

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

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

Yes, I have. Environmental Science. *I didn't even know we had environmental science, I'm embarrassed.* Yeah, it's really small. Believe me. Like me and three other people, maybe.

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

In my major, I think it's a 3.0. I always get Bs.

3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*  
BA  
BS [science or commerce]

a BA.

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

I'm not sure. I think. There's like 10 of them. I'm not sure. I think I will go into the environmental field somehow, but I'm not sure when. I might go to do law school, do environmental law. I might just work for a company, I don't know. I mean it will have something to do with the environment. I might go work for National Geographic and do research. I don't know. *That's a lot of great choices. What did you mean when you said there's 10 of them?, 10 different things you can do.* Yeah, there's a lot. Because environmental science is so interdisciplinary, there's a lot of avenues I can take. I can even go to do med school, cause I've had so much biology and chemistry. I wouldn't get into the best med school or anything, but, I mean, it's just so broad that I don't even. I have to do take a year off after, cause I don't even know. I know I'm getting my PhD. I just don't even know in what yet. I'm not sure where I'm heading. I have the main goal, of my PhD, but in what avenue which will make me happiest I'm not exactly sure, yet.

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

yes

no

maybe

Yes

6. *While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes / No*  
Yes

*If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.*

Catholic. When I was little I did the whole CCD thing. And we had, like I never did youth program per se, but we always, we knew people in church and that's how my parents met some of their friends and that's how I knew some friends. We weren't actively.. I wouldn't say we did

major picnics and barbeques with them, but we were always friendly. We went to do church every Sunday. the things you really have to do do we did, but we weren't socially attached to do the church or anything.

*How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?* I think, somewhat active, cause again I go to do church every weekend, but I don't do very many social activities with them.

7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?* The exact same. I have too many and I can't deal, cause I overextend myself and it's a personality quirk of mine or something, so they're about the same. I did dance and I did tons of little groups and I did some theater and I've done all of that here at least once and I'm .. I was on the track team in high school and I'm going to do join it next year, so they're exactly the same.

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

*W&L literature*

*W&L admissions counselor*

*Relative*

*Adult friend*

*Peer*

*Other*

I learned because a recruiter came and we got to do get out of class to do see the recruiters and I just happened to do go to do the Washington and Lee recruiter and he was the most wonderful person and he's really why I applied. I didn't know about the school. His name is Alex, it was somebody Spears, I think it's Alex Spears. He was wonderful.

9. *To do what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee?* I wasn't. My guidance counselor did everything.

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:*

*Please describe your reactions to do this campus visit.*

I was an honor scholar finalist. I had to do come and be interviewed, and that was the first time I saw the campus. *Was that the long honors scholar weekend, and you attended classes, Yes. and were there panel discussions...* I think, no, no actually, I just came here and was interviewed for I think it was three days, and I was interviewed every morning and every afternoon, or something like that, I think I had three or four interviews and they had something for the parents and my mother came down or something, so. *Did you get to do attend classes?* I think so, but I think I just went with my host, I don't think they were assigned to do me, or anything like that, as far as I remember. *Did you meet other minority students when you were here?* Yes. *How was that?* Oh, it was fun, cause I went to do

Chavis House where they had a party, and it was fun. *What kind of feedback did you get from the other minority students?* Two of them hated the school. Told me not to do come. One of them I ended up dating at the beginning of the year when I got here. and then, it was like me and three other guys and we just all went over there, and it was kinda mixed, like I said, cause two of the seniors were like "Do not come here." But I had such a good time that I'm like, If I'm an honor scholar they're gonna pay for it, so, you know. And it was all about money at that point, so I really wasn't paying attention to do what they said. I knew what I was coming into. sorta. *So what specifically were they saying that were the reasons not to do come?* Well, at that point they were one of maybe 10 of 15 blacks on campus, so like "you see us all in this room right now, and you'll come and you'll realize where the racist places are and you'll realize who you can and can't talk to do" and they just started telling me all this kind of stuff and he was like "and they won't understand how you feel" and I was like, I just, like I said, it was about who was going to do give me the most money. Whether or not Washington and Lee gave me money, that's how I was going to do decide whether I was coming here. It wasn't by what they were saying. I was glad that they told me, but I wasn't taking it into heart as much as I guess they wanted me to do. and all three of us ended up coming anyway. Well, we were all honors scholars. *And what were your reactions to do the campus outside that feedback?* I thought it was pretty. My high school is a lot like this. It's a historical landmark, so I was. a lot of people come and they say they fall in love with the campus, but I was so used to do the campus and how beautiful, and we had white columns and everything too, and it was kinda like - OK it's just like my high school. It looks quits similar.

*10a. Was W&L your...*

It was less than third before I realized I was an honors scholar, and then it was by default my first.

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

Eight.

*10c. How many other colleges accepted you?*

Seven, no all eight, but I was on the waiting list for one, so I don't count that one.

*So what were the reasons that put the other ones above W&L before you got your scholarship?* Name recognition, close to do home, that was it. *the others were more famous?* They were more famous and I knew about them more. And I wanted to do try to do stay close to do home. And, that was about it, and oh, I couldn't decide whether I wanted to do go to do a small or a large college, so it didn't have anything to do do with size or anything like that, it was just location...

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

The scholarship.

