

#31 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?

If yes, what?

Yes. Economics.

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

I haven't started on my major yet.

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

BA

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

I'm not sure yet.

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

Yes I do. PhD, but not [as soon,] I guess.

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.

No

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

Nonexistent.

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

they were much more in high school, but that's probably cause I had more time. you know I didn't have as much work to do after class, so there was more time for that. You would finish your homework by seven, or.. you know it would take two hours to do your homework, and that sort of thing. But I am on the swim team. I am with MSA, not really active, but I support MSA, and other than that nothing, there's really no time for much more.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative

Adult friend

Peer

Other

Was my high school counselor. Yes.

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

Not at all. I don't think there were any in Trinidad, where I'm from.

How do you think your counselor knew about W&L?

College guide books. That sort of thing. But, other colleges that I applied to had alumnus in Trinidad, but W&L didn't.

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

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

No. Kind of far to come. It was a big risk, trust me. [chuckling]

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

Second.

Tell me what you mean when you say "it was a big risk, trust me." What do you mean?

Um, I didn't know what to expect. I mean I know it's a good school academically, but I don't know what to expect. I know I would experience a lot of cultural shock. you know, you know these things, but until you've like lived through it you just have ideas, you just have stereotypes, or whatever...

What kind of stereotypes?

I guess you see colleges on American TV, and you know, that sort of thing, but you don't know.. I mean a lot of parties and a lot of drinking, a lot of.. but you see certain things about colleges that - you know that this is probably going to be part of it, but you know that it's not going to be the entire thing, and you don't know what to expect.

So were you real nervous about taking the risk?

Yes, I was, because it's a big decision and it's difficult, it was especially difficult because I didn't get to visit, I didn't get to experience like a week or a weekend at the colleges before I chose.

you didn't go to any of them?

I couldn't go to any of them, because I had an external exam form, - We write British E level exam, at the end of twelfth grade, and it was around that time when we had mock exams for them, and I couldn't leave at all. I remember my older sister left, when it was her time. she didn't write the exam, but I thought I should. You know, it was her personal choice not to write them, but I thought I should. So she got to see some colleges, but I didn't.

So did she come to college in America?

Yes, she goes to Swarthmore.

So you knew a little about college from her.

Yeah. She helped out a lot, actually. More than my high school counselor did. In the process, and in what to expect, cause she lived through it, and my counselor didn't come to school in America. Like a living experience is always more valuable than what you read or

what you see or what you hear. So, she helped me a lot with applications.. that sort of thing.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

I think it was about six or seven.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

About three or four.

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

Relatives wanted you to come here

Teacher advised you

Good academic reputation

Good social reputation

Offered financial assistance

Offers special programs you wanted

Tuition lower than similar colleges

High school guidance school counselor advised you

Private college counselor advised you

Wanted to live near home

Friend suggested attending

Recruited by college representative

Recruited by athletic department

Graduates go to top graduate schools

Graduates get good jobs

Religious affiliation or orientation

Size of college

Not accepted anywhere else

Rankings in national magazines

I got a good scholarship from W&L, that was one reason. the other reason was that, I didn't get into my first choice school, and it was my second choice. And it was a really good school, so that just fell back.

So, why was it your second choice?

Because I really wanted to go to U Penn. I thought that I wanted a bigger school. I wasn't sure,

but I thought I wanted a bigger school, and I thought that I wanted city life more than country life.

So why was W&L second choice above the ones that were third fourth and fifth, then?

Because it was academically stronger, basically, it was better known, ...

Why don't you take a glance at this list and see if there are any other factors that jump to mind.

You've said that it had a strong financial package for you and it was academically strong.

Tuition lower than similar colleges, that would be one. Recruited by athletic department. I had a lot of contact with the swim team coach before I came here. Ranking in national magazines. That would probably sum it up.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

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

They were happy that I - it's difficult to get into American colleges, being non-American, and they were really happy for me. a lot of them never heard of it. Not because it's not a good school but just because you don't hear about all the American colleges in Trinidad. So everybody was happy, but they just didn't know, I mean you'd get questions like "Where's it at?" and stuff like that.

Did your sister know about it?

