

THE BLACK STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT W&L

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THE BLACK STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT W&L

CHAPTER I: METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

How do black students experience Washington and Lee? In 1995 the Institutional Effectiveness Committee asked alumni from the Class of '91 whether their W&L years had reinforced or instilled such virtues as tolerance, open-mindedness, etc. They rated us low on those qualities. The following year we repeated the identical question on the Class of '96 Senior Exit Survey with similar results.

To investigate in greater depth, a large section of the 1997 Senior Exit Survey examined student attitudes towards women and minorities, especially blacks and gays and lesbians. At the same time, and as a counterpart to the Senior Survey, we interviewed all W&L students who identified themselves to the Registrar as black. We sought information descriptive of the undergraduate black student experience at W&L and ways that experience differed from that of white students. A small subcommittee consisting of Dean Anece McCloud, Professors Ted DeLaney and David Novack and students Mogana Richards and Robert Taylor met to draw up the questions and discuss how to conduct the interviews. After this group decided that having a white interviewer would pose no problem, Jennifer Ashworth interviewed 40 undergraduate students from all classes, freshman, sophomore, junior and senior; this population included 34 American and six international students, 17 men and 23 women. The process of transcribing these tape recorded interviews and coding them for data entry and analysis has taken longer than expected, hence the delayed appearance of this report. Nevertheless, this report provides important baseline information. We hope in the future to repeat these questions with a new student population.

Assimilating the rich material gathered through interviews has proven a daunting task; we have attempted to develop some statistical information by categorizing the often lengthy and complex answers into short phrases. Often during the interviews, the individual would, in the course of answering one question, digress to a discussion that related to other, later questions. When coding the responses we could not always pick up this material and relate it to the other question. Moreover, the process of coding answers is always somewhat arbitrary. Therefore, the

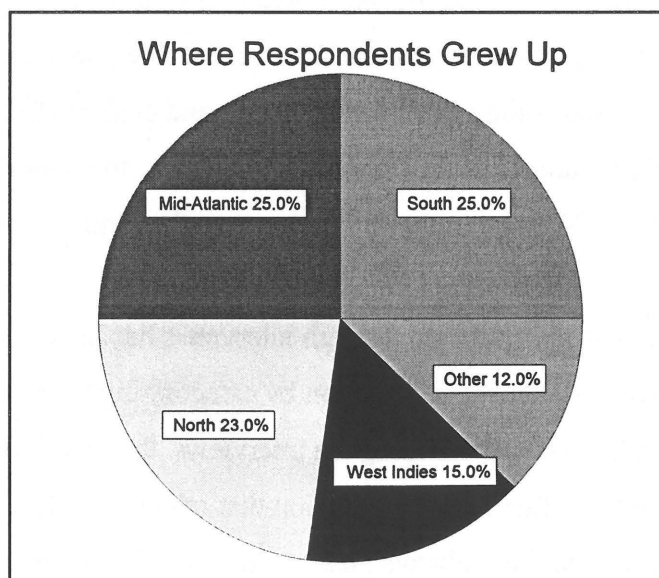
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

reader should take the quantitative data in our following text with care; they represent only approximations rather than precise differentiations of views.

Our readers have often told us they enjoy reading the words of the students themselves. Since interviews yield an abundance of words, we have quoted extensively from our interviewees. We believe this will help the reader capture the flavor of these students' views. We have selected quotes because they illustrate the variety of responses. We caution the reader, then, that the quotes reflect different nuances in the responses and are not necessarily broadly representative. In these quotes, italics sets off the interviewer's questions while regular font carries the student's answers. Ellipses appearing within a quotation represent editorial decisions to omit material either to preserve the student's anonymity or to enhance the readability of comments that originated as oral discourse.

By breaking the text into chapters and inserting headers that identify the subject matter page by page, we have attempted to develop this report as a reference work. The reader may flip through the pages and pause to read as his or her interest or needs dictate.

As the following table shows, we had a fairly even geographical representation in our interviewees.

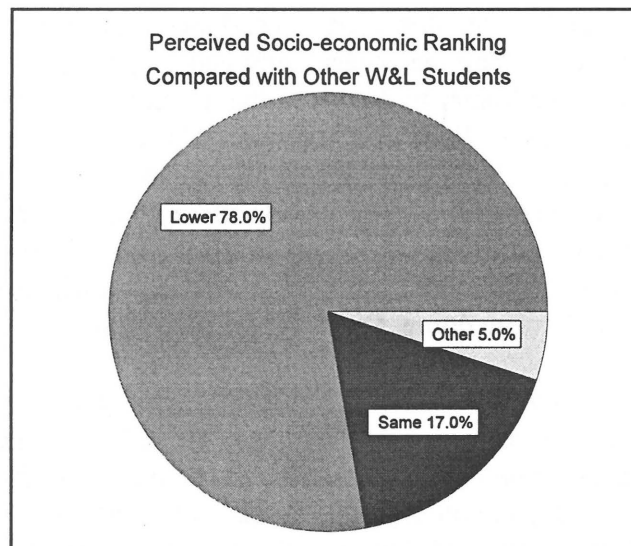


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With regard to rural/urban/suburban origins, ninety percent were from urban or suburban communities; 10 percent were from rural communities. Seventy-eight percent came from urban or suburban high schools; five percent from rural high schools and five percent from private schools (12% indicated "Other"). Over one-third came from high schools with mixed white and non-white student bodies; 28 percent came from predominantly black high schools and 28 percent from predominantly white high schools.

Eighty percent had siblings in the home when growing up; over half came from two-parent families and a small percentage had lived with grandparents. Their parents were well-educated; fifty percent had at least one year of college and 35 percent had attended graduate schools; 13 percent had completed high school. Forty-five percent had parents who were professionals; 20 percent were blue collar and five percent were secretaries.

These students tended to see themselves as ranking lower on the socio-economic scale than the majority of W&L students.



Sixty-five percent did not think this had affected their W&L experience; some (30%) thought it affected their experience somewhat; only one respondent thought it had strongly affected his experience.

Oh, I'm definitely in the lower class. In comparison to W&L people especially, I'm definitely in the lower class. But ...I really don't think about it, because it's what you do. I

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realize, "Hey, I don't have money," so whatever I do have, I have to spend it wisely and do whatever I can. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* It hasn't really at all. Apart from the fact that I don't have a car, which is really no matter since I can't drive. It doesn't matter.

Lower class. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* Though I don't really feel my problems are greater than other people, when I listen to people, some of the things they complain about, I really want to just stick my foot up their mouths. It's very different. There's so much that people have that affects their lives. I can't escape what I grew up in. It's taught me a lot of discipline... Our discipline was—you work hard regardless of what, and I can live but I have dreams. If I don't graduate for whatever reason, at least I know I can bust my tail for the rest of my life and I'll be able to eat and I can provide for a family. Not everyone in my family has a sheet of paper but everyone's doing well to some degree. It's not about what you have on paper, what you're capable of doing. We didn't have much but what we did have we treasured and worked hard for. *So your background has given you that kind of determination. How do you think the difference between your experience and the other W&L students whose experience is different; how does that affect you?* It scares me. There are a lot of kids here who take life too lightly....They just spend money like there's no tomorrow...the money that I spend is the money that I earn as opposed to the money—say, here take \$5000 and go travel with it.... lot of kids here work but they don't have to and their parents literally tell them they should work. My mom has to call me occasionally and say, "Hey send me a couple of dollars."I don't have that luxury to do this or that or have this or that. ...I have to humble myself as a result of it. When you're around this environment, it's very easy to get caught up in it, very easy. You spend a lot more money than you're able to do just because you want to be a part of it. *So you found yourself doing that and had to pull yourself back?* Oh, yeah. Just because it's friends and it's hard for them to understand it. *You don't want sympathy?* I don't want sympathy. And that's what I felt once I did a lot of these things that people were doing. Don't sympathize with me.

Middle class. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* I ... think that a lot of individuals at this school have been spoon fed. They've had the best of everything. You can't let that affect you, but on the other hand I... think about that. It does come into play when you think "What are you gonna do this break?" I know a lot of individuals who have to work. I don't mind working. I express the fact that I have to work—no problem. When there are instances when I can go with them, I ... enjoy myself. If we plan a trip, the majority of the time I go... I say "My family's spending too much. I just have to be honest with you guys. I can't go." There's no hard feelings. I don't feel intimidated by the fact that these individuals have received everything that they want, that their parents pretty much just ship them off to private schools. I ... think I'm at an advantage. I think these individuals would love to have the family that I have. They've gone home [with me] and they've come up here. They see that we're so close. I talk to some of my cousins on the phone. They're like my brothers. I have a step brother, but my cousins are probably the

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closest brothers that I have. All throughout high school and middle school. ... You can't buy that. Sometimes you ... need it. You don't need the money.

Probably very low, middle class - maybe. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* Going to school with people who drive Mercedes, BMW's, brand new cars - cars that cost over \$20,000. It hasn't really affected me. I think the majority of my friends come from pretty wealthy families. It makes it clear what you can and can't have. You can't always do everything that your friends are doing.

Very very low. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* Where I'm from at home, I would be considered one of the lucky ones, not rich but well off ones I guess. When you come to W&L, it's a whole different level. *How do you think it affected your experience that you consider yourself very low?* I felt like I was a lot different from everyone else here. I wasn't rich. I didn't go to Hawaii every year like other people. Have a brand new car. Call mom and dad for money whenever I needed it. I was always worrying about paying bills, getting work study done, having enough to pay off whatever, taking out loans and stuff like that. I don't know if it was a good or bad thing really.

I don't think I'm doing bad compared to others. I know there are a lot here with a lot of money, and there are a lot here who are on scholarship. I think I'm in the middle somewhere. My father does pretty well and my mom holds her own, too. My family has a pretty stable background. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* That's been one of the major factors. I'm one of the only black students on campus who pays to go to school here. That's worked as a negative and a positive with blacks, also, because some look at me like I'm crazy. They wonder why I would come to a school like this, while others look at me like I'm not down, not cool, whereas when they get to know me, I am probably one of the more militant ones. Well, not militant, but one of the more outspoken blacks on campus. So that's been a factor with them, having a little more money than the majority of the blacks on campus. But that has worked as a positive. They see that there are blacks out there who are making money and that's why they're in school, so they can have a strong career and have a strong family and so that their kids can go to a good school. That's what I want to do, that's why I'm here... My father might come to a game where [some] might say that he must have a nice job to come way up here to a game, where if somebody else's father comes to a game, there wouldn't be a comment made. That kind of thing makes me mad, that people can't just see the support that you are getting from your family and acknowledge that instead of making a big deal about what your father does, how can you, being black, afford to be going here. That's not the issue. It's irritating, but it's also a chance for people to see that no matter what situation I come from, I am the person I am, no matter what my background is.

I would say I'm very, very Poor, with a capital P. I'm not ashamed of that. I'm poor, that's fine. *How do you think this has affected your experience?* I think a lot of the kids here make me angry because they don't realize what they have. Like people are concerned

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about where they're going for spring break and the boots that they didn't get for Christmas. Just things that I think are so trivial. ... that makes no sense. ... I worry about whether my parents are going to be able to pay bills, you know what I'm saying? And they're concerned about — it just makes me angry that they don't understand. But in all fairness, they know no other way, so I guess you play the game with the hand that's dealt you. And if you've got a better hand, then so be it. *I hear you keep saying "in all fairness" like you're trying to cut everybody slack while at the same time you're angry.* Well, it's not that — I don't want to be angry, but it's not everybody's fault. You know, I did choose to be here. And everyone's not like that. And I guess you really can't help the society you were brought up in. A lot of times, if you're racist and you're prejudiced, it's because of how you were brought up. So if you know no different, I don't know if that's bad or if it's ignorant, but what else can you do? *So, how do you think this has affected your experience, that you're poor and they aren't?* Well, I don't know if I just value things more. Trivial things are trivial to me. I guess I've just lived a little on the rougher side.

I would consider it middle class. As compared to other students, I don't know. Probably lower class. That was another thing when I came here. I felt out of place because I didn't have a car. My parents at the time couldn't afford to give me a car. I'd see lots in the freshman parking lot. I'd see Lexus, Jeeps, and \$20,000 cars and more, \$40,000 BMWs. I thought, these are their cars. It was frustrating to a point. I didn't let it bother me. As far as interacting with kids in the dorm, they would order a pizza and ask me if I wanted to order something, and I just wouldn't have the money to do it half the time. The way that some of the students here have money is like, it's just not an issue. I was talking to a friend who was working at the door at Fancy Dress, and a lot of students who were drunk had lost their ticket. They were like, "Oh no, here's 50 bucks, I'll pay for it now, right at the door." Must be nice, you know? Because I know Fancy Dress for me was really expensive, and it was a lot of planning for myself that I put into it. I knew that I needed to put aside this much every month to know that I have enough money for my tux and probably bus fare for my girlfriend to come up. It was a lot of planning.

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

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middle class and not have all —..... 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. 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.

Eighty-four percent of our respondents had chosen majors; they favored no major in particular. Most were working toward a BA, although 38 percent sought a BS. The following table lists their expected occupation after graduation.

Law	9	Consulting	1
Teaching	6	Accounting	1
Medicine	6	Corporate finance	1
Journalism/Communications	2	Film Industry	1
Computing	3	Environmental field	1
Engineering	2	Don't Know	5
Industry	2		

Thirty-six of our 40 respondents planned to pursue an advanced degree after graduation. Four were uncertain about their plans that far ahead.

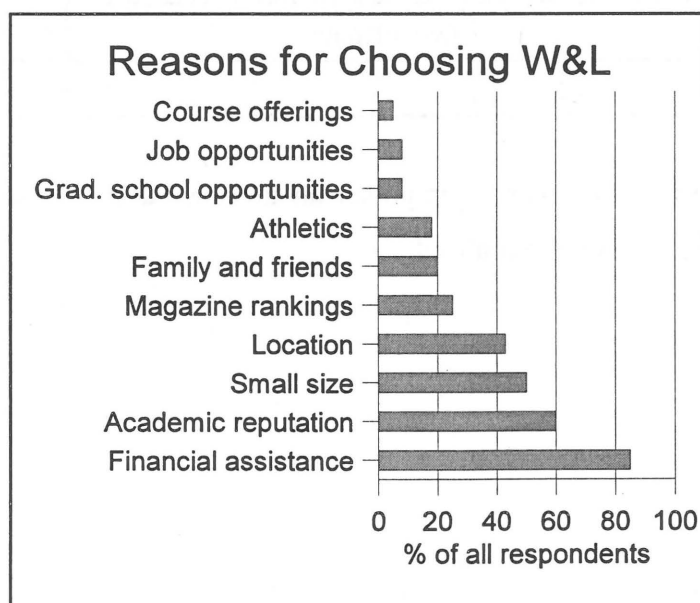
CHOOSING W&L: POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS

CHOICE OF W&L

The following table tabulates how respondents had learned about W&L.

High School Counselor	10	Parents	1
Friend	6	Scholarship	1
Admissions literature	6	Friend of mother	1
College fair	5	Internet	1
Alumni	3	SAT Instructor	1
W&L Admissions Counselor	2	Project excellence	1
Football Coach	1	Futures program	1

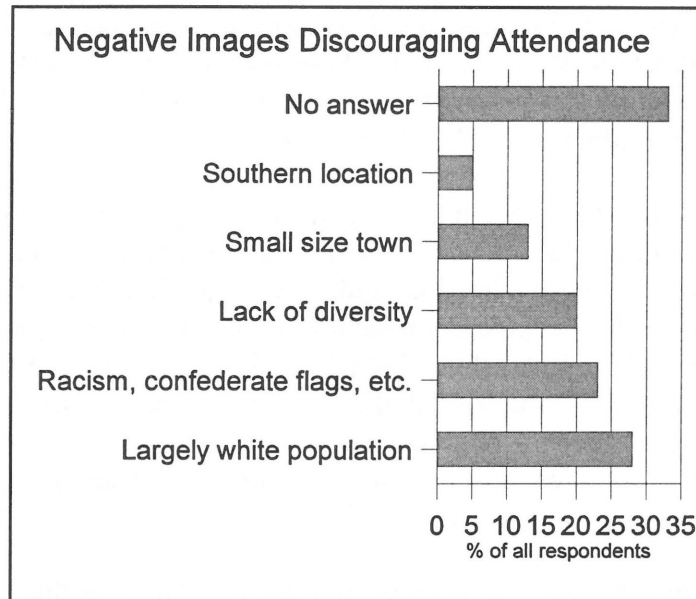
All but four visited the campus before matriculating as a student, mostly on a prospective student weekend or on their own. One had lived on campus as a summer scholar, three had visited in connection with their athletic interests, and three on an honors scholars weekend. Twenty-five had fun during their visit which had favorably influenced them, while nine had mixed reactions to their visit. More than five other colleges had accepted 16 of our students; three, four or five other colleges had accepted 19 of our students. The question, of course, becomes one of what had influenced their decisions to come to W&L. The answers underscore the very strong influence financial aid has on such decisions.



CHOOSING W&L: NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

For over half, friends and relatives supported their decision once they had decided to enroll. Only two reported a negative reaction to that decision.

Negative images about W&L made some think seriously about not coming.



Some of the experiences that the other black students told me about, but I just disregarded it . . . I just say I'll come and find my own experience here.

The only problem I had was that it's not a very big town. It's really very small. ... Coming here, you realize that, despite the fact that it's so small, wherever you need to go, you get a ride. People are kind enough to give you a ride.

The ratio of African Americans. I knew that ...[the student body] wasn't going to be full of individuals that I could always get along with. Hopefully, my work environment would be something suitable. I understood that I would have to cope with the situation and that no matter what you do, participation is very important. You can't sit around, moping and crying, having self pity. You've got to get out there.

Some of my friends mentioned to me that W&L is down south. Southerners aren't very tolerant of minority students. I didn't have any evidence, it's just hearsay. So I was worried about that at first, if I would feel comfortable. But I was like, well, other black students are there. That was the only thing I was a bit worried about. It wasn't enough to make me change my mind.

CHOOSING W&L: NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

I seriously thought about the small size of the school, the number of black students here, and actually being in a small town. Those are things that made me really think about whether I wanted to come here. My desire for a change in [kind of schools] – and this looked like one that would give me a fresh start and a good school, so I decided that I would – that outweighed the negatives and I could make up for the rest of it.

I saw that there was a very small number of minority students, but I don't think I really thought negative about the school for that.... People were like ... to pick a predominantly white school, they had no problem with that, but they were like, "Why did you pick Washington and Lee, ...the school of Robert E. Lee?"

My Dad is from Texas and my Mom grew up in Arkansas, briefly, and so, especially my Dad had bad experiences when he was in Texas and he knew that, or he had feelings that things might not have changed a lot, and especially . . . a school like Washington and Lee, associated with Robert E. Lee, the Confederacy, all that he had worries about even my safety and things like that. But, I think that's behind him. I don't really picture [Robert E. Lee] as an evil person . . . but it's just the fact that there is a lot of association with the Confederacy and there's no way of getting around that most black people do have problems with that. I think you just have to look more to the school, and don't base things on what happened 130 years ago.

I spoke to friends in high school, not peers, like teachers that I considered friends, and they told me that – I mean, they tried to tell me what I'd be in store for, and they were honest with me too – but they told me that if I was just looking for an education,... which is what I was really looking for – that's not the only thing about college, but it's big for me. I'll be the second one in my family to graduate. A lot of people said that it would be a very racist campus, that I probably wouldn't be accepted, that I probably wouldn't have any fun. ... It might be a lot of pressure that [I] might not be used to. Just not being accepted by the students, being stereotyped or just basically a lot of students don't even believe that I belong here. I didn't know if I was willing to make such a sacrifice for four years of my life. I mean, its supposed to be the best four years of your life and they don't feel that way. I've talked to friends at other schools and I'm wondering if it's worth it – if I've sacrificed too much for probably what's going to turn out to be the same as everyone else who went to another school and had a different experience. When I get out of here I'm assuming it's going to pay off and I will get into a good law school, ... or be successful in the corporate world ... and I gave up a lot to do that and I don't even know if it's going to happen. I have friends who went to state schools or predominantly black schools, and they're having a great time and I wondering if we're going to be in the same lane when we get out of here and whether it's even worth it for me to come here. I mean, there's more to college than just education and academics. I know that. That's number one for me but it would be nice to meet different people. I'm not saying they have to be all black, that's not what I'm saying at all. I do like diversity. ... This is fantasy land, to me and it's not my fantasy, ... I think in college you're supposed to meet different people

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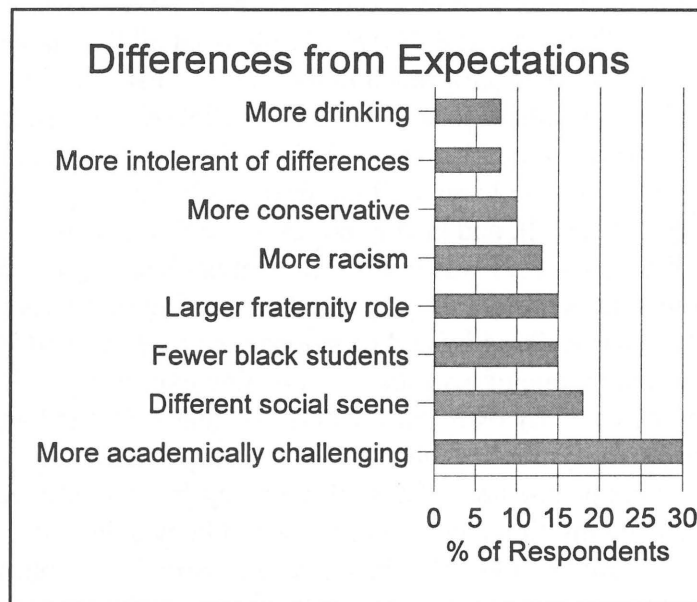
so that when you get out in the real world you know how to deal with others. It's not always going to be a group of white, conservative, southern people that you're going to be dealing with, and the students here are going to be in for a shock when they get out of here.

