

#32 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?

If yes, what?

Yes. Well, it was biology, but now it's business administration.

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

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

BS with special attainments in commerce.

4. What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education? Something in the work world, something in business.

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. It was nondenominational. I was in the youth group and I did the day camp in the summer.

Did you attend it, or...

No, I was one of the workers.

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?

I'm more involved at W&L I think than I was in high school.

What activities are you involved with at W&L?

I'm in the Minority students association, Women's Forum, and the Pride group that just started up.

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

At a college fair. That was the first time I heard about it. And they offered me the money on the spot, so

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?

Yes.

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

They brought me down for one of their weekends. I think it was in December, I don't remember. Then again I think the accepted students weekend.

Tell me what those weekends were like.

Well, I got to see the campus. And hang out with all the students - well the minority students that is, but I don't know. It didn't really prepare me for what was really ahead. Kinda painted this picture but it's not really that was when you get in here.

There's actually a question about that in just a little bit. What impressions did you get?

Um, I thought it was a pretty small school. I thought there were more black students here than there are, actually, and I thought it was a nice campus, pretty well kept up.

What kind of feedback did you get from the minority students that were already enrolled.

Well, they painted it as a pretty positive place, and that the work load was pretty hard - That I found to be true. And that they didn't have any social life - and that I found to be true as well, but overall I got positive feedback about it. Nobody was telling me they were going to transfer or anything.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

Second

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

Four all together.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

All 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

The money, that was the deciding factor.

What was different about the college that would have been your first choice?

It was larger, it was at home, and it's really known for what I wanted to major in at that time. so that's the reason why.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

No, not really - well yes, reputation. Reputation and - after I got accepted here everyone started telling me about it, and I started hearing things about it, but before then I hadn't heard anything about it.

By reputation do you mean academic reputation?

Yeah.

And what kinds of things did you start hearing about it?

That it was a really top notch place, and comparable to Ivy League schools and I was like, "Well, maybe I'll come then."

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

Well, most of my friends hadn't even heard of it. So they were all wondering why I didn't go to Johns Hopkins. "They offered you money, and all this" and

Was that your first choice?

Yes. My mom wanted me to go to Cornell, but what she heard - she had some co-workers at work that were "Well, W&L is just as good, so either place you go.." But relatives, no one had really heard about it. So, they still don't get the name right. I go home and they're "What? Where is that?" Very few people had heard about it.

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

No, well from what I saw. I - a lot of the rebel flags around. That kinda surprised me coming

here because I didn't really know the reputation of the school, until I got here.

Which reputation's that?

The southern, the whole southern tradition. Course, Robert E. Lee is in the name, but I didn't know he was like God here, until I got here. So that was one of the things that kind of made me think about it. I thought, "Well, if this is being done, then what is the student body probably like?" So I had to really think about that, but I still came.

So, you were concerned about..

About the racism and whether or not I would be treated as fairly as other students may be. Because there's so few of us. And, no one, when I came here, no one told me about any incidents that they had had. Well, that's not true, but that was with a fraternity, and not in academic life. So, I figured if no one's having problems in academic life, then I can deal with it on the outside.

Since then you've heard of some incidents having to do with academic life?

No, I haven't. So far everyone tells me that professors are pretty fair, and I can say that too.

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

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

Well when I came down here I was like the big prize. They threw parties for me and all this,
As a visiting prospective?

Yes, cause I was one of the two [few?] that came. At that time, everyone else had SATs, and I don't know - I didn't really get to interact with any students that were not minorities, so maybe that was a drawback. Because I only saw one side of the campus.

Tell me what you said about your SATs. I missed that.

Oh, everyone else had to take SATs. Tiffany was supposed to come down and she had to take SATs, so I was pretty much the only one, and they drove all the way to my school and got me.
Wow.

Yeah. So They rolled out the red carpet, and I was like "Well, OK." And I only got to interact with the minority students, and that wasn't a problem, but they only saw one side of the campus, and I didn't know that for the majority of the people that's all they do interact with on this campus.

The majority of the minority students?

Yeah, so that was different. When I got here, it's a lot different than when you come as a prospective, cause you're not living it.

Tell me in what way.