Yes, she did, but she also did a lot of research on it for me, and sent it home. But, she didn't really, she preferred me to go somewhere else that wasn't so conservative. [] Cause she's very liberal in her view. and Swarthmore is a very liberal school. And she didn't want me to go someplace so conservative, but at that point it didn't really matter, because I didn't know whether I was one or the other, because I wasn't in America, so to me, whether you are conservative or liberal didn't really make a difference. Cause, for example, my roommate is very conservative, extremely conservative, but we get along well. So, at that point it didn't matter. Cause I really didn't know either way, cause I didn't know enough about American politics to be able to decide whether I was one or the other.

So your sister wasn't all that happy.

She was glad that I got some sort of aid. She was glad that I was coming up, she'd be able to see me more, that sort of thing, but as a school, she didn't know whether I would be happy or not here. Because she knew what type of school it was. In terms of not very diverse, very conservative, that type of thing.

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

That's probably what I just said. Conservative and not very diverse.

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

I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't know. I'm the type person that prefers to see things for myself, than to go by here say, what people say about it. And I didn't know what to expect, that would be any different from any other college that I was going to. I knew that it wouldn't be in the city. I knew it was a rural area. I didn't expect that there would be so much - that it would be such a lack of activities other than fraternity parties. I didn't expect - I thought that there would be more to, when the weekends came.

Are you from a city at home?

I'm not from, like, it's a small country, but I'm not from the city, but there is more to do where I'm from than there is to do in Lexington.

What sorts of things to do?

There would be like bowling alleys, there would be malls, there would be clubs, dance type clubs. I don't know. It seems that every weekend we do the same thing at W&L. Fraternity parties, drink, everybody gets drunk, you know, it's the same thing.

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

It's different in that I expected more activities on campus, you know there are a lot of groups, but it just seems that the groups are not very strong. They don't like stand for much. There's a lot of different, there's LIFE, there are a lot of different groups on campus and it doesn't seem that they have anything that much going on that interest students that you could be a part of, or whatever. I just expected a lot more activities on campus than what there is.

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

The greatest challenge, I think it would be cultural shock, in that I know that I am very different than black Americans, although I have a lot of black -there are very few of us, and we're all friends, but I don't see a lot of the things that they see, because we have different histories, cause I'm not American. And I haven't been through racism, I haven't been through all the struggles that they've been through, cause in Trinidad, blacks are in the majority, so I haven't been through all that. And I know I am different from white Americans, because we just have things that are different about us. I'm not saying that I don't have white friends, cause I do, but we just have too many differences for us to be that close, so the biggest difficulty for me was.. sometimes I don't feel that I just don't fit in, that there's nobody else like me. And, I don't really know if I've dealt with it more than just let it slide, like ignore it, and just try to be as accommodative as I can whether I hang out with black people or whether I hang out with white people, I try to learn as much as I can from them, but I don't know whether I've really dealt with it. I think it will always be there. It will be there for the four years that I am here.

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

I get good grades. I do get good grades, I'm pleased with my grades, but academically, you know you are at the top of your class in high school, and you're not at W&L. Sometimes you might get the highest grade in one quiz, but then there are going to be people that get grades that are much higher than you, in other quizzes. I knew that when I was coming here, that it was very academic school, the people - I'm not saying that everybody in my high school was slower, or not as bright as I was, but it just seemed that it was easier to be on top in high school. Not that I'm upset with my grades, cause I'm really pleased with my grades. It's just that you just always seemed to be on top in high school, you were like class president, and you had all these titles, that are just not as easy to get at W&L. You have to work a lot harder to be at that same level. Cause everybody at other schools was probably the top in their high schools. the best of the best.

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

- x Undergraduate library
- Science library
- x Computer facilities.
- Writing Center.
- Tutors in the disciplines.
- Study groups.

- x Public lectures on academic subjects.
Language lab.
- x Visiting professors in their offices.
Study skills courses

That sums it up.

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

No, I'm pretty pleased with the academic resources. I love the idea that the library is 24 hours. I really don't have any complaints about it.

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

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

Interest in the particular academic discipline. Promise of a handsome salary. I think everybody wants to earn a good salary, but I did do a lot of economics courses in high school. That's something that I really love, something that comes easily to me, that I don't have to put as much effort in as I would with other areas, you know.

18. Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?
If yes, please describe that change.

No.