*Were there other factors you considered in making the decision? You might want to do*

*glance at that list.* Yeah, actually I do. After I decided I wasn't upset or anything, I wanted to do come here too, but it was the good academic reputation, the good social reputation, the tuition was lower, my guidance councillor loves this place. she wanted me to do come here so badly. I liked the fact that it was a smaller school cause my high school was a smaller program. I heard something about getting good jobs. I knew it was highly ranked. I didn't know what number it was, but I knew it was highly ranked.

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

They were ecstatic. They loved it, they thought it was wonderful. *They knew about W&L?* No, but once I got accepted and they told me I was going to do be a honor finalist, or semi-finalist, we started researching, and at that point we really realized that it was, what a wonderful school it was. I didn't know, and I came home and told my parents, and they were like "OK, whatever." Cause they didn't go to do school in the states, so they couldn't help me very much. So it was kinda like "Pick some schools you think you want to do go to do" so that was one of them. And after we researched and found out how good academically it was and it's reputation, not only it's academic reputation, but like when I had an internship in DC and people were like "Oh, you went to do Washington and Lee, that's wonderful." And it just kinda seemed like it was more just coming from this institution, I don't know what it was. It was the prestige of the institution and knowing the fact that I went to do school with so much tradition. that kinda comes out when you say the name, and my parents realized that, so everyone, it just kinda sunk in how wonderful the school was after a while so everyone was just completely excited when I got in.

*Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?* Yeah. The fact that there isn't even a minority population. I mean, not even just blacks, there's just, there's like 2 Jewish people, there's like 2 Indian people, there's only a handful - too boot I'm black and foreign, there's not many people from Europe or the West Indies or anything, and I went to do the International Baccalaureate Program which Draws people from all different backgrounds, and so it was just weird. And I just .. I knew I wouldn't have a problem, I'm not that kind of a person, but it's just nice to do be surrounded by diversity. It's just nice. *Nice in what sense.* It's comfortable. Cause you know there's .. Even if you don't feel like hanging out with a certain group of people you have the choice of going and hanging out with different groups of people. Here it's like if you don't shop at the Gap and you aren't rich and don't have a Cherokee, who else is going to do be your friend, you know [laughing] *Has that been your experience, that those kind of people aren't your friends?* Yeah, and it's just because it might be me, because I don't approach them maybe, I don't know, but it's - I tend to do be drawn to do people who are the epitome of the word normal, and just like typical laid back, don't have any strong personal views, not liberal, conservative, just kind of middle of the road kind of people. They're from middle class families, middle class values. I'm drawn to do those kind of people and I can't handle the extreme. *You don't find normal people here?* There are, I just - like I say, what if I didn't like a group, it would be nice to do maybe be able to do go to do the European kids and be like "I lived in Europe, let me go hang out with you all." *Normal European kids, or normal Haitian kids..* Yeah, normal anything, but they're just normal kids. *So the negative image that made you think seriously about not coming was just the lack of diversity and the tiny minority population?* Yeah. I think it's the overall - even the kids, even if there weren't any minorities - just the lack of diversity. there's a lot of the same kind of kids here - and they're good kids. They're wonderful kids, they're just the same people over and over. Even if it was different kinds of people it would be better. *you mean different kinds of white people..* Yeah, yeah, I don't care, just different people in general would be better.

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to do 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.*

Hmmm Yeah, kind of, and no. I just, I didn't judge it. I just was like I'm going to do go there and it's gonna be this new experience and I'm gonna deal with it. that's how I came to do college, so I was expecting a lot of racial problems, but I never really got any. Not hard ones, anyway. It was kinda like I knew what I was getting into but I didn't really care, cause first of all I had to do come here anyway, and second of all I don't I just don't judge things before they happen, so I was just gonna be like "Whatever happens to do me I'll deal with it." *So was there anything that was surprising, not having even guessed before hand what it would be like?* I thought the, I thought people would be a lot more overt in terms of - I heard this was a sexist campus too. I thought it would be just more overt. And it seems to do be very hidden, and I expected to do have to do confront a lot of people and explain myself a lot, and I didn't have to do. And I don't know whether that's a good thing that its underground or not, or not, but it's just. I think that's just the only thing that shocked me. I knew the classes would be hard. I knew I'd make friends with professors. I knew I'd have a group of friends. I Knew I'd be in a sorority. That's just something I wanted to do do, but I did all the things I wanted to do do, but I thought I'd have to do handle a couple of things that I haven't had to do handle yet. That's why I said, kinda yes and no.

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

I think my greatest challenge was the fact that I tend to do be a part of everything. And it was having people accept that no matter what they thought of me I was gonna.. I wanted to do be in a sorority whether they accepted black kids or not. I wanted to do do that. And I wanted to do be close to do the Deans whether they were used to do .. I walk up and hug all of the people I know, and .. I had certain goals I wanted to do set, and they were all challenges, and I .. it was just gonna happen. And it think it was just how I handled it - like I said sororities - socially I wanted to do feel comfortable at a fraternity party, and I would walk in the door and I would be like "It's gonna be OK" You know, so like, everyday life was a challenge. And I didn't have one specific one, cause after I did sorority, I had to do[] that professor that was really hard that thought I was stupid. Every day there was a new challenge. None of them were more outstanding than the other, but I just wasn't gonna let anything.. I was gonna do what I wanted to do do. I had certain things I wanted to do do. So there were a lot of them and I wouldn't rank any higher. *So what's your major way of dealing with that? Sounds like you coach yourself a lot.* Well, for example, when I went through rush I walked in and happened to do hear two girls talking about me and one was like "I can't believe that girl is going through.." And it's kinda like - I kinda prove things to do myself and people at the same time, and that's how I deal with them. I was like I'm going to do go through rush and I'm going to do be accepted by them, and I got accepted by all four, and nobody really does that. And I knew I did, because they all told me I did, so that was like my way of getting back at her, and my way of proving.. Like with teachers, sometimes I get the impression that they think I can't do it, so I'll do it. I'll get the a or I'll get the B - even a B's is satisfactory. The first time, I was told I'm not supposed to do go to do KA - I was told they would kick me out, and I walked in the door at KA. And that time I was talking to do myself "This will be fine. No one will say anything to do me." and nobody did. Whether they were

