

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

1. Have you decided upon a college major?

If yes, what?

No, not really. I'm thinking about biology, but I'm not quite sure yet.

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

I don't really want to do say, cause I'm ready...

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

Probably a BS.

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

Medical school..

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, I was. Greek Orthodox. I haven't really participated in activities. I just attended church.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

I don't have one.

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

I played a lot of sports in high school but I'm not playing any right now.

*Do you have any other extracurricular activities now?*

No.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative

Adult friend

Peer

Other

Guess, from my guidance counselor, and from the Internet also.

*From the Internet, really? Were you searching for colleges on the Internet and reading about them?*

Yeah.

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

I don't really even remember being assisted by one.

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

No.

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

Please describe your reactions to do this campus visit.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

It was one of my top choices. I would say second maybe.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

I think I applied to do ten or eleven. And I got accepted to do all of them, except for one.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

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

I liked the honor system. I liked the size of the school. And also I'm sure everybody has said this, the scholarship.

*Sure. So, did you get a better financial package than from the other schools that accepted you?*  
Yeah.

*Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?*

I would say academic reputation. It's a private college. And it wasn't really that far from my home, but not really that close either - about three hours away.

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

I don't know. When they came here, they really loved it. Loved the campus and everything.

*When you were already on campus as a student?*

Yeah.

*But, before you came as student, what was their reaction?*

Um, They didn't really know about the school. There was no reaction at all, I guess.

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

Nope.

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

I don't know. I guess I expected it to do be hostile, I guess, because it's a predominately white school and everything, but I really love it here. I don't experience any kind of racial discrimination or whatever here. I think it's a great school and I really love it. I was really surprised, I guess.

*So, just because of the high percentage of white folks you assumed it would be more hostile than it turned out to do be?*

I didn't really assume, but I was - I prepared myself.

*Any other ways that it was different than you expected?*

I find the professors to do be really nice, approachable. I find I can talk to do them. I love the town, the people are great. People are really nice.

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 do be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.

How have you dealt with it?

That's a tough question. I would say adjusting to do college in general, which I'm still

doing now.

*What aspects of college?*

The dealing with the work. I had to do modify my study habits..

*So mostly academic adjustment,*

Yeah.

*Not social adjustment..*

No.

*So how have you dealt with it?*

I'm still dealing with it right now. I haven't really dealt with it. I don't know.

*What approaches are you trying?*

*I guess I'm studying more. Making up my own schedules and stuff.*

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

*You're laughing.*

Do I really have to do answer that one?

*Well, it's not going to do hurt you to do answer it. [chuckling]*

I did really well in high school. I'm doing OK here, but not as well as I was doing in high school.

So, I'm working on it.

*Yeah. Of course you are.*

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

x Undergraduate library

x Science library

x Computer facilities.

I haven't used the Writing Center.

I haven't used the Tutors in the disciplines.

x Study groups.

x Public lectures on academic subjects.

I haven't used the Language lab.

I have visited professors in their offices.

I haven't taken Study skills courses

*Have you thought about that?*

No, but I should, though. I guess, I haven't really heard about that.

*That's though, from what I understand, through Dean McCloud's office.*

Oh, OK.

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

No, not really.

*Anything you have wished for that you didn't know how to do find for yourself?*

No, nothing that comes to do mind.

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've always been interested in medicine, so that's why I chose biology.

*So it's interest, basically*

Yes.

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

If yes, please describe that change.

No, not really.

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

Yeah.

*Would you elaborate on that?*

May I ask you a question?

Sure.

What is the relevance of that question?

*There's no right or wrong answer to do any of these questions, so it's not like testing you, what you would do about something, it's - a lot of these questions are in here to do see how students feel about certain things about the university. So the relevance of this question is to do see how students from this particular group in the university feel about the honor system and how they would choose to do interact with the honor system.*

Yeah. I like the honor system. I think it gives students a lot of freedom. And I would certainly report any violations of it.