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

This is a hard question. I've never been one to tell, at all. To turn people in. But I'm not sure if it's an honor violation not to turn people in. See, I'm not sure about that, and if it were, I guess that I'd feel more obligated to. But if it wasn't an honor violation not to turn them in, I don't think that I would. Because I've seen cheating at this school already and I haven't done anything about it.

What kind of cheating?

Take home tests. I think that.. I must say that the temptation is great, with something like a take home test, but I mean I wouldn't cheat on a take home test, and I've seen people cheat on a take home test.

Cheating in the sense of..

Looking in books.

Why is it a take home test if you're not meant to look in the books, why not just take it in the class?

I think because the professor doesn't want to take class period, like if there's a long syllabus and he needs every class period in every week to lecture, he doesn't want to use up one of his classes with a test, so sometimes they have a take home test. I mean I have never had a take home test, at all, none of my professors have take home tests. But I know people who had take home tests and I know people are cheating on take home tests.

And they're really meant to be used without the books.

Yeah. And I know there's, there has been stealing in this school, because our, - we have missed a lot of stuff from our room. What a lot of people do also is that they steal laundry, like if you leave your laundry in the laundry room, and 45 minutes you do not want to sit there with your laundry. You come back and things will be missing. I know a guy who walked in and somebody was walking out with his entire laundry. So there is, you don't always see it, but you know that it is there. But I don't think that I can turn people in, and especially if I am their friend. I don't just don't know if I can do it.

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

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

In class they seem difficult, but like once you step into their office it seems to be different. You have to build up courage to step into their office, because in class, sometimes, when they lecture, they seem difficult to approach. I have a hard time approaching professors in front of other students, like at the end of class sometimes I'm like, no I'd rather not say it, cause there are other students here, cause I don't know how they would react, whatever. But once I step into a professor's office I find that it's much more casual, much easier to talk to a professor than when I'm in class.

Have you taken advantage of that much?

No, because it just seems like sometimes it's almost like kissing up to a professor. Cause I know a lot of students who are always talking to a professor, always calling them, they e-mail professors, and it just seems like they are kissing up so much to professors, it's unnecessary. I mean like, if I have a genuine problem, I would go to professors, and I would talk to them. I think I've built up the courage now, having been here however many months. In the beginning I thought it was harder to, but now I feel free to go to professors. I would talk to them if I have a genuine problem, but I think some people take it too far. It's almost like kissing up to a professor.

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

Does this relate to like job?

It could be all kinds of different things actually.. It could take different forms.

I can't say I'm especially close. I have a host dad, who is the head of the economics department, and I mean I would talk to him, but we're not really that close. I don't know, I don't know if it's from high school, but in high school, teachers were seen as teachers, not as friends that much. And I don't know if it's that way in American high schools too, but in general teachers were seen as teachers. You would laugh with them, but it's something new for me to think of professors as friends also.

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

I'm totally against the social life at W&L. I think that they're.. I mean, in Trinidad teenagers would go to clubs and they would be drinking, but nobody drinks in excess. Drinking is good in moderation. it's enjoyable up to a certain point. That's what I think. I think it's taken in excess, and that people, because they drink too much, everybody makes silly mistakes every weekend. They have these random hook-ups. People have sexual encounters that they wish they didn't have the next day. Date functions at W&L - guys really treat you well up until the date function and then they expect a lot from you the night of the date function. And it's really.. I get along so much better with the guys from VMI than I do from W&L. I don't know how they are, but when they're with, when I hang out with them they're never drinking in excess. They're really cool guys. I don't

want to categorize all VMI and all W&L because I'm sure that they are just as many jerks at VMI as at W&L and there are nice guys at W&L, but on average, I just find that the average VMI guy is as a person much nicer and the way they treat women is so much better than the W&L guys.

Do you mean that the W&L guys are likelier to be taking advantage, in the hook-ups?

Yeah, definitely, cause everybody drinks too much. During the school week they're really focussed on school and the classes, cause this is not an easy school, and if you don't get the grades you're going to fail out, and you have to get good grades. But then on the weekend it's a totally different scene, totally different atmosphere, and you can't believe that these are the same guys that are in your class.

Have you gone to parties very often?

Yeah, nearly every weekend I will go to a party, sometimes even Wednesday. But it's getting too repetitive, because it's the same thing, same typical fraternity party, nothing new, nothing added, nothing subtracted, just the same thing every weekend.