The whole southern thing, I didn't know about that. I didn't hear about it being a southern conservative school. At that time I didn't really know what all that meant, politically..., or anything. I didn't really consider it much in the south, because I didn't really think of Virginia as that much of a southern [state], but there's a lot of southern heritage in this school. It was good, cause I remember coming for the Honors Scholar... and I stayed in Graham-Lees with someone, and I was walking through the hallway and there was some big Confederate flag on the wall, and having no real experience with it - except for what you've seen in the history books, I was like "Well, I'm not hanging out with that kid. I'm staying away from that kid's room." But one day I was sitting in my room reading, my host was gone, and he was walking by and he stopped in and said "hello, how're you doing?" That was probably one of my most eye-opening experiences. I realized that I came here with prejudices of my own and I understood that what the flag... symbolized to some, it didn't necessarily symbolize that for all. That experience ...opened my eyes up to other things. There are people here I [wound] up being friends with, acquaintances with, who, if you told me my first day here these would be people who I would be hanging out with, ... I would be like, "Yeah, whatever." Now I hang out with everybody. Whoever's cool, whoever respects me, I respect them also, so that too was an eye-opener for me also.

It not being diverse, but that wasn't a deterrent for me. I wanted some diversity, I guess, but the way my parents brought me up and growing up in [a cosmopolitan city] I feel like I've been exposed to a lot of people, so I didn't need that. I wasn't sheltered so I didn't need to go to a place that was diverse. Probably the truth of the matter is that, for me, that was kind of a deterrent. Those bigger schools that I visited, a lot of times they flew me down for a minority thing, that's all I saw were minorities. They had the attitude that you shouldn't be hanging out with those people - the blacks had that attitude - and I'm not for that. That wasn't the environment I was brought up in and I'm not accustomed to that. I like to hang out with whoever and that actually was a deterrent at those schools. There are obviously negatives to being a minority here. But one of the plusses is that generally there are not enough of a minority population for them to faction off like they did at those bigger schools. There you could live with just the one minority, Asian, black or whatever, go to the same parties with them and in the same group organizations and stuff and I don't think that's healthy. I think here I've been forced to be exposed to whoever, and in a way for me it was somewhat of a learning experience. I'd never met people from Alabama before and I had something in the back of my mind about what people, especially coming from [a cosmopolitan city] where we think the rest of the world is backwards once you step out of [the cosmopolitan city].

EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES

Once they enrolled, however, many found the University different from what they had expected. Like many of our white students, many of these black students found the academics more challenging than they had expected.



It's so much more difficult. I have had so much work to do--it's crazy. But what happened was a lot of people have a different image of college. They know it's going to be hard work, but you just don't know how much. I told my best friend about it and until she came here, she thought, "Oh, she's just being difficult." She came to me and she's like, well.....it's a lot of work. That's the main difference.

I saw the racism from the moment I came here. Though I had talked with my future roommate once on the telephone before coming here, there was just the look on his face when I came to the door that let me know that it was going to be a very rough year. *That was as a freshman?* As a freshman. Just from that meeting, "nigger" being spray painted on the walls, having friends walk down the street with a white student, the white students call him "nigger lover" or being turned down for drinks at a fraternity party, being turned away from a party. Having everyone in my hall have confederate flags up. The naked women, black women, on walls. Just that type stuff. *So you're saying it was the same as you expected. You expected that?* I expected some dumb people, ignorant people, people who aren't prepared for someone who is different. I didn't expect it to be to the extent that it was, but I did expect to see some things that were bad, but they were far greater than I expected them to be.

One thing that just blew my mind was the serious southern attitude that I saw all

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throughout. Most specifically, my freshman year, because, where I come from, there is ...nothing there. Once you go further out, there may be some, but even then it's just not there. *The southern attitude is not there?* Yeah. I had never been exposed to that before. And that really struck me as something to adjust to or deal with or figure out why it's like that. It's just totally foreign to me. *Would you describe it to me so that we're clear about what we mean.* First thing, all the flags. Confederate flags, stars and bars. I had read about it, seen pictures of it and I had never been that close and that exposed to that proliferation, that many of them. I would walk around and there would be one on the door next to me, one across the quad. Everyone you see, you'd go into someone's room, have one plastered on the wall. I was totally offended by this. I had my own images and I know what I think of all this. I couldn't understand why anybody in their right mind would post this up and be proud of something like this. It was just everywhere. I could not understand. *Does it mean the same thing to them as it does to you, do you think?* Explicitly, no. But subliminally, I think yes. That's just me, I don't know if I can ever get away from that. But yes. I heard other people make all these excuses for some people. "This person's parents did this, and this person--this is my heritage and all this." I'm saying "This is just garbage." Really, it's just something I can't comprehend. *That was very offensive to you?* Yeah. I have yet to put my finger on that beyond I just don't understand it, I don't want to understand it. That's all. *Sounds like you think that was a visual statement of their intention to be separate from you or their pride.* That was a visual slap in the face basically. Me, a lot of time being around here, the university as a whole will say to you in so many ways that you really don't matter. That's what it says to me, because what I like to pay attention to is a lot of times some students write in the newspapers, not particularly the articles but the editorials, the letters to the editor that people write. I think that really gives you a feeling about where people come from. People will talk exactly how they feel, have no qualms about it. I'm sitting here listening, or reading these things, and I cannot believe the attitudes some people put forth and have no shame in putting anything forth as though this was the truth, the gospel in and of itself. I think someone may have complained about it, you know. And then the attitude that always comes back is, you know what you're getting into, suck it up. Or this is how it is. If you want to complain, don't come to our school. That's what gets put forth. That's how it is. *So the major way that it differed from what you expected was the whole southern attitude.* Southern attitude, other people's attitudes about other things. *Like what?* I remember sitting down, I don't know if this was the first day of school, this was within the first week before any of the freshmen had taken the class. I remember some guy saying "Women had to prove themselves worthy to be here." I heard that. I didn't say anything. I'm not the most vocal person in the world. I was thinking that we all have to prove ourselves to be worthy to be here because we haven't got [enrolled] yet. I haven't purchased books yet, haven't gone to class yet. Everybody has to prove themselves worthy. To put that on a certain group of people was another thing that was foreign to me. These are just things I have not been exposed to at all. That was offensive to me. I couldn't even understand why the majority of us, we stayed silent. *So right away you started wondering why people were silent about offensive things?* No one else

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disagrees... It seems to be preaching to the choir, "Amen, brother--that's right--we agree. I say the same thing. I have the same opinion as you do." To me this is wrong--the worst type of opinion to have. *You mean those prejudicial opinions against groups of people. But you're saying that people don't speak up and say "wait a minute."* Yeah, and when they do, they're shot down quickly. They are often in the minority.

Well, I think the whole living in the south thing was unexpected, cause I had never, I mean I didn't know what it was like before I actually came here. My college advisor, .. actually I guess she tried to warn me about some things I might see ... *Is she black as well?* No, she's not, I guess she just realized, well where I was from... I didn't know it was ...a big deal between like North and South and... Confederate flags... I mean, really, I guess everyone up there kinda just thought the war was over and everything like that. But I guess southerners take it really really seriously, so they're still hung up on it, so that was a really big surprise when I got here. ... I guess it was almost, well not a different culture, but, everyone's just a lot more hung up on North and South relationships and where you're from and ...it was just different from where I was from. So many different ways every day. People wear flags on their shirts, or when you get here everyone wants to know where you're from, and "Ah you're from New Jersey, You're a Yankee." Even ... in town you see people riding around with bumper stickers "I'd rather be shooting Yankees." or something. I was just, I don't know how to explain this, I just wasn't prepared for it I guess, I didn't know it was a big deal still down here. *Did that affect you especially as a black person, or as a northerner, do you think?* Well, I think probably the confederate flag might have affected me more as a black person, cause -- I don't know what white people from the North think when they see it. I guess before I came here I always thought -- it always symbolized to me ...the Confederacy and I always thought... that was mostly about keeping blacks slaves and stuff like that -- so, like I said, it was very shocking, you know what I mean? I guess it wasn't until I was actually here for a while and got to know people --... it kind of took the edge off it.

Well, to a certain degree, yes. I expected it to be hard academically and it has proven way beyond that, but on the social scene and that kind of thing, yes, it's come out pretty much -- It's not as bad as I thought it was going to be, but... I'm seriously offended by the Confederate flag which means one thing to some people and something else to another. Not that they should take them down, because they have every right to have them, but still I have a right to say the way I feel and I am offended by the Confederate flag. To me the Confederate flag -- we got into this in one of my classes -- this one particular girl was saying, "I don't understand what the big deal is; the Confederate flag stands for southern pride." Well, see that's not what it stands for for me; it's slavery and if you think about it, that's what southern pride is. I mean, if you traced it back, it's a chain reaction. Southern pride, it's about the south, it goes back to the roots of slavery, no matter how you want to hide it and the students here sometimes are bold about the fact that they could care less about people that are not white. I was told I didn't deserve to be here by an individual in one of my classes. We were having a discussion about affirmative action

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and he didn't feel that blacks should even be at this institution and you know, my grades are fine. I mean, I'm struggling, but I think everybody is, and I think I fit in here academically just as well as anyone else. Socially, definitely not, but academically, yes, and that's the argument he was making -- that I wasn't smart enough or that kind of thing. *He made the assertion that there are no black people that could measure up?* Well, he could understand why children of alumni are given priority as far as affirmative action is concerned because their parents went here or they have some kind of financial connection -- you know you like to get alumni children to come here. He understood for athletes because I guess in some way, they'd be bringing money into the school,... to help the program out, but he didn't understand why affirmative action applied to black students. He's like, "They don't do anything for the school." And I was trying to tell him that they actually do, they provide some kind of diversity for the school, because a lot of people here have not ever been around people that are from the outside, so in a sense they do help anyone who doesn't come for just an academic education. You could learn from the two or three black people that are here. But he failed to see my point of view, which is fine. I mean, I wasn't trying to change his mind; I was just letting him know that I thought he was anal. He's so angry. *Was that an isolated incident?* Well, that was just one time my freshman year. I was -- this guy asked me why I even came here; you knew what it would be like, so why did you even come here? It's almost like they want to keep it this way, like they don't want to change it or anything. The more people who come here the more chance it has to change. God forbid it should get diversified. We might learn from one another. I've had some instances I'd rather forget but not all bad. There are some people here who are really nice and friendly. I guess that's also part of the southern thing, hospitality, and there are some people who are really nice, but you do bump into people who -- well, I guess that's the situation everywhere; you are going to bump into people who aren't going to be so friendly.

The amount of alcohol, that was a big surprise. I knew college parties were going to be different. I guess the way that people--eating, drinking, partying. I remember going to a locker room after practice and guys talking about, "oh, I can't wait to getthis weekend." I thought that was odd. I'm thinking that during the season, I figured there would be some strict rules. Now it's no big deal. I've gotten used to all that.

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

... it was a little bit harder academically, and socially it was hard. Because on our weekend we were always with the minorities, and that helped, and that still helps now that we're all together, but we didn't see how the other students were. *Would you describe that to me?* Now, we're separate. Even if we try to mix in, it just doesn't work, I don't know why. It just seems we're outcasts, you could say. *Is that a sense you get, or are*

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there specific things ... It's a sense, and then things that happen. ... we had a lot of freshmen that came in, and the first weekend or so we all went to a party somewhere someone told us about, and a guy came out and asked us if we were all W&L students. a fraternity person asked, were we all W&L students, and he goes "Can I see your ID?", I mean.. It's a little hard. There's not many of us. You're not going to see everyone who goes here, but you shouldn't really ask that question just because there's a whole bunch of us. Maybe they haven't seen all of us at once. *Was there much of that stuff that happened?* Yeah. It's happened before, we were at another one, it was ... parents' weekend, and a girl was talking to her friend and said "My dad said why are all these black people here?" And it was just... five of us there. And we weren't staying for long and it was even a black band that was playing. And it just makes you feel uncomfortable. *So, it was different in that it was harder academically, and much harder socially.* Yeah, that's really it, I mean I came from a high school that was fifteen percent minority, and I was used to being... the minority, but it's really different here. This is like a big frat. High school, was... a lot of different people, here... everyone's so the same.

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

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 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, because first of all, I had to do come here anyway, and second of all, 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."

Um, the people, I guess, and their attitudes and just things they say, things they do, its just... I guess in the community that I live in I didn't really know the attitudes or the personalities that the upper middle class has, and that's something that's different. *In what way?* They're very closed minded. they're very naive [in] ... a sense, because they live in the world they live [in], they think everyone lives in their world. And... I hear a lot of comments... -- I was doing a project with a group, and I don't know how the discussion came up, the students were discussing and he said, "Well, if I was poor, or living in the ghetto, I think that would make me strive even more to get out. and to go to college and

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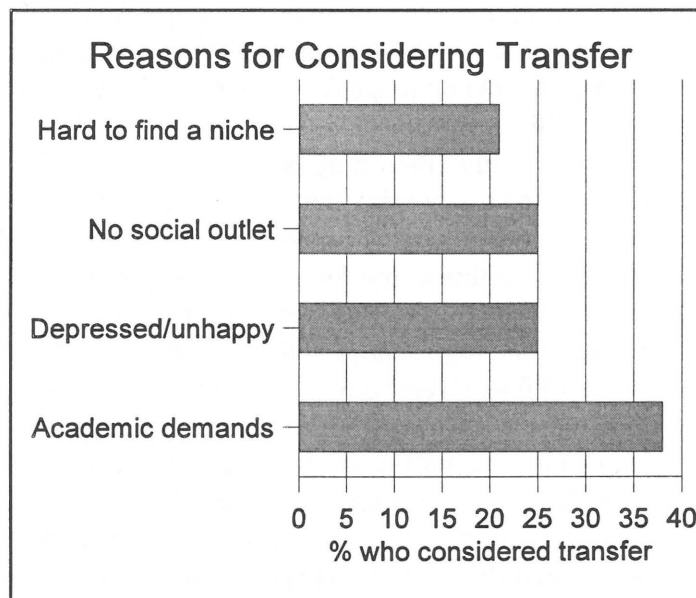
do something with my life." And, it's easier to say it when you've never been in that situation, you've never been in the ghetto, you've never lived in the ghetto, to just say that and expect it to be that easy. It's comments like that that you hear and it just [chuckling] makes you wonder where these people live. Then you have some people say... "I've never, I don't mean to do offend you, but where I come from there's not many black people, and the black people that are in my town, they're all drug dealers." So, you look at them, and it's like "All right, whatever." I said, "Well, don't feel guilty, I didn't have any white kids in my high school either, you know, but that doesn't mean that I think that all of them are rich, or you know." The things that go through their minds, you have to do wonder some times.

OK, my first year, when I first got here,... I was just shocked by the lack of color on the campus. But I didn't really think anything of it, of course, because I thought it was just like high school and everybody was going to be as open and kind as they were at home, and then I got to know, or started interacting with people when classes started, it was - I think I was in shock my whole freshman year, so I didn't really realize what I was into. I think I was still trying to do figure out what was going on. But I had a real good roommate last year, and he helped me through a lot of things - he's just a good friend. *What were you in shock about? What was it that stimulated that? Since you're saying it wasn't really the numbers so much.* It wasn't the numbers, but it was just the way that I was being treated. I could sense that people were uncomfortable with me being here, and a lot more people than I wanted to acknowledge didn't want me here. And they kinda let you know, they weren't saying things to your face, but they'd let you know - "You're not supposed to be here." and then the only other thing last year that I actually realized at that time last year was that people didn't really think that I, because of my color, that I was on the same level as they were. Not everybody of course, but the majority of people thought that they were superior, and that just threw me for a loop, because we're in the nineties here, and we're not supposed to do be thirty years back, and I just couldn't grasp. *And that wasn't your experience in your white high school.* Oh, no, not at all. Of course you had your few, but it was a very small few. Everybody got along. That's what I've been trying to figure out this year. I don't know if it's whether we grew up together, or if it's because it's a different socio-economic class, or whatever, But everyone accepted everyone, no matter what that was, or what kind of background you came from, or what kind of music you listened to. People accepted you for what you were, and if you wanted to be friends with that person you were, if you didn't that wasn't because of - that was because of something else. This is just a big shock. *Yeah, well, so tell me how it was that people let you know, since you're saying it wasn't very overt.* I just started to realize these things this year when I started to open my eyes to the situation. Last year I didn't really realize what was going on, but I just kinda got a feeling. But, if you're at a fraternity party, for instance, you get looks, really bad looks. Sometimes people will say things. And since they're all drunk they think they're whispering, but of course they're not whispering. So you hear some names being called and some things being said about how you should go back to where you came from and why are you in our party, or you're messing up my

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whatever, high or drunk or buzz, or whatever you want to call it. *You mean by being there you're messing up their buzz.* Yeah, I think that this year was when I really started to realize what was going on. Walking down the Colonnade – we have a speaking tradition at this school, and I realize you can't speak to everyone you see walking down the Colonnade, but when you're between classes and there's only a couple of people walking, and when you can look someone in the eye and they make eye contact with you and you acknowledge that person and they don't say anything, they just walk on by you like you don't exist, that just really gets to you. *Does that happen all the time?* Oh, gosh. You know, one person you can take, but when it happens consistently, just over and over, it just drives me insane. I think I really am going crazy here. that's why I had to go home. [He had just returned from a weekend at home] I just had to get - I can't take it here. That's a few of the things that have let me know how this school is ... different from other places.

Sixty percent of these students had considered transferring. Forty percent said they had never considered such a move. The following chart illustrates the reasons they considered transferring.



Yes. Because I was unhappy. I didn't feel comfortable here. I have not had what I thought the typical college experience was supposed to be. *In what way?* I thought college was supposed to be about classroom things, learning. Also thought college was supposed to be fun, meeting people, building lasting relationships for life. You always hear people say "This is my best friend from college." These people, no matter where they live in the

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country, they always have a great college experience to fall back on. I didn't have it. I wasn't having fun. It was hard academically; it was hard socially. I said "Why would you put yourself through this?" *When was this?* I thought this my freshman year, my sophomore year. It kind of ended after that, beginning my junior year. Even during my junior year at the beginning. The school work, I had my toughest year last year. Class here was kicking my butt. I hit the wall. I didn't know if I was going to be able to go through it. I spent more time in the library the winter semester than I even spent in my room. I would just get up at 6 or 7 in the morning to read for class, go to class all day, come back, get worn out, then stay up til 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning again. This was a cycle. I got sick last year. I hadn't been sick the entire time I'd been here. I just wore myself out. I didn't know if I wanted to go... *So your reasons for thinking about transferring were lack of social life, not having fun plus academics getting so hard. So what factors influenced you to stay?* The money. I didn't think I could get a better deal anywhere else. My grades here were not enough to get me a scholarship anywhere else. *So you just stuck it out in order to get your education?* Yes.

Yes, I've considered it a lot of times. I think the main reason I never transferred is probably money issues. Financial aid here is very good. The Financial Aid Office is very helpful. Whenever I had a problem, they would always take care of it right away. Financially it was just easier to stay here. W&L for a black person is not - it's almost like you don't fit in. There's nothing here that's geared toward black people. At least that's the way I felt. Nothing that's geared toward black people as far as girls and stuff like that. Sometimes it feels like you're different from everyone else here, I guess is a good way to say it. Even though I have a lot of friends, it still seems like I'm different from everyone else that goes to this school. *Is that why you thought about transferring?* That's the main reason, I guess. That along with the confederate flag stuff early on. *That made you think about leaving right away?* Right away. *So you stayed mostly for money reasons?* That's the main reason. *But you repeatedly thought about leaving?* Oh yeah, there are always times when you're having like a bad day or week. I'm different from everyone else that's here. I wish this was a school with more people from my same background or something that I could identify with and that could identify with me.