thinking it or not I don't care. As long as it's not verbally said to do me, I don't care. I guess sometimes I just tell myself It'll be OK and have a good attitude, and sometimes I physically try to do prove to do that person "You're so wrong about me" *Hun, and how does that work? To do physically prove..* " Like, if it's a grade, if I have to do study for 10 hours I will do it. I just never let people think that... I know who I am and if you don't know who I am I'm gonna prove to do you who I am. That kind of way. Whether it's showing you on a grade, or whether it's you think I'm a slob, for 10 days I'll dress up, you know what I mean? whatever it is, I know who I am and if I have to do prove to do you who I am because that's the world we're living in, then I will. *Did you find yourself in that position a lot, having to do prove yourself to do people?* No. Those are just the challenges I was talking about. When I see one, I'll just go after it. And they're not, there haven't been that many. I have a 3.2 or something, and I really want a 3.5. I don't know if I can do that one, that will be hard cause I keep getting one more B than I need, but I just dive right into it. It's not even like I feel like I need to do prove myself to do everyone, it's just those certain people trying to do pull me down. Those are the people I'm ... "I'm better than that..." there's a number of ways with me, chilling with myself and deciding what's important to do me, or me studying harder. I walked up to do one professor and "I get the feeling that you think I can't do this, and I don't like what I'm getting from you." and I confronted him about it. *What kind of response did you get?* Well, of course he was like "I don't know what you're talking about. I think you can do it. You're just not showing me." And I'm like, "Well, it's because Every time I talk to do you you sigh. How am I supposed to do approach you of every time I'm getting this feeling like "Oh you stupid girl." I called him on it and he said whatever he needed to do say, but I was like "I just want you to do know that I don't feel comfortable in your class. I'm going to do do all I can and I won't let you get me down, but I just want you to do know you're giving me this feeling that you don't think I can do it." *Did he change his approach to do you after that?* No. But I got a B+, so I didn't care. I found, that was good for me, that's what I did cause I wasn't doing that great in the class, but it wasn't cause, it was just kinda like he made me feel bad. It's hard to do walk in a class and know this teacher thinks you're so stupid. That doesn't make you motivated, you kinda have to do force it. .. So, there's a lot of different ways I deal with it.

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

About the same.

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

The library, both science and undergraduate, computers writing center, I don't do tutors, I don't do study groups, I don't do lectures, language lab, I do visit professors in their offices a lot, and that's about it. *Any reason why you don't do tutors and study groups?* I can't study with other people. I've never done that before and it just doesn't work at all. And the tutoring, I have a tendency to do just say "Oh just tell me the answer, and I know that about myself." I won't, if I sit down with a person and they say "Oh just work it through" I can do that on my own. I have a tendency to do say "Oh just give me the answer and then I'll work backwards, and I don't think that's right, so I don't encourage myself to do get tutors.

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

I think the writing center needs to do be bigger, cause I know everybody and their mother goes there. I think that needs to do be, and every department needs to do have.. I know they bring two or three people in the one location, but I think every building needs to do have a big one, cause there are so many people that don't know how to do write. *Did you say you use it?* Yeah, I have. *How are the hours for you?* See that's why, cause I work and a lot of the times are at night, so I can't go. And so they haven't been that great for me. I think they're 5-7 or 8-10, or something like that, and I always work from after dinner on. There's a few afternoon ones, but most of them I have to do miss cause I work every night, or almost every night. So that's why I think there should be different ones so you can go to do all these different resources at all these different times. *Anything else?* I think the computers are really good. I think the professors have adequate office hours. I wish they were there all the time, but that's just unrealistic.

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

I have two passions and I chose a major that has to do do with one of my passions. It didn't have to do do with anybody else, all about me. *Interest.* Definite interest.

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

Yes, I was biology and []. *would you describe the change?* Why, or what happened? I wanted to do be a veterinarian. My two passions are animals and the environment. I wanted to do be a veterinarian, and I thought the biology department - it came across to do me as very, all the classes seemed like weeder courses to do me. It wasn't about learning knowledge, it was about being tested quickly and practicals quickly so that they could find out who was hard core, and I, the reason I say passion is because it's more - it's not an academic goal of mine to do be a veterinarian, it's more I wanted to do take care of animals. So the fact that it was a rushed pace and I wasn't really learning deeply about the animals bothered me very much. So I took a couple of geology courses and the geology professors are hard core environmentalists, well not environmentalists, but they love what they do and you can tell. Kind of different, so I switched, just because I got the feeling that I could seriously sit back and learn about aspects of the environment. It's much more fast paced in the biology department and there's many more people, so it wasn't like I was learning the way I wanted to do learn, so I just switched.