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

I'm not saying I don't drink. If there's no alcohol, I can have a good time without alcohol. Some people need alcohol to have a good time. I don't. But if there's alcohol, most likely I will drink, but I haven't been drunk once at W&L. I've been tipsy, but I haven't been drunk once. If there's no alcohol I can have a good time, if I'm around the right people, around my friends I can have a good time, I can laugh without the alcohol. It's not like the center of things for me.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

No.

You don't use drugs.

No.

Have you run across them at social events?

I've run across marijuana,...and I do notice people who are on drugs.

Have you seen other things?

Not really. I mean I've heard, but I haven't seen for myself.

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

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

Just fraternity parties. I'm not in a sorority. I didn't even rush.

Is there anything more you'd like to say to evaluate or describe...

Not really.

Have you felt welcome at the parties?

Yeah. I have a lot of white friends, cause my roommate is white, and I'm not saying that's the only reason I have white friends. I'm on the swim team, and I'm the only black kid on the swim team, so I have white friends on the swim team, I have white friends who visit my roommate, I have white friends who visit me. I don't think that a lot of the things that black Americans see as racism I don't see. They seem to have a stronger attitude towards it than I do just because I haven't been exposed to it. So some things go past me and I really don't see it as a racist statement by a white person, but they would be like "Did you see that, did you see that?" and I would be like "see what?" and I genuinely haven't seen anything. They would get all hyper and upset and I would be like "No, I really didn't see it." Sometimes they wouldn't understand, but I really didn't see whatever it was.

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

I really. I'm a very athletic person. I'm on the swim team. I took one physical education class fall. I really had a good time. I look forward to those classes. I think it's necessary to get away from the academic schedule. We had physical education classes right through high school. Up till twelfth grade, and they always see it as like a brain cooler during the school day. I look forward to it.

And the facilities?

I wouldn't say that they're bad, but I'm on the swim team and I think that the pool that we have is of a lower standard than a lot of the other schools that we visited. Their locker rooms, the actual pool was better than what we have. I'm not saying it's bad, because it's better than what I'm accustomed. But in comparison to what I've seen, it's not as up to standard as other schools. Just an observation. I'm not unhappy with our facilities.

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

I date mainly VMI guys. Not because - I guess it's based cause of race here, you know. I mean I'm not anti-white or anything like that, but it just who you click with, who you have stuff in common with. White people and black people listen to different music, for example. Just little things like that. I don't really date many people at Washington and Lee.

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

Why/why not? I just thought it was too homogeneous. I thought the school wasn't me. It wasn't exciting enough. It wasn't vibrant enough.

If yes, what factor(s) influenced you to stay? One thing, I didn't want to lose credits I got here by transferring. I didn't want to remain a freshman if I transferred next year, for example. Another thing is, sometimes I look at it and I'm like, it's really not that bad because I do have friends. I'm accepted. I have a lot of friends. I get along with people and it's really not that bad. I could stick it out, that kind of thing.

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

Yes, work-study.

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

I'm happy at my job. I really like the people that I work with. I've heard other work study students complain a lot about their jobs. I mean if I call my supervisor and say I cannot come in today, she'll be like, OK, she'll be really understanding. She will be "I hope you're not having too bad a day. I hope the work isn't killing you." and I have friends that have to even say what hours they want to work before the week starts. They're very lenient with me. Not that I get to do whatever I want, but they make my life easier by being so accommodating. So it has improved my satisfaction. Do you think it has improved your satisfaction at W&L per se, having a job? Not only is it a good job, but it's good to have a job?

Yeah, My mom didn't want me to work just because she wanted me to focus on my classes. And I told her that I could not imagine... It seems good to have your own money, that you worked for, that you know you're helping yourself out. Your money you can spend it how you wish, instead of every little thing you want, "Mom, can I get more money?" It feels good to be independent. I could not imagine going through four years of college, I mean you're an adult now. I think that it's time that you take.. I mean you can't be expected to pay the big bills. Nobody expects you to

be able to pay your tuition. Nobody expects you to be able to pay your room and board. But I think if you want new jeans, if you want a new CD, you should be able to put out the effort to buy these little things. You shouldn't have to be calling home for these things.

