

#34 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?
If yes, what?

Yeah. Biology.

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

Well, I know my cumulative, Biology, I guess B range.

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

BS

BA

BS [science or commerce]

4. What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?
Either medicine or some branch off of medicine.

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

Yes.

Med school, you think?

Yeah, or if not that, maybe pharmacy school or something like that.

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. Baptist, Christian Baptist. Youth group, I wasn't in the choir but I helped out with Christmas programs - I play an instrument.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

I don't have much church involvement in Lexington. I did go to church this past Easter. But, I know this probably sounds bad, but Sunday is the main study day, and to get up at 9, 10:00 and spend till 2:00 in church cuts out a lot of time with studying, but when I do go home that's the first thing I do. I make up for it when I go home.

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

I think they range about the same. I think I'm involved in the same number of clubs and activities in high school and here. I don't play any sports though, here.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative
Adult friend
Peer
Other

I've always tries to figure that out. I believe, we can never remember. It was one summer I received an application for university scholars, the summer program. And I applied for that but I didn't get accepted, so my junior year, or whenever I started to apply to schools, I found the flyer and I said, well I'll apply to this school. And then got the application and filled it out and thought I probably won't hear from them, but then they responded, and I was excited but not excited because I didn't know anything about the school so then I came to visit and I looked around and thought "I can't go here."

Why was that?

I felt so uncomfortable. I felt just like I stood out, I was so isolated. I stood out but I was like in a little corner so different from everyone. And my parents and I took a tour and we got to the gym and I just fell out crying, I was so - I said "Just take me home, I don't want to come back to this place. I just want to forget that I ever came here, but then I changed my mind.

And it was the stress of feeling so different.

I just felt really uncomfortable, to walk down the campus and see like maybe only one black face. It just didn't say that I really wanted to go here, but then I changed my mind [voice sounding rather regretful]

So you came just for one day with your folks, You didn't come for a weekend?

I came on a random weekend. All the weekends they had planned for prospective students to come I had other activities. And I came and I brought clothes to stay of I wanted to, and I ended up staying. I got myself together. My parents said, "Why don't you just stay until Saturday, and see how you feel about it." And I stayed with a black student, so that helped a lot. And that morning I felt a little better about the situation.

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

It wasn't until after I got accepted that I met with some alumni. there is a judge and there are two lawyers in my area, and once they found out that I was accepted to W&L and was contemplating on whether to go or not, they got me together and we had a meeting, I think we went out to lunch, and they convinced me into coming. And I still keep in touch with them now.

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:

Did your parents stay in town while you stayed on campus?

Actually I think my parents drove back home cause my father had to work, and my mother drove back the next day and picked me up. Cause they said that even though my father had to work they said take your clothes anyway, in case you want to stay. And you know see how the campus is.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

a very big shock.

anything else about your reactions after you decided to stay?

That night I remember she went out and I decided to stay in the room, I don't know, I wouldn't say I didn't feel comfortable around her, I just didn't feel comfortable in the situation. So I decided to just stay in the room and watch television to see how the students outside acted. I looked out the window of the quad, and I got a better sense of the campus. I tried not to let that initial shock like bias my opinion. And she came back and we talked a little bit, and I felt a little better. And I even requested her room the next, my freshman year, and I got her room.

What is it that she told you?

She said the school is great academically. Socially it does take a while to get used to, especially for minority students. But, it's worth it. She said you do work hard and you will find times that you're just - you've worked so hard and you feel that you deserve a reward and there's really nothing there for you, but you can sacrifice four years of your life to then go on and be the best that you can be. So four years is not that bad.

What do you mean that you feel that you deserve a reward but there's nothing there for you?

Like just an outlet, or something to do, or just somewhere to go. You sit in your room Saturday and say I've worked all week long so hard and what is there to do to get away?

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

I think it was my second choice.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

Six

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Five out of the six.

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

Financial package.

That was a big thing.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

Well, when I had the meeting with the alumni that convinced me a lot because I saw how successful they were, and they said once again sacrificing four years of your life is not that big of a deal for the benefit you'll receive after you graduate. And just the name that Washington and Lee carries. Before I applied, no one knew anything about W&L, and then after I applied and got accepted and said I was going, everyone came from their little shells and holes and said "Oh, that's a wonderful school" I went, "Where were you three months ago when I was having such problems?" I know that, I think this was the best decision, but some days, like today after that paper [Alex Brown, whom she loves, had asked her to rewrite a paper, which she had just completed] I'm just like, "Why am I putting myself through this. I'm loosing brain cells here." But I think it was a good decision.

12. Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives? Relatives didn't really know much about it. Friends in the neighborhood and the area were very , I wouldn't say shocked, but they were surprised I guess that I decided to go to this school and since they knew about W&L and it's reputation and the environment, they were kinda I guess shocked that I would go to this school, but they were happy because they knew I could be successful and graduate and do all that.

What was it that they knew about the reputation..?

Very conservative. Very southern conservative school. Then once I got here, and I realized how conservative it was, then they gave me more credit for just staying here. And dealing with it.

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

No, not at the time. Only negative thing, and I don't know if you'd call this negative, was just the lack of minority student, the low percentage. But I didn't really see any true negative aspects until

I got here. [chucking]

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.

It was what I had expected academically. I was pretty sure that this was going to be a pretty tough school. Everything else. Let's see.. Things like conservative flags. I m sorry, Confederate flags. Sometimes people just don't speak to you, or they look upon you like you're not supposed to be here. Just little things like that. But I had to say to myself, "Put those aside, don't think about it, you're here to receive an education, you won't have to see these people for the rest of your life, just for these four years. Just deal with it, get through it.

So, how overt is it. What do you mean when you say they look upon you as though you shouldn't be here??

I've had one of my friends told me she was in class, I think it was a history class, and they were talking about diversity, or something like that, and one of the students said that he did not come to W&L to see, I think he said something like he didn't come to W&L to see black students or interact with black kids. He didn't expect to see this many here. Just things like that. I guess some of these students come from places where they don't see a lot of minority students, so when they do come and there's one in the class they're just shocked. but, And then just sometimes you're walking in some of the academic buildings or you're among other friends and then their friends come along and sometimes the looks, or they might say something, or you might overhear a conversation. and Its's just like How can someone say something like that, or why's she looking at me like that, she's no better than I am. It's just little things.

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

I guess it would have to be, I guess proving that I'm just as smart as the next person. I'm not here just because I'm going to fill some status to say that they've got 16 black students that go to this school. I mean I'm here because I received a scholarship because I am a minority, but I also had to qualify academically for the school. they just wouldn't give money away to just any ordinary student. Sometimes I do feel like I'm at a disadvantage. Some of the students here come from wonderful backgrounds, wonderful schools. Some things I have not been taught that they have, so when it comes to a certain aspect of a class, I may have more trouble grasping it than they do, but I find it hard to just say that I can do it just as well as you can.

You find it hard to say that.

Hard to prove it, to actually say "Well, I got a B+ on that just like you did." I think sometimes they assume that we're only here because of the money and we're being pushed along and given special privileges because we're minorities. But, no, we're working just as hard as they are.

That must be awkward, because how would you show that you're as good as they are. You can't exactly wave your paper in the air.

no, let's see, how can I explain it. I don't know, just in conversation sometimes, if we're in a st'wow, she actually knows what she's talking about." Well, why wouldn't I. I wouldn't be here if I couldn't. So I think sometimes they're very surprised that we do know how to speak well and we do know how to carry ourselves, and we do not all possess all the stereotypes. that black are known to have.

you seem to be very very conscious that you're always on the spot to prove yourself.

It's very hard, especially in the science departments, especially pre-med, with so few black students. I feel that they have it so much easier than I do. That may be just me, I mean biology is hard all together, but I just feel like what am I doing wrong. What are they doing right. Cause I seem to be some days just struggling beyond the point of confusion. and they just seem to be "well I'll study for that later", or "I did fine on that", moving on to something new. When I've spent two or three days on it and have tutors and everything and they're just flying right along..
So how have you dealt with that?

I have found, well number one, my parents. And a lot of the faculty members help. I have one in particular faculty member in the religion department that I can go to whenever I need someone to talk to , so that helps. that helps a lot, to get encouragement from someone that says "I know you can do this. You're doing fine, don't worry about it, just keep doing what you're doing. You'll come out fine.

study group or in class, and you may give a right answer or you may explain something - sometimes students are like

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

Well, my GPA is not as high, but I think that's to be expected because the work load is increased. High school, I guess I took all honors classes, .. I worked hard, but by no means as hard as I work here., You could do homework in class and not have to take it home and still get an A in the course. Here you have to put in several extra hours to do well, to get the grade that you think you deserve. Some days you have to do things over, like today, or you just gotta work those extra hours.