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

No, because - this is really weird, because I don't think it's my place. Because I know the university has this set up, but I've never - like I was brought up that you see people and you just kind of turn the other cheek - they're doing something bad and they will get punished for it somewhere down the road, whether - something will happen - so I don't feel the need to do . I don't feel that I would want to do go and say "So and so is doing this bad thing. Punish them." It's not my place to do judge someone, or to do place judgement on them. No, I wouldn't *Sounds like that's part of your religious belief.* Yeah. that's what I was going to do say, it's a religious belief. If you do something bad you will get punished, and I should have nothing to do do with you doing something bad and what God wants to do do to do you. So, I wouldn't. And I know that's probably bad, because of what the, but again, that's the school's philosophy, and that's

really great, but that's not mine.

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

Easy. Very easy. Well, I can go to do professors and tell them how I feel about their classes or what I think is hard and I think they'll sit down and honestly talk to do me, and I think I can go to do them and tell them I don't feel comfortable doing something of taking this test and they will understand and I don't know whether it's just the kind of people they are or they're so used to do the university, but either way. they're very approachable, they're very personable. It's not like, they don't take the professional standpoint of "I'm a teacher and you're a student" When you walk in their office you're almost a peer to do them and it's very nice.

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

I have.

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

I have a great social life, which I know a lot of the minorities on campus don't have, and I feel really bad. There's fraternity parties. That's the only thing going on, so, I go to them. All the guys I've dated have been in fraternities. I have my sorority. When I don't want to go to a fraternity party, I know that next week is a function or something. I go see basketball games and my boyfriend's in track and I go see him. So, I mean, I think I have a great social life. Sometimes overall it's pathetic. Overall, you just get tired of that whole scene. Like, I don't like going to bars — everyone goes to The Palms and I don't see that. So whatever night that is I won't have a good time. But I think you've got to make your own social life, and I've made mine. I think it's fun. I've had a good social life and I've had good rapport with people on campus.

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

It's not necessary.

*So do you drink sometimes and not other times?*

Uh-huh, yes. I weigh 100 lbs, so a glass of wine and I'm fine for the entire evening. It's nice that it's there and I think it's nice that we don't have to have lists for parties, and I think all that stuff is nice. But if it's not there — our sorority functions are non-alcoholic, so I can handle it either way.

*How important to you are drugs at a social event?*

No. They shouldn't even be there. I know probably people go upstairs and do stuff or whatever, but I don't do that. That's just dumb. I don't think that's necessary.

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

I've had good relations. Like I said, I came in here and I was told which ones I shouldn't go to, and I kind of follow that as a rule, so I don't go to the big five because I heard bad things. There's five of them that I heard that bad things happen sometimes to kids, so I stay away from

those. My sorority has been wonderful. It's never been an issue or anything. And the mixers I've had, no drugs or anything, so I think it's overwhelming, but I think it's been positive for me. I go and have a good time with the guys that I know that are in fraternities.

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

The only time I ever felt threatened was rush. Until this day I can still walk into K and still feel OK. I haven't had very much negative feedback, but it's never been voiced. I don't know if those people are sitting there thinking something wrong. And I guess if you want to think it, that's fine, just don't make it verbally known to me. So, if I had to rate it from 1 - 5, I'd give it about a 4. It's been good. The difficulty with Rush was with that one girl, because I was just wondering how many other people thought that. It's like when the spotlight turns on you and for a minute you wonder if you're the topic of conversation for this whole time. It made me uncomfortable more than anything. It didn't last long, tho for a little while I was a little leary of everything. But I handled it well and everybody else handled it well, so I thought it went really well. That girl got in a sorority she didn't want to, anyway. I was kind of like, see, you got what you deserved for being mean. It just made me feel better, the end result of me getting what I wanted.

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

OK, I think it's dumb that we have to take five P.E.s. I just do. And I think a lot of people think that, too. Just because it's time consuming and you only get one credit for five. I think that's weird. But I love athletic coaches. I think they're wonderful, because I also do dance, and we have to coordinate with the basketball coaches, and I'm going run track, so now I know the track coaches. They are just really nice and accommodating. I don't have anything to compare the facilities to, really, but I think the facilities are OK. I don't know what the weight room looks like, I don't lift weights. I don't know if it's adequate. I guess the gyms are fine.

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

I'm not a big dating person, but it would be nice if I had a bigger pool to choose from, but I don't. So it's kind of like, the guys that I know that are my friends that are cool, they are already my friends so we have fun. And I am not the kind that would just go to a frat party and flirt. That's just not me. So there's that whole thing Xed. I don't chalk it up to a racial thing, I think it's just that I'm a timid girl when it comes to dating, so I don't approach it very aggressively. I think you have to be aggressive to date actively here, and I am not.

*Is that true for every student or just minorities?*

See, I don't know because that one of those things that's really odd about this school. If there is any kind of racial something going on, it's all underground, so you never know. So I don't know if I am going to that party and I talk to this guy and really he's thinking, "Why is this girl, especially this black girl, talking to me?" So I just don't do it. It's not a big thing. I think I wish sometimes that it was more open so that at least I knew where I stood, but I don't.

*What makes you assume it's there and underground rather than ...?*

Just because so many things have happened to other kids. Specific, overt stuff. Like this girlfriend of mine got kicked — she's ethnic — she went to a fraternity and they threw beer at her and kicked her out. That just makes me nervous. That's why, as I said, I don't want to chalk it up to a racial thing and I think I'm timid. Because I don't know. It's never happened to me, but I just don't want it to. I don't want to have to deal with that. It's so subtle sometimes that I just would rather not get into a situation than have to get in the situation and have to deal with it.