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 don't know if I want to .. I mean I would love to recruit students, but if I do recruit in Trinidad, I genuinely can't say that the people I recruit will be happy here. I don't think that they would be happy here. I think it's very different to what they are accustomed to. And for that reason I don't know if I want to be involved in recruiting, but it's something I want to do.

In what way do you want to do it?

Because I know that this is an exceptional opportunity for me, and it's something that I want to be able to give to other people. To help them, to find opportunity as I did, to succeed in life. So in that sense I would want to recruit. But I don't think that I can...if I recruit people I have to be honest about how I feel and I have to let them know up front that it a difficult school, it's very homogeneous, there are not a lot of minorities on campus. I have to be honest. I wouldn't be able to say that it's picture perfect, it's a place you want to be. There are advantages of going to W&L, there are [] about going here, but I'd have to put in the negative part about it being a minority student on campus, how difficult it is to adjust and fit.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Country: Trinidad

State:

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

Not really city, but the part that I grew up in is densely populated. A lot of people think that [] as a country, or whatever, but

we have a lot of cars, a lot of skyscrapers, a lot of businesses, a lot of action.

Suburban?

Yeah, but you still get a lot of traffic, it's not like - you still get a lot of traffic jams, that sort of stuff.. but definitely not city.

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

Suburban

Predominantly

Black

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

One brother, three sisters, My mom, recently like two, three years ago my mom and my dad separated, but he wasn't around for a lot of my life anyway because he spent a lot of time in America working, so my sisters, my brother, my mom.

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

My mom got masters, university, in Trinidad. I'm not too sure about my dad.

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

High school teacher. Chemistry and biology. She loves teaching. I don't know what she gets out of it. It's inner city teaching, children with a lot of problems, she has to spend a lot of time and energy, and it's not the best paying job. She could have so many jobs where the pay is more, so it's not about the money. But I've never seen anybody so happy in their job as my mom is teaching. To me it just seems.. it's so frustrating. It's such a frustrating job, and why would you frustrate yourself every day with children who really don't even want to be in school. I just don't understand it, but she gets so much pleasure out of it, you know the kind of pleasure that makes you happy to see somebody so happy, kind of pleasure. I just don't understand.

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

It's kind of hard. My mom's really educated. I can't talk for my dad. In Trinidad we're pretty above average, upper-middle class, but I'm pretty comfortable even in America. I have everything.. I wouldn't say that I'm rich. This is a very upper-class school, and I would say that I'm below the average person here, but it's not unhappy, uncomfortable. If I need money I know I can ask my mom. I'm just trying to be independent about it, and I have everything I want in my room, that sort of thing, there's nothing I want and I don't have, really, so.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

Motivation to work harder so that I will be able to give my children what I see other kids have. But it's not that I'm unhappy that I don't have the best of everything. I see that as motivation, and it's not that I'm way below average, or I'm unhappy or anything. I guess, I don't know how I could react if I had less money, but I'm really not unhappy.

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?*

Please explain.

When I first came, I would have to say as a student, like everybody else. But because race is such a big thing on campus, cause of the lack of diversity, I'll have to consider. Now I would say that I would consider myself as a member of a particular racial group, rather than just as a student. Because, there are such few of us that we hang out so much together, cause we click so much easier, easily than anybody else, that now it's a racial group. But when I first came I would have said a student if you asked me at the beginning of fall term.

What do you mean by 'race is so important on campus?'

It's that, um, because I think if there was more diversity people wouldn't notice race as much as they do, but people notice race on campus. I hang out with a lot more black students than I did at the beginning of the year. And, everything they talk about has to do with race. And it's made me more conscious. Things that I didn't see, now I see. And it's not really in a good light. Cause that's not how I am, but they're my friends and everybody is entitled to their point of view. But things that..everything's in terms of race. Every little thing is in terms of race. I wasn't brought up that way. So now it is part of a racial group. I know I'm black and I'm not ashamed, or I didn't wish otherwise, but I don't know. Do you know what I'm trying to say?

I think I do. What you've said is that your friends are black and there's a strong group of them .. Yeah, there is definitely a strong group.

