes, I do....I haven't experienced it but when it does happen, and I believe it will happen, I won't be surprised.

And you've heard about it from others.

That's one thing that hasn't happened.

Since you do think there are more racial tensions here than in the "real world", how do you think those tensions could be eased?

Increasing the number of non-white faces that someone will see when they're walking to class every day. Get more used to seeing a black person, walking past a black person. It's so easy for a person to go through 4 years of school and never really having to come into contact with a black person.

So more contact would mean that they would know that you guys are just people and they'd be more relaxed.

It's not like we're any less intelligent than they are. We're here.....

You've said several times in this conversation things that indicate that larger numbers of diverse population would help to solve that problem.

It wouldn't solve it.....A student last year told me that someone on his hall, a white student, approached him and said "I don't want to sound rude or whatever, but I've never seen a black person before in person." He was asking him questions and stuff. I thought that was kind of crude. This person was being honest....just that he probably had preconceptions about black people when he came here and he actually spoke to one. It might have changed him just a little bit. Things like that would happen more often if there were more blacks 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?*

I don't know. I would hope that they would.

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

Overall, I guess.....Students, people who claim there was an honor violation...even.

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 would say they're pretty equal. There was a black student last year who was a writer for the Trident.

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

I think it's a big issue. As big an issue as it is, it hasn't been in publication enough.

When you folks - is it Black Students for Campus Change that you call yourselves? When you have those meetings, would you like for that to have cover?

Maybe. I think the administrators....they're not happy here...try to change...maybe might try to keep things quiet. (Can't understand the tape.) I was telling you about how we were pushing for a new house or renovating the Chavis House. One of the administrators kept trying to avoid the question, kept trying to change the subject. We were talking about something, it didn't have anything to do with what we were talking about. Like "What do your friends at other universities think?" That has nothing to do with us. We're here and we're talking about this school. He was trying to avoid the question. I don't know if they'd want something like that to get out. I don't think they'd call the newspaper.....some of the students who write for the newspaper...publish it. *It sounded like when you first started answering the question, it sounded like you think that black student issues on campus are big issues. It sounds like you're saying that you think it's inadequate.*

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.*

Some similar. Some totally different, racial problems. We're such small numbers. To some of the white people it's not an issue.....It's harder for a black person....and not speak to a white person. We have more obstacles to get over...educating people about African American people in general. A lot of people don't know anything about it. What they see in the news is, you know, a black person killed a black person. They don't see the black person getting a scholarship to Harvard or this black person graduated from Harvard Law. You don't see that kind of stuff in the news. All you see is negative stuff, so if you've never met a black person, you're going to think that's what black people are all about. Just the exposure. So they know we're not all stealing or killing people.

Sounds like you're saying that black people have the shared problem that you're not perceived accurately by the vast majority of people.

If you haven't met someone and all you see is the news on TV, no blacks can speak correctly, all blacks are in jail, 25% of all blacks are either in jail or on probation or something. That might be true but that 25%, that's 1 out of 4. What about the other 3 out of 4? Their problems are probably the same as others. I think the media in general has a problem about that. Where I live, you turn on the news, all you see is there's another murder in DC today, suspects, whatever. They never show anything positive about black people.

So in terms of students at W&L, the shared problems are academic challenges. The problem of culture's perception of you is solely a black burden.

*46. Sex Male

*47. Age?

*48. Year in college? (Sophomore or Junior)

*49. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 3.0

*50. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality?

51. How do you identify yourself in terms of race?

Black.

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

In the future there needs to be....more administrators brought in. I don't believe the school's doing enough to get black students in here. I know the school isn't poor. We have the means to fly in people from all over the country to come here. We should make a trip out to Chicago or Atlanta to recruit. I don't understand. We're not doing a good job of recruiting. Getting more blacks in here would benefit the school a lot.