Yeah, I thought about it a lot freshman year. Like I was looking in the book for other schools that would offer a decent education. I just hated it here. It was just bad. I wasn't having any fun here at all. But now I've made friends that I wouldn't want to trade. I've suffered so much that I'm not going to just [not] finish. And I felt bad, but it's the truth. But if I don't finish here--- I am not trying to transfer credits and end up having to do another year in another school. It's not worth it. It's not that bad. It just could be so much better. I don't know what I could recommend for it to be better, but this school is so homogeneous. It rates number One in the Princeton Review for least diversity. Everyone knows it. This is terrible. *If yes, what factor(s) influenced you to stay?* I made friends that I really wanted to stay here with. I am assuming that in the future this will pay off. And if it doesn't, I don't know what I am going to do with myself. If it doesn't, I think I just

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might slit my wrists. Because I feel like I have given up so much. And maybe not. That might not even be the case. I might just feel that way because I'm here. It's like I'm stuck, but — I mean, I just feel like I've given up a lot and I just hope it pays off. And if it doesn't, then I don't know. I'm going to be very disappointed, I think.

Yes. Many times. Freshman year, sophomore year, this year. But it's too late now. At this point I won't consider it any longer because it's not something I really have to do. I can't consider it now. It's not practical. I don't want to have to do extra years as an undergrad, and I figure I've stuck it out this long, I can go longer. I can finish it off, and it's going to be worth it once I finish here. But it's frustrating and it weighs on you at times and it just seems like, when I go visit my friends at other schools, they have more of a — I don't think people here really "hang out." Just kinda can kick back, like with girl friends or guy friends and just sit around and shoot the breeze. I think people in general here, the main focus is "how drunk can I get tonight when I go out." It's..., because since everything is so fraternity-based you can't — watching a movie is something you do because you're too tired of partying. I don't think that happens too much. It's not like "Why don't we just get a movie tonight," or "Why don't we play cards or board games." I like that kind of stuff, and my friends at other schools, we do that, we sit around and play video games and I like that. It seems like more of a laid-back type of atmosphere.

Yes, I definitely have. For one reason, because of my girlfriend, and the other reason because all of my high school friends; my best friend goes to [a large state school] and if I'd had my wish I would have gone to school with him. That's always hanging over my head. I wish I would have done that. Honestly, I know I'll never transfer from here for two main reasons. One is that I feel like I've really tied myself into the school. I feel that if I left, especially from [a varsity sport], I would be letting a lot of people down and there's no way I could do that. And the other reason would be because if I did go to another school, my parents couldn't really afford for me to go to another school. So that's why I will not transfer.... It was never because of the academics, even though it was hard that's never been a reason to leave. I like challenges, that's one thing I do love about this school. It's not easy at all to do well, so I really like that a lot. I'm pretty competitive too. So I have thought of transferring, but I never will regret that I stayed here. I'm having a blast. It's just an occasional thought. It's missing people, more than anything.

Yes. Because W&L is too homogeneous, too fraternity dominated and too small. And the women here suck. They're not very exciting. Very much more southern than I anticipated. Even though there's a lot of people from New York, Maryland, and the rest are from the south. *And the southern style doesn't interest you.* It doesn't really excite me. All this painted red brick you see outside doesn't excite me either, but - I knew when I was coming here, but when I got here it was a lot worse than prospective weekend had made it seem. So I was ready to go, and then, for being independent I had my few friends, but definitely not enough to keep me here, so I thought when I was transferring. It was like, you people are nice and all, but I can get out of here and meet more people. The other

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school I was going to transfer to was...[a large state school]... there's enough stuff going on there you don't need drugs or alcohol to go outside or go party on a Friday or Saturday. *So you actually applied?* Oh, yeah, I was done. Accepted,. enrolled, I was out of here. I didn't withdraw from W&L, so I came back. Actually the only thing that sells this place, and I have to say, 55% of these people who go to this school now would transfer if it weren't for spring term. That's the only thing...*What is it about spring term?* Six weeks of partying. How 'bout that. You party five out of seven days a week. Out at Zollmans which is the closest thing you ever have to a Woodstock. And Zollman's sells it. You have a river there, you have pavilions outside, You can find parties from Wednesday to Thursday to Friday to Saturday. And then Monday they probably party because they studied Sunday, so party and study again on Tuesday. Although it's probably like the first month is fun and the last two [weeks] people do all the work they haven't done. But with [my course] you can still find something to do.

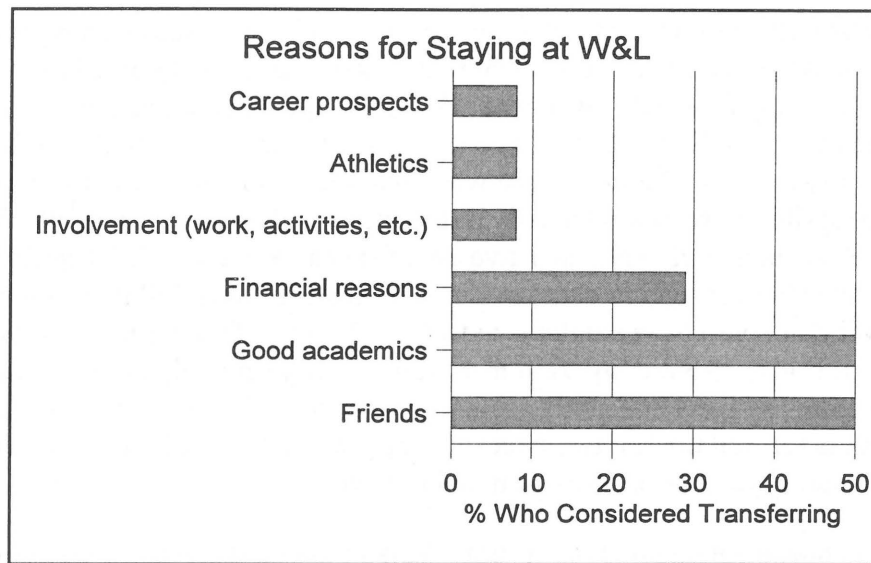
No, I really haven't thought about it. W&L is the kind of place that when you do find your little place on campus, you don't really want to leave. I didn't think I'd miss the campus. Then I went home and I wanted to come back because I missed all my new friends, and I had all my old friends. So I told all my old friends to come on up. That was helpful to know I have friends here that I've met and have friends from home. I'm totally happy.

No. *Why not?* I thought what was most important—social life wasn't a decision I made before I came here anyway. Academics—I worked this summer. When I left I was telling the people I worked with that I...[had to go back to] school. They said "What school?" I said "Washington and Lee." They were like "That's a really great school." I guess that's the main thing that's most important to me. It's not like it's horrible. It's a comfortable atmosphere. I'm doing what I have to do.

No. *Why/why not?* Things have been bad, but I was always taught to deal with things. For that reason I don't view things as bad, or that bad that they would cause me to transfer. It there were hate signs on my door and stuff like that, maybe I might think of transferring. But there's not blatant racism, it's always subtle. It's just a way of life, and I think that it's good that I learn to deal with it. I probably speak for a lot of kids.

Their reasons for remaining, even though they considered transferring, were varied but the key to retention lay in their ability to find and make friends and their appreciation of the academic challenge.

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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.

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

Just the great academics and the possibility of getting a great job when I leave here.

I made friends that I really wanted to stay here with. I am assuming that in the future this will pay off. And if it doesn't, I don't know what I am going to do with myself.

I decided to stay because I'm close to my friends and I'm getting a good education. I thought OK. We were all going to live together, so I thought I could do it. So that's why I stayed. ... I had developed a close circle of friends and I think that's what made me stay.

I have had a good experience on campus. I have met some good friends. I get along well with my roommates. [His varsity sport] I is going well for me. I like the decision I made.

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Academics are starting to improve for me, and I think this is a good situation for me to stay here.

I did find my niche, ... I got my friends. I joined MSA and I started getting involved.

Other research has shown that campus or community involvement such as participation in local churches, work study jobs or extracurricular activities may provide needed connections to the community that foster persistence to graduation. Thirty-five of our interviewees had actively participated in church activities while growing up and most described themselves as either very or moderately active at home. Baptists led the list of denominations (48 percent). In Lexington, however, only nine attended Lexington churches regularly, while four said they attend sometimes and 26 said they rarely or never attended church here (one did not answer). So church participation only affects a few of these students.

Seventy-three percent of these students had paid jobs on campus including work-study. For some, these jobs also influenced their satisfaction at W&L, although in some cases the influence was negative.

Yeah, I do work study....*If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?* Yes, it really helps. It gives you a feeling of responsibility. It helps you to view life a different way. It feels as if you have to go out and work for a living, which you really don't do it two hours a day. But it sort of helps in that way. Instead of just going to classes and then going back home and not doing anything. This is your responsibility--you have to go to work.

Yes,....*If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?* Yes. Because sometimes the more free time you have, the less you do. Having something to do every day at a certain time for a certain amount of time adds some kind of structure to your life. It also adds, besides pocket money, a feeling of worth and accomplishment. It's almost like handing in a paper; when you've got it done, you feel accomplishment. When you've done school and you've finished work, you know you're taken care of, but you're taking care of your needs financially as well as academically. It adds to a feeling of accomplishment.

Have you had a paid job on campus (including work-study)? Yes*If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?* I'm happy at my job. I really like the people that I work with. I've heard other... students complain a lot about their jobs.... Yeah, my mom didn't want me to work just because she wanted me to focus on my classes. And I told her that I could not imagine... It seems good to have your own money, that you worked for, that you know you're helping yourself out. Your money you can spend it how

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you wish, instead of every little thing you want, "Mom, can I get more money?" It feels good to be independent. I could not imagine going through four years of college, I mean you're an adult now. I think that it's time that you take... I mean you can't be expected to pay the big bills. Nobody expects you to be able to pay your tuition. Nobody expects you to be able to pay your room and board. But I think if you want new jeans, if you want a new CD, you should be able to put out the effort to buy these little things. You shouldn't have to be calling home for these things.

Yes. *If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L? Like in what way? Do you think you feel more comfortable or more satisfied with your life here because you work on campus, or less because you work on campus?* Probably less, and that would be because of the way people have treated me while I was working. I work in catering and we did a lot of alumni functions, and the alumni weren't very polite. Yes, and I have offered to do student development calling, when we ask if they would like to donate to our annual fund, and that's when they are at their rudest. It's really bad. It's not a fun job at all. *And that would have nothing to do with you as a minority student, would it?* No. Well, the catering maybe, because they actually do see us then. But in the calling, no. I think they just get irritated because we call.

With respect to extra-curricular activities, 24 respondents said they were less active in extra-curricular activities here than in high school while only two said they were more active here. Among such activities are student publications. Eighty-eight percent said student publications, radio and television afforded black students opportunities to participate although only a few had done so. ¹

Participation on a varsity athletic team has meant a great deal to many of these students and may have helped them decide to remain at W&L. Through the team they find friends, a niche, and even a fraternity. We asked them to evaluate their experiences with athletic teams, athletic facilities, and physical education classes; over half were happy with the facilities; 60 percent expressed satisfaction with physical education classes, although some complained of the number required. Most found no racial grounds for dissatisfaction, although one described in detail difficulties with security personnel who challenged their status as W&L students. We believe these problems have since been remedied.

¹Opinion divided almost equally on whether those outlets were fair in their treatment of news about black students (38 percent said they were fair; 33% said they were unfair.)

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Fraternities also provide men with a connection with the campus that fosters persistence to graduation. None of our women respondents were in sororities. For the minority of black men who belonged to fraternities (5 out of 12) the experience had obvious benefits.

I'm in a fraternity here. I did the regular rush thing and pledged. *Are you happy with your choice?* Yeah, I'm very happy. *What's it been like to be in a fraternity?* ...We were all friends anyway. It didn't really matter if we were in a fraternity or not. We were all friends, hung out together.

I definitely had a positive relationship with the Greek system at W&L. On the other hand, there are other Greek [organizations] I try to refrain from participating in - like I said, I wouldn't join anything that I thought would compromise me. It was an advantage for me to meet a few individuals at W&L who I could relate with, even if the percentage of white individuals in a fraternity -- It's definitely overwhelming. I think I've had a great impact on a lot of individuals. I'm... not going to compromise myself by doing anything that I don't want to do that they might be participating in. I... don't do anything that I don't want to do. *It sounds like you're saying that you were fortunate when you rushed - you found a group you were comfortable with. That's been very positive. Then there have been other fraternities where their pattern is something you shy away from.* Exactly.

Well, since I'm in [a] fraternity, I've experienced everything we've had and it's been a lot of fun. Last year I didn't go to FD because I was really close to my girlfriend and she couldn't come up, so I decided not to go. But this year [at FD] she came up for it and I had a great time. We had some bands, we had a band in the afternoon on Saturday, which was a blast. I just liked sitting out there, the weather was perfect, so it was a great time. Overall, it's really a lot of fun to hang out with the guys that I decided to be with. Like the closest guys that I would be with for four years. Especially my pledge class. They are really close, 15 best friends. We really get along great... But I would say overall it's really great. I think also that the other minorities, like there are a few that always ask me questions about how it is, and I look at them and I want to tell them, "Why don't you just try it," because they don't know. I just feel they are not experiencing the whole W&L life. About 80% or 90% of the people are in fraternities, and that obviously means a lot about what goes on around here, it revolves around that. I just think they're missing out. That's another thing, I like to be able to have an opinion about something because I've gone through it myself, with first-hand knowledge. So I'm glad I got into a fraternity. During the weekdays there really isn't a lot of partying, just a lot of hanging out with the guys in the fraternity, and I like that a lot more than — like right now, everyone at the house is watching the final four and stuff, and I love watching sports on TV. That was one of the reasons why I wanted to join a fraternity, was to hang out with a group of guys that I liked and watch all the sporting events, not really because of the drinking thing or because all the girls go to this house, or anything like that. I laugh about it, but sadly I think there are some people who will go to a certain house because certain girls will go there, or you'll be viewed differently. As far as the social scene, it does get monotonous,

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that is true, but that's maybe two times out of the week. The other five days is just hanging out. *So... have you felt welcomed at the other fraternities?* Yes, definitely. I think I at least know three or four or five people from every house, so I can just go in. They're my friends too.... There's one house that... — this was freshman year during pre-season — and they were trying to rush us during pre-season and they were really nice to us, and someone told me that this year one of the ... players was talking to a person in the ... house that I'm really close with, and they were talking about who they were going to go for, and he goes, "what about P. Will you go for him?" and he's like, "I'd love to have him, but there are these guys in the house who just don't want a black person in the house." So I was like, oh, there are things you've got to accept. I could sense that kind of stuff. I've learned to sense those types of feelings, but to really hear [it] just solidified my opinion that that goes on. I'm still not scared to walk in there because I have those few guys that do like me as a friend. I just don't let it bother me.

I found a fraternity that I was comfortable in, so it hasn't been a bad experience. I'm really comfortable where I am now. Not so much with the brothers that were there before, but with the pledge class, freshmen class, I'm comfortable with them. *Not so much the brothers that are there?* No, because I didn't know them. They're upperclassmen and all that. I never met most of them before, but I knew the people who were going in. *Because of being in the dorm with them, etc.? How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?* It takes some getting used to. ..., for me it was something really different. For two or three weeks I seriously considered depledging. I wasn't used to doing stuff for people. *All the things you have to do for them?* But they were really understanding. In fact they didn't let me do a lot for the first half. *Is that the part that took a lot of getting used to? Is that what you mean?* Yes, and the whole brotherhood thing, all that. *What do you mean by that?* When I joined, I thought it was more of a social club than a real tight close-knit thing. That took some getting used to. *The idea of being super close to anybody?* Uh-huh.

These interviews confirm the research that shows a positive correlation between retention and campus involvement outside the classroom.

CHAPTER II: PERCEPTIONS OF SELF, THE GROUP AND OTHERS

We asked them how they thought of themselves first—as a student, a member of a racial group, a member of a national group, or other. Fifty percent said they thought of themselves first as a member of a racial, ethnic, national or gender group. Forty-eight percent thought of themselves first as a student.

I think of myself as an international student. Just looking around the campus and all of that, I realize that I'm different. I speak differently. I react differently to things. For instance, people here just love snow—I hate it! It's wet and it's nasty. Little things like that. It makes me realize, oh yes, you're definitely an international student.

Because the black community is so small on campus, I almost make myself first as a member of a racial or ethnic group, just because I want people to know that I am black student at Washington and Lee, just to recognize that we are out there and we want to be part of the community. And second, as a student, just because the main reason you go to college is to be a student, and I want to be like everybody else, a student, and I want to attain my degree and achieve like everybody else.

My race comes first, before American, before Washington and Lee, everything. I am an African-American student. Gender doesn't seem to be a big problem.

I guess I think of myself as a student. I really don't think of myself as a black female student until the issue is brought up in some social gathering, and then I see it, it's brought back. Yeah, student first, but it's quickly reminded that you're a black female student, or whatever. I mean, people talk about getting a tan around here! Everyone's lounging around the quad, it's like a tanning salon. I'm like OK, you know. Like I don't need a tan. A lot of kids here don't even like black people, but they all want to be dark. I haven't gotten past that.

That's a good question. Wow. Actually, I think of myself as a student first, then I guess that I am black. I guess I consider myself as a student, just because I really try to overlook all the color barriers. Maybe it's because I grew up in a predominantly white area anyway, that's why I do that. I consider myself more as a student, I guess because I am a student here, that's why. A student and an athlete.

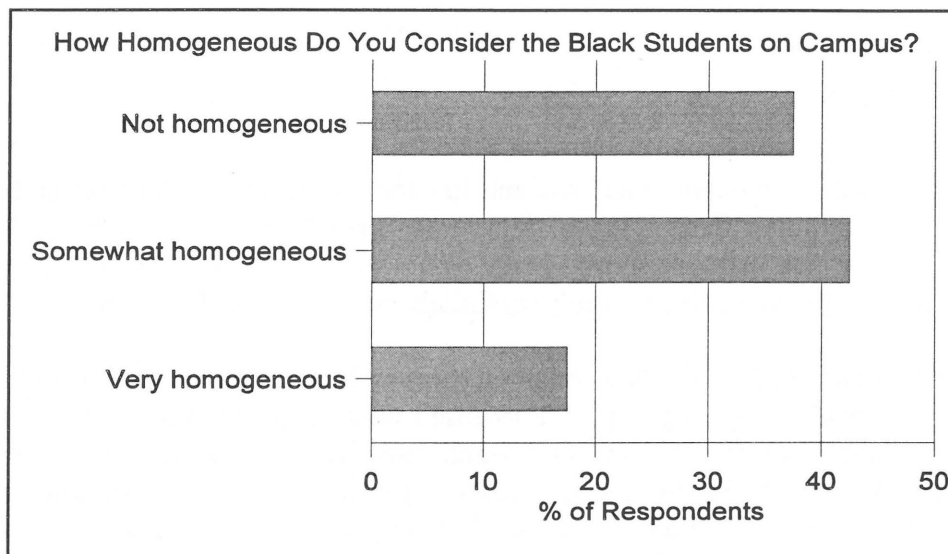
African American. *Please explain.* I guess because in all my classes, I stand out. There aren't very many blacks in all my classes. So I'm just there. I tend to sit in front of the class anyway. When you look around the campus, that's all I see.

First as black. Everything ... it's like first of all I'm black. You see me you know I'm black, you don't know if I'm a student, you don't know what I'm doing and that's just like

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the first thing that you see. I know I'm a student, but I know I'm black first.

We next asked how homogeneous black students are on this campus.



I don't think we are very homogeneous at all. We are more so now than the first couple of years that I was here, just based on where we grew up and the people we grew up around. There are some students that ... are black, but once they got here chose to not be black anymore. Like not associate themselves as black anymore. For the other students, it's a lot based on background. We have students here that are upper middle class minorities, and lower. Just because of the difference of backgrounds we view things differently.

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

I think mostly we are all homogeneous. We have a lot in common. We know where everyone's coming from. There are different types of black people, but we all have the same roots. We all have the same way, if one person does something here it usually happens there. Things like that. We just know more about each other from our own experience. There are a few different ones that come from different backgrounds and they may not feel comfortable around black people...

Actually there are two groups of black students. There are black African Americans and

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there are black internationals. Somehow they don't mix for some reason. They are pretty homogeneous within those groups.