And that you're hanging out with them more than you did at first. Is it your impression that the white students are as conscious of race as the black students are? Have you sensed that? I think they are. Like my roommate and I get along well, and she's white and I'm black, and to both of us we are both color blind, but there are white people, not that they are mean about it, but they are definitely conscious, they have to be conscious of what they see all the time, not to offend people. And what has happened is that even on the swim team a lot of white people have asked me questions that they wouldn't dare ask black people just because they think that they would get offended, or they probably know that they would get offended, and questions that don't offend me.

Oh, interesting. So you get kind of an inside view of what they're thinking.

Yeah, what they're thinking. I know that they are not racist, but they are just curious. Like, for example, we went to Florida, the swim team went to Florida over Christmas break and it was really hot, and one girl asked me, do black people tan. And I know that she's not trying to be mean about it, she's just curious and she really doesn't know, and the best way to find out is to ask. And I know that she wouldn't ask any other black American what she asked me. She would be afraid to ask. And I said 'Yeah, we do, we do.' And it really didn't offend me. It really didn't. I've gotten questions like this from, like when I went to Suzy Thompson's house. They were asking me questions that I don't think they could ask. And I've gotten it all year round and it really doesn't offend me cause I understand why it's that way.

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 they are homogeneous in racial identification, I mean they have the same belief. A lot of them are not really anti-white, but it's a sort of like reverse racism, you know. Political perspective, I think it's pretty homogenous. They are liberal, democratic. Social class I would have to say that I've seen, there are black students on campus who are really low in social class. They don't have money. And I've seen people who are comfortable, and I've seen people who have been in between. So I think that varies more than would racial identification or political perspective.

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

Oh, I think they are very different. Um, they're definitely more conservative than black people are. They're definitely higher up socially than black people are. and a lot of things that they have done, most black people on campus wouldn't be able to do. Ski, a lot of white people would talk about how they skied over Christmas break, and I know black people just went home. And, everybody's going to Florida for Spring break, and black people just go home. So in that sense, I'm not saying that black people on campus are struggling, cause they not all are, but it's just like a totally different - I mean like some things you can't even dream about. Like my roommate has four houses in California. You know, in Oceanside California, which is a really prominent part of California, and she has four houses there, of three houses there and one in another state, or whatever, and although I'm comfortable, I know that that's something I can't relate to. And she went skiing over Christmas, and she's going to the Vineyard over summer. Things that you just hear about... So I would say remarkably different.

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

Inadequate. The freshmen class has 440 students, and 9 of us are black, and I just think, I don't know how much percent that is, but I just.. I'm not saying that just black is inadequate. I just think minorities, just diversity is just inadequate - other minorities - Asian, Latinos, not just blacks. Black just happens to be the largest of the minorities, but, when you think about it there are no Asians on campus, no Latinos. It's still inadequate.

What would we gain if it were more?

I think that you can learn, that people would be able to learn a lot more from each other. I think that people wouldn't recognise race as much as they do now. I'm just pro-diversity because I think that there is so much to be gained from - I mean having a white roommate has taught me so much that I wouldn't have know if I had roomed with a black person. And there is so much to be gained from people that are from different places, different races, different backgrounds, social backgrounds, everything.

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

Inadequate. I think there's only one permanent black professor, I'm not sure. I think professor DeLaney. I do have a problem. He's the only black professor, I've never had him, so all my professors have been white. and I just, more important than whether professors are black or not is whether they are good or bad professors. Whether they are female or male is not as important as whether they are good or bad professors. And I think that is imperative that we get the best professors possible. Then we can diverse into more females, more minority professors, whatever, but most important is for them to be good professors, despite race, despite gender. And then, if people have a problem cause there are too many male professors, too many white professors, don't just diversify, and bring professors that can't lecture, professors that can't teach. Nothing's wrong with diversity, but make sure that the professors can do their job. Don't just start recruiting a whole set of female professors, a whole set of black professors and it's not benefitting the students. I think the most important thing is to have good professors, professors who can lecture, professors who can really relate to students, and then from there if you diversify make sure that the quality of the professors doesn't drop at all.

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

Explain.

I don't think there are many blacks. Probably inadequate too. But, sometimes I don't see how this is - I mean it helps, diversity, but I don't see how it's important whether an administrator is, I mean I think if there are more black professors than administrators, there are more people for black students to relate to, who can understand their problems better, but it goes the same as with professors. Don't bring people who can't do their jobs just to create diversity. Diversity is good, but not at the expense of like efficiency and ...