*So you would choose to do report because you would want to do support the system, is that what you're saying?*

Yeah, um hum.

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 very easy to do approach. They're great.

*In what way? Just describe that a little bit.*

All the professors I've had so far have been really nice. They've been pretty open to do students.

*So have you gone to do them after class or in their offices?*

Yeah, I've gone some. They're really helpful.

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

I have talked to do them, I wouldn't say a close working relationship.

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

I guess it's ok but there should be more social activities in this school. I don't mean that much, not just for the black students or for the minority students but for all students in general. There really isn't that much to do, in or outside of school. Maybe more lectures that interest students, not academic ones, like Travolta [?] Probably like forums or something, where students can get together and talk about what's on their mind. I think that would be great. To create some sort of social interaction within the W&L community.

*What do you miss?*

I think this school should be more diverse. I like dealing with people from different cultures. That's great and I think you learn a lot by doing that.

*Have you interacted with the International House? Has that been part of your social life?*  
Yes, I would say so. I used to go there the first couple of weeks of school, and I don't go there that often now.

*How important to you is alcohol at a social event or social engagement?*  
Not important at all. I don't see why this school tolerates the alcohol consumption here. I think it's illegal, I don't know why — I wouldn't say the school supports it but I don't see any actions taken against students who do drink.

*So in a sense, feeling that way about it, also influences your social life, yes?*  
Yes.

*Have you gone to the parties that are available?*  
I have gone to a couple, less than five. I found it shocking in some ways. I used to watch movies and wondered if everything you see in the movies is really true, movies that deal with college life. I've always thought they were unrealistic, but it's really true and that was shocking to find out.

*How important to you are drugs at a social event?*  
Not important at all. I haven't really encountered people using drugs.

22. *What experiences, if any, have you had with Greek organizations on campus?*  
None.

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

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

Haven't taken any phys ed classes. I think we have a great volleyball team. Also I used the games in the gym and I think that's really good.

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

I haven't actually looked for someone to date because I already have a boyfriend, so I really can't answer that question.

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

*Why/why not?*

I really like this school. I love the professors, I like this town and these people. I interact well with the students also. I really like it here. So I haven't had any reasons to transfer.

*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. Actually I have talked to a couple of my friends from high school who are still seniors, and I've told them to come here. I think it's a great school. And I have also talked to my guidance counselors to talk to students in my high school because they don't really know about

Washington and Lee.

Now we ask some background information:

28. *In what geographical location did you grow up:*  
Country: Ethiopia, until about 5 years ago.  
State:

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

Urban  
Suburban X  
Rural

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

Urban X  
Suburban  
Rural

*Predominantly*

Black X  
White  
Mixed

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

We have a really close family: Mother, father, brother.

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

My father has a PhD in civil engineering and my mom is a lit major.

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

My dad is an engineer and my mom is a student but she used to be a journalist

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

I would say middle, low middle. Below the average here.

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

I don't think it has affected it at all.

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?*

I see myself as a student. I don't see myself as a black student here because I'm not used to thinking like that. As I said, I grew up in Ethiopia and I was in the majority there so I'm not used to thinking of myself as a minority. So I guess I think of myself as a student.

*Do you think of yourself as international, even tho you've been here for 5 years?*

Yes, I guess so. But first as a student.

*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.*

It depends. It's different for some people. I see, like the upperclassmen sharing the same ideas, especially about this school. I guess they tend to be a little negative about their experiences here. Political perspectives: most are Democratic. I'm not sure about social class.

*So when you say the upperclassmen are a little negative about their experience here, is that different from the underclassmen?*

Yes, it's very different. The sophomores, just because they have experienced more in this school, the ones that I've talked to tend to think this school really isn't that great, as great as they thought of it as being when they were freshmen, and it changes over time.

*Do you expect that to happen to you?*

I hope not. I don't think it will.