Oh, we're very different in all aspects. Very heterogeneous. Because I say, like social class position, you probably have some people who are poor, and we have some in the upper middle class. And then racially,... you've got the Caribbean students, I don't know what they think they are, and then we have black Hispanics. So racial identification is very heterogeneous. Political perspective, that's a big one. Because we have some students who gear more towards integration, as in getting involved in fraternities and sororities, and I guess we have some of us who just, forget it all and stick with your own. And with regard to Democrats and Republicans, it's heterogeneous. I consider myself a conservative.

When we asked how similar or different these students saw blacks and whites on this campus, sixty-three percent emphasized the differences. Thirteen percent stressed similarities; 18 percent saw both similarities and differences. Six percent did not know.

I think the blacks and whites on this campus are different, and social status... plays a part in it. Political ideology molds and shapes a person's way of thinking. For instance, Republican, Mock Convention - the participation of the whites is just enormous.... *So, different in social status, different in politics.* Different in taste, in music, little things like that are important.

The only differences being those that you would find between blacks and whites anywhere. This being America as it is right now, blacks and whites come to the table with very different experiences as far as just various difficulties that they have had growing up, or whatever. So I think those are just differences that you would see in society in general is what you would see as differences on campus.

I think that blacks and whites on this campus are very different. I think racial identification is a big thing. It can't be overlooked. I think that even in instances where a black person might be a member of a fraternity or sorority, there's always that time where, you know, their different race causes a slight tension or problems. It's not something that can be completely overlooked, and I am sure that other people can't help but notice it. Political perspective, I think is very different. I think a lot of the white students on campus tend to be very, very conservative. Or even if they probably aren't sure of themselves. I think a lot of black students are conservative, but in a different way. I think a lot of black students are conservative in ... family values, things like that whereas a lot of white students are more conservative with... economic issues or something like that. I think that's the main difference. Social class position, I guess for the most part the black students here are on financial aid, but so are a lot of other students. So I guess that isn't a real big difference.

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Growing up, our peers were black. A lot of people here spend a good portion of their time when they go home with all blacks, and you're coming here where the people you're dealing with have different experiences than you have. I think there is a difference in black culture than there is in white culture, whether it be religion or whatever. The blacks tend to be more expressive than white churches may be. And all the little variables accumulate to large factors enough where there is a difference. But that's where the learning part comes in, when you learn that people are just people, who are different based on their experiences. The more different they are, the more you can gather from hanging out with them. *So are you saying that the black population and the white population are different?* The culture oftentimes is two different cultures that can co-exist well. They have for me. I've enjoyed meeting people, who like the type of music that I've never heard before, and it opens me up to it to hear it and decide whether I like it or not. Similar or different? I know that everyone comes here with prejudices, black kids coming here with their prejudices, white kids coming with their prejudices, and the only way they overcome that is by interacting with someone different than themselves, which is one of the weaknesses of W&L. It doesn't offer that very much because it lacks that diversity and it tends to stress more conformity. People I know had the conflict of being who they want to be or being who they should be to fit in. And a good number of them chose to be, for a little while at least, who they should be to fit in. That couldn't be me, because I don't try to exclude or alienate anyone, but I've got to be myself.

Very similar. Both of them want to be accepted. Both of them want to excel. Both groups want to be recognized for who they are from their past. They're different just because how our paths have led to the present...Say a lot of the blacks still complain about some of the stuff the whites dominate on campus. There are more organizations for the whites still. With the ratio, like the 97 to 3 or 93 to 3 percentages, 93% white, 3%black. Obviously there's going to be a disproportion of where the powers and advantages are here. That's the biggest difference. Not to say that all the white students feel that that's the way the power make-up should be. It's just something that exists and I don't think collectively--definitely don't think the black students care for that much. They want the power to be split up more. They want to see more black students here. I wouldn't say that most of the white students would want that, to see more black students here.

I think they are very similar. They have similar concerns, etc. but they are probably just not aware of it because they just don't communicate enough. *What sort of concerns?* I think it just stems back to the whole line between races in America itself which will be found in schools. Schools reflect the rest of society. I don't think they are that different, except they have different backgrounds, so they have different accents. Little cultural differences, like little slangs and dress codes, the type of music they listen to. That's all different. But it's just like us being from this side of the world and liking classical music from Europe. It's different. It's not our background, but you can still appreciate it. That shouldn't be very significant. *You said you think they have the concerns but they're not aware of it. What do you mean--what concerns?* Like grades--with academia. Some blacks

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give the impression that they think that they have it that much more difficult than the white students on campus. Maybe they do have it a bit more difficult, but they think that the white students don't have similar problems with getting good grades because they have more opportunity. I've actually spoken to white students who are having similar problems and having things that I didn't. They also have problems fitting into the whole social scene. Sometimes they feel insecure just as the blacks do for different reasons. Sometimes for the same reasons. We're thinking all the whites are having--they're cool. It's just us because we're the minority. The same problems are there.

Well, I think that black and white students are similar in the fact that we're both here to get a good education. That's the main thing that attracted us. Socially, I think we're vastly different except for a few exceptions, those black students who have pledged fraternities, who, I would guess, have come from a similar background as the people they have pledged with... *So you say that socially black students and white students are quite different?* Yes. In general, but there are exceptions. Just because --it's hard to explain how the difference is because black students go to fraternity parties a lot, too. I think that a lot of black students on campus don't feel comfortable at fraternities. Another major difference is that since a lot of black students don't pledge, there aren't the more formal events that black students can go to....

Thirty-five percent said the problems of black students at W&L were basically different from those of whites; 43 percent said some problems were different, but some were similar and 20 percent said their problems were similar. One person did not answer.

Definitely different. Black students here have problems. At least myself, we have problems on the lines socially, because we are the minorities here. Like we're not in an all black college, you know. Everyone is not like us; we're all different ethnically. Backgrounds are different. The majority of the black students we see come from around the same range, at least in comparison with the white students here. So it's definitely different.

Pretty much the same. I think black students face the challenge of trying to provide their own social activities. That's probably not the case for most of the white students, although there are a number of white students who face the same challenge. Probably a small percentage of white students do not fit into the mainstream social scene at W&L, a lot larger percentage of black students do not.

Different and similar. Different in the fact that race has a lot to do with it. You always encounter different beings as an African American. Different stereotypes that are pinned on African Americans, that's different. Similar in the fact that everyone's going to have problems academically if you don't understand something. I... think you can go to your professor. There's no problem there. Different in feeling accepted. That's... the feeling

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that African Americans at this school may not long for, but there's... a feeling that you want to be accepted. It's more difficult. That's tough. That can also affect your social life or your academic life. You have to overcome a lot more obstacles as far as social life. You don't feel comfortable in a certain environment.

I think they have problems that are different from the white students. I think the majority of white students don't have to worry about finances, where I think a lot of black students do have to worry about that type of thing. Also something I've noticed is that black students are definitely recruited to campus through different programs like Project Excellence and other programs. W&L attracts a lot of the black students very heavily because of the financial aid package they're willing to give them. That's definitely a motivating factor for a lot of black students who do come here where that's not necessarily true for some of the white students. I think also that the white students have a better time of assimilating with the general population, whereas the black students feel different, trying to fit in without standing out in a crowd. The white students just kind of slide right in there. *So social adjustment is easier for the white students?* Oh, yeah. A lot of the black students come from predominantly black high schools. They come here and are thrown into a majority white school. That's hard. *So economically quite different and a different social experience and background. Anything else?* Maybe even possibly the clubs. You have interviews for almost everything you do, committees and stuff. A lot of these clubs are packed with the presidents, them and their friends or pretty much people they know.... They may feel that it's harder to get on committees. Like some committees I've really wanted to do, but I've always felt like it's been more of a "who do you know" type thing. If you know such-and-such really well, then you're more likely to get on that committee. You may know them and they know who you are, you know each other's names and say hi on campus, but that's been the extent of your contact. *You've tried for some things?* Yeah, and not really gotten them.

I think that in general, not just students but I think in life, black people feel that they have to do more to get the same, and so if you are worried about law school or — just anything as far as academic performance, you have your career on the horizon — everything just comes down to you wonder how much is race going to play a role. I think that there are additional burdens added on to the regular student troubles to prove yourself.

Both. Similar I guess would be academic, and for a lot of people, money: if they are going to be able to afford this school or not. Different because for a lot of black students, they are the first to be going to college or to a good college. I think that sometimes there is a lot of pressure from black parents for their students to do well. I guess a lot of times this is pressure that we, as black students, place on ourselves, to do well in class.

CHAPTER III: DISCRIMINATORY EXPERIENCES AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Fifty-five percent said they had not experienced discriminatory behavior on this campus directed against themselves.. Forty-three percent said they had experienced discriminatory behavior. Two percent said, "I don't know." Most often such behavior came in the form of spoken remarks from other students. Thirty-five percent said they sensed racial tensions on campus beyond what existed in the larger society. Fifty-eight percent said they did not. Seven percent did not answer.

No. Even if there was any, I have not noticed it. I am probably a little bit more thick skinned towards things like that than some people. *Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?* No, other than behavior, I don't think so. What I've noticed so far is just as a result of behavior. As I said, it's not really any discrimination in the sense that it's something done to other people. I'm never quite sure. You can always suspect that something is going on. It's just what you think. Behavior, in the sense that it's more on the part of the blacks segregating themselves. You need to go out there and deal with other people. If you segregate yourself from a group, they're not going to put themselves out of the way to get to know you. It's just been like that as far as I've seen in this country. *If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?* I don't think there's anything that a program could do. It's what the students have to do. They really have to get out there and talk to other people. You will be surprised to find there are interesting people out there despite the fact of [how] they look or even how they behave or how they dress. You really can't look at the surface and make a judgment. You need to leave your group once in a while and talk to somebody else.

I'm the kind of person who approaches that sort of thing skeptically. I don't usually believe that people would be outwardly discriminatory towards another. That might be a good way to approach it or a bad way, but it just allows me to give people the benefit of the doubt. There was one case that I can think of—down in the gym. Maybe I was just being influenced by the people who were there, but it certainly seemed plausible that a group of black guys were playing in the gym with various W&L t-shirts, shorts, whatever and were asked if they were W&L students. *By whom?* Well, I know it's happened with Security once or twice. In this particular case that I was involved in, it was a custodian, I guess. It's just interesting to see how other people who are playing there are not being asked, when they're clearly not students. We almost clearly are. It was just obvious that we were being asked because we were of a different race. We weren't given a hard time. All of us pay to go to this school—it's ridiculous. *So you're saying that you've heard that this happens with security and when it happened to you, it was a custodian.* I am unsure about the security problem. I don't want to defend it but it definitely was not malicious in

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any way, whereas the custodian was definitely not being nice. *Be a little more specific for the record, so people know exactly what you mean.* ...When the custodian was questioning us, it seemed like it was a definite attempt to not have us there, because we were black. *You could tell by what? Body language, tone of voice?* By the fact that we were being singled out and these sort of things just blew me away. People don't make that big a deal out of it. And it really wasn't that big a deal, except that it shouldn't have happened. ... *So what about his behavior besides the fact that he asked you.* ...He wasn't malicious about it, it's just that he was singling us out where other groups weren't. It was almost like pleading to leave us alone and let us stay there. He was like, "We don't have anything written down that you're supposed to be here." *Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?* No. In fact, from the previous question, I don't want to paint a picture of W&L being an awful place for a black person, because it's not at all. I think that a lot of people here go out of their way to show that they are hospitable to all people. I've had a very positive experience, even in a racial sense. Sometimes at W&L, it can be perceived that there are people who dislike black people, but I guess I try to keep an open mind. I don't find things like the confederate flag to be a symbol of racial hate or whatever. I try not to get upset when I see things like people with their face painted like blacks. I've seen that. *In what context?* At a Halloween party. I don't think that's appropriate but I don't get upset about that. I can see how someone could get upset about it. If I were white, I don't think I'd do that. Overall, racially it's been a good experience here.

No, actually I haven't. I don't feel like anyone has discriminated against me to my face. When I first got here, the whole black thing felt discriminatory to me. I don't know if it was or not. There's never been an incident where someone called me a name or something like that. *In terms of the flag question [a reference to an earlier answer], who was responsible for that behavior? Was that mostly individual students?* Well, this school is called Washington and Lee - you kind of have to expect that. I don't know why I didn't think about it or notice it before I actually came here. Then when I got here, it was the only thing I noticed for a while. I guess when you stop and think about it, the school is named for Robert E. Lee, so I guess I have to expect that. Where I'm from ...it's not an issue at all. There's more black and white issues, north and south issues.... *Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?* I don't think there's a lot of racial tensions, because I don't think there's enough different races to have tension there. Everyone at the school knows that there are different fraternities that black people would never get into just because they're black. I believe everyone knows it. The administration knows it. This is my opinion, that everyone knows it because no blacks have ever been in.... I feel like there are fraternities here that black people will never be admitted to just because they're black. *And you know which ones they are. Have you felt a difference when you've been in their house, like when you've gone to parties or anything?* At first I used to have my own stereotype about a lot of houses on this campus. I guess for the most part I try to treat everybody individually. If

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you don't do anything to me or I don't notice your behavior is different to me or whatever, I'm not going to hold it against you because I've heard things about you. It's hard to know that some of the guys I'm playing with are in houses that will never admit a person who is black. I don't know how I've managed to deal with that, except that I'm friends with some people in these houses. It's almost like - what I'm doing here in my four years, I'm gonna get my degree. I have to make sacrifices while I'm here, but I'm gonna have my degree and it will be worth it. *It sounds like you feel you're compromising yourself, being friendly with people who might be prejudiced.* Their behavior toward me - I would hear things - I don't know. It feels like I am compromising myself, I guess. I feel like while I'm here, I'm making sacrifices, I guess. In the end, I'll have a degree from here, college degree. It'll be worth it. *But it sounds like the friendships that you've had with these people, even just the friendly interactions have been honest and pleasant.* Even if no one ever said anything to my face, if I felt like they were being nice to me but ... inside, then we wouldn't be friends. It would be no problem for me not to talk to them or even tell them how I feel. I'm not friends with anyone who I feel is prejudiced toward black people, whatever. *Are you saying you don't think there's racial tensions beyond what exists in the larger society or are you saying you don't know or are you saying there might be?* I'm saying I don't think there's as much as the larger society, because there are not enough black people here for there to be enough. If this school were 50% black, 50% white, there would be a lot of tension.

Like I said, at the fraternities sometimes there are some who think you're a townie and don't belong on campus. You might be walking down the street late at night and a security guard might drive past and slow down. Or a police officer, just when you're walking around campus, where they look at you suspiciously, assuming that you look suspicious. That's something that we have to get over those kinds of things. ... Most of the racial things I've bumped into have been team related. Like a fellow player might make a comment, or a coach might make a comment. We work those out different ways. Sometimes they still need to be worked out. That's one of the roughest things I have. Most teams here only have one black athlete. ... It is like that one black is always going to be in a position where it's him against the rest of the team, and that's a tough situation that a lot of blacks — that's one of the main things me and my roommates talk about: this is what happened to me today at practice. Sometimes there are comments that are directed at me. I understand that my teammates are not trying to hurt me, sometimes they just don't know. They say it shouldn't be taken the wrong way. I know that if I say things that might not be taken the right way, I understand, because I wouldn't want that said around me, so I wouldn't say it around them.... Sometimes people will say things, or will act certain ways, like the townie comment, where they don't necessarily think or try to understand. They will say things before they think about what they are saying. That's when you see people's true sides sometimes. Sometimes they really don't care. That kind of hurts. Now we're real tight with Security so it doesn't happen as much now. When I first got here, nobody knew me. I'm walking around campus and sometime earlier this year, when I was walking around campus, down an alley from the dorm, he slows down

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to see who it is. It's the kind of stuff that gets under your skin a little bit. It's funny on TV, but in person it's not funny anymore. Same with the police who might stop you and talk to you, just different type things where those things pop up maybe twice a year, where they just shouldn't happen at all. Probably the most where you get organizations saying something or having something happening is a Greek organization. A fraternity house ...having people out front picking cotton, that's a definite race thing.... The more people try to hold on to things and don't think about what they are saying and don't understand that what they're saying is wrong, that's why you can't have [an integrated] society today. *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 that because it's a small group of blacks that in our relationship with some whites we do definitely see the tension. Sometimes you're face to face and they put their heads down or look the other way. It's definitely tension. There's one kid, we went to kindergarten together and we were like this, he'd be over at my house one weekend, he was over at my house the next weekend and we grew up really tight. When I was going to come here, I talked to him at the airport, we hadn't talked in a while 'cause he went to a different high school than me, and you kind of see a little bit of tension. His parents were still friendly. I get here, we talked one time. He's a white student here. I have heard from other people that he has made a couple of racial comments around other whites. People in his fraternity say he's a little on the racist side. That kind of thing is where you see the tension. I knew you at home, you were a different person. Now you come here, where there are not that many blacks and where back in elementary school we were face to face all the time, where here you don't see blacks every day. I think there is room for that to happen. That's why I say that more blacks on campus and more interaction between blacks and whites would take away some of that and make this a [better] society. Because right now it has a reputation of being a racial tension campus among people on campus and among others. When I talk to people at home or elsewhere about Washington and Lee and black students, they ask why I go here, to a school that has Robert E. Lee and glorifies this and that. Other people can see something is not right here. ... If you ask certain people here about how do you feel about society from a black/white issue, some people say the right things, some people say we need to work to this, but then there'll be a lot of people that will still say things that are racist. These are the things that we have to work at from a community standpoint. Right now I don't believe that the campus or individuals on campus are doing that. So it does provide a lot of racial tension. To reduce these tensions, we need more blacks on campus, more administrators, making people communicate. If you want to take a class as a requirement and you have to have a black teacher, you're going to have to come in contact with a black person. If there are more blacks in class that means that in one out of four classes you're going to have a black student in your class and you're going to have to deal with black students. There are some blacks in fraternities, that's a positive.... It's a positive step when not just a black organization is bringing in blacks and whites together and seeing that the minority viewpoint is heard. If the school would show more incentive, the numbers would increase and that would be a positive step. Then you have a speaker come in and the audience gets

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bigger. Every time you bring in a black speaker and the audience gets bigger, that's a positive. You don't just have your black students there, you have more white students there. People want to hear different things. That shows the campus is coming to a better understanding and is willing to listen to the other side and work together.

I have experienced it. It was mostly fellow students who were responsible for it. I would say a lot of them are in the Greek system. Just kind of being ignored when you are speaking to someone, not being invited to certain things when everyone else has been invited, not being asked to join in on certain things, or being told, "Well, we thought you were invited" or "You wouldn't enjoy it." Having generalizations about my race made in speech to me. Like, "All black people are loud," and stuff like that. *So it included remarks and exclusive behavior, leaving you out?* Yes, but mostly remarks. A lot of times I don't think the remarks weren't even meant to be rude, but they were. I think a lot of people just don't — I think a lot of students here have never gone to school with or been around black people, so a lot of times they just don't know what to say or they say the wrong thing. But I think a lot of times, too, they do know what they are saying and they do mean to say hurtful things. *How do you handle that?* Well, a lot of times I just ask, "Well, what do you mean?" I don't think it helps the situation to ignore it or just pretend that you didn't hear it. *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?* Yes, because there are so few black students, and when black students do want to do something, like have their own fraternity or sorority, the question is asked, "Why? Why can't you just join the ones we already have?" The answer usually given is because we don't feel comfortable doing that, and I think that most of the time people realize that they haven't made us feel comfortable, but they may want to say that we are being exclusionary, when we want our own thing. So it's kind of like a Catch-22. I don't know what could be done to ease the tensions. I really don't know. It just really hard, because you don't feel comfortable doing one thing, so you try to do something for yourself, and people say that you are separating yourselves.