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

If not, why not?

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

Does this mean like when freshmen enroll?

I think so.

No. I don't think so. I think that you shouldn't.. That's the same reason I disagree with sororities, because they force people to hang out with certain people. I think if you hang out with somebody it's because you click naturally, because you have something in common and you get along, and the campus is small. You will find people that you get along with. You don't need anybody to tell you who you should hang out with. I think if there is somebody there who you click with, you will find that person. It might not be right away. Like, my best friend now I didn't find, we only

met in November, but we're best friends now. So the first two months I had a different friend who I was really close with, I'm still close with her, but you find people that you click with. I don't think that anybody should - it shouldn't be this pressure to have to hang out. If you choose to hang out with mainly black people that's your choice, but it's not a pressure. The same thing with sororities and fraternities, that you have to talk to these people, you have to be all jolly with them, because there's this pressure to do so. It's not natural. I think that it should be natural. It shouldn't be something that's forced upon you.

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

Yes. It's.. I hang out there a lot. That's where my best friend lives, so I hang out there a lot. I think that.. we've had parties there, it's a place to go outside the dorms, outside your dorm room, a place to hang out where a larger number of people can chill, larger than a dorm room.

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

Yeah, I've met people through MSA. um..

Do you go to meetings?

Yes. I haven't been to all. I only started going recently, but I've been to the last couple of meetings, but I just don't think that they.. It's like MSA is like any other group. That's what I was saying about the groups on campus. You don't really feel their power, not really power, but like their rule on campus. You don't really feel like they have any presence. Like MSA, we have functions, we have little activities, but you don't feel like it really exists, it's just there. It's like all the other organizations on campus, you don't feel like it's making a difference to the quality of life on campus.

Why do you think that is?

I don't know. I don't know if students just don't support it. We go to meetings and there are maybe 8 people, 10 people. I don't know if just students don't support it, I don't know if there need to be faculty behind it, I don't know. I can't like pinpoint a reason why, but it just feels like nobody really cares - like if it didn't exist tomorrow, nobody would... It just feels like, I'm sure it's not true, it just feels like if they banned MSA from W&L tomorrow that nobody would really fight for it. And that's how it feels with all the other activities..

Like you mentioned LIFE.

Yeah, people think about it, people form it, but it's like nobody's really into it. And really wants it to be there. That's just how it seems. I could be wrong.

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

Yeah, I do. I think that, not just of color, but if you have like study of works of people abroad, just different, something different. Everything doesn't have to be AMERICAN. Everything doesn't have to be white, you know? Just ones that are different. I think it's good. I think you can learn. It's so much more valuable when you learn different things from different 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 inadequate. It just isn't there. Most courses it's just not there.

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

I don't really understand the term climate in the class.

The feeling in the classroom, the way it functions for you and the way it feels for you.

Sometimes I'm afraid to speak out just because I would, in high school I would talk all the time in class, but now I'm a little more cautious about talking out because I know that my views are so different. And...

Because you're black, or because you're international...?

Maybe a bit of both. Sometimes because I'm black, sometimes because I'm international. They're so different, and because it's just me in the classroom, sometimes I'm the only black student in the classroom, so I know that if I say this, most likely I'll be the only one with this view. But like, if there were more people in the classroom, I know that, not like it would be divided down the center, but there would be other people with my view, and I'd feel more confident that my view might stand for something.

So you feel a little awkward sticking up for

Yeah

Has that been a problem for you in class?, has it come up often?

Yes, I would say definitely it has.

How do you deal with it?

Most times I don't say anything. It really effects participation grades and, you know. Like my French class this semester is 20% participation grade, but most times I wouldn't say anything.

For that same reason?

Yeah.

Even in a French class.

Yeah. Because I have ideas, but it's just, when I hear people talk, I realize that all their ideas are the same and I am different. You see it when people say their views you realize their ideas are really different. And I'm sure that will help everybody if there's a difference of ideas, like conflict within class, but it just seems that you're the only one with this view. And even if there's conflict in class, maybe two people might take this view, ... at least somebody's with you.

So you don't like feeling so exposed.

Yeah

So what has happened when you have spoken up and been so different? How does that play out in class?