*That's interesting, because you are going to parties and must be conducting yourself in a careful way, not like flirting and approaching people for dating.*

Exactly. I'll go there but at the same time, I hold back.

*You're interacting clearly as a friend and not as a possible date for someone.*

And again, I don't know if that's my personality. I don't think I used to be like that. I think I was more open. Again, it's not because of anything that's happened to me, but because a few of my girlfriends have had negative experiences and I don't think I could deal with what they had to deal with and I don't want to. So I don't put myself in those situations.

*So, with relation to dating, you are dating, so it has worked out.*

Yeah, it's OK.

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

*Why/why not?*

Well, freshman year I didn't think I'd get enough money to go anywhere else. I didn't even hate the school. There's never one day when I feel I hate the school and need to leave. I was never that unhappy. It was really something positive. And I'm not that kind of person. If I couldn't stick it out here, I'd feel terrible. So it really never even entered my mind to transfer.

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

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

I have three. I do paper work for Mr. Chap [?] in the D-Hall, I waitress in the GHQ, and I work at Lenfest.

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

I don't know. That's an interesting question. I think, again, I overextend myself, so I would do it anyway and it wouldn't matter if it was here or somewhere else. It just made me appreciate the college experience, whether that's Washington and Lee or another college. I think I appreciate my time more, appreciate the money I have more. It doesn't really have anything to do with my overall satisfaction with the school, but with me, personally, being satisfied with what I'm doing and knowing that's my money and that's my time. But with the school, like I said, I think I would do it anywhere I go, just because I think it's part of me.

*In a sense you're saying that you're more satisfied with your college experience because you are working for it. Is that right? And you're appreciating your time and your money.*

Yeah, I think so. I am appreciating my time here more, yeah, I think, other than if I was just sitting by and not doing anything. You have more time to actually think about the negative things, maybe. And I really don't have time to do any of that, I am on the go so.

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've already decided that I will, if they let me. I want to do — I already decided when I met Alex, Mr. Spears [?], that I wanted to do that. YES.

*Have you had any way that you could so far?*

No, because I'm an idiot and haven't asked. I did find out that you have to be a graduate to even do it. So I was going to wait until next year to even investigate. I want to recruit. Especially because I think a minority would have a better rapport with another minority. We're not at the point yet where we are at complete equality where everything's OK. I feel comfortable saying that a black person or any minority would feel better being approached by another minority to go to a white school. So I think you'd be an asset, personally, for that mere fact — which is

terrible, but we're not at the point where we can look the other way in terms of recruitment. I would like to see a bigger minority presence here, and the only way to do it monetary, give them money. To have a big minority group here, do whatever is necessary. If it's to send some black kid out there to get another black kid, do it. Because you need to get him here. So I want to be part of that process in a BIG way.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Country: Trinidad, West Indies

State:

We moved around a lot. My father's a geologist. He would be assigned somewhere and then within a year we'd be there, too. I was an only child for seven years, so we did that until I was about 9 years old or ten. Then we settled down. I think that has also contributed to the kind of person that I am, moderate and can tolerate a lot of things. That's why I hesitated, because I grew up in various geographical areas. Actually, most of the time was in Europe, but I was born in Trinidad and didn't stay put in Europe long enough, so I just kind of said Trinidad.

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

Urban

Suburban X

Rural

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

Urban

Suburban

Rural

A private program in a public high school. I think it was a suburban high school in St. Petersburg, Florida.

*Predominantly*

Black

White

Mixed Heavily mixed.

See, that was the problem. My high school was predominantly black, but my program was mixed. So, it was good for me to be there. I met all those different kinds of people, at the same time I had a good network in the public school.

*What kind of network?*

A network of black friends, which is important sometimes.

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

Mostly it was my immediate family, my mother, father, brother, sister and I. A lot of my father's family is in Trinidad and Europe, and my mother's whole family is in Texas. So when we would move to those locations, we kind of moved closer to and had extended families for a little while.

But mostly it was just my immediate family. We have a pretty big family and we're all close. So we had immediate extended clumps, every now and then.

*Were you boarding in high school?*

No, my high school was an hour away from my house.

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

My father went to college. My mother went to college but it doesn't equate the college here, because she went to a Catholic school in Trinidad, and it doesn't exactly equate college, but it is our version of college. And they both just got their BAs. I don't know what my mom's is in, but my dad's degree is a BS in geology.

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

My dad is a geologist, and my mom is community affairs director of ABC in Florida, and she has a community affairs talk show.

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

I think they're just middle class, in comparison to this campus.

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

I think that a lot of the time it's funny. I don't have a car, and sometimes kids will wonder why I don't have car. I say, well, we can't afford a Jeep Cherokee, darling. They say a lot of funny things and they don't realize that they are being — they don't mean to be mean. Like my boyfriend is me in the guy version. He didn't realize how much he had been spending all year, then FD came and I told him he was paying for it. So he had to work and all this stuff. He was talking to all his friends about how he was so crunched for money and they're like, why don't you just charge it home. And he was like, Oh, I can't do that. And they're like, "What? Everybody charges FD home. That was just one of the little things that they say sometimes. Like the thing about me and the car. My friends will see me walking, and I say, I don't have a car. They don't realize that you can honestly come to this school and be OK and be middle class and not have all — like my clothes aren't all from .... or whatever. And that's because I don't want to spend \$40 on a shirt. I can get two shirts for \$40. It's a different mentality but they're so innocent about it. They just really don't know. I never take offense because they are just honestly clueless, some of them. Some of them know exactly what's going on. But some of them are like, Doesn't Daddy buy it for you, and I am like, No, sweetie. It's fun to play along sometimes. It hasn't affected me because my friends know. My really close friends have no problem with that. I think it's funny. I really do. I call myself the Toy sometimes. I feel like everyone's educational toy. Like I have to explain to my boyfriend, who I thought would understand, that blacks have to get a perm to straighten their hair. So I told him I was going to get a perm, I'll see you later. I came back and he said, Your hair's not curly. And I was like, No! I had to tell him. I don't even take offense, I think it's cute. I am an educational toy for a lot of my friends. For a lot of them, I'm the first black person that they've known personally. A lot of people will say, "But you're not like 'those' black people." And I say, "Yeah, I am." I've had a great time with them. There's never been anything mean about it, it's all in complete innocence.