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

- x Undergraduate library
- x Science library
- x Computer facilities.
- x Writing Center.
- x Tutors in the disciplines.
- Study groups.
- Public lectures on academic subjects.
- x Language lab.
- x Visiting professors in their offices.
- Study skills courses

I think all of them. Maybe not study groups - well, if I get a couple of students together, or someone asks me. Study skills - I tried that and It didn't work. I think I'm so set in my own study habits that it's hard for me to adopt something else.

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

Maybe study groups, - in Chemistry 111 the professor a couple days before the test would ask "Do you all want to have a review session two nights before the test?" And we would always say yes. I think sometimes teachers forget that they lecture it once, and they think OK that's fine, we can move on to the next thing, or they assume that if there are questions the student is going to come. I think sometimes it helps a lot if you get the students together not so much in a classroom environment, maybe in a different room later on at night so the students can ask the questions that maybe they are afraid to ask in class. And it helps that the professor is there, because the professors know the answer. It's not always good to have just a bunch of students there because

they may all be confused on the same subject, so I think it would help a lot if the professors would try to create more type study groups later on in the evening or at the end of a term or something. Just not that one lecture and not talk about that topic again before the test.

Do you find that true about any particular subject area, or about all of them?

Well some subjects you probably can't do, like English, I guess you could for the readings. But I guess it has a lot to do, since I am a biology major. Biology and Chemistry have a lot of problem solving or just different aspects that you need to explain again. Cause some of those topics are hard to understand the first time. So they can say, well Thursday night we're gonna have a study group on respiration, or photosynthesis, or problem set, whatever. That may help, even though I do have tutors and I do go to the professors after class, sometimes students need that added help just to say well the professor came and said we're gonna have a study group and this is the time to ask your questions., cause sometimes it is hard to ask in class.

Is it hard to ask after class too?

No, not so much, it's just in class cause there's a set time and they want to get through the lecture material.

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 and salary after graduation.

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.

Um.... OK, lets see. If I say someone stealing or cheating I think it just depends on the situation. If it is some grand theft, you know some major thing that I know is going to affect several people, especially the reputation of the school, then yes. But if it's something that I know is not going to hurt me or anyone else, just that one person, then I don't want to have more stress or pressure on myself from that person coming back to me and saying "you say me, you told," and ... then I've got to deal with that person. But if it's something I saw and I'm 100% sure it's going to be a detrimental effect to W&L then yes.

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

Easy. Most of the professors here are willing to help you, but they're not going to just come out and ask, you need to go ask yourself. They want you to initiate whatever it is that you're asking for or want. But I think once you ask them they'll work with you as much as they can.

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

Yes.

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

Social life? There's not much. I got lucky freshman year. I met a guy at VMI and him and I have been together ever since, so he kinda creates my social life. If he wasn't there I think I'd be more bored than I am now. Even though he is over there and I get to see him, but there is not really much social life. I mean, there are frat parties, and then the parties that we have on campus, but besides that there are many weekends when we all get together and say, what are we gonna do now? What are we gonna do today. We all have our work done. We're tired of playing cards, watching movies, so..

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

I don't drink alcohol. So it's not important at all.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

Not important at all, don't take those either.

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, I am not in a sorority. I do attend frat parties, and that would be the extent of my ... They're usually OK. Sometimes I do get tired of the drunk students having no respect for the people who are not drunk. I understand they are intoxicated and sometimes they don't remember what they are doing, but, I think when you drink you have to be responsible. Don't just say, well I'm drunk, I didn't remember, or I don't know what I'm doing. This is another human being. I had an incident where I was at a frat party, and frat parties are very congested and hard to move around, and normally if I want to get past I would tap someone on the back and they would respond and move to the side and I would say "Thank you." This one particular incident, the guy had to be at least 6'3" and I had tapped him on the shoulder several times and he would not get out of the way, and everyone's like, well after the situation happened they were like "Why didn't you go around another way?" There was no other way. I was tryin to get through, so I gave him a little push to say, well maybe if he feels a little more force on him maybe he'll move or turn around. That didn't work, so I had to it several times and finally he like turns around and throws beer on me. That was it. That evening, I think I must have, I think woke up from the wrong side of the bed that day, I was very upset. I was to the point where I was really going to hit this guy. They pulled him away and pulled me away. I was like I don't care if he's six three, you don't throw beer on someone just because you turn around and they're tapping you. But you have to be aware, especially when they're drinking. You have to have a really high tolerance level because you can snap quickly cause they don't know what they're doing and you're like, well you're drunk, you shouldn't be doing that. Why can't you realize that I'm standing here. Don't step on my feet. You just have to say, well they're drunk, just leave them alone or go the other way.