Probably just in small things, not a big issue, just something that's minor.

So when you speak up..

It's something minor.

Have you ever spoken up when it wasn't something minor?

No. Playing it safe.

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 didn't know such an office existed.

Do you know Dean McCloud.

Uhn hun.

That's the name of her office.

Oh. I have no idea what the role of it is.

What would you like it to be?

I think, um. I think they should definitely have some aspect of it that helps students, cause minority students seem to have so many problems on campus, that address these problems. But hear these problems and actually do something about them, not just hear them, mark it down, or

hear them, and put it in a folder. But these problems exist, and there is some action behind the problems. So what we say, there is some action behind it, not.. Students will lose hope if every time they voice a problem of concern that nothing was done about it, like what's the point, you know.

Is that your sense of what's happened?

Yeah. I mean I've heard black students talk about problems and problems and problems and I'll say, well why don't you go tell anybody about it? And they will say they have. So then, like what's the point if you talk and you talk and .. I don't know Dean McCloud personally, but I that a lot of people are very unhappy with her position, cause they don't feel that she does enough, or she isn't doing anything at all, but I don't think that I am in a position to say anything about it because I really don't know, and I'm not trying to go a long with what everybody says. And I really don't know.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

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 friends, my best friend, who is black, American, female. My mom also gives me a lot of emotional support. I guess I'm not supposed to use names, but it doesn't matter. I don't care. My mom is, I talk to her a lot and she is really there for me. She understands what it is to be different.

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

My closest friends are black, but I have so many friends, that because it is a predominately white school you'd think that in terms of percentage that more would be white, just because there are so many white people. But it doesn't really reflect my closest friends. My closest friends are black. Surprisingly I don't have many international friends. I don't know why. Even the Jamaicans I'm not that close with and you'd think that we'd be close, cause we're from the same region, but, I talk to them, but it just hasn't clicked, or whatever.

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?

I think. I don't know if it's beyond what exists in the larger society. Does that mean if it's greater?
Um hum.

I don't think it's greater. But I think that racial tensions do exist. I don't think that it's because of whites. I think that it's equally because of blacks if not more so, because they want to be secluded. Because they eat separately. They seclude themselves. They stay amongst themselves. They talk to white people, but they always room together, even when there's the option. They eat at the same table in the D hall and that sort of thing. So you know tension does exist, but..
Is it your sense that they have reached out and been rejected, or not responded to...?

I don't think they've tried to reach out. I just think they didn't bother. They probably thought that it wasn't worth it, or whatever.

Is that your guess, or is that from talking to them...

I would say that from having discussions with them they really do not, I mean they have no interest in trying to reach out or anything like that. They are very content to stay among themselves.

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 can't say. I haven't heard of or encountered anything where they are treated different. So I really can't say. I don't know.

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

For both these questions I have to say yes, just because I don't know otherwise.

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. If black students have been denied participation, I can't say that it's unfair or anything, and I haven't heard so anything, so I assume that it's really equal.

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

I think that they just do stories. Whenever they do a story they do it. I don't think they specifically look for .. I mean I've seen black people in the Trident. I've seen stories about them. Black history month the Trident was filled with stories. So I think that they so their job and they just try to do stories and they just say the facts. I think they are very honest in the facts. They do not try to present a biased view. I don't think they see race when they do their stories. I think it's pretty fair, pretty equal.

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 it is different from whites. I think now that whites are making the effort to reach out. And I don't think that black students are responding to the efforts that they are making. This is just on average. You see it is just so different for me with a different past. It's just different for me. I have no problem. I am totally color blind, but I know that the black students on campus are not. I know black students are totally against interracial dating. And that's something that I accept, I have no problem with it, and I know black students who

really do not want to have white friends. They are different. They really are not going to make the effort. But, I just think it's different problems because, um, whites in majority, blacks in minority. You can't compare the problems that they have. Blacks generally have less money, whites generally have more money, so that blacks have more financial problems. Whites, it's easier for whites to date on campus just because there are more, there's more choice. There is more options. It's just different problems because one group is so much larger than the other group.

*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? TRINIDADIAN

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

In America, black, but in Trinidad I am biracial, cause my mom's indian, so I'm biracial in Trinidad, but in in America I am black.

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

No, I think that these questions pretty much cover it.