Well, for one thing, in a lot of my classes I'm the only black student. And, like in my lab now, I am the only black student, and it's hard cause people aren't always as receptive to you. Like in lab, I was the last person to get a partner, because everyone - they didn't even know each other, but it was just that everyone's apprehensive. They don't know how to approach me. On the colonnade there's the speaking tradition. And that weekend, I came, everyone was -I had my little blue folder - everyone was "Hey, How're you doing?" They knew I was a prospective. But when I got here, I can look you dead in your face and I'll speak and I don't always get a response, or people will do everything but look my way so they don't have to speak. So, that was different. That was hard for me freshman year, but I got over it. That was one of the big differences.

Any other ways things were different than you expected.

Well, the work load, I think, was a little different. I knew it would be hard, but I don't think it's really as hard as people make it seem. Cause I thought it was going to be too hard for me, and

that almost made me not come. Cause I was like "Well, I don't know if I'm up to do this." But it's not really that bad. Some weeks it's really bad, but it's not a continuous bad thing, at least for me.

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

I think my biggest challenge here is trying to remain focussed, because it's hard going here as a student. We don't have a lot of people that we can turn to - as a minority student that is - We don't have a lot of people that we can turn to outside of ourselves. And, on the weekends there's nothing to do. so everyone's like, well let's go to this school or that school, and usually they're an hour away, and that's an hour out of my study time just to get there, and then an hour back. It's so easy just to sit around and just harp on all the negatives about the place. And that's hard too, cause you need to remember that you're only here for four years and just deal with it. So I think that's probably the hardest thing is trying to stay positive.

Stay focussed in the sense of stay focussed on your work so you can get through because ...

Yeah. there's nothing else for me to do really, except for waste my time.

So how do you stay positive?

It's hard! but, talking to my parents a lot. I call home a lot, cause they live in Maryland and that's my home, and it's way different than this part of Virginia. I live right outside Northern Virginia, but it's nothing like this part of Virginia. I don't know. I just try to keep in contact with people who are still in my environment and let them know what's going on here, and they try to keep me encouraged. But, some weeks it's really depressing, cause you've got to deal with "I don't have a social life, and not only that I'm not even accepted on the campus. Plus I've got all this work to do, and it's not even any motivation for you to do anything, but sit around and harp on it. So, that's hard.

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

[chuckling] It's. um well, I was a 4.0 student in high school. Here I'm about a 2.5. I have a 2.5 GPA, so it's the big difference, but I'm working a lot harder for that 2.5 than I was for the 4.0. Even though I only have a C I feel that I've learned a lot since I've been here. a whole lot in a short amount of time,

Academically?

Yeah, so I can't really complain too much. I mean I'm working just as hard, if not harder.

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

I've used the Undergraduate library, the Science library, all the computer facilities. Study groups - kind of, yeah in biology. that's another thing that's hard to do, get into study groups, being a minority student. You're just kind of left out of things unless you go after them. So that's one of the things. We don't really conversate with people in our classes, so we don't find out about stuff like that. The language lab, yes, and that's about all.

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

Definitely need some better printers. the printers on this campus - they never work, so and maybe free laser printing, or maybe laser printing where you don't have to use your card, cause I don't carry money on my card a lot. I usually have change, and so it's hard for me to find a copy machine that takes change, and none of the laser printers do. Well, the computers. Word Perfect always has a virus on it in Gaines. You can never get on it, so that's another thing.

Have you called the computer help people about that?

Yeah, a couple of times. It just keeps happening. And it's not just one computer. It's all of them.

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*

well, in the beginning it was interest in the subject, but now that I've changed it's more of a promise of earning a handsome salary after graduation. Yeah, that has a lot to do with it. and I know I can probably do anything with a business degree, but with biology you're limited to certain things.

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

I changed from biology to business administration. Biology is.. I don't know, here - I don't know if it's here, or anywhere else, but the sciences, W&L isn't known for it's science department anyway, so biology here, I mean, it's OK, but It's a little more than I'm willing to deal with. The four hour labs.. Well that I can handle, but the lab practicals every year. It's just too much for me.

Is that a lab exam?

Yeah, it's this big thing everyone's so stressed out about. And it's the week before exams, which is bad too. You have two minutes to go around to each station and, well this year you had to answer four questions in two minutes, looking at slides and things. So a lot of times you have to end up having a curve in biology cause the grades are so bad. But, I know last semester we did.