Well, freshman year, on my hall as I was walking, minding my own business, the walls are thin and I could hear people talking and these people on my hall were saying stuff like — they were naming pretty much all the black freshmen that there were and describing them and just saying "Why are they here? It makes no sense to be here. I wouldn't be here if the roles were reversed." I didn't expect to hear everybody that I knew being referred — I didn't stay to find out what else was being said. Obviously, it couldn't have been too good if we were being discussed. We don't sit around and discuss every white person on this campus. I don't understand why people were discussing us. But I've never really encountered anything personal. No one has ever called me a nigger, or anything like that. Not besides being told that I don't belong here, that kind of thing. *Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?* I don't know about beyond what exists in the larger society because racism is everywhere. But the fact that there is no diversity at this school, being at the other end of

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the spectrum, being a minority, sometimes you do. Sometimes you walk in a room and you're the only black person and sometimes you feel like people are looking at you. You might be speaking a different dialect sometimes, like my slang will be completely different from everyone else's. Things like that make you feel the difference. And some people are just too nice. Let's have a backbone, let's be nice but at the same act like — I don't know, some people are so nice they make me mad. Some people are afraid to hurt someone's feelings. And I'll be honest with you, because it's the first thing people see about me. I go to school here, at W&L, and they see I'm black. It's OK, like for me the race issue is OK to talk about, it's the first thing people see about you, it's not "Oh my God, we can't talk about it!" What's the big deal? They have to be careful. They're afraid to offend. Go ahead and offend me so I can correct you so that we are on an even playing field. *So you're sensing racial tensions in the sense that people are being so careful and staying away.* Yes, people try to stay away when they are around you, to a certain degree. Sometimes they might say things. Like we were going to see Spike Lee and someone said, "I can't believe he's coming here. He's so racist." And I'm not a big Spike Lee fan at all, so everyone's entitled to an opinion. I'm going just to be going because he's Spike Lee, but I really don't care very much. When he came out with his jokes I absolutely enjoyed them and people in my class after that, they were just like, "I can't believe he came to this school and talked a lot about the flags and it's so sacred here, ta da ta da." But it's just a piece of cloth. Let's relax, I don't understand what the big deal is over a piece of cloth. That's great. Whatever amuses you, that's fine. I don't think you should take it down because that's what you believe and I believe in my rights and I don't want to infringe on anyone else's.

Do you think that these racial tensions exist beyond the way they exist in the larger society? For me, it seems like it is so. Because I don't experience that at home, maybe only a little bit. Here it seems so concentrated and you have so many people coming from that kind of up-bringing or those beliefs. So you have more people compacted into this area and it seems that it's more concentrated here. Whereas if I were in the Deep South, living at home, I might see it more than I do at home. For this environment compared to my home environment, yes. My home town has a lot more diversity.

Well, I think you can't really address the issue without including the larger society. The racial tension in society is manifested here on W&L's campus. But on an overall scale, I think the students — I can't emphasize enough that this is still considered a Southern school and there are people here who, for example, support the Confederate flag for reasons besides the fact that it signifies Southern pride. I think that's used as an excuse. I think that within that Southern pride — I am not saying this is indicative of all the students, but for example that within Southern pride that includes the fact that there were black slaves. I think that's part of that Southern pride, because the South prospered off of that. I do think that there are racial tensions on campus. And for the size of the campus the tensions are beyond what exists in the larger society. *If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?* It goes back to recruitment. If you have a more

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diverse campus, the problems are not necessarily going to go away, but I think we have that availability, it opens the campus up for more understanding. But if you only have 40 blacks out of a total of 1600 students, that doesn't signify diversity to me. Part of the problem is with the numbers and I don't think it's available. I don't think you can ease tensions with such a small number of black students on campus.

Nothing that I can actually say was discriminatory. I can't say it's discriminatory. I mean at the fraternity parties, they kind of look at you funny, but no one's ever said anything to me directly. One time when I was here, I had my car with me. I was loading it up to go home. I had my music on and everything. There was this guy... He talked with his friend ... "They like that kind of music—they always play it loud." He kept referring to black people as "they". That kind of bothered me. I didn't say anything to him or anything. He wasn't talking to me. He didn't say anything to me personally, so I guess it wasn't that bad. No one has said anything to me personally—never.

I also got stopped by security more times than I should have. "We heard someone stole a VCR from the C school and it fits your description. --where are you guys coming from?" "We're coming from Graham Lees." "So you guys were at the C school?" "No. - do we have a VCR in our hand either, we're walking in the freshman parking lot, man, leave us alone." "Hm. You don't have a VCR in your hand." Where are you guys headed?" "To our car." "You guys didn't drop the VCR off in your car did you?" "NO, man, god leave us alone." *This really happened? Yeah, it really happened. More than once?*

I think it stopped happening cause I think they were harassing more than just me, they were harassing quite a few other minority students who were eventually having their parents call Dean McCloud.... So then security's gotten a little bit better in the past year and a half than it was. At least for me. A lot of students are like "Hello, there are only like 20 black students on campus, you should realize I go to school here, and quit asking me why I'm in Gaines." Like happened prospective weekend. Even though it's prospectives, other students still get stopped. Coming out of a building - "What have you done?" "Oh, man, I'm a student. I'm a Junior! Leave me alone." So... Oh well.. *So other than security?* Other than security probably not. I've never had anyone come up to me and say anything or anything like that. I don't think most people would. If they have anything to say they'd say it behind my back. If they say anything at all. I think it's a fear to come up to someone and say it to their face. If you're gonna come up to anybody and say "You're this and this and this." Without getting punched. Most people fear that and don't ever do anything.

Well, just things, stereotypical type things, maybe not anybody discriminating against me, but remarks that are made, or generalizations that are made about me without even knowing anything about the real me have been made. *Like what?* OK, like when I first got here, freshman year, a guy, I was walking across the quad and this guy walks up to me and he says, out of the blue (I don't know this guy, I've never seen him), he says "Can I borrow some of your rap CDs sometime?" Like, "How do you know I listen to rap?" For one thing, at the time I didn't own any rap CDs. I'm more of an R&B person. So I was so

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taken aback by that. This guy is not even saying "Hey, hello." Just "Can I borrow some of your rap CDs? I know you listen to rap." That was one of the things. Just people assume an awful lot about me. On my hall, the girls would do Melrose Place night, get pizza, and no one would ever knock on my door and say "Hey we're doing this." I was the only black girl on my hall, and in that particular section of Graham Lees, I was the only black female, and there was one black guy above me. We were alone in that. He was on the [a varsity athletic] team, so he was able to work within the student body, but as far as I was concerned, it was rough. No one would even speak to me, except for the dorm counselor. She was really nice, but the majority of the people wouldn't speak to me or say anything. It's like everyone was,-- I want to say-- walking on eggshells around me. Because they thought, I don't know, maybe I was hostile, and if they were to upset me I would punch someone in the mouth, of.. That's the way I felt that I was being perceived, and it wasn't even like that. Freshman year I was pretty much alone in that way. *So, it wasn't overt discriminatory behavior, but sort of a quiet sense of avoidance or something?* Yeah, and that's how it is I think for the majority of black people on campus. Just not even in your face type deal, but kind of on the sly. *And you started answering by qualifying 'on campus.' Have you had experiences off campus?* Oh, yeah. Definitely. This town. I tried not to go in town unless I have to. Because we're not well perceived in town. When we go in shops people tend to watch us, tend to immediately ask "Can I help you with something?" I'm not allowed to walk around and browse, I have to know what I want when I go in there... We get stares downtown all the time. So I try not to go down there if I don't have to. *Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?* No, I don't. Pretty much, on the minority side, everyone knows where they stand, and everyone knows the organizations to watch out for. I think there is one particular fraternity that everyone knows has a reputation for being at a certain position as far as blacks are concerned, and probably other minorities too. I think for the minority students, they know where they stand, and so in that instance there are no real racial tensions cause no one's trying to go out of where they see as their defined area. *So pretty parallel to the larger society? Or are you saying there aren't tensions because no one's pushing the limits.* Yeah, that's-- yeah, there aren't tensions because no one's pushing the limits. I think this campus here is definitely not like the larger society. It's not like anything I've ever seen or heard of before. So you can't really compare it to larger society, because there wouldn't be this many white people and so few black people like this in anyone's area, as far as I know. Well, in a lot of your metropolitan areas it's either equal or it's close enough that the kinds of things that happen here, maybe they do happen, but are not as prevalent as they are here. Not to people that are in my position. *How do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?* Well, I think more black students, because like I said as it is now, if I am the only black person in your class, you don't ever have to say anything to me. I can just sit beside you, or wherever, you don't ever say anything to me. And I think since they feel .. well, maybe it is if they don't have to, they don't need to. Because I can't say that if the shoe were on the other foot I would go out of my way either. So I think if there were more of us here, then they would have to be more into

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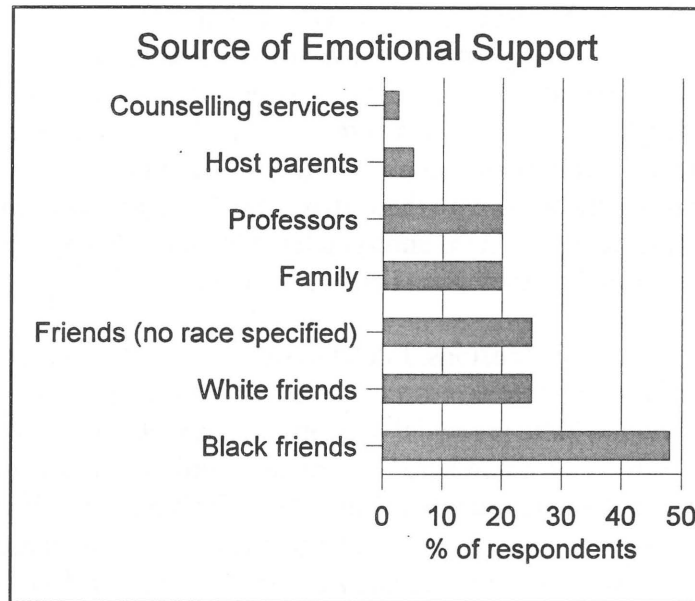
action. Whereas now everyone has their own thing. We don't pledge fraternities, a lot of us, so you don't even have to deal with us there. You seldom have to deal with us. So pretty much you can go on thinking whatever way you're thinking and not ever have anyone tell you well that's wrong. I think maybe that could do something. I'm not sure a lot can be done with W&L. A lot of the kids here were raised in homogeneous environments. A lot came from private schools. A lot of them never even had to deal with black people, so they're gonna come with their own stereotypes anyway, a lot of them. And I'm not sure you can get rid of them until you have to actually have contact with someone of that persuasion. And there aren't enough to change it.

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 tension 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 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.

Our next question asked from whom they received the most emotional support on campus.

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I would say my roommate, who is [a] white,... male, who is a fellow student, in every aspect of my life. If I have anything that comes up, whether it's with a friend or with my family, he would be one. And then I have a best girl friend who happens to be white, but I have no idea what her — I think she's German, a woman, and she's a fellow student. Same type of support. I have never gone to anyone for crisis help.

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.

A faculty member, female, white, let's see....*What kind of situations?* Grades, like today when I had to write my paper over, the grade I received on the first paper ... 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

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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. So between my parents and this particular professor, they help a lot with all the stress.

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

I probably use myself. Maybe friends. Definitely not administrators. Staff members I doubt. Faculty members, I probably have maybe one or two staff members that really care about how I'm doing or anything, and then the rest I talk to students. If I have a problem I go to friends first, then just random people. Really I don't rely on family or religion or most other things. Use myself, my friends and probably the one faculty member I actually associate with, who actually cares, who actually asks me like "How're you doing. Are things well with you?" Most people I talk to 'hi' in passing, but that's probably it. I don't think I really have too many emotional problems to break down on. *I don't think they mean just with problems. I think they may mean just support in general.* Probably the D hall family - crew of line workers, cause we have to hang out with each other for so many hours every day. It gets a very mixed bag of people together to do one thing for an hour every day. You get to see them during lunch and a half hour before when you're eating together.

It would be a male friend who is white, who is American, he's Jewish. Well, I just talk to him about what's going on, about my feelings, that I can't do the work...and he tries to support me. If I have problems with my friends, he'll sit there and listen to me and give me suggestions.

The two examples that come to mind, one is a... professor and the other is a girl here on campus. Their race is white. They are male and female. And in a different capacity, the deans have been supportive of me since I have been at this campus academically. They have always been concerned with how I'm doing and also personally they have been concerned with personal issues.... I feel that if I had a problem I could go to them if they weren't busy, I could just stop in and they would be willing to lend their ear.

A black student who is older than I am, has been here longer, and I've learned just from talking to him and he has learned from talking with me — he's told me, "Yeah, you've grown since you first came here, which is good." But someone who came through, the

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interactions begin with, you learn from other people's experiences.

Actually I have emotional support from my black friends. It's understandable. We pretty much walk in the same shoes, so we know what it's like. If I have to complain about something, if I don't think something is fair, they know, because they've been going through the same thing — maybe not to the same degree or maybe slightly different. If I need a shoulder to lean on, someone who would be completely understanding, then it would be my black friends. Faculty, you don't really expect them to understand. I discuss my racial problems with faculty. I don't have a problem with that. But faculty is faculty and there's always a — you know, you have to be here for over two years and I don't want them to think that I'm completely close-minded and that I hate it here, because that's not the case. I just can't make him understand, and no matter how much he tries — you know, you really can't make people understand. I give them that, they try. You just don't know what it's like until you've walked.

I believe that most of my emotional support comes from my roommates. They are black. We feel we are in the same kind of boat. I have two roommates and live in Gaines. We are together all the time, so that when one has a problem, it's like everybody's problem. We deal with it. My closest roommate is also an athlete. We deal with the problems of being sometimes the only black on the team and with other athletic related issues. We lean on each other for support, try to make the other one feel better. My roommates are my friends and my closest emotional support, and without them I would have a tough time making it on campus. You can't always rely on your teammates, you can't always rely on your coaches, sometimes your advisor is kind of a tough person to talk to about certain issues. Being able to have two black roommates is a strong thing for me. Last year, I had some good roommates. I could talk, they were real open, so I think the roommates have been my strongest support, especially with the black ones this year, definitely has allowed me to express my feelings a little bit better, and come away from our discussion feeling that "Hey! it isn't as bad as I was making it seem."

CHAPTER IV: THE HONOR SYSTEM AND OTHER DISCIPLINARY BODIES

Seventy percent of our black interviewees said the Honor System was applied in an even-handed way to black and white students (18 percent were not sure, two percent did not answer). Ten percent said the System was not applied in an even-handed way, but their answers rested largely on hear-say or rumor. Moreover, it was encouraging to find that, leaving aside the Honor System, 60 percent thought the Student Executive Committee and Student Judiciary Committee treated black and white students equally fairly (38 percent did not know). Only one person said it did not.

With respect to the Honor System these students display the same ambivalence as their peers. Our recent exit survey of a random sample from the Class of '98 revealed that of the over one-third of the sample who had observed cheating, only 10 percent had reported that violation. Our black students responded in kind to a hypothetical question.

Lying is harder to report. With lying, you don't usually know all the things that are involved in it, because a person might be telling a partial truth or whatever and you don't know all the information. It's hard, because you don't have much to base it on as a person. You saw someone take a wallet or take someone's books or you saw someone cheating on a test, definitely. But lying, it would be harder to show evidence of it, to prove it. It's not tangible, not concrete. You don't know all the information that's being involved with it.

... Cheating, yeah. There's really no excuse for it. You can study up until the time you take the test--to write it on your leg or your pants or your hand or anything, there's no excuse for that. That's not being--that would just be outright. If you have the same opportunities for getting the work as everyone else, you should be able to do it. Cheating would definitely be something that would be reported. More clear cut.

I don't shy away from the honor code as far as enforcing, basically because I signed a statement that said that I would. I would not condone that sort of behavior. Just from that fact alone, I feel that it would be my duty to report that. And also, this isn't a place where reporting that would be considered tattling. It wouldn't be looked down upon. It would be more applauded. *Have you had an experience with that at all? Are you assuming that that would be the case? Have you observed it?* I've seen that happen in certain cases. *Where someone takes the responsibility of reporting it, that they are actually supported.* Yes.

Yes ma'am, I would. I...think that is one of my decisions for coming to this school is the Honor System. Sometimes the Honor System can become a bit confining, because you

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want to enforce it to the greatest extent that sometimes you become uncomfortable. I've become uncomfortable sometimes, because I don't want anyone to think that I'm cheating. So you almost look as if you're suspicious. You understand what I'm saying? *Yes, I do.* I ... think the Honor System is very important. Sometimes I think people take it out of proportion. I think that before honor there is humility. You... have to have a certain amount of humility. *Could you elaborate on that? I'm not real clear.* I ... think that a lot of these individuals that come to this school, maybe don't understand what honor is. I think that you have to understand that you want to do what's right.... some of these individuals out here always have the best of everything.... They've never really had to put themselves in the situation to say, ok, I need this and I really can't get it, so I'm gonna steal. I'm not saying I've had to put myself in that position. I can say that I've come through a lot. My mother has.... worked hard....I can say "I don't always have this." I've.... worked hard. I've come this far. I'm not about to humiliate myself, I'm not about to degrade myself or let go of my value system just because I need a certain thing. I'd rather work and get it. *It sounds like what you're saying is that your background has given you a much deeper sense of honor than you think maybe some of the... kids have....* They really haven't had to come face to face with a certain conflict that challenged them and made them say, ok, this is really tough. It challenges them to a certain extent, where they're almost ready to compromise. *Making hard choices? Making hard decisions.* You can pull away from that and say "I'm better than that."

Yes, I would. I respect the honor system a lot. I think it's one of the best things. I probably should have mentioned it before too. It's impressive. *You thought about it before you came?* Yes. Even reading about it, I still didn't understand how big it was. When I got here, I realized it's a big deal. It's good to have something like that. *Tell me why.* Because I think society's morals are decaying so fast nowadays. Sometimes that burns me, especially being a Christian. Those things really get to me. To have something like this, no matter how small. It's just one college, but it's over 1,000 students. It's good. It actually works. It's such a dishonest world. So yes, I would report somebody, because I respect it. So far I've never actually--I tend to miss things anyway. Like if someone was cheating, because--I have a weakness. I tend to trust people a bit too easily probably. So maybe if someone was actually committing an honor violation, because I tend to think of the positive. So far I haven't--

If they were my real close friends and the violation was really, really cheap, no I wouldn't report it, but I mean, cheating on a test... I still don't know, I'll never know until I get in a situation, but depending on how well I know the person. If I don't know the person, chances are I will. If I do, I probably won't, I don't know.

How would you handle it then? Probably talk to him about it. If I knew them, if they were really my friend. I'm sure there are some really serious honor violations. If it were like really, really serious, I probably would report it, but can't imagine how I'd act in that situation.

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Yes, I would. I think this school thrives on the honor code. I think some things are kind of small infractions, you know, like picking up something that you didn't know belonged to someone else, so that thing I might let slide, but some of the bigger things, I think definitely people at this school try to teach what's right and what's wrong.

Probably not. Well, I'd say probably not. *Tell me more about that.* Well, I guess that maybe I just have a problem with the honor code all together. Because, number one, some things need to be covered.... you can rape a person, and you can no longer go in the freshman dorms. And... that's so ridiculous to me.

You mean that's the punishment? Yeah. Like you can't go in the freshman dorm and you can't go to parties, and... that makes no sense. So this lying cheating stealing thing. Its just so - I don't mean petty - but there are... worse things that could be done and there's... no penalty for that, just lie, cheat or steal and then get kicked out. Like possession of drugs. You don't get kicked out for that -... if they asked you, you say, "Yes, I do have a drug," and you get to stay. But you know, if ...if you steal a soda or something you get kicked out for that, and possession of drugs you don't?? I don't know, it's just strange. I don't like the honor system. *So you wouldn't report it because you wouldn't choose to support the system?* I think to some degree I don't. *What else? What other reasons would make you not want to report it?* I guess ... to me the punishment is too severe for lying, cheating or stealing. That's just what I think.

If someone was stealing, I'll stop them from stealing. If someone was cheating, that's definitely not my business. That's just a person cheating. It's not an honor violation not to tell.

Well, where I'm from people don't do that. You don't turn in other people because that can get you in even more trouble. You know, that's none of my business. I know I'm not doing it and I just have to look out for me. In all fairness, I can't tell on anybody else because I wasn't raised like that. That's just something you don't do. You kind of keep your mouth shut and just look the other way -- you didn't see anything.