*So that would be something that would make black students not homogeneous.*

Yes.

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 see a lot of students interacting well with each other, so I can't really say how different they are. I can say something about the political perspective, because there was some kind of meeting at Lee Chapel and somebody asked who supports welfare and a lot of people raised their hand saying they don't support it. We were talking about this outside, after the meeting was over, and most of the blacks tend to believe that welfare is a good thing, and the whites don't. I'm not really comfortable saying "blacks" and "whites." I'm really sorry about that.

*Are you saying you'd rather not make distinctions like that?*

Yes. I don't feel comfortable doing that. I'm sorry.

*No, you don't have to apologize!*

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

I'd say the number of minority students, in general, is inadequate. I think this school needs to be more diverse. I think we would gain from the experience of sharing different cultures of different people, different viewpoints. The one thing that this University lacks is that. I think it has most of everything else.

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

I don't know. I don't know how many black professors there are in this school. I only know one. But I don't know. I guess there should be more, minority professors, not just black. To be role models.

*Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate? Explain.*  
I don't know how many there are.

*Right now there is Dean McCloud.*

I think there should be more women administrators and more women professors, but I don't really think of it on racial terms. There should be more minorities — and women, definitely. I just think it's odd to go from the high school to the college level and you see less women.



37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together? If not, why not?*

I guess I'd say yes.

*That's interesting. You are shaking your head back and forth and yet you say yes.*

I don't really understand the question. Oh, I think they should plan activities to bring blacks and other students together, not just blacks, no. All new students together.

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

They could plan forums, as I said before. Because most of the black students share the same view. The whole plan is to expose yourself to a different viewpoint. I think it would be better to bring together different students from different backgrounds, as opposed to just the same type.

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

I've attended meetings there, MSA meetings, and that's all.

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

I'm not really a member. I attend their meetings but I have not become a member yet. I don't know why. I guess I don't like the whole idea of being a part of the minority.

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. Just to expose the students to different viewpoints. Not because they are "people of color" but because they have different viewpoints from other groups of people.

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

I would say adequate. I've only taken a certain number of courses that would allow me to answer that question.

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

I've not really thought about that. I don't see myself as a "black student." Sometimes it happens that my cousins will ask how many black students are there in your math class, or something, and I'll be like, "Oh, I guess I'm the only one." I really don't think about that at all.

*So that must mean that the climate has been fine for you.*

Yes.

*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?*

I'm not sure what the role of it is. To help minority students adjust to college.

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

I'd like to see it encourage more minority students to come here. And to plan activities, not just for the minority students again, but for all students.

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 would say my friends and my roommate. We are really close. I think we've really bonded in the last few months. I've felt I can talk to them about anything. Also my dorm counselor. She is very helpful. I feel lucky to have her.

*The kinds of situations where you get this emotional support are?*

I'd say all freshmen miss family.

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

I've never really thought about it. I would say, 60% black, 30% international, and 10% white.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself?*  
No.

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

No, not personally. I have talked to people who have experienced discrimination, but I haven't experienced it myself. I'm not saying that it doesn't exist but I haven't experienced it. No, I don't really sense 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 would think so. That's an odd question.

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

I think so. I can't really answer because I don't know. But that's a really weird question also.

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 guess equal with other students.

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

There was one article written about ebonics, I thought that was a bit wrong. Other than that — I talked to some students who were really offended. And it's really not that germane to us. I just

don't think about it. My friends and me, we were like, "We don't speak that way." Other than that, their treatment is fair.

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, just like dealing with a lot of work. And social life at W&L, you can't really go out as you would like in a city. I'm from DC and there are a lot of things that you can do in DC. The only thing here is frat parties, and they're not that great. That's the only thing that we have here.

\*47. Sex F

\*48. Age? 19

\*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? Black

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

I guess that's it. I really love this school. I like my professors, I like the students. I like the honor system. I think more minority students should be encouraged to come here.