Is that the norm, that kind of drunken behavior, is that the norm?

Yeah, dancing, moving around, bumping into you and just no respect for the people who are not drinking. It's just like 'well we're the majority here, so deal with it.'

Do you see respect for each other among the people who are drinking?

Um hum. They're both in the same, I guess, mental emotional state. I don't know. I mean.

They can tell that you are not drinking?

Cause most people will have a cup in their hand. A lot of people assume that I feel uncomfortable because I don't drink. I don't feel uncomfortable at all. I don't see why I should have to have a cup

in my hand to have a good time. But I learned to deal with it. I still go to the frat parties and if I see someone coming my way that looks like they have no idea where they're going I quickly move in the other direction. I have to keep alert of what's going on.

But you still go?

Um hum. I learned to deal with it.

Is there something about it that you do enjoy?

The music and just seeing friends and stuff like that. Sometimes you need to get out and if a frat party is the only thing going on, you go just because it's not sitting in the room on Saturday night.

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

Those have been fine. I don't play any sports. Only do sports for PE, but I do say that 5 PEs is a little bit much. I mean like my other friends at other schools, they don't have to take any PEs. Once I got out of high school I said Yes, no more physical education. Then I got here and it's like 5 and you only get one credit for it, and it's like, what's the point. I think if they're gonna make us take PE, maybe not so many, or give us more credit for the five that we have to take. But, that's my view on the subject. Five PEs and only one credit, I still don't understand that. Who knows?

What about the facilities?

I think they're great. The gym and tennis courts and the track and I've heard the new locker rooms, I haven't been down there to see it, but I heard that's like beautiful. So I think the facilities are wonderful.

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

Here on campus I really don't think there are any opportunities for black students. If you're not dating - well see, I think it's hard for black students among the other black students, because we all know each other so well. So we don't want to ruin any type of a friendship that there is cause we're all so close. The other students, I feel that, well I know there are some that would not be seen dead with a black student. There are some that would like to but because their frat brothers don't approve of it they don't ask. Or they just, I don't know, they just have no desire to or just don't want to at all. So I think dating for black students you have to go elsewhere for it.

You said you wouldn't want to ruin the relationships you already have. Do you mean among women because of competition, or do you mean..

No, among the males, or the other sex.

So you already have friendships already lined up and you wouldn't want to jeopardize it by .. changing the parameters?

Yes. [chuckling]

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

Why/why not? I just got to a point that it was just too much. I work so hard and my grades really were not what I wanted them to be and I knew I could go somewhere else and work half as hard and get wonderful grades. But, then I had to come to reality and say, there's a reason why I'm here, and I've only got two years left. I made it through the first two, I can make it through the second two. But I have several times considered transferring. But I'm still here.

You said, there's a reason why I'm here? What is the reason that you're here that keeps you staying?

To get my education, and I know that this particular education from this campus will take me a

long way. A degree from Washington and Lee says a lot. I may not come out of here with a 4.0 average, but if I come out with a 2.8 or a 3.0 they know that I've worked very hard to get it. If I were to go to a community college I could come out with a 4.5, but I don't think that really says anything. But I think a solid GPA anywhere from the range of 2.8 to a 3.5 says that you worked very very hard to get that and .. A 2.8 doesn't say that you worked less than the person that got the 3.5. You're just as equal as anyone.

You said that you know you could go somewhere else and get much much better grades. Do you know that from talking to people who are in other universities?

Other students who I've graduated with and, as far as GPA they were below me, or took classes that maybe were not honors classes. So if they're getting those grades, then I knew that I could get better grades than I was getting here and not apply so much effort.