...if I did see someone cheat, I think that if it was like a take home test or something like that and I saw the person reading through the book, I think I would ...say something to them, but as far as someone using a sentence from a book or something like that I would say something to them. If they were my friend I would be like "Well, you should probably think about what you're doing, maybe quote that or something." I have actually done that before... - and the person was like "Oh, you think I should." and I was like, "Yeah, I think you should." As far as stealing-- if I saw them stealing anything, I would turn them in for that. And the lying, I guess lying, as far as lying between students. I wouldn't say anything. If that counts as part of the getting kicked out, or something like that. But lying to a professor... or administration or something like that - I think I would probably say something... if it was something of importance. Not if it was something small. It depends.... I ... yeah, just the single sanction thing. That's pretty harsh I think. I

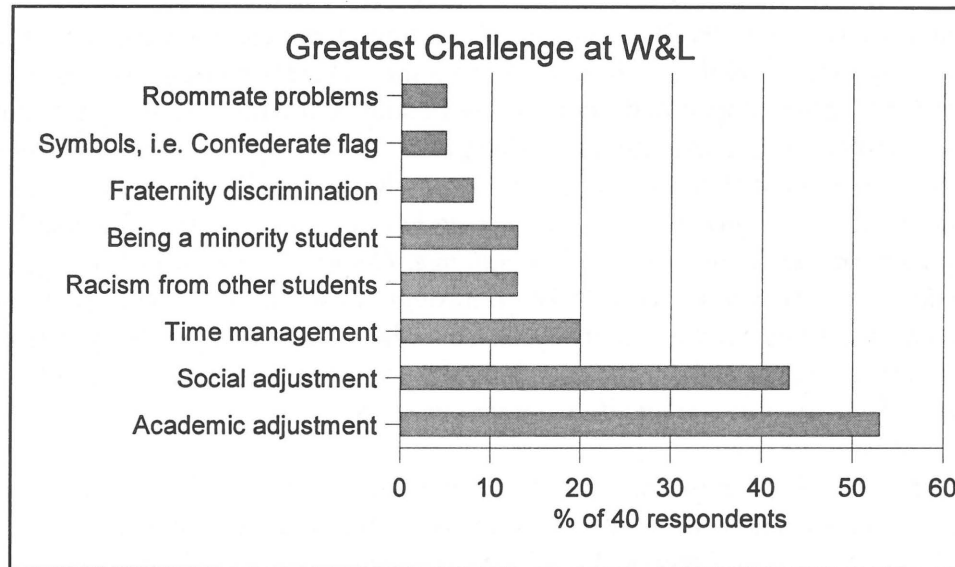
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personally will never do any of the stuff, but actually I don't want to ever be in a position where I see someone doing this, because I think that puts a lot of pressure on the person who does see someone cheat. Because if its a friend... You would want em to still be here, but at the same time it's pressure because you have agreed to the honor code, and part of the honor code is saying that if you do see someone cheat you will report em. And I never want to be put in that position...as far as the plagiarism thing goes. I guess it's a big deal if you have a huge chunk of someone's [work]. In a way it seems so minimal to me. It is stealing. It's stealing someone else's work and everything, but maybe there's - there should be some other kind of punishment, maybe like a suspension or something... *Are you saying that you have reservations about the honor system in general?* No, see I can't even explain how I feel, cause I don't. Not about the honor system in general, cause I think it's great to have. I think it's a great thing.. That actually was really appealing to me when I was looking at the school, because when I came here I actually left I think it was my wallet in the D Hall, and I was just like "Oh, no." And then I remembered this school has an honor system. I was like "Let's see if it really works." and I came back and it was sitting right there. And I was like "Wow." That really hit me pretty hard. When I went back that was one of the first stories I told people .. so that was another big thing. No, I like the honor system a lot, but... I just don't like the... final punishment for certain things that can happen.

No. Just because I – not that I don't believe in the honor code, but I wouldn't, whether black or white, for two separate reasons. For whites I wouldn't report it, just because I believe that my word wouldn't be taken. I don't think that I would be believed. I wouldn't want to put myself through all the stress and agony of going through a whole trial just for them to say, ...“Well, who knows if you are telling the truth or not?” *Do you have reason to believe that your word wouldn't be believed?* Yeah, just based on stuff that I was told about a previous W&L student who graduated, about her situation, in an honor trial. It wasn't about a white person. But, I think we're here at this school, but only as puppets or toys. Just to say, “yeah we have them.” Not really because we're wanted. *Meaning we black students.* Right. *OK, and so, I think you said there were two reasons One was because you didn't think your word would be trusted.* Right, and I was saying that for a black student I wouldn't report it just because there are so few of us here, and one less, I don't think we could get any smaller number than we have now. I just wouldn't care to do it.

CHAPTER V: GREATEST CHALLENGE

We next asked them what was their greatest challenge at W&L. “Academics” answered slightly over half, but 43 percent also mentioned social adjustment or finding a niche.



Many of these problems resemble those of white students, but we believe the social adjustment problems for black students at W&L are more intense as their comments suggest.

To look at things strictly academically, I think that somehow I did not feel as prepared schoolwise ... I thought that some of the materials may have been a little bit newer to me than they were to some other people ... my own basic viewpoint of them was that most of the people came from private schools. Private school education is a whole lot different from public school education. I felt that somehow I had a little bit tougher road coming from a public school environment where you have to pay attention to a lot more different things....*In terms of skills and content?* Most specifically, in terms of writing papers, which... is a prime part of what you're going to do. There's some things that we went over in my freshman English class, really no one had ever sat down with me, reviewed my papers and said "This is what's wrong. This is what's good. Why are you using punctuation here like this for this?" Basically, before then everyone looked at my papers and style of writing and said "This is good style. You're very expressive. You know what you're doing. You do your work on time. You turn it in. It's nice, everything." And it wasn't that anything was terribly wrong with it, but it was not up to a college level....*So that's academically what your greatest challenge was, that you weren't very prepared. Any other level of your greatest challenge that you want to talk about?* I guess dealing with being here and growing up. *Is that two separate things?* No, I think they went hand in hand. *Want to describe what you mean by that?* I think when I came here I was very

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naive about the way things are supposed to be versus the way things are. *In terms of what?* The way the world works. I think this is an explanation of how the world works. Just being here and seeing that the people that have the money and the interest in the money, seeing people that rule America go to school here. This is their world. I'm operating in their world. I know how to do what I have to do in this world. *From being here and working with the W&L scene.* I don't think there are any experiences that could hurt me any more. I think I've been hurt about this. There's nothing else--no other racial incident that could happen that I don't think I could deal with. I think I have cried enough tears—*Literally?* Yes. I felt....this is nothing else. There may be something else new but it's not going to be different. You take what you have. You learn from your experiences and move on. I have grown up.... *Discovering how the world works, how hard it really is, taking your knocks. That was like the challenge. Hanging in there and getting tough and realistic was the way to go with it?* To go through it and know that you have your own goals, and regardless of what anybody else over here does, what anybody else tries to put things in your face to make you upset, to make you want to go somewhere else. You ..stand right where you are and do what you want to do.

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 —... in conversation sometimes, in study group or in class, and you may give a right answer or you may explain something - sometimes students are like "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 blacks 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.... Because 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 ... that I can go to whenever I need someone to talk

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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."

My greatest challenge is probably finding my little place on campus. Finding new friends, adapting to a new culture. It's really difficult. It's difficult for people from further up north. I am from way down south. It's so much harder. But once you find friends, real friends, not just acquaintances, you realize that it makes everything so much easier. That's probably the difficult aspect. *How have you dealt with it?* It was a little hard the first couple of months. I would go home and cry for no apparent reason. I do understand it's difficult, leaving all your friends and stuff behind. I just hung in there.

My greatest challenge is definitely having--I hate to keep stressing this point--having to cope with the fact that there aren't a lot of African-Americans at this school. Tradition does rule this school and I can't change that. There are a lot of traditions at this school, as far as the South... that other students stress. It doesn't consume my life or anything but it bothers me. *Could you be more specific for the record, just so people understand what you mean?* OK. Maybe there are concentrations of individuals in the fraternity who share certain way of thought. *Give particulars, but don't give names.* OK. Certain fraternities-- I'm just looking at composites--definitely during rush. I was very energetic, very excited as a freshman. You have the opportunity to go around to each fraternity. Just looking at some of the composites, they would have a picture of the guys in their house and then maybe some African-American statue eating watermelon or something like that. That kind of bothered me. *Like those old things that used to be on lawns?* Yeah. I got over that but--- *But still you found that offensive.* Special dances, as far as within a fraternity that would gear towards like specific southern themes. *Like the old plantation south sort of thing?* Yeah. Tradition is what this school is built on and that definitely threw me. There were other instances of negative feedback. Just the fact that I came to this school. I don't want to be special or anything. I definitely gave second thoughts about why other African-Americans don't want to come to this school. After I was here. Even though they may have drawn a lot of African American prospectives that were as intelligent as I was, they definitely understood that this would provide them a good education, but they decided to go to elsewhere. I... had second thoughts. That bothered me greatly. *So have you dealt with that?* I've ... had to become more active,... had to challenge my way of thinking and others as well. ... fraternities have this school shaped--[they] shape and mold individuals to a different mind set to a certain extent. I've had people on my hall [with] who[m] we shared a tight relationship. You go through a lot. Then they sort of change and maybe-- hopefully I didn't give them a reason to-- but I would have to say the majority of them, the molding of their mind set had to be geared towards the fraternity. *At what point?* Wanting acceptance--everyone wants acceptance. I think that participation in a certain fraternity, that theme, the reputation of that fraternity, after pledgship you had to be a certain way. *After pledge ship. So that change would have happened during winter term?* Yes ma'am. The whole process. *Throughout freshman year--because the*

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identification changed. Definitely.

I think it's just the fact that being a black man on campus here where there's not that many of us and having the opportunity to socialize with people from different walks of life and everywhere across the country, and some of the wealthier people in the country. Whites that might not have had the opportunity to meet with black people before and get to know them -- I mean, some people will break down and love you and some people, you will have to really get at them, you know, and try to make that connection. That's been a big challenge for some of the people I've won over and people that have won me over. So I think that's been my biggest challenge. I mean, when I came here I wasn't the greatest person and there were some people I thought had certain ways, that I would never adapt to, but when I got to know them and actually hang out with them, they kind of won me over to their side. Some white people had certain assumptions about blacks that weren't true and would interact from there, and the same thing works for us. *How have you dealt with that? What was your main approach?* You have to get out and talk to people. You can't just see somebody on campus and look at them and make your assumption. You have to get out and talk to people. That's something I don't have a problem with. I love to talk to people and being active and I believe that's what helps you. Everybody on my [varsity sports] team is from a different fraternity and so every weekend, I can go anywhere I want to and talk to people. So as long as you're talking to people and there's open communication, you'll be able to work things out. That's one of the positives.

I guess, ... I guess I'm angry. And I guess I'm angry about it all the time. ... *that's a challenge.* That's probably what it is. *What are you angry about?* I mean... I don't know, I guess... I guess it's like the race factor is there, like 24 hours a day, seven days a week [near tears] it doesn't matter where you go, like on the weekends in the fraternity parties, they ask the black people to leave. *Really, every fraternity?* No, last weekend it was [deleted], and they asked us to leave. *How many of you?* There was probably about four of us. *What excuse did they make?* Oh, they said, we didn't know you were Washington and Lee students. [Note that white students from other schools were welcome.] *And then when they found out you were W&L students, they still asked you to leave?* No, when they found out we were students, they were-- OK we had one friend from VMI, and he had to leave because he wasn't from Washington and Lee, but I knew there were white people there who were not Washington and Lee students. ...an hour ago I'd just seen this group of white girls from [another school] get in a fight and they weren't asked to leave, so... so, and we were just standing there, so... *Is it certain fraternities that ask you to leave, or is it across the board?* It's not across the board, it's only certain ones, but it's not like, I don't really ... pick out which ones have the problem. ... there's some we know you just don't go to. ... that time it was the house president that asked us to leave, ..., and then ... one night I can go to a fraternity party, and then if I come back in a couple of weeks, somebody might ask me to leave. *Same place, huh?* Yeah, so it's not ... an across the board thing, it's just people with personal problems, maybe. ... *So those kinds of things happen enough that you feel angry all the time.* Yeah, and in the classroom environment,

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—... I used to really like politics, and one time I thought I could major in it, but nope. Because that's one of those majors that have way too much discussion. And when people start discussing things, you hear people say things that really, that just really anger me. But I still like politics. I take politics classes quite often. I just end up angry a lot. *Is it students that say things that...* Yeah, students, and sometimes teachers. *So how do you deal with that? The fact that you have to carry around this anger all the time?* [pause] I don't know, I mean, I've been here three years, you'd think I'd get used to it. It's just part of life here. *So you just keep going..* Yeah. There's really nothing I can do, so.. *So you haven't found any way to deal with it that really helps.* No.

I guess just being accepted in general. I used to have a lot of friends and that's just not [true] here. ... you have just a couple of friends, but usually they're the black ones. It would be nice to get to know some of these white students on a social level, but I'm just different to them. ...if I say something, to them it's always funny. ... not in a mean way, -- everything is "Oh, you're so funny, you're so funny." A lot of times, well, actually I'm being serious. I really don't see anything funny about what I'm saying, but it's like they don't know any other way to react to what I say or what I do besides, "Oh, she's so funny." And... a lot of people, no matter what I say -- I could be really serious or something, and everything is a joke to them. I can be in class and in class discussion, and I'm very honest about things and everything's funny. I feel like I try to make friends and whatever, and I don't want to change who I am to make friends. That's not worth it. That will never be worth it. There are just some things you won't do to make friends. I like some of the people here, but -- *So, your greatest challenge here has been to --* Trying to fit in, trying to be accepted without losing my own identity. *So, how have you dealt with that -- how do you approach dealing with that?* I don't know, I guess I try not to give in to the stereotype [of a] black person that there is -- I guess I go out of my way to be extra nice to people. *You were saying that your challenge is how to be accepted and still be true to yourself and that you try to do that by not giving into the black stereotype. What do you mean by that?* ... I make sure that I let people know that I'm just as smart as they are.... It's like, you're not that much different from me, we just might look different and I try to communicate that to people to a certain extent. *By being articulate in class?* Yes, ... I'm just as smart as you are and I have a brain, you know. But I also like to have fun. I tried not to come here with a chip on my shoulder, but you kind of develop one after you've been here for a little while. *Because?* Because you want to come here with an open mind and you do, but after you've been here for a little while, you see people's true colors and you start to wonder if this is all a front when they're with you and then when they're not with you, if they just like talking -- that sort of thing. *What makes you wonder? -- what gives you the signals about what their true colors are and makes you wonder what they're saying behind your back?* ... for instance -- well, let's just take FD that just passed. And its cut-throat for an African-American woman to even get a date on this campus. So... you have friends and you could always be like, well, "If you have any friends that don't have a date, I'd like to go and then we could go." And these are the same females who hang out with you every now and then and they think you're so funny

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and so much fun to be around, but as soon as you say something like "I don't have a date, but I'd like to go and if you have any friends" -- and it's like all of a sudden these people don't have any friends, it's like you're okay with them on a selective basis, I guess, but when it comes to actually going out with them, all of a sudden you're not good enough or something. And then you start to wonder, well, we're friends and if I'm good enough to be your friend I should be good enough to go with one of your friends on a date or that kind of thing. Little things like that.

My greatest challenge at W&L has probably been social more than academic, cause academic I don't think is really, I mean academics are academics regardless of what race you are or what sex you are or anything, what fraternity you're in. The professor is just going to go ahead and grade it based on whatever you do, so socially is the hardest thing... or be accepted as an independent.... to have an equivalent social life to the fraternity system without being in a fraternity.... And it starts off, you know, independents, since you're not in a fraternity, you hang out with other independents. So you have to start the whole thing based on other independents. So you can't even base it on hanging out at fraternities, especially during freshman year, when all the people you really know are all pledges. So you have to base it on other people that are independents and they're doing the same thing you're doing and you're trying to just do it, and it doesn't come out as a fraternity system of independents, it doesn't come out like that at all. Definitely a lot smaller. I won't say that I know a lot,... back then I probably knew a lot fewer people than probably someone equivalent to me in a fraternity, but I knew them a lot better, probably, the few people I knew. ... *So what did you do together? What kind of life did you make for yourself as an independent?* Back then, we just sat in our dorm rooms and drank. That was pretty much it. We'd make it out to the fraternity parties and drink. And of course they gave you natural light, cause you're not a fraternity member, and then, or we'd get women [to] get us beer or alcohol, and if there was ever hard alcohol, we'd never get it, they'd just give you beer. So, that's pretty much what we did. We did a lot of inside drinking and watching TV, and , I don't know. When I first got here I didn't smoke marijuana or anything, so then a lot of people did that, I'd just sit in the room and just keep drinking, but eventually I got hooked on that, so - it's there and these people aren't dead, and I was just like "Drugs are bad." and these people are still alive, still at W&L, still functioning, so I mean it probably started from that. But, definitely a small room of people that just sat around and drank, is how I got started.

The greatest challenge, I think it would be cultural shock, in that I know that I am very different than black Americans, although I have a lot of black -there are very few of us, and we're all friends, but I don't see a lot of the things that they see, because we have different histories, cause I'm not American. And I haven't been through racism, I haven't been through all the struggles that they've been through, cause ...[at home], blacks are in the majority, so I haven't been through all that. And I know I am different from white Americans, because we just have things that are different about us. I'm not saying that I don't have white friends, because I do, but we just have too many differences for us to be

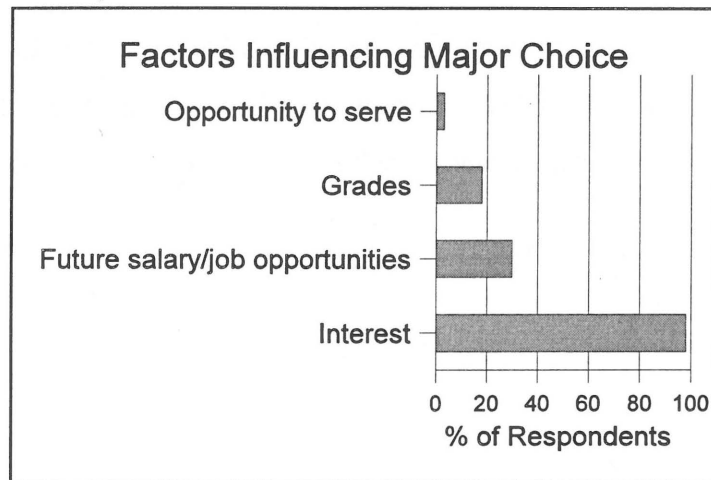
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that close, so the biggest difficulty for me was.. sometimes I don't feel that I just don't fit in, that there's nobody else like me. And, I don't really know if I've dealt with it more than just let it slide,...-- ignore it, and just try to be as accommodative as I can whether I hang out with black people or whether I hang out with white people, I try to learn as much as I can from them, but I don't know whether I've really dealt with it. I think it will always be there. It will be there for [all the] years that I am here.

Fully 80 percent of respondents said their academic performance at W&L was worse than their performance in high school. Of course, that experience is not unique to black students. But, as the abundant quotes above suggest, for many black students a barren life outside the classroom exacerbates the problem.

CHAPTER VI: ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

As with their white peers, for these black students the major influence in selecting a major is interest in the discipline. Forty-six percent had changed majors since they enrolled at W&L.



These students had made extensive use of the academic resources at W&L.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROFESSORS

And, as with their white peers, they called for better computer facilities, especially printers.

Two-thirds of these students found W&L professors easy to approach. The remaining one-third expressed mixed views on that score.

Some are easy, some are difficult. I think some instantly turn you off as soon as you open your mouth. Definitely some of them treat you as though you were an imbecile. Some treat you as though you know nothing. Some treat you as though they're looking at a test as opposed to all the things that's involved in the test taking. ... say you're going to talk to a professor if you did poorly on a test, looking directly at the results as opposed to how much time you put into it, what else your life is dealing with. In that sense I think they're very difficult. There's.....professors that you can talk to and you can get understanding, they'll sit there and they'll figure out and they'll reason with you and they'll see where you're coming from.

It depends. Some of them are very easy and friendly and approachable, while others aren't. I think it just depends on the professor. I think they're difficult when they don't try to be flexible and realize that you have other classes besides theirs and you have other schedules to keep. When they won't talk to you on the phone, or do stuff like that. But they're pretty easy - I think a lot of them for the most part will talk to you whenever you need their help or anything. *So, when they're not taking into account that you have other things in your schedule, what form does that take?* Well, just recently, I had three things for three different classes on one night, all at the same time, and I don't like to make excuses to professors,... it's ...kind of hard to tell them I have three different things to do and I had to pick one, because then it makes it seem like theirs wasn't as important and then they just don't seem to understand. And that's really hard. I mean, you can't help that. They all schedule something at the same time on the same night. *Do they tell you just shortly before it was due so that you couldn't plan ahead?* Well, I think they told us ... a week ahead, but ...*Did you try to approach them about it, or did you feel that you couldn't..* I did, and the professor was like, "Well do it when you can," but didn't seem very pleased about it, or understanding. *And the ones that are easy to approach, in what way is that?* It's easy to have a conversation with them, or just talk to them about stuff that's been going on in class that you don't understand. They're very helpful.

Sixty-five percent said they had been able to establish close working relationships with the faculty. Fifty percent said they felt comfortable in the classroom; 35 percent felt uncomfortable and 15 percent said it varied. For those who felt uncomfortable, the almost universal complaint stemmed from their perception that others expected them to be spokespersons for all blacks on any black related topic that came up.

Mainly, most times it's ok, except in probably specific classes. Like in history classes.