33. *In general how do you think about yourself first at Washington and Lee --*

*as a member of a particular racial/ethnic/national/gender group, or as a student?*

I think of myself as a student, because I don't like to think of myself the other way. I don't think it's healthy to keep saying, to keep identifying yourself as .... There's so many things: I'm Catholic, I'm West Indian, I'm black, I'm — No, I'm a woman.

*Please explain.*

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

For these three reasons and sometimes the fact that you don't understand what it's like to be black on campus, I understand the reason that there's like a clump. You'll see them eating

together, and they go out all together. It's protection and self-preservation. You turn to the person next to you and say, let's dance, and you know that person next to you can dance, or you can just talk about stuff. I think it's hard to go into an environment where you don't understand a lot of what people are thinking, and you don't understand people's ways, so you just cling to what you know. I think they do that a lot. I say "they" because I don't do that. I have black friends, but as far as I'm concerned I have just friends. I don't feel the need to cling to anyone. I am very independent. I don't cling anyone to begin with. I think there are some kids who come on this campus and they are so intimidated that that's the first thing they cling to. But I don't think it's wrong. I think that it's that you stay with what you know because it makes you feel comfortable. I think they are very homogeneous but I think they have every right to be. No, I don't think they are homogeneous politically. I am a different type of person. Growing up in the West Indies there was not racism, and I say that very frankly because I didn't remember having to deal with it. This would never happen in a school in Trinidad because it's a stop over for a lot of people and they stay there and they like it. I'm part Irish, and I don't know how I got Irish in me, but there are so many types of people and different kinds of friends that my parents had. So when I came to the States all of a sudden I had to deal with this stuff. I think that black Americans have a chip on their shoulder and I feel so bad for them. I understand that they are upset. My ancestors didn't have to deal with that much slavery. I feel bad but I don't see things that way. And I don't see everything as black and white. I just wasn't brought up to think that, so when they are all sticking together because it's "us against the Man," I just don't think that way, I'm sorry. My best friends are white and they've never done anything to me. I don't think I should make them pay for what some idiots did in the past, because they didn't know any better. Half the problem is that I see that they are sticking together for similarities but I don't do it because I don't have the same similarities that they have. A lot of it is that they sit around and they bitch because something isn't going right because it's somebody's fault. I don't see that, so I don't need them as much as they need each other.

*Another way I think this question is intended, tho, is in a sociological sense, when you are describing whether a group is homogeneous, whether it is similar, and that's why they listed several different divisions to look at.*

I just don't know about the other divisions. I don't think social class position is homogeneous. I think we're all pretty different. I know K is upper middle class, and I know there's a couple of kids that are lower middle class. I don't think so. I think it is for racial identification.

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 exactly the same. I think that in terms of racial identification all the white kids feel more comfortable hanging around other white kids, the same as the black kids. As for the political perspective, I know the liberals do not hang out with the conservatives, and I know those two split up anyway. Social class position? I think it's the same as with white kids, it really doesn't matter. The other two categories are the dominant factors for who people hang out with. You can tolerate someone of another social class as long as they are not overt about it. It's a matter of who makes you feel comfortable.

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

Inadequate. I don't even think it's blacks. We need a stronger minority population. I don't even

care whether they consider themselves minorities or not, 'cause I know a lot of people have a problem with that word. Minority just means you're not the highest number in the country, geographically speaking, numerically speaking, in general. So I think we need more different kinds of ethnic background in general on campus. I think the size of minority student enrollment is inadequate.

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

Do we have any?? We have one. Yes, Delaney. Considering that there's just one, it's terrible. But I know that probably if I was a black professor, I wouldn't come here either. So I think it's inadequate, but I don't even know how you would fix that. I'd like to see more.

*Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate? Explain.* Also inadequate and I'd like to see more.

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

No. I think they do that anyway. The students do that, they will congregate anyway. I don't think they need to have activities.

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

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

Yeah. That's why I think that any minority student weekend, any kind of weekend where there's black students we'll do something. We'll have a party, a cocktail reception, a DJ something. So that's why I think they handle it for themselves. Yeah, the first place I went when I got here — everyone told me to go there. I don't still go, simply because the friends that I used to have don't go there anymore. I'll go to their functions and stuff, and we have meetings and I'll go there, but I don't hang out there. I don't hang out anywhere. It's not anything against the Chavis House. I have about 2 minutes to myself a day and I go to sleep!

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

Yes, I am part of that organization. It's kind of hard because there's not very many things — there's Homecoming and Black History Month. It's funny because, I don't know if a lot of people know this, but although all the black kids hang together, when it's time to organize and do anything it falls apart. I think that's just an apathetic, 19-21-year-old thing. When you're at that age you just don't want to come together and rally or do anything big. So we get together and we talk and complain but never do anything about it. I'm such a doer that it bothers me sometimes. I don't think it's just a black students thing. Half the organizations on this campus have that problem. Complete apathy, students don't have time, conflicting schedules. So sometimes I really think it's beneficial and sometimes I cannot be bothered.