So what were the factors that influenced you to stay?

My parents had a lot to do with it. They keep encouraging me to stay and just realize that four years, like I keep saying, four years is not a long time, in comparison with the rest of your life. And the benefit that I'll receive from a degree from this school will be plenty.

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

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

I did catering for a while. But that's it.

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

No, not really. Just gave me something else to do.

27. *Would you be willing to recruit other students for Washington and Lee either as a student yourself or as part of an alumni program? Please elaborate.*

Yes. I just recently applied for the student recruitment committee, where you give the tours, and I was picked as one of the people, so I will be giving tours spring time and next fall.

Now we ask some background information:

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

State: Queens New York

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

Very Urban

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

Let's see, well I moved. I've grown up in two different places. I take that back. I was born and raised until I was 9 in Queens New York and then when I was nine I moved to Chesapeake, Virginia, so I did like third grade through high school in Chesapeake, Virginia. So the high school was suburban. It wasn't in a city city, as compared to New York City.

Predominantly

Mixed

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

I have a sister and a brother, but my sister is ten years older than I am so by the time I got to the point where I was old enough to go out and do things she was out of the house. My brother is 13

years older than I am so he was long gone. Married and had children, so people always say that I'm an only child. Cause now I'm the only one in the house. My sister's in New York now, my brother is in Florida.

And the adults in the house were..

Parents. Mother and father.

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

My mother completed high school and so did my father and I think he completed the first two years of architectural school. Then my mother has gone back to school for phlebotomy, - takes blood in the hospital - we call her vampire lady. My sister works in a home for the mentally disabled adults. My brother has brain cancer so he does not work.

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

So, your mom works in a hospital, and your dad?

He is now, lets see, in New York he was a detective for the New York police department transit authority and he retired and that's when we moved to Virginia. And now he is security officer at Virginia Power, so he's been in law all his life.

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

Middle class. I know there are a lot of students here that are upper class, high class, however you want to phrase it. Sometimes you're just like 'How much do their parents make?' Because when I applied to other schools and the financial aid package came back, they always claimed that my father made too much. They would always give me like a thousand dollars per semester and I'm like 'Please, we never see that much money.' And I mean it's not a lot compared to the students here. Some of their parents make like six figures, and it's like, a school turned me down because my parents make too much? What is this. So I think middle class.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

I don't think it's affected me that much. I don't, in that respect I don't feel like I don't have as much as another student does. I believe like I have just as many clothes, or whatever the item - it doesn't have to be material things, but I believe I'm just as equal as the next person. Now, some of the students do have very expensive items cause there's cars and things like that, and I've always wondered 'If that student has that, what is their graduation present? What do they have to look forward to, are their parents going to buy them a house for graduation?' You know, the way my family is, you work for certain things. You work up to certain things. I have a car now, but it's not a brand new car. It's something I could get around and get back and forth to school with. You know, certain things you work up to, like my mother said she wanted to get me like some pearls, or diamond studs or something for graduation, but I see a lot of students they have all those things already, things that I am saying, well that's what I'm getting for graduation. I always wonder, what do they have to look forward to? .. But I don't think I fall short. I think I have enough, and more than enough to get me through here.

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?*

As a particular race, and then as a student.

Please explain.

Most of the time, like in interviews like this, I would always say that I was a minority student. I never seldom say just a student. It's either a black female student, or a minority student, never just as a student at W&L. I write many essays for internships, and I find, myself, and I have to get out of this habit,.. I find myself always saying as a 'black female student at Washington and Lee,' or as a 'minority student at Washington and Lee.'

Why do you say you have to get out of that habit?

I don't know, I feel like I'm always, not downing myself, but always.. I don't know. I guess I'm distinguishing myself from other people, but I also see that in a negative way, cause I feel like I always have to say that about myself, when I don't need to. I think sometimes I could just leave that out of whatever I am writing or saying. People don't always need to know that, and if they do they might think that I am saying that so they'll think of me differently or whatever. I think I'm just the same as everyone else.

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.*

Well, I think social class there are a range, well, yeah I think there's a range. I think all the black students here live very comfortably. I mean I don't think any of them are neglected things that they absolutely need. Political perspectives.. I think they probably all believe in the same thing. Especially going here. Racial identification. I'm pretty sure a lot of them view themselves the way I do, as a minority student at W&L, or a black male, black female, whatever.