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History class can be a touchy class. In history class they were discussing slavery. It was American history. I wasn't uncomfortable, but for the strangest reason I became aware of the fact that, I was the only black student in the class, all the students in the class got uncomfortable at one point in the lecture when it got into a lot of sensitive details. To me it was just history—it's history. First of all, I'm not even American. I wasn't there. You don't have to take a history class to know about slavery. Everybody knows about that. I did that in high school. So to me it was just refreshing my memory. The teacher seemed comfortable too. [The teacher] made certain statements and students would glance around at me — almost as if they're afraid to say something to me after class. They're looking at my reaction. I wasn't uncomfortable. *So for you it wasn't uncomfortable?* No, it wasn't. *Are you saying that the climate of the classroom for you has been fine?* Yes. It threw me off a bit, because if you're in a situation where you're fine but everyone else is uncomfortable, that in itself can --- I'd be uncomfortable not for their reason, but that they're uncomfortable. *So how did you deal with that?* Just tried to keep myself calm and tried to understand why they were uncomfortable and why I wasn't and tried to let them realize that I wasn't uncomfortable. So they'd be at ease. *So you did that by managing your demeanor?* Yes, my whole attitude, like smile and talk. In general, even on my hall at first, [with] all my hallmates I got the impression that they were unaware how to approach me. At first I thought they didn't like me or maybe it's the whole racist thing. I was unaware of the racist thing, since I had never lived here. I realized that they just weren't sure. Eventually, they realized I'm cool. Now they love me, I love them.

I'd say it varies. In some of my small discussion classes that I've had, the discussion could go on fine then a certain topic will pop up and it might cross some of those lines that people, black and white, tend to differ on and the discussion might get quiet for a little while, or somebody might raise a question and they might look to you like, "Oh, man, maybe I shouldn't have said that." Even, I think, that teachers once in a while might be scared to mention something that they might say if I wasn't in the classroom, even if it is not a negative comment, but thinking that I might have a negative approach to it. But that works the same with me. I might want to say something in class, but I wonder if I say this, is it going to be taken in the wrong way? People in the classroom might have different viewpoints than me. When you have a small class where people are talking, that's where you start to see it. That's good. I think people should be open and say what they want to say, and that's where you get understanding and communication. That's what the class is for, to get different viewpoints. In some of the bigger classes, where you might be the only one in class, I think it's interesting how the teacher knows your name the first day or second day in class. It's for obvious reasons. You see it on both fronts, but I think it's not a problem if you're not scared to say what you want to say, and others aren't scared to say what they want to say. The topics that raise that funny feeling are affirmative action, that comes up a lot, different topics during the election, talking about an African-American person like Malcolm X, where there are totally different viewpoints of what he stood for among black and white students, where neither one of them is necessarily wrong. ... That's where the teacher is definitely the mediator, he provides the

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facts, that "Yes, he was both of those." That's what the whole class comes to understand.... There are some classes people have said something and I have said something back and it's worked into a discussion where by the end of the class we haven't resolved our differences, but there is a better understanding, and you feel almost happy coming out class. And there are some classes where the topic is raised and then it's almost like nothing comes out of it, and you walk away and you're thinking that didn't work as well as it should have. And other people may be thinking the same thing. So it works and doesn't work, but you got to keep trying.

Sometimes,... in politics class, you're so angry where... you've learned that sometimes it's best not to say anything, because it's just — Like I've done that. In some politics classes I just shut down, I'm not even going to say anything because you get so angry at some of the things you hear in the classroom. The other day we had a discussion in one of my classes about... affirmative action. One of the students said that there shouldn't be affirmative action. I can understand what he was saying, and then he [the professor] said, "What do you propose then would happen to qualified minority people who are refused jobs because of their color?" And the student said, "Well, let the chips fall where they may." *So is that a good example of the kinds of things that happen?* Most of the time people just deny that there's a race problem. I mean, that's what you usually encounter in classes.

Sometimes it is very uncomfortable because you're the only one. It's uncomfortable because, I guess, you don't know how other students will react to you, if you ask them for help, or something. You don't really know how to react to the professor if you've never had him before, or her. *You mean that as a black student you don't know how to react because you don't know how they will react to you?* Right. I think that sometimes you are just worried a lot and you shouldn't be, but you have to be, because that's based on your experience throughout life. I think sometimes you feel a lot of pressure to say something witty or smart, just so people will know you do deserve to be in that class, you aren't just put there to fill a quota, or something. A lot of times students don't talk to you unless they have to. Like they have to be in a study group and the professor says you have to be in that study group, then all of a sudden they talk to you and they know your name, whereas before they never spoke to you. That can be really frustrating. *Do you think that's an experience that happens mostly to black students?* I think so. *If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties?* A couple of times I have talked to people outside of class who I thought there was a problem with, or I'll talk to the professor. *How do you approach it when you do that?* Well, I've had a couple of classes where we discussed topics like welfare and stuff like that, and that can lead to very heated debates, and so, just after class I'll say, "Can we talk about this?" *What kind of response do you get?* Sometimes it's been good, sometimes it hasn't been, but worth trying. ... A lot of times I have found it's the case that if you say that "Well, I feel it's like this," then some students are really surprised, like "I never knew you felt like that, I guess I'd never thought about it that way." Like describing my life here, they'll say,

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“Well, I never thought about it that way.” But then when you take the time to explain, they’ll say, “Well, I guess that probably is true.”

Well, I took a history course and there was slavery, and when we got to that part... —I liked the course. History is history. I have no problem with discussing slavery. That doesn’t bother me because that was history and I’m assuming white people will never go back to that, but you have to know where you came from before you know where you’re going, so that’s OK. But everyone was expecting me to come up and give the other side. But I said, I wasn’t there! You weren’t there! They look at me for the answers, but I’m learning just what you are. They look at you like you’re the spokesperson for all the black people in the world, and that’s not the case. They think you should speak up for the entire race. *Does that come up often?* Sometimes. Usually they stay off the racial issue and they really don’t ask you to discuss it. But if I bring it up, they might ask — they just won’t discuss it. They won’t discuss the racial issue here. *So the climate in the classroom for you as a black student is?* It’s all right, but if I say something, it’s a joke. It’s so funny. And everyone waits for me — like in my sociology and anthropology classes, everyone waits for me to say something. I feel I’m entertainment for people at times. They say, “You’re so funny, you crack me up.” Like this guy was following me around forever, he wanted to take courses that I was in because he thought I was so funny. That’s nice that people think I’m funny. There’s nothing wrong with that. But when I’m serious I like to be taken seriously. But everything’s funny. And that makes me angry, because everything is not funny. *Do you think that’s related to your being black?*

I just think that they don’t know how to react to me. Laughing, you can always get away with that. You don’t want to be serious. Laughing is thought to be a good thing. They probably aren’t used to interacting with very many people besides white students so why not laugh? There’s nothing else you can do.

Cool. Most people know me or they’ve seen me before. And if I’ve got something to add, I’ll say it. From my experience, it’s been beneficial to the class or the professor. And, for me, it’s also good because, when I first came, I was conscious about being black at an all-white school — what people thought, “Was he here just because he’s black, did they accept his qualifications?” So I made a concerted effort to say something every now and then in class to let the professor and students know that, yeah, I belong, I deserve to be here just as much as you do. And now it’s not necessarily for that purpose, but it’s good we can show that result. Because sometimes, if I say something, some people may go “Whoa!” Sometime you have maybe just feelings for people that’s based on superficial things, people you don’t even know, like you might see, let’s say, a beautiful looking girl but she speaks and she has a mind like you wouldn’t believe and that you never even considered. *So the climate in the classroom has been good for you?*

Yes.

Most of the time I’m the only minority student in the class. It’s just quite hard when, because of the C-school and the way it is structured, there are a lot of groups and group

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projects. You go through the year and you'll have this group and that group and the next group. Once that group is over, most of those people don't talk to you, if they see you on the colonnade. It's not a Hi! or anything. There'll be random occurrences where someone will say "Hi," or I'll be shut in the computer lab, doing work, and someone will come and say to me, "Do you know how to do this?" And I look up and wonder how they know my name. They've never spoken to me before, all of a sudden they want to know if I know how to do something. It just surprises me that they have never even spoken to me before, yet everyone knows who I am and my name. And then they won't speak to me again. It's very hard. And in class, when race issues come up, it's even harder, because you're that one or two black persons in the class and you feel like all eyes are on you, watching you, wondering how you feel or how you think. It's an awful situation to be in.

If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties? Most of the time I try not to think about it. I just go on with my day. After a while I got used to it, and it doesn't bother me as much.

We asked if courses in the humanities/social sciences should include recognition or study of works by persons of color. Ninety-five percent thought they should, only 5 percent said they should not. If they agreed that courses should include works by persons of color, we asked them if the coverage in courses they had taken here was adequate, inadequate or excessive. Fifty-eight percent said it had been inadequate, 16 percent said it had been adequate and the rest did not know or did not answer the question.

If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain. I would say adequate, based on my experience. That's the way it should be, There shouldn't be any preference or anything against them. If that subject or those works make sense within the context of the course, then they should be dealt with appropriately. It shouldn't be "We have to put a black author in." Based on merit.

Yes, I do think that's important. Just in classes here, everyone should be exposed. *If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive?* I've only had one course that was geared toward Afro-American studies. That I enjoyed.... Besides that, in my general ed classes I haven't experienced black authors or writers or anything to do with minorities. I think the recognition is inadequate. There should be a point made to include people of other racial groups and backgrounds and the works that they contributed.

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

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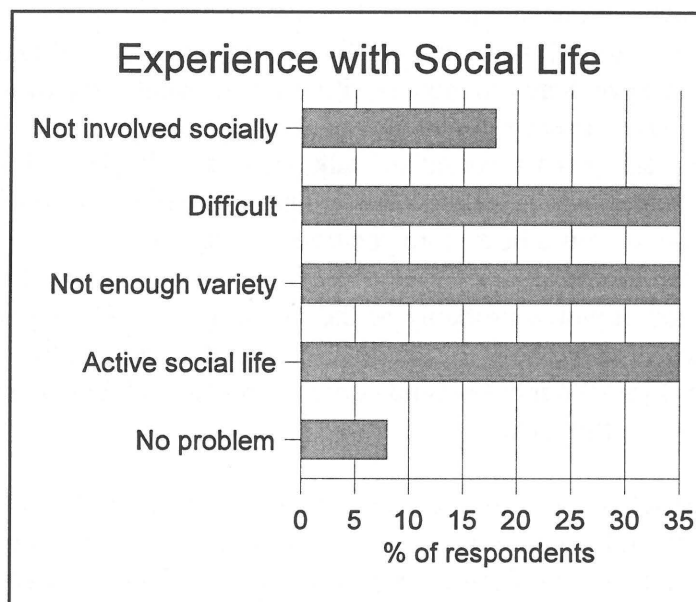
mandatory that everybody knows about it, because then it'll seem forced on people and they won't want to do it. I think sliding it in every now and then so that people are more aware is wonderful. And I think we are doing that, and I would like to see that continue. *You've mentioned courses that are 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.

Yes, because even though I went to a black high school, I didn't learn much about it. My roommate, she's from Africa - I didn't know anything about Africa other than what I learned on TV. It would be nice to get to know a lot more about my own culture. *If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive?* Inadequate. I haven't learned anything. In English class we have studied a couple of poets and authors. We didn't spend a lot of time on it. I think it is inadequate in that aspect.

Yes. Actually I'd like to see more classes, as far as African history classes or classes dealing with black leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X. I would probably take them. I am a science and math guy, I hate writing papers, and I hate to read. But I'd definitely take those classes. *What about weaving it into normal history classes, sociology classes, or English classes?* I think that'd be nice too. I feel like the only thing we really talk about involving blacks in history — I've only taken history here — is slavery. We really don't talk about any of the inventions that blacks have made, or any of the culture of Africa in general.

CHAPTER VII: SOCIAL LIFE

We asked our black students about their experience with social life on the W&L campus.



...the first couple of months it was very hard. I didn't go out much because I really just didn't want to see anybody. But after a while I started going out and meeting new people. If you are shy, W&L is not the place to be. You need to get out and meet people. You'll realize that they're not as bad as you thought they were. You need to have an open mind, be tolerant of others and just go out there and have fun. I have no problems with the W&L social life. It's all your choice. If you want to go out and party every weekend, fine. If you don't, I guess, that's just it. You really need to meet people and talk with them, have a couple of friends.

I don't get involved in that too much now. It ranged from watching people be compulsive drinkers to being rude, disgusting, ungentlemanly. ...parties are nice, I guess. But they get boring, they get old. They're very immature, they're for kids. *Has that changed over the years?* I never was really involved that much with it. ...*So you tried it for a while?* Yeah. I never really drank that much, it never appealed to me. By my sophomore year, I had a very small close-knit group and that's pretty much the way I've dealt with it. Several small close-knit groups that I interact with. I seldom get involved with the larger social events. *So your experience at W&L with social life, it sounds like you've created your own social life with small groups.* Right.

Well, I'm definitely a non-main-streamist, because I have been to 4 or 5 fraternity parties

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since I've been here. *And this is your fourth year?* Yes. I just thought that wasn't for me. I really don't enjoy the fraternity parties here. *Can you describe that a little more?* It's not that it's been a negative experience. It's just something that I don't enjoy. I usually try to find other ways of having fun. I hang out with my friends, I go to movies, I go to Roanoke now and then. I watch a lot of movies on videotape--exercise. *Do you feel that was satisfying to you?* It's been--I'm happy with that. At the same time, I realized that probably at other colleges there are more positive social events that are occurring. I kind of feel like I might have missed out on some of the other things. You can have a group of people from campus and just sit around and talk, instead of drinking all the time. A lot of that doesn't go on here in my experience, except in my small circle of friends. I think if more of that went on, it would be a more positive experience.

It sounds like you felt that as a lack for you? If I had to say one thing that was a disappointment to me, it would probably be the social scene. I feel that it's partly my own fault, because I didn't really check to see what the social scene was like. I didn't even value it at the time. I just thought I should come to college and concentrate on my work and not worry about anything else.

I definitely have an active social life. I believe in a balance. I enjoy going out and meeting people, just drinking and hanging out. Sometimes I find that things could be a little bit better if there were a few more African American girls that I could relate with, you know what I mean.... In high school I had a range of friends, from white to black to in the middle. I was definitely color blind in that sense. That helped me out. *So you have an active social life in several kinds of forms?* Yes, some fraternity interaction, some hanging out with other individuals. Going to other schools, that helps out, road trips. It's a conglomeration of many things.

The social life is very active, but it tends to be one-sided. It's mainly fraternity parties. There's hardly anything else. At first people mentioned that we needed alternatives to fraternity parties. That's why people get so drunk - fraternity party and beer. Maybe if there was some kind of student activity center. Not like the one we have but one with a room with games on a Friday night it would be open, people could hang out there instead of drinking. It's very active. Parties are there. I have fun at the parties. I do go to the parties. But sometimes I wish there other things than just going to another fraternity party.

Big difference. Social life is kind of geared ...[to] fraternity parties, drinking, that sort of thing. But you can get around it, because you don't have to do things that you don't want to do. It's not forced on you. It's just different and I guess once you understand it you know where you're at. I attend fraternity parties, but you don't have to drink if you don't want to drink. It's new to you. *So you've attended fraternity parties?* Yes, but I still don't drink. *What about other aspects of social life?* The International Club has a lot to offer in terms of that, so you can get involved in that. And Intervarsity. There are a lot of other things to do....and all those nice things. The Lenfest has nice things sometimes. I don't have a lot of time either. *But your experience has been very different. What's it like at*

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home that's different? People don't set out to drink. It's very disturbing here. I've gotten used to it. I think what happened is like when I first came and people used to get drunk and bang on your doors on Saturday night, it used to scare you. ... I think they were just happy when they came. "Oh, we can drink" or something like that. Used to get drunk and pound on your doors. It was very disturbing....It's still happening, but I'm kind of used to it now. You don't jump up and get scared when you hear them banging. You just go back to sleep. Back in high school I don't remember seeing anybody drunk.

It's been fun. It's been great, except the city thing. Occasionally there are things I want to do that I can't do here because there is lack of culture. You can't go to a play here. I mean, you can go to a play at the Lenfest, but I mean you have to wait for one to be put on. You know what I mean? Any day in New York City anything you can think of you can do. That just doesn't exist here. So that has been a limitation. When I get upset with that, I'll go to DC or to Baltimore, get away. As far as the social life, yeah, I know some people — A lot of people have a love/hate relationship — A lot of people leave freshman year, like "I can't deal with the scene." The frat parties, that's all you're going to do.... I never had a problem with it, and again, that's what it's like where I live, so. We were always at people's houses or at the golf course, so it's a bunch of people sitting around, drinking and occasionally you put music on for variation. We go to the city, but we're not city kids. City kids go to clubs every night. I never did that. It wasn't an adjustment for me.

I'm in a fraternity and I also play ...[a varsity sport]. It hasn't been difficult to find friends here I don't think even though the friends that I have here are a lot different from the friends that I have when I'm home. I still have a lot of friends here....

That's the main thing about being a black student on campus. It is difficult. You don't have fraternity because there aren't enough in number of blacks to establish a black fraternity. A lot of blacks, like myself--my father is a member of a black fraternity and I have always wanted to be a part of that fraternity. So I really don't want to join a fraternity on campus. But being on ...[a varsity athletic] team, I have the outlet of knowing people in fraternities and I am always welcome. So from the standpoint of going to the parties and formals, I am able to attend. But from the standpoint of being a black on campus, it is difficult because your black network is not as big and you're not necessarily always able to do the things that others who have a fraternity can do.

Miserable. For me the whole social life at Washington and Lee is geared around fraternities and sororities. So if you're not involved, there's nothing for you, basically. And that's going to be all minority students, basically, with the exception of maybe two or three. I think there were two or three, or there may be five of them now. Maybe four or five in fraternities.

It's very active, obviously, here, but I guess the one complaint that I'd have is that it's

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probably too fraternity-centered. It's a good thing, but at the same time I think that a lot of times this school tends to be not one school, but broken down into sub-schools based on the fraternity and sorority level. You know, you can have fun with the fraternity system, but at the same time I think that there needs to be more of a sense of school. *What about your experience with social life? Is your social life very active or are you saying that the school's social life is?* The school's is and mine is probably not much different than any other Washington and Lee student's. I am not a party animal, and I try and study and keep my head above water academically. I'd say I probably go out three times a month. That's not much, I know, but...

At W&L it's terrible for black students. If you are not in a fraternity or sorority, basically you're nobody. But I think that goes for both, any independent. ...I go to fraternity parties and stuff on the weekend, but it's not as much... fun as these other students, and we don't get to go to... these other social gatherings that fraternities and sororities — I mean we don't get asked to these, so we don't know what it's like to be on the other half, actually do the other things. ... I ...[play a varsity sport] and ...[one teammate] is always talking about a certain thing that their [Greek organization] is having this weekend, and it sounds like a lot fun, you know. But ...[Greek organizations are] not really my type of thing, at least not... here. But it always feels like I'm being left out of something. ...the students here think this is such a huge party school and it's so much fun here, but I don't see it being so much fun here at all. It isn't fun for me, so I guess — I would say it's like that to some extent [for all independents].... It's not a secret that this school is fraternity oriented. So if you're a male and you are not in a fraternity, basically you are nobody on this campus. And that's understood, people know that. But if you're a female, it's good to be in a sorority but it's not as demanding, not as essential to be in one, to be included, to be part of the group. But for males I think it is. That's why we have such a high percentage of men that are in fraternities. But in all fairness, there's nothing else to do around here. So you might as well be in a fraternity.

Know what the social life is, accept it for what it is, and try to enjoy it to the best of your ability. What I've learned from the guys who were here before me, who graduated, particularly black kids, actually from them, when they told me "You can make it anywhere if you've got your boys.".... So the social scene here, I've come to appreciate, like bands, which is good, 'cause being here I've also been open to different types of music and it has broadened my horizons. Stuff I probably wouldn't have heard at home. *So your social life has been open to you? You've said you can visit fraternities and go to parties and dances as much as you want to.* Yeah, whether or not it's a closed party or an open party pretty much I know someone enough at all of them where we're cool enough where "Yeah, he's cool, he can come in." For instance right now I go places and hang out with friends, it's cool with friends who are getting pledges to come pick you up. And some of my friends got my roommate, who is also an independent, and we get the benefits of being in a fraternity without actually having to pay for it. Even last night, I went out, being chauffeured by pledges to friends' fraternities.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

There is not any. One does not exist here, for me. Let me make that clear. The partying and drinking and that type of thing is not something that I enjoy doing. And because the fraternities and sororities are a big part of the social life here, that means that I don't really have one. Or, don't really have an outlet. *What would you like to see.. What would serve you?* That's a good question. More students like myself. And maybe some other things close by, like,-- this is kind of impossible-- but like a mall or something - better movie theater. Things to actually do.