*Were you approached about PRIDE?*

Yes, and I turned in my application a week late, 'cause I thought it was on one Friday and I turned it in late. I really wanted to do that but I misread the date.

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?*

I think we do that already. I took an art history class that was African-American art history. I thought that was wonderful. And I know there's a lot of Martin Luther [King] and Malcolm X in black history classes. I think it's important but I don't think it's very important. I don't think we should get to the point where every term we have one and it's mandatory that everybody knows about it, because then it'll seem forced on people and they won't want to do it. I think sliding it

in every now and then so that people are more aware is wonderful. And I think we are doing that, and I would like to see that continue.

*You've mentioned courses that are about persons of color. What about injecting references to persons of color into general humanities courses?*

I think that's very important.

*Have you felt that kind of recognition has been adequate?*

Inadequate in terms of injecting it into mainstream courses. Like, I took art courses, but I had to take a separate, African-American art course. No, like history classes will skip over or will touch on Civil Rights. If this is what the University wants to do, at least it's a positive step, but I think that in all aspects of academia we should incorporate African-American contributions to all these fields.

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

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

That is interesting! Every time they say the words "black person," everyone looks at you. I remember we had a debate about affirmative action, and I was the voice of black America in this class. And I hate that! I could answer for me, but the teacher was like, "Affirmative action is wrong, don't you think, Nejma?" And I was like, "Whoa, I can answer for me." You know what I mean? They turn to you, if there's only one black student, but we all have different majors, and I know there's probably only one or two in a class. If it's a joke about some things, they'll look at you as if to ask, "Are you OK with that?" Or if it's a black issue, they'll turn to you to find out what the blacks think. I don't know! Sometime's it's interesting, and I say that again because I don't think that's done to be offensive. They don't know they are offending me at that given moment. But you can't really discuss black issues, they feel uncomfortable, or sometimes they feel that it's their right because I'm there. It depends on the classroom and the teacher. It can flip any minute. Sometimes I feel completely comfortable and sometimes I feel like I'm never taking this class again, because I know that everyone in this room is looking at me like I'm the black voice of America. Certain topics I don't even want to hear about. Overall, it's fine, but it's those isolated incidents that — every time I say something about whites, I don't look at the white kid next to me and ask "Are you OK?" So I don't think they should do that with me. I don't know if it happens with other kids. I'm sure it does.

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

Most of the time — like with that affirmative action thing — I just dove right into it and "If you want my opinion I'm going to give it to you." A lot of the times I just laugh it off if they say something stupid and look at me like, are you all right with that. Do I have a choice? So most of the time I say "whatever" and give them my "face" and we move on to another issue. I'm not going to start a problem, I'd rather just let it go.

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

I don't know. I don't know what Dean McCloud does. I think she told us that it was more international than black, and we kind of took offense to that. We asked her about something at a meeting. She came to talk to us because we needed a faculty advisor, or we thought we needed one, or something like that. We invited her to a meeting, I don't remember the circumstances. But we were asking her a series of questions and she was replying that she didn't know because she was really supposed to — it was the way she said it — "I'm supposed to," or "My focus is on

the international student.” And we were just like, “OK, never mind.” It just didn’t come off very well. That was freshman year. I don’t know if she was in a bad mood or whatever. That always stuck with me so I don’t have anything to do with her. She just didn’t know the answers and when we asked why she didn’t know she said she dealt with international students and not y’all. We were like, OK, bye.

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

I don’t know because I don’t know what she does. I don’t talk to her anymore. I would like to see somebody fighting for us as a black woman or man adult on the administrative. Isn’t she a dean? It’d be nice if she could be fighting for us. We have all these students upset. It’d be nice if we had someone else on this end fighting for us and who knows what’s going on in the meetings and can speak up for us. I just want an active ally.

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.)*

Can I say I don’t? Because I have a huge network of people that I go to for different reasons and if it’s an issue of race I’ll go to a certain individual who happens to be older than me. Whenever I have a gender issue I will go to my female girlfriends of my age where we can discuss it. There are faculty members that I am really good friends with that I might go to. But I am very independent and if there’s anything wrong with me I will call my family. The people that know me best are the people I go to, and there aren’t very many of those. I’m not the kind of person who says she has so many problems and let me burden you with them. If I do have a problem, I have a huge network and I will go to different resources for different problems. I don’t have one person or one type of person that I tell all my problems to. I’m lucky to have that. None of them really know each other, which I think is funny. They are all my friends, but they aren’t friends of each other. And they are all different kinds of people.

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

I’d say about 80% of my friends are white, and then 10% and 10%.

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

Individual students

Student groups

Greek Other than the rush thing, no.

Non Greek

Faculty

Staff

Security

Not any verbal, what I consider discrimination or directed to me personally. Never any graffiti. Physical assault, no. Discriminatory treatment I think is overall. Sometimes you don’t know if it’s because you’re a woman or if it’s racial. That’s another problem. Probably I’ve had discrimination, but I couldn’t tell which it was. Like sometimes a teacher not thinking I can do it. Most of the time I automatically assume it’s a racial thing, but sometimes they just have a discriminatory edge about them and you don’t really know what it is.