So it's super super hard is what you're saying.

It's doable, but I don't know, it didn't impress me enough to want to do it for the next two years. So I decided to get out now while I can.

And you chose business administration because..

Well because, it's something I hadn't done yet, and it's something I felt I would be pretty good at. I've already done the chemistry thing, and the biology thing. English, I'm not really interested in that too much, so it was the only thing left that I could do that I hadn't experienced yet.

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

that would really depend on who it was, I have to be honest about that, because if it were a close friend of mine, and - well stealing is kind of - that's a bit extreme. I don't know any of my friends who would steal, but it would depend on who it was really. If it were a close friend of mine, no, but if it were someone else, yes.

And, what's your reason?

Why, if it was a close friend of mine? Simply because they're a close friend and I don't want to see them kicked out of school, you know, over this. I understand there's the whole honor code thing here, but that's my friend, so, what can I do?

20. Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?
Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

I think, for the most part the ones that I have had have been easy to approach. I haven't felt any hostility from anyone, and actually most of them have been more than willing to help. They'll come to me before I'll come to them, so. I mean, in some ways I kind of feel self-conscious about that, cause I'm sure he's not doing that for anyone else.

Are you really sure he's not?

No I'm not,

That's your reaction.

Yeah, cause I'm the only minority in the class and I may not speak up a lot. because of that, so he comes to me to find out if I'm having any problems. I mean there's a down side to it. I appreciate it, but at the same time I'm always wondering well is it because I'm black that he's doing this? But other than that They've been more than helpful.

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

Well lately I've been working closely with Dean McCloud because of this Pride group. But, ..
Tell me about that.

Well, she I guess whoever was in there had to leave or something, so she called me to replace them. I've only been in the group maybe three weeks, maybe four weeks now. So I came in and joined and I have to see her every Monday. We meet every Monday, so we're meeting next week too. And before that I just never stopped in to talk to her. I just never did, so I have to talk to her now, and it's becoming more of a - we don't always talk about the group. It's "How are you doing? How are your classes?" But other than that, there isn't anybody.

So when you see her on Monday is it a meeting with the group?

It's a meeting with the group, but usually I mean I'll stop by her office if I need to talk to her. Or, if she needs to talk to me, she'll call me.

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

Well, W&L as a whole, or W&L as a minority is concerned?

Well, what has been Your experience.. your direct experiences with your social life at W&L.

Well, you know W&L is fraternity oriented, and, I used to go to the parties freshman year, and there wasn't too much for me to there. I'm not a drinker, so that kinda got old really quick. And a lot of the black students don't go to the fraternity parties unless they want to drink, you know that's the whole purpose. So as far as social life, I'm basically left with two options: to go home, or to go away to another school. And you can't go home every weekend, well I can't cause it's four hours away. So, a lot of the times we'll try to get the MSA to throw parties, but then there's the money situation, and where we're going to have it. So,. social life is pretty nonexistent here. There isn't one for me.

Do you, does your social life spill over into connections with VMI at all?

Yes, yeah, unfortunately. The VMI guys, we had a mixer with them early in the year. And that's pretty much all we can cater to. It's limited to just the VMI guys, and they're not as accessible as we would like them to be, or maybe some people would like them to be.

Why's that?

They're not allowed to leave the post. I think they get to come out Saturday night and that's it. So, it's limited to VMI and within that it's limited to their time schedule and ours.

Is that what you meant when you said unfortunately?

Yeah.

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

It's not important at all to me. I don't drink.

You don't drink at all?

No.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

Not at all. No drugs.

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?

Well, like I said I've gone to some of the parties, and as far as that's concerned, that's about all. I don't do anything else with them and they don't do anything else with me, so that's it.

It's a lot of things. The drinking. Usually when you get there everyone's drunk, I mean really drunk, and there's a lot of pushing and shoving, especially if it's packed. If the party's pretty crowded people will bump into you or push you. People just get roudy when they drink and I don't like to be around it. It seems like especially here, because people don't just drink and have a beer, they get drunk, especially if they're in the fraternity, so that really wasn't.. I mean if they were sober it would be different, but I'd rather not be around someone who's drunk all the time. And the music, it's not the music that a lot of minorities listen to, I'll just say that, because all of us don't listen to the same music. As far as I'm concerned it's not anything that I want to hear, so that's part of it too, usually. Usually if I go to a party it's just because I'm desperate for something to just to get out of the house.