Tell me more about what you said about how you think you probably all believe in the same thing especially going here.

That has a lot to do with social. I'm somewhat a hundred percent positive that we all believe that there's no social life here for black students. Academics is something we all think is very difficult, and we probably do work a little harder than some of the other students here. I think we just all agree generally that our lives here at W&L academically, socially, ...

Does that affect your political perspective?

I don't involve myself too much with politics. I'm very afraid of the C school. I just stay in science and leave it at that. Like politics, that was just never my interest.

Actually when I said you, I meant you as a group, and the reason I asked is that you're responding to how homogeneous the black student population is in terms of political perspective as one of the categories.

Well, I guess I could say, if all of us were together and there was some question asked on some of the political issues, with the exception of the ones that everyone must have their own personal individual opinion about, I'd think that a lot of us would agree. Like just the general things like affirmative action, or just things like that. I think a lot of us have similar opinions.

So it sounds like you think the black student population is fairly homogeneous.

Um hum.

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.*

Social class I think definitely different. Like I said before. I don't want to keep going back to material things, but that's basically all we have here to compare. I think all students should know that they are here because they qualified academically. They wouldn't be here if the school didn't think they were qualified to do a good job, but when you get below that and you start looking at material things, or just, I don't know, just things beyond academics, I think there is a difference.

Difference in personality, you know that is individual, but personalities, material items, ways of thought. Political, yes I think it's different.

I guess this would have to go back to how the school was developed. It was founded by a confederate army general, and a lot of black students I know are uncomfortable with that. Especially when we celebrate Lee's birthday. and just like I said the confederate flag. Many of my friends say they didn't realize how conservative, how confederate, how southern this school was until they got here. I think the other students, the white students really support that. Black students don't. We don't participate in Lee's birthday, and all the other stuff that comes along with that, we just keep to ourselves. So it's different that way.

So most ways pretty different, but did you say academics fairly similar?

I think academics because we are all here based on a set number of qualifications and we all passed it cause we're all here.

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

Inadequate. I think there could be a lot more black students here. It think - the school is trying to do it's best to recruit more black students, but I think they're just concentrating in the one area. They always seem to concentrate in the DC area. It wasn't till I think it was a couple weeks ago that we got some prospectives, and I was so surprised to hear that there were some from Florida. We never see prosectives that come from Florida. It's always DC, MARYland area. I think if the school were to go into New York, out west, they could find a lot more students that would be willing to come here. But they concentrate in areas that students, especially the city areas, the students are not going to want to come to the school growing up in a very urban, very city atmosphere. So I think they need to...

They would not want to come here because..

Because of the foundation of the school, what it was based on, or who it was based on. It takes a lot of getting used to here. Social aspects are a lot of time the major thing students base their choice of college on, which is sometimes not good, but that is an aspect of college life. If you feel that that school is not going to fulfill it, then you're not going to want to go, and I'm pretty sure before they contemplate coming here they'll check out well let me go see what their social life is like. Weekends I do want to go out and have fun and if that school can't provide it then I don't want to come.

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

Inadequate. I think there is only one - 1?, 2? 3?

One tenure track and two one year positions.

Well that's not enough. That's not enough. I would like to see professors, well there's - what is her name, Marty Gilmore? but she is only here for a year. I would like to see more professors, black professors in the science area. I think that would help a lot for the few blacks that are in the science department, cause science is very hard, and some days you just need someone to tell you it's going to be OK, you're doing fine, don't worry about it, put it behind you and move on. And some days it's just not there. And those are the days you think about transferring. Those are the days you say, well what am I putting myself through this for? I could just go home and sit around and watch television all day and be happy and not having all this stress.

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

Explain.

Let's see, there's Dean McCloud. Is that it? I think. Well, again there could be more, but I've found the administrators here are wonderful people whether they are black or not. The Deans are bery friendly, willing to help you with anything. I mean there could be more, but in that sense we

have some of the best Deans, administrators here, so.. Administrators maybe not, but definitely in the faculty, professors. Those are the people you deal with every day. You don't necessarily see a Dean three or four times a week. But a science professor, politics professor, you see those people every week. Probably every day.