*Does it happen very often?*

Oh, just a couple of times. Because we're talking about this, it's all coming back. No, it's just happened a couple of times.

*Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?*

I think it's harder for black men, in general. When black men are walking down the street, others will clutch their purse, you know what I mean? That kind of behavior and of people feeling fearful. It doesn't happen with black women. Other than behavior, no. I don't think so.

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 think so because I haven't heard of any instance of black students — a lot of the kids that get thrown out for whatever reason are white. So I don't know.

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

I don't know. I haven't heard of anything.

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 think they're open but the black kids just don't take it. Like I don't participate in those kinds of things. I'm not a journalism type person. I think everything is open.

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

Well, I know that when something happens to a black student, they say "a black student" was. I wish they would just say, "a student." Again, I just chalk that up to them not realizing what they are doing. They were like "a black dining hall worker." They'll call it if it's a black student. If it's a regular student, they'll just say "that student did such and such." I don't think it's fair to put that label on a person. It singles them out more. That business with Vera, they made out like she was the biggest drug dealer of the world and she was a corrupt individual that let this stuff happen, and that was the whole angle. I was thinking that first of all, you don't know her and second of all, isn't it funny that because she was a black woman, and the other person involved was black, there was this big drug ring thing. That's one of the instances that I can think of. The word "black" was in there: this "black" dining hall worker, with these "black" — I mean, it was just in there so much. I don't like the way they do that. So the news always comes across badly.

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 black students, in general, have a lot more problems that are different than white students. I think it's emphasized more because of the social status, the income status that separates them. Just little things like the they'll all turn and look at this black student. It makes them feel uncomfortable. We don't do that to white students, so why do they do that to them? I think there's a whole gulf of — a lot of it is secrecies about black kids that white kids don't understand about each other. You can't educate everybody about everything. A lot of the problems that are happening on the Washington and Lee campus are happening other places. And I don't understand how they're dealing with it so much better than we are. That's half the problem that

I'm having, like identifying what the problem is. I know there's a problem, and I know that we are not dealing with it right, but I don't know why we are having this big gulf between the white and the black students. It seems to be OK everywhere else, so I don't know if it's just numbers, or the kind of people we bring in, or if it's faculty, I just don't know.

*What gives you the impression that it's OK other places? From visiting other campuses?*  
Yeah. I'm talking to people. It's not perfect. Maybe it's just because I'm here and I'm dealing with it that I think it's so much worse here. I just don't know many people that are happy. I think there's got to be other kids on other campuses that are happy with their choice and are happy to be there. I feel really bad that I'm happy. I'm pleased with my college experience and I'd like, it's really bothering me that they're so unhappy. I think it's a lot of misunderstanding. I think a lot has to do with the huge socioeconomic gulf between the white and black students. I don't know many other black kids who will go to a frat party and feel comfortable other than me and a couple others. If you look at your social life as terrible, you're going to get all stressed out and not have enough outlets and so everything just starts to fall apart. I'm not saying the social aspect has to be a huge factor, but I'm just saying that could be one of the factors. If a couple of things are really bad, then everything else just seems so much worse. And there are so many ways that things could be bad, sometimes. Just the fact that they can't go out and have a good time wherever they want to, but you have to know deep down that someone might be saying something. There's a lot of ways to go wrong, and I think the kids are focussing on those things, because they seem to be overwhelming. It's really weird, because I'm friends with both of them, but I don't understand totally what both of them are going through. I'm like a third type of person. It's hard for me to understand: I do, but I don't.

- \*47. Sex F
- \*48. Age? 21
- \*49. Year in college? JUNIOR
- \*50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 3.177
- \*51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? WEST INDIAN
52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race? Black
53. Are there additional comments you wish to do make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?

I'd just like to say that I've had a really good time. I've had a really positive experience, because I'm friends with a lot of the deans, and I mean friends, and I know a lot of the professors and I haven't had a lot of bad experiences. I think it's good that Washington and Lee is trying its best to make positive a lot of the negative aspects of it. I think there are a lot of negative aspects, but if you don't dwell on them, then they're not that bad. I think the problem is that a lot of the kids dwell on them, both blacks and whites. I think it's good that they're trying, and I think programs like this are important, as long as, again, they're not forced and it doesn't come across as a big color line thing. As long as they're done in such a way that it comes across as more people trying to get people together, than whites trying to get blacks together.

*What is your impression in terms of this effort? How's it coming across?*

Right now, it's coming across as "you poor black kids, let us help you." But I know that's probably the only way you can come across right now. But I'd like to see it changed as more of people helping people type thing. Right now it's coming across racially. But that's how you have to take the first step. And I understand that completely. I'm just not the kind of person who sees people differently, so I don't like when it's emphasized. Unfortunately it is.

*Would you think that's because they have chosen to interview the black pool of students that it's coming across that way? Is there something I'm doing that — ?*

Oh no, no. I'm not even uncomfortable, I am just saying how it could be viewed. No, I think this is a very positive program. You need to know what the blacks on campus are thinking. I don't even know what they are thinking. If you can figure it out, that's absolutely wonderful! But I think in the future we need to take more steps to — maybe the next survey could include all the minorities, and the next survey could a huge big interviewing of select people and could be black minority AND white. About how you feel about Washington and Lee. Maybe ask white students what they think about black people. I'd just like to see it as people getting together, cultures maybe. But I think this is a very positive, wonderful first step, and I'm glad to be a part of it. And I'd really like to know what the end result is. Because I don't even know what they're thinking, and I guess I should, but I don't.