Have you felt that it was a place where you were welcome to go?

Yeah, I think so, for the most part. For the one's that have security, sometimes I feel as though, I don't know, the security guards look at us funny, like they want to ask us do we go here, but they don't. Or, even if they know we do, it seems like they keep an eye on.. well I feel that way, I don't know if anyone else feels that way, but I've felt that way. And you kind of feel self conscious about it. Other than that, no one has ever approached me with anything.

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

Well, I've only been to a couple of games here. I went to a football game and a basketball game. The facilities, I use the gym pretty often. And I haven't had any problems or anything, it's been fine. Phys ed classes, they've been fine too.

You've enjoyed them?

Yeah, for the most part.

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

There aren't any. Other than at VMI. Everyone here is kind of cliqueish anyway. As so far as the minority students are concerned, there are only maybe about five or six guys here, and we're all friends, so I don't even consider them even an option to date, and they have girlfriends anyway, a lot of them do. So, it's pretty much limited to VMI.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university? Yes. Just about every other week I consider it. Just depends on what week I'm on. But I don't think I'll do it. I think I'll stay.*

Why/why not?

Well, there are times when my schedule gets really hectic, plus, I look around and there's no one I

can even turn to outside of my friend who's going through the same thing. So we're sitting there both saying the same thing with no one to talk to who can really understand it. Other than our other students. And my parents, although they are helpful, they haven't been in it yet, so they can't say what I should do. And there's really no one I can even go to about that because the only alumnus I know of is Professor DeLaney, but I don't know him well enough yet to start laying my problems on him.

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

The reputation of the school, the academic reputation, and I'm not a quitter So I'm in here now and I'm gonna stay, unless I get thrown out..[chuckle] I'm gonna 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.*

Yeah, I would be willing, but whenever prospectives come down I don't want to give them the disillusion that I was given about the school. So I try to paint it a positive place, but at the same time I let them know that it's not going to be fun a lot of the time. You're going to work for your four years. Don't come here unless you're not ready to get down to business, because there's not really a lot for you to do other than that.

Now we ask some background information:

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

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.*

Definitely urban high school. They bussed in a lot of kids who didn't live in our area.

Predominantly

Black

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

Just my sister, my father and my mother and myself.

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

I think my father, he dropped out his junior year of college. My mom, I think she went to a two year institution. Associates degree.

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

My dad is a logistics something at NASA, and my mom is right now working with our church at home, but she was working with the EIA - the Electronics Industry Association. They do electronics stuff, like when the new Nintendo comes out, they market it. Now with the church I think she's administrator, so I think she handles all the financial bit...

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

Well I know that if I didn't have a scholarship, I know my parents couldn't afford to send me here. I know a lot of the W&L students are going here without any scholarship money or even, a lot of them don't even work. My parents make maybe half of what their parents are making. What would you call that?

Compared to other W&L students? I don't want to say that I'm poor, definitely below.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

I think it really makes me work that much harder, because I look at them and I know, well if they fail a certain class, or if they fall behind in their credits and have to stay here an extra year, they can. Whereas, with me, I only get one shot at it, and it's either that or you don't do it. So if I want to stay here I have to push, and I realize that I'm not here because anyone can afford for me to be here. I'm here because I got a scholarship here. That keeps me down to earth and focussed.

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.

Boy, at Washington and Lee, sometimes it's hard to believe I'm actually going here. um...

In what way?

Well, because I'm not the norm, as far as the main stream school. I guess a lot of minorities aren't, but particularly for me because I went to a majority black school and I live in a majority black community where the type of things I see down here I would never see at home, never. Like with the Rebel flag. It's like flagrant here. That's the type of thing that I see here that I know I wouldn't see at home. Cause I live right outside of DC and no one would try that at home. It's not even thought about. So, I mean, and here I'm a real minority, whereas home I knew I was as far as the whole American nation was, but it was never in my face like it is now.

So does that mean you think of yourself first as...? as black?

Because I have to. Only because I know other people see me that way. Yeah. I pretty much have to.

Have to because it's in your face, or to protect yourself? What do you mean?