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

Yes. I'm trying to think. I don't know of any activities specifically, maybe an activity every so often, every couple of months or something. Doesn't have to be like every two weeks. Sometimes we don't want to be around each other. We're tired of saying .. you know there's only 40 of us and we're tired of the sob story, we don't want to feel bad for ourselves, put ourselves down. But we'd like sometimes for the school to provide programs for us.

What kind of programs or activities would you have in mind?

Oh, well lets see. MSA does like most of the black history month type activities, but maybe it would help if the school would provide an activity that is organized by the faculty and administration and not just by the Minority Student Association. Even just like, if they celebrate Lee's birthday, celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday. Or, I don't know, there's so many different things they could do. They could do a sister activity as something they do every year, just geared toward blacks.

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

Yes and no. That's where we have our MSA meetings, but if we don't have a meeting we're not there. I don't find that house too attractive. And it's just too much in and out. Too open. I'm fine if it's a group of people but I would not like to live there.

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

They've helped. I am an officer. I don't know if I should say that, but I'm an officer of MSA, and I've been involved in a lot of the activities that we've planned, but there are times where the group kind of goes about it's way and even though there are so few of us we end up having our own little groups. Within MSA, and that tends to be a problem. We are people, we are gonna have our own set number of friends, but I do think that when there are times that we really need to come together as a group we can. But if it's not really a pressing issue we kind of go out and do our own thing.

How has that contributed to your life at W&L?

It's helped. Sometimes it has been a hassle, because sometimes I feel like there are so few of us, we sometimes don't even get along. So that doesn't help at all. I thought that because there were only 40 of us, that we would be the tightest group of black students you ever saw, but some days it's just like there's so much tension, you could cut the tension with a knife sometimes. But we're all human, we all have a differences and similarities, it's not just because we're black.

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

Yes. I think it just helps a lot just for a well rounded person generally in life all together. No matter what color or whatever. I think it would benefit all students.

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

Adequate and inadequate. I think you're exposed to it at different levels. A person in the history

or English department maybe sees more that one in the music department. I think it just varies.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*
In many of my classes I am the only black student. Sometimes I do stick out, other times I do blend in. sometimes I feel like I'm the universal spokesperson for the black race. Because when it comes to a question about black people I think they all tend to look upon that particular student, whether it be me or someone else, as that person having the universal answer. Actually I'm there to learn as much as they are. If I knew the answer I don't think I would be there. But sometimes I do feel that they're looking for me to raise my hand and argue, well that's not true, with respect to a black issue, or be downright arrogant, or always have something to say in reference to blacks, but no, I'm to learn just as much as they are and I don't have the answer.

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

I just act like I don't know the answer or I am just as confused or don't care. I don't feel that always I would have to supply an answer. I just act like I'm one of them and wait for someone else to answer the question.

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

Well, they help with a lot of the MSA activities. But if it wasn't for me being an officer and having to deal with that office I don't think I would be involved too much with it.

Why's that?

Um, I'm basing all of this on the times that I have had to use that office or been involved and it's always been an MSA activity or something. I did go for the study skills, but like I said, I'm set in my ways and I didn't want to adopt any of those study skills, so I think if it wasn't MSA related that I wouldn't be exposed to that office.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

Well from my knowledge it's only Dean McCloud is like the head of that office. Does she get any help from anyone else from the administration or faculty?

I honestly don't know how it really is designed, to tell you the truth.

I think that would help.

What kind of thing are you thinking about?

Just some more interaction and involvement from maybe other Deans or faculty members, or just don't always place the burden on her. Some people may not get along with her, so that's why they may not choose to associate with that office. But if there were another faculty member or administrator, maybe they would feel more comfortable going to that office and using whatever that office had to offer. More interaction from other faculty members and other administrators.

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.)*

A faculty member, female, white, let's see. I think, may I say the department? ..Religion department -

What kind of situations?

Grades, like today when I had to write my paper over, the grade I received on the first paper like ruined my day, and I went straight to her because there was no one else to go to besides my parents, but it's not always easy to call home. And I went to her, and almost instantly she makes me feel so much better. She gives me so much support to say, you can do it, just put it behind you, move along, we know you can do it, you just had a bad semester. Everyone has a bad semester, it's not just you. I think mainly it's been just grades. I don't have any family problems. She and my parents have talked several times on the phone, and so now they have a kind of a relationship now. So between my parents and this particular professor they help a lot with all the stress.