Every social aspect runs through fraternities right now, I think.... I think the school really needs... [a University Commons], just to give another outlet as far as activities and things. All in all, it's fun but... it's kind of monotonous to me, the same scene, because actually, like last night, I went to someone's house who was having a party or something. It was just the same thing as any where else on this campus, just a gathering of people. I'm almost positive it's like that across the country, because it's just — I don't know, everything is focused around alcohol. I mean, I do drink occasionally, but I'm not a big-time, every weekend I'm gonna drink. Like, during FD I'll drink a little bit, or something like that. That's probably why I'm not really the most social person, but I am really social.

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...[on a varsity athletic team] 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. ...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.

Only 13 percent of respondents rated alcohol as important at a social event.

I'm more of an observer in those situations. To be intoxicated--to drink--to have a drink, like if I were to use a drug, to have something where I'm not completely, where I can't walk or can't talk or can't see clearly or remember my name, that's not me anytime. But if I do choose to do it, it's moderation. *Is it common that you would do that at a social event?* Pretty common, in moderation. I guess that's part of--something I saw before I came to school here. *That pattern?* That pattern. Once I got here, it was more prevalent...--not everyone parties the same way. Some people drink until they just pass out. Some people drink--the people I spend my time with, that's pretty much how we are. We're more of the sippers. It's not to get to the highest level of being intoxicated. It's more, let's just sit around and rap, and if this is the form of entertainment that we choose for this night, if that be it, fine. I'm more of an observer in those situations.

I definitely think alcohol is there for you if you want to drink it. I... think sometimes you

GREEK LIFE

need to relax. I believe in moderation, but other times I've gotten out of hand. I drink more than I've wanted to. But I don't think it's totally important. I can give it up on a weekend. I might drink heavily to a certain extent, but I tend to taper off towards the night, start drinking water or something like that. *You mean start out heavy, then lightly?* But always in the back of my mind, I know I have to wake up. I need to get this work done. It might be a Saturday. You have a meeting to take care of. You have to study on Sunday, you can't totally waste your weekend. I would have to say alcohol is definitely- I've always had it. It's always present, but I don't have to rely on it to have a good time.

I don't value it. I don't mind if it is there. The one thing that bothers me at W&L is that it's so prevalent. It's almost as though it is a problem. *Can you be more specific about that?* It's just that if you want to have a conversation, it's difficult because either they are drunk at almost every party, or there's someone who's drunk around you, making it difficult to do that. ...to get drunk every weekend. I don't mind it at all. It's something people are going to do, but it's a pattern that occurs all the time. The kind of alcoholism where people get so drunk that they can't remember what they've done. I think it's a problem.

Ninety-five percent said drugs were not important at a social event. Only five percent said they were important.

Experiences with Greek organizations ran the gamut. Those who had engaged the system fully -- gone through Rush, pledged, and become an active -- generally found it worthwhile. Others, who encountered fraternities primarily at social functions, had mixed experiences at best. Forty-five percent said they had mixed experiences with the Greek social organizations on campus; 33 percent said they had a good experience with them and 15 percent said they had a negative experience.

I rushed. If my financial situation would have been different, I guess there was a great possibility that I would have joined a group. But I think also I would have depledged quite quickly because it's not--I mean, I party, I drink, I hang out. I don't want to pay \$2000 to do it nor do I want to be forced to hang out with a certain group of people and be forced to like them because we're in the same organization. I think a lot of it's very fake. After I decided not to pledge and I finished rush, a lot of these guys...they never spoke to me again. They wouldn't even invite me to their functions.

Well, I've rushed. That's about it. I've been to 4 or 5 fraternity parties. *What was rush like?* That was a positive experience, because I got to meet a lot of people.....It was really fun. A lot of people knew where I went to high school. They had heard of my high school. When I go around campus now, there are people that I know.

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I have gone to fraternity parties. A lot of times you have somewhat the same music, somewhat the same crowd. It all ends up being the exact same feeling. That's my experience. I did not rush and I did not want to. *Did you feel at all ostracized or did you feel welcome at parties or at houses when you would drop in? Is there anything that came up in relation to that at all?* Until this year I didn't know anyone well enough for them to say "Come on down. We want to see you." So I went with other people who got invited down. So in that aspect there was no ill will there. The worst experience, however, was last year during Halloween. One of my friends got invited out to Zollman's. We went out there, and I believe—I'm not exactly sure which fraternities it was—not the ones that I usually attended. They were all dressed up somewhat funny, some of these costumes. The worst thing in the world were the people who dressed as black people. Yet another thing that I had never seen before except on some type of metro show, from the 30's or something. I had never seen this before in my life. I couldn't believe it. I was upset for the rest of the evening. *Because you felt this was degrading?* Yeah. Yet another offensive thing. Once again people had no problem whatsoever. *It never occurred to them that it was offensive?* No, not at all. That was on a Tuesday or Wednesday. That Saturday we had gone down to one of these fraternities in Red Square. We went in there. They had a real nice band. There weren't that many people there. ...[someone] said "Look at these 2 people. Look at them." They turned around. These people are also in the same thing the night before. *That was the Sat. before the Halloween party at Zollman's?* Yes. I cannot believe this stuff. The audacity of these people to do this. Couldn't understand it. Don't know why it would be fun or interesting or why you would want to do something like that. That was a hurtful experience. *How did you handle it?* I called my parents and said "Look what these crazy folks are doing again." We're at a backward place. That's all I could do. *Talk it out with somebody outside the situation.* I talked to some guy I was with. *You were with one other black person?* Yeah. Two other black people. I was just mad enough. Kept talking to them the whole time, saying "I can't believe this." *Did you stay there?* Just a little bit. I couldn't stay. My friend is a more calm guy. He was just "Don't worry about anything. All this is doing is showing how stupid these people are." He just talked to me for a while. I was fuming, I was just mad. I couldn't stay there. *Any other experiences like that? You spoke about the flags. Are there any other things you need to comment on?* During Parents Weekend we went up to a fraternity party. You could see the shock on a lot of these parents' faces that we were there. ... It was a very surprising look. There were already black people there. We came in also and we were talking to them. We were all just standing together and you just see people looking. That type of look—I can't explain. You could tell visually that they were concerned. *Because there were black people at the party?* Yeah. I guess it was something that they didn't expect to see.

I know the Greek fraternities and I go and spend time with the guys. A couple of them have asked me to join, but it just wasn't my thing. They are good guys and good fraternities, but I just wish there were more options. Certain ones...are more southern, Old South types. But I've experienced less receptivity at some you wouldn't expect that from.

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You might go to a house where 50% of the brothers are nice to you and 50% don't seem to want you around. But, like I say, we have to go and communicate, and see who's going to be on your side. Everybody is not going to love you and you aren't going to love everybody, so that's one of those things. Sometimes it hurts, especially when it's someone you know and expect different treatment from. [It may take the form] that I might be at someone's fraternity standing there, talking to somebody, and another brother might come up to me and tell me that I have to leave, townies aren't welcome. I've got to tell him that I am not a townie, and he's like, "Well, he's got to go." That's an obvious instance. It happened to me a couple of weeks ago. I've only been here a [short time], so I haven't seen it as much as some of the seniors who have seen that. Because I'm on ...[a varsity athletic team], some people might not say as much to me as they would to others. But I have experienced it. *How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?* When you encounter the bad experiences you have to communicate and talk and see what's going on and evaluate the situation yourself and then you just go on from there. It's not going to break anyone's heart. Some people are always going to be unable to understand you. As long as you don't let it get in your way.

I haven't had any negative experiences. The only reason I didn't join a fraternity is that I was a little greedy and I didn't want to pay the dues, plus I thought it would kind of constrict me as far as what I wanted to do socially. I didn't want to become whatever my fraternity was instead of being myself. *How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?* You can still visit the fraternities and you have friends there. So, you can hang out there. It's not a problem as far as that goes. So my experiences with them are very positive. *And you do, to some extent, go to the parties and you sometimes go visit?* Yeah.

I go there for parties. I know I didn't want to join [a] frat, just because it's a lot of money. ... I think a lot of people join it just to make friends, that's the way I look at it. It's kind of like a name for yourself. You're here, people characterize a person because of their frat. He's an SAE or he's a Phi Delt. You kinda form an image of those people because of frats. I guess my experience with frats has that they're OK, they're fine. I haven't had any problems as far as... racial. I haven't felt excluded. I wouldn't go to those frats. The only frats that I really don't feel comfortable at would be..... I've been to some of the typically Southern frats.... My roommates are in [a particular house], and before living with them this year, I thought I'm never going to [that house].... And I've met a lot of the guys from [that house] and I think they're real cool. I don't have any problems with them. I have a totally different image of [that house] now. And [another house], I think those guys are cool, too. I know a lot of those guys. *So you know many of... people to know that you're not comfortable, or is this just by reputation?* Just the reputation. And I know, actually I think there is one guy that I know definitely who's in ... and I think he's cool. I don't have any problem with him. But just the house, their tradition, I just don't go there.

When I was a freshman, these girls came to my room and asked me to rush. I said "Thank

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s you.” They said that a lot of minorities don’t participate in Rush and we really enjoy having you in a sorority. I don’t want you to have any negative feelings or think that you wouldn’t be accepted or anything like that. I was like, “Yeah, that’s fine, but I still don’t have the desire.” *What is it about sororities that made you feel that way?* When I think about sororities, I guess I think of people that you feel close to, people that you would naturally be friends with, people that if you have a problem you could go talk to, people who share the same backgrounds. It’s not the same background y’all have ...But with those definitions, that just does not meet the sororities that are presently on campus. I just don’t feel that being in any one of them would help me in any way. It just wouldn’t be something that I’d like to do, just because I don’t feel close to any one person. Not to say that I don’t have white friends that are female, I do. The majority are independent. I believe some are in sororities, but though they’re my friends, there’s still a limitation on actually what we discuss in our friendship, just because they have different backgrounds. That’s the major reason why I just have no desire... Basically, my mother told me I wasn’t going to be in one, just because of the negative publicity at that time about fraternities and sororities in general, with hazing and people being locked in cars and dying. My mother was like, “No, none of that for you.” It was never a desire of mine. I would do it now, because basically I would want [a black sorority] here as an attraction for black students, something that could draw black students here. A lot of times, when I’m hosting or recruiting black students, they ask about fraternities and sororities, if black ones are coming, and I think that is something that if we had them, we could pull in more minority students.

A lot, I guess...I’ve had a lot of involvement. *How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?* They’ve been very positive, very rewarding. There’s the fun aspect of the parties, and that’s the big thing here, ‘cause you kinda need that. But, especially sophomore year, when I lived in the house, that was good, being with all those people and being that close with them. But I was in somewhat of a unique position, I joined my fraternity because there was a lot of [varsity athletes] in the fraternity, and a bunch of the freshmen did too, but looking back on it, when people look at me, they say “You don’t fit in that fraternity.” So, that’s been somewhat of a unique situation for me. Not uncomfortable. It’s just that there are people in my fraternity that, if I met them outside, in another circumstance, I wouldn’t probably be friends with them. I wouldn’t have any significant relationship with them. But yet I have very close friends in the fraternity.

Seven of these students brought up the subject of black fraternities and sororities.

I’m not saying that blacks -- people who aren’t white shouldn’t join a white fraternity. It’s just you should have an option to associate yourself with people who are more like you. That’s why people join Greeks. They want to be in an organization where people have a lot of things in common, share together, and I don’t really see.....by joining one of the Greeks here. My relations with the Greeks are pretty good. I have free entry to any house I like.

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A black fraternity or sorority would be great.... We feel that with new housing rules, you know, it's very hard for us because, like I said, a lot of black students are on financial aid, so they cannot afford to live off campus, and obviously they cannot afford to have a car. Whereas many other students here can. We don't have any other place to live, like fraternity or sorority homes, because we don't feel comfortable in that situation. So we shouldn't be forced to have to join just to have somewhere to live. So if we had a black fraternity or sorority and a house to go with it, that would be great. I think it would bring black students together a lot. I don't see a lot of other black students on, like, day to day, going to class and everything. I see the ones I live with, but that's about it. Like, I haven't had much interaction with the freshmen. *Why is that, do you think?* Just the way classes are set up. Because there is nothing really for us to do socially. There is a reason for us to come together, but there isn't. There is nothing for us to do. You can only sit around and talk just so much. Having a black fraternity or sorority would create more things to do in the sense that fraternities and sororities have their own social functions, their own formals. I think that would be great.

We were trying to get a sorority or fraternity, and we don't have enough guys to do a fraternity. All we need is ... five - you have to have five interested for the guys, and ... seven or ten girls for a sorority and everyone maybe didn't want to do the same sorority. So we don't have that choice, like there's four of each, I think. There's not enough people to make that choice, you have to choose one, everyone has to agree on that one, and it's really hard cause people have family that come from one and then another, and it's hard. We were thinking about that outlet. But we can't have that cause we don't have the numbers, and numbers aren't seeming to go up.

My father is a member of a black fraternity and I have always wanted to be a part of that fraternity. So I really don't want to join a fraternity on campus. But being on [a varsity athletic team] I have the outlet of knowing people in fraternities and I am always welcome. So from the standpoint of going to the parties and formals, I am able to attend. But from the standpoint of being a black on campus, it is difficult because your black network is not as big and you're not necessarily always able to do the things that others who have a fraternity can do. *How do they differ, black and white fraternities?* I think it's just the fact that a fraternity ...[in which many individuals have much in common] you have a different bond with people that you know and relate to better. Especially in this kind of environment, a black fraternity would allow you a big, strong bond and would pull the black community together and make it stronger.

My mother told me I wasn't going to be in ...[a fraternity], just because of the negative publicity at that time about fraternities and sororities in general, with hazing and people being locked in cars and dying. My mother was like, "No, none of that for you." It was never a desire of mine. I would do it now, because basically I would want it here as an attraction for black students, something that could draw black students here. A lot of times, when I'm hosting or recruiting black students, they ask about fraternities and

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sororities, if black ones are coming, and I think that is something that if we had them, we could pull in more minority students.

Forty percent of respondents described their opportunities for dating as limited. Twenty-eight percent said there were no opportunities but 18 percent declared there were some opportunities.

Well, I didn't date for a year and a half because of my girlfriend. But since then I've had plenty of opportunities to date. That hasn't been a problem. I've dated girls from here and not from here. *Why did you laugh?* It's a funny question. Dating isn't really a big thing here. People generally don't date and have pretty limited interaction. You hang out with someone a couple of times and then it's over. *Why is that?* I think a large part of it is because this school is so interconnected as far as the rumor mill, people talking, -- this girl that you just met, you might like her if you met her at [a large school] because you had just met her, but the reality is that she probably dated someone you were friends with or was with someone you were friends and that creates other problems. So people are so interconnected here ...-- you can't be with that person because of this and that person because of that, and that's part of it. I think the other part is that at a smaller school you don't need to meet more people. At a bigger school you would think that you meet more people, but that's not the case because they generally go to the same place every weekend. I go to a different place every weekend so I meet people all the time, and I think that people are less likely to... feel like they need to be with one person, because it's one of those things like the grass is always greener on the other side. Why settle down? At another school people might think they might find a husband or wife, but that's generally not the attitude here. I know very few people who are engaged and going to get married. As opposed to my friends from home. A lot of them are in that situation because they go to bigger schools.

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's 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.

Here on campus I really don't think there are any opportunities for black students. If you're not dating ... I think it's hard for black students among the other black students,

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because we all know each other so well. So we don't want to ruin any type of a friendship that there is because 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.

Well, I would have to say that I have never dated a W&L student ever. With my opportunities, I don't think this school promotes dating because of the fraternity system. I think the only time dating really occurs is winter term. *Why's that?* Because it is cold outside, it is gray outside, people don't want to go to parties, they don't want to leave their house, so they get a girl friend or boy friend for the winter, until the weather warms up and they take off their clothes and spring term comes. *And then what?* And then they all break up and probably never talk to each other again, cause they're weird that like that, and then they enjoy spring term - with whoever and however many people. *Hooking up.* Yeah, then hooking up comes back in. But winter term people are kind of lazy. I guess the older you get. The more years you've been here.. I guess after a certain point you just want to find a girl friend or boy friend cause you're just tired of the whole hook up world. And that lasts through winter term until spring term comes and then you're part of the whole hook up process. And some people, instead of calling themselves dating, repeated hookups. - where they just hook up with the same person over and over again, so they don't call them dates. They don't actually spend money on them or anything like that. That's why Fancy Dress is such a big deal. It's just one long night of foreplay, that's all it is. A huge date function and that's it. Date Function, you know. They don't even call it - It's not even a date. So it's just eighty thousand dollars and people stand around dressed up really looking nice with each other for 5 days... I... just get dates for the night of FD and that's it. *So what are your opportunities as a W&L student how do you ..* I probably just shock them to death and ask them out. I've had dates here at W&L, gone out to dinner and things like that, with W&L students, but I wouldn't say I dated one the same sense I dated women in high school. I had a girl friend from another school my freshman year so I was kind of out of the scene, which was really quite good...

Well I don't go out on dates. ... there's just hookups here. *What does that mean?* I think that has a varying degree of meanings, but from what I understand ... You go to a fraternity party or whatever, you get drunk or maybe you don't get drunk, usually you are drunk, and you end up with somebody for the night. Now what goes on in that time span is, I guess, your business, but I guess it can go for many things. I think it's fair game, everything, I think. A lot of times, people go out and expect to hook up, that's what it's called, hooking up. There's a couple of people that date on this campus, but as far as dating is concerned, that's just not something that's going on around here. They're different, the people that date here. People here just hook up: you end up with somebody one weekend, somebody the next weekend, somebody the weekend after that. *What do you mean when you say that the people who date here are different?* What I mean is that

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obviously the hookup scene is not what they're in for, and it's just different. They prefer to have a steady relationship. *So your opportunities are limited because the scene* — The opportunities are limited because I'm a black person and the white guys here will not date black females... If I were white, I think there would be no problem. *Someone suggested that most of the women go over to VMI to find relationships. Is that something you've explored?* Well, yeah, when I first got here, I mean that's not how I intended for things to work out, you know? But, the guys over there are a whole lot more down to earth than the guys here, I think. Even the white guys over there. And when I first got here, I was kind of seeing some — not all at the same time! Yeah, I guess if you want to call it "dating" it would be guys over at VMI, definitely no one here ever. That's not by choice, you know. There some guys here I find very attractive, but they just won't give you the time of day.

Limited and With black females here on campus, there is not too much relationship between black females and black males on this campus. We're friends and all, but to go beyond that is really stressful. *So you are friends. There's not a wall between you in that sense.* No. They run with their crew, we run with our crew a lot. That's just natural. But we're just nice friends, hang out sometimes. It's fine....*Why do you think dating doesn't happen between black women and black men?* Because they have VMI (this is my personal opinion). A lot of them are involved with people over at VMI. These are more glamorous people from what I gather. They feel closer to them than to us. We just go to school with them. Apparently that doesn't mean too much.

These students divided closely on whether the University should offer activities designed to bring new black students together, 50 percent saying yes and 35 percent, no; 10 percent were not sure and five percent did not answer the question.

I don't think so. They have a Minority Students Association. Bringing them together is one thing, but segregating them from others is another. I think we have to be careful about that. You have to go out in the world and deal with many different types of people. College should be a reflection of life. You have to go out there and deal with people, come on. Talk to everybody. You'll realize that there are people out there who are so interesting. Some that are not. Just go ahead, yes, if you want to bring them together, if that's what is needed, fine. But be careful not to segregate yourselves from others. I think there is an ingrained need to identify with people that you think are similar to yourself. Sure, I come together with my friends all the time and we talk. We share a culture, we have a dialect. We'll just break down and we'll talk. But we have to go outside of that, and we make friends.

I don't think the university should do it. I could be reading the question wrong. I think it will be nice to have new activities. But I don't think it should be under the leadership of the university just because, it's kind of like affirmative action. You're working to get people who aren't directly associated with that group to help you to solve your problems. I think it's something the black students need to do....the faculty members, the

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administrators need to do, as opposed to the university itself, because I don't think the people would appreciate it as much. *The incoming black students?* Right. *Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.* Oh, yeah. It's the only place that I feel comfortable, completely comfortable. Whenever I feel the chips are down, I can always rely on the people there, always have a place to crash, television to watch, place to eat, to cook. *So it's a real safe haven for you? And you've used it a lot?* Oh, yeah. All the years I've been here, I've directly or indirectly lived there.

I definitely think there's a need to draw African Americans together, but it's difficult. How do you not label that as racial? As segregating. I ...think the MSA isn't segregated. It's not African American Students association. It's Minority. I ... think it's tough