Well, when I walk in the classroom I realize that I'm not perceived, well I think that I'm not perceived as just a student here. I'm a black student. The only black student in this particular class. And in most of them. So that's the only reason why. If I were at another school I'd just be a student, at least probably. But here I'm a black student, I'm not just a student.

34. *How homogeneous do you believe black students are on this campus? In answering please consider racial identification, political perspective, and/or social class position.*

They're not homogeneous, I don't think, as far as - well political perspective, I don't really know where everyone stands on politics. But as far as social class position, some of us are more well to do than others, when you're not comparing it to W&L. But among each other. A lot of us, most of

us I think are well-to-do middle class, but a lot of us have to work in addition to our scholarship. So it's varied. There's no one here who is dirt poor and has two jobs just to keep up with things. Most of us either are well to do or have to work.

So you don't know about political perspective, and..

Racial identification, what do they mean?

Well there are varieties of ways people think of themselves racially within the black community. Well I think there are those that are not actually black who may identify themselves as black, but I think some of them are actually Trinidadian, or from other areas like that who identify themselves as black, so yeah, there's diversity in that. But the majority of them are black as far as I know.

When you say black do you mean African American or..

African American, yeah.

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

I think they're very different, very different. I think a lot of the whites on this campus are conservative, I know there's a large population of Republicans. And as far as I know there are only one or two Republicans, yeah I guess I do know their political perspective, one or two Republican black students that I can think of. And I guess the rest of them are Democratic. Maybe they don't have an opinion at all. The social position is definitely different. It seems like a lot of people here are what I would consider to be close, if not already rich. The cars that they drive, and I was driving an '88 Escort. And the places they go, like for Spring Break and things. I have to scrimp and save just to go to Atlanta, and they're going to the Bahamas, and places like that. That's a big difference. A lot of us just go home. They're going to other countries.

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

Definitely inadequate. I think if there were more black students here, that would help us a lot. Because we wouldn't feel as singled out as we do. Where it is now, a lot of them I talk to, I'm the only one who's the only black person in the class. That's pretty much the norm for everybody. Maybe not in all their classes, but in at least one or two they are the only black person in there. So, I think there needs to be more representation. I think that if there were more of us that would force the whole student body to interact with us, cause right now they don't have to. So I think that's why I'm looked at as a black student, rather than a student, because I'm the only one in your class and you don't ever have to talk to me if you don't want to. If there were more of us at some point you'd have to talk to one of us. Sounds bad, but..

Well, hey.. So if they had to talk to you..then what..

It would help relations in the community, I think. I think there's a lot of stereotyping here. I don't think the racism here is really out of, they just want to be prejudiced, it's just 'I don't know you.' 'I don't know anything about your people and I don't ever have to know because I don't ever have to talk to you. I might have to take this history class about slavery, but I don't ever have to talk to you so I don't even have to know if you all like rap music or not.

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

I think it's inadequate, and I think that makes a lot of people not want to come here. They only see.. There's only one that I know of, I believe there's two now. Two black professors. For me it's not really a problem because I don't care who's teaching the class as long as they can teach. But I

think for maybe identification purposes and maybe for some of the students on this campus as well who are not black, because the majority of the black people on this campus who do work here are serving them. I think it's important to keep that balance so that one doesn't walk away thinking, well I'm sure no one is - But it gives the impression that the majority of black people can never achieve the status that a lot of the professors do, in that they only work in a service type of environment because all of them are raking leaves or serving in the D hall. We definitely need more.

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

Explain.

Yeah. I'd say that's inadequate too. That's more for identification purposes, I guess.

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

If not, why not?

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

Yeah. I think so. Well, they're gonna be together anyway. We're kind of forced into it, but I think it's important that we form bonds to get each other through this school because everyone, as far as I know, all the minority students depend on everyone else to get them through these four years. Nobody has done it alone, as far as I know, so far.

Maybe some sort of a social, or, yeah probably some sort of a social, maybe not a party, because you're dancing and not talking. Maybe a panel, though that might be too formal. Maybe a pizza night or something.

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

No, not the Chavis House itself. No. Only reason I go there is for the MSA meetings, and that's about it.