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

I never thought about that. I think I would have to say, well I don't think I have too many international friends. So I think equally divided between black and white.

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

Not that I can recall. I know of cases of other students but I can not recall a particular time when it was directed towards me. Sometimes it's just a general atmosphere of the room, or whatever, but it's not someone coming out and saying something or doing something.

And the general atmosphere, how does that manifest itself?

Sometimes you can just tell, it's really cold, and you feel that people are always looking at you, staring at you, and talking behind you back and saying what is she doing here, or just things like that.

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?

Um, Well I do think there's racial tensions. I don't know, I think that's just to be expected. I don't think it's solely based on that this is such a conservative school. And I'm pretty sure, I'm almost positive that there are racial tensions at every other school in the United States, or wherever. I think the tensions here is increased a little more because of the foundation, the background, the reputation of the school. Its big emphasis on Lee and things like that that - I don't wouldn't say that doesn't help, but it doesn't decrease the amount of racial tension.

Are you saying that that's because it attracts a certain kind of person, or do you think it is actually promoting those ideas actively while people are here?

I think it promotes a certain type of person. I'm pretty sure there are many students that come to this school because they know there will not be a large percentage of blacks. I'm not saying that this school stands up for whatever the Confederate flag and Lee stood for, but the students here are here for a reason and some of those reasons are because there are not that many blacks that go to this school. They know they will find others like themselves. Who were raised a certain way

and were raised on this particular aspect of history, or whatever.

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

I don't know. I don't know if we can ever ease that tension because I'm pretty sure the school plans to stay the way it is. The school was founded by that particular person, and that name will always come up because his name is part of the school's name. They will always recognize him. It can't be dismissed. So I think that's always just going to be there. Now as far as seeing like the confederate flags in student's windows, that varies, with each student and with each class. But as far as just the overall picture, W&L can't erase that, cause it's in its history.

43. *Aside from the Honor System do you believe that the student Executive Committee, the Student Conduct Committee or other University judicial committees treat black and white students equally fairly?*

I would hope so. I think. I've never been involved in any of those. I don't know of any specific instance where black students were treated unfairly. But I just hope that they would be the same.

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

Yes. I think when it comes to the honor system there's no joke. Whether you're black or white doesn't matter, if you've committed a crime, or violated the honor system, you deserve punishment just like the next person.

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.*

Think they're adequate. If you have something to publish, as long as it's not downright inadequate to print, somebody will print it for you, or offer, or tell you somewhere else you could print it or whatever. As far as positions on the different publications, I think I recently saw applications for the different editors. I think that there's fairness in the way they're treated.

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

Again, I don't see why they wouldn't be willing to publish or print whatever it may be. There was one .. I don't know if it was a playbook, or something in reference to the bands and I think one of the artists said something like 'What student at W&L would want to jump on the stage with a 6' black man.' Or something like that. I didn't read it, but I was told by other friends about it. I don't know how that was supposed to be taken. When it comes to something like that I would hope that whoever has written it would read it over and think about it from a black person's perspective or point of view and say 'will they take this the wrong way?' Cause I don't think anyone would print something knowing it's gonna cause tension on campus, or it's just downright, wrong or whatever. I hope they would take the initiative - read it over or get someone else to read it over, say well they might take this the wrong way, you might want to reword it. I didn't read it. I don't think it was meant to be a slander against this particular black person who was in the band, but some people took it that way.

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.*

Different. I think a lot of black students are trying to disprove some of the stereotype that are placed on us. I think many of the white students assume certain things about black students and we feel that we

have to prove ourselves that these things are not true. And there's things that are similar. We're all growing up, we're all around the same age, we all have the same problems, you know, drugs, whatever. But I think there's just some things that black students have that are different from white students.

- *47. Sex F
- *48. Age? 19
- *49. Year in college? SOPHOMORE
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 3.204
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN

52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race?
Just the category. Black. Sometimes I may say African Amrican but it doesn't matter to me.

53. Are there additional comments you wish to do make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?
No, I don't think so. I don't know, I have to deal with it. I don't think my one person can change some of the problems on this campus. But I am here for a reason, to get an education and I won't always have to deal with these problems, so just get through, and enjoy the vacation.