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

Yeah, but not the kind of role I think it should have played. MSA is basically a place where I voice my concern for a party, and nothing else. I don't know, when I joined that association, I thought it was an association that was supposed to help us on a more personal level, and not necessarily in my social life. Although that's important too, but I'm looking for something else, so in that way it's lacking. But it's played a role.

What were you looking for?

Well, OK, when things like the house needing to be fixed up, or bringing more black professors on campus, or things like that, things that are important to minority students other than parties, I think they should have a role in that and so far they haven't. It's just been a party thing. I think that's lacking definitely on this campus.

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, definitely. I think it fosters awareness that are different people who write novels, different people who have philosophical thoughts and views about things, so definitely. For a lot of my academic life I've been learning European history, and I only learn black history during February and I think that's definitely a problem. There isn't a balance there. I think courses like that definitely foster awareness.

If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition

was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain.

Well, so far I haven't run across anything where a person of color was brought up in any of my many classes. But I've only taken philosophy, religion, and in English they got me there. I took Darkest Africa, and I was expecting something totally different that what I got. We didn't read anything by any African authors. No, they were all white, and all from England. And I thought, well this isn't what I was expecting. Like we read Congo by Michael Crichton, and the books were good, but I was expecting something from an African perspective - at least one, but, yeah.

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

Well, I think you have to learn to be aggressive in the classroom, because I know freshman year I was kind of intimidated, and sometimes I still am a little. I'm not as apt to ask questions as maybe I should be. If I don't understand something I'll just try to get through it myself, or I'll wait and see the professor afterwords. It's intimidating. You're always listening to yourself - how do I sound, or am I saying this right, or how is everyone else perceiving me? That's constantly on your mind, and not only that you're the only black student and you don't want to seem dumb on top of that.

You think this thing about being self-conscious and wondering how you sound is common among all students?

I think it's common among the majority, definitely.

And are you saying that on top of it you are black and wondering how you are being perceived that way?

Um hum, yeah, because you know that whole ebonics thing, and I know that people on this campus know about that, because of - I don't know if you read the Spectator, or anything like that? I mean that we are all conscious of that because we don't want to foster any kind of stereotypes here that aren't already fostered. We definitely don't want to further it.

So how do you deal with that pressure?

Well, you just do. You have to learn to get over it, I think, at some point, and I have in the majority of my classes. Some of them are just big anyway, and I wouldn't ask a question no matter if it were all black or not. But in others I just, I have to realize that I'm here to learn and it doesn't matter what people think about me, or about my race. At this point. I'm here to get a degree.

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?*

Hum, That's Dean McCloud's isn't it?

I think so.

Well, that's a good question. Far as I know, they sponsor the MSA and that's all I know. I don't know what they do exactly, or what she does, as far as that's concerned. I really couldn't answer that.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

Well, do you have any suggestions? Instead of saying how it could be improved, what would you like to see it do?

Maybe make more of a presence known. Because, the only reason I know that she sponsors the Minority Student Association is because she came to one of the meetings at the beginning of the year. I think maybe make more of a presence known that she is the sponsor and maybe try to do

more towards the organization. I realize that it is student run, but at the same time, I think a lot of the students here feel that they are kind of alone in that. So I think it's important, especially with her being one of the few black administrators on the campus, to get more involved.

Do something to make herself more visible?

I don't know if I would say that, because there's a lot of hostility towards her, but, I think maybe...

A lot of hostility among the black students?

Well, not really among them, but towards her. Unwarranted, I think, but.. There's only so much she can do, as far as I see it. I think if she were more involved then people would be more receptive to her.

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 the greatest emotional support would probably be a fellow student. African American, female, American of course. And she's probably the only person on the campus that I can say offers emotional support. Personal support, as far as academics, cause she's going through the same thing I went through. And she went through the same thing I went through before I got here. So we're both on the same level, we both were educated with the same tools, so we're both facing the same problems here.

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

Probably 98.2% are black. White, I have a few, very few, 4 or 5, and most of them are through one of my friend's contacts really, so they're not really my friends, but they're people I'm friendly with. And maybe 2 are international. Two people.

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

On campus, no.. well, no not discriminatory, no. I can't say that.

What is it you're thinking of.

Well, just things, stereotypical type things, maybe not anybody discriminating against me, but remarks that are made, or generalizations that are made about me without even knowing anything about the real me have been made.

Like what?

OK, like when I first got here, freshman year, A guy, I was walking across the quad and this guy walks up to me and he says, out of the blue, I don't know this guy, I've never seen him, he says "Can I borrow some of your rap CDs sometime?" Like, how do you know I listen to rap? For one thing, at the time I didn't own any rap CDs. I'm more of an R&B person. So I was so taken aback by that. This guy is not even saying hey, hello. Just can I borrow some of your rap CDs? I know you listen to rap. That was one of the things. Just people assume an awful lot about me. On my hall, the girls would do Melrose Place night, get pizza, and no one would ever knock on my door and say "Hey we're doing this." I was the only black girl on my hall, and in that particular section of Graham Lees, I was the only black female, and there was one black guy above me. We were alone in that. He was in the basketball team, so he was able to work within the student body, but as far as I was concerned it was rough. No one would even speak to me, except for the dorm counsellor. She was really nice, but the majority of the people wouldn't speak to me, or say anything. It's like everyone was, I want to say walking on eggshells around me. Because they thought, I don't know, maybe I was hostile, and if they were to upset me I would punch someone

in the mouth, of.. That's the way I felt that I was being perceived, and it wasn't even like that. Freshman year I was pretty much alone in that way.

So, it wasn't overt discriminatory behavior, but sort of a quiet sense of avoidance or something? Yeah, and that's how it is I think for the majority of black people on campus. Just not even in your face type deal, but kind of on the sly.

And you started answering by qualifying 'on campus.' Have you had experiences off campus? Oh, yeah. Definitely. This town. I tried not to go in town unless I have to. Because we're not well perceived in town. When we go in shops people tend to watch us, tend to immediately ask 'can I help you with something?' I'm not allowed to walk around and browse, I have to know what I want when I go in there, or like.. One night my hall this year went down to Sweet Things, Dean Manning's treat, and me and Tiffany are the only two blacks that are on my hall that are under my dorm counsellor's supervision, so we went down there and we were in line to get our ice cream and everyone else had gotten their ice cream and we were in line next, after the guy who just got his. And our dorm counsellor had told her at the beginning that she was going to pay for everyone. And I get up to get my ice cream and the lady says 'are you with them?' Well, obviously, I walked in with them, I have on this W&L T shirt, but I couldn't be with them. Maybe I'm getting too sensitive, but I just felt that.. I mean we were singled out, and I have to assume that it was because we were black, cause she didn't ask anyone else that. That type of thing. We get stares downtown all the time. So I try not to go down there if I don't have to.

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, I don't. Pretty much, on the minority side, everyone knows where they stand, and everyone knows the organizations to watch out for. I think there is one particular fraternity that everyone knows has a reputation for being at a certain position as far as blacks are concerned, and probably other minorities too. I think for the minority students, they know where they stand, and so in that instance there are no real racial tensions cause no one's trying to go out of where they see as their defined area.

So pretty parallel to the larger society? or are you saying there aren't tensions because no one's puching the limits.

Yeah, that's, yeah, there aren't tensions because no one's pushing the limits. I think this campus here is definitely not like the larger society. It's not like anything I've ever seen or heard of before. So you can't really compare it to larger society, because there wouldn't be this many white people and so few black people like this in anyone's area, as far as I know. Well in a lot of your metropolitan areas. It's either equal or it's close enough that the kinds of things that happen here, maybe they do happen, but are not as prevalant as they are here. Not to people that are in my position.

Could you say that again. I'm .. suddenly I'm a little confused. Just the last part of that sentence.. OK [chuckling] What I was saying, if they did happen it wouldn't be as in my face, or anyone else's face.

So it's more so here?

It's more obvious here.

What kind of things?

Well... the whole apprehension.. well I'm sure that happens in everyday life, but as far as when I walk into stores.. well I guess that happens a lot in society too, but it's not happening like it is here, so, since they a lot of black people, when they do see one, it's like, 'definitely coming to rob me.' 'I have to watch this person because they might take something, or I just want to be cautious, basically.' I think that although that probably does happen in the large r society, it probably doesn't happen without any repercussions like it does here, because if I even raised a fuss what would it do. It's not like her clientel is majority black anyways. So, who would listen. So I guess it's pretty much the same.

How do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

Well, I think more black students, because like I said as it is now, if I am the only black person in your class you don't ever have to say anything to me. I can just sit beside you, or wherever, you don't ever say anything to me. And I think since they feel .. well maybe it is if they don't have to they don't need to. Because I can't say that if the shoe were on the other foot I would go out of my way either. So, I think if there were more of us here, then they would have to be more into action. Whereas now everyone has their own thing. We don't pledge fraternities, a lot of us, so you don't even have to deal with us there. You seldom have to deal with us. So, pretty much you can go on thinking whatever way you're thinking and not every have anyone tell you well that's wrong. I think maybe that could do something. I'm not sure a lot can be done with W&L. A lot of the kids here were raised in homogeneous environments. A lot came from private schools. A lot of em never even had to deal with black people, so they're gonna come with their own stereotypes anyway, a lot of them. And I'm not sure you can get rid of them until you have to actually have contact with someone of that persuasion. And there aren't enough to change it.

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 couldn't even comment on that cause I don't know of anyone who's been involved in anything like that. I couldn't say.

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

Yeah. I would hope so. As far as I know it is.

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 they are open to black participation. As far as I know there aren't any black writers on the Trident nor the Ring Tum Phi. With the student radio, I do know some people who are DJs, so I think that's pretty open. I guess it's pretty open across the board.

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

Now that. Well as far as I know the only time we are even considered in the Ring Tum Phi and

the Trident is during Black History Month. Other than that no one asks our opinions. That's when everyone got the opinion poll and all that, but other than that no one asks us how we feel about anything. I think that's a problem. I mean, I'm black all year round, not just during February.

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 in some ways, but different in a lot of ways. We are all facing the same academic challenges - well, I think for a lot of black students it's that much worse. I mean now it's evened out, but freshman year I came from a bad public school, and so when I got here I was behind a lot of the white students here, so I had to play catch up. But I think now it's evened out pretty much. I think freshman year is catch up year for everyone, but by sophomore, junior year you're pretty much equal, I think as far as what you've learned. I think that as black students we face a lot of different problems, problems that white students here don't have to face. We face the whole minority problem. We're the only person in that particular class. You don't know who you can go to to express any problems that you have, or a lot of things. There are a lot of different problems. A lot of different problems. ...

Are you thinking about something you don't want to talk about?

Well, I think a lot of times the black students, well I know for me and some others I've talked to, the white students here, their problems seem sort of superficial in comparison to ours. Because it's more of a 'Where am I going to go Spring Term?' 'Where am I going to buy my dress for FD?' And I'm worrying 'If I tell this professor this thing, is he gonna lower my grade, or whatever.' Well with this interview here, there's a lot of concern about that, because even though it's anonymous, it's really not gonna be hard to pick some people out, because some people there is only one black person in that particular major. And, well she just changed majors, so I know who that is. I mean there is even concern about that. We have to always watch what we say, around who we say it. If you can trust this particular white person and you tell them this thing, how are they gonna react to that, or whatever. So we're always watching our backs, that too. We're always worried, are they talking to me because they think I'm just some charity case, or are they genuinely interested in getting to know me? I know a lot of people here do things for political reasons, their image on campus. I'm always worried about that. I know a lot of people are too.

- *47. Sex F
- *48. Age? 19
- *49. Year in college? SOPHOMORE
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.576
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN

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

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

Well, I guess I want to say that it's not all negative. I want to make it seem like I feel that I'm just this poor girl and everyone's picking on me. It's not like that, but that's just the assessment of the campus as I see it. But there are a lot of positive things about it too and I don't want to make it seem like I totally hate it here and nothing every goes well for me. It's not like that at all, but there are a lot of problems I think that need to be addressed.

What are some of the positives that you've experienced?

The academics. I generally like the classes I am taking. I generally like the professors. I get along well with all of them, and I haven't had anyone do or say anything to me negative as far as a professor was concerned. Although the school may be [fostered?] in a particular position, I think the professors here are pretty open minded. I've had pretty good experiences in the academics. I can't really complain about that, and the facilities I am using are top notch as far as other campuses, I have been to some other colleges who are pitiful in comparison to W&L. So it's not all bad, it's just a matter of what you are willing to put up with and I made a decision to come here, so I'm willing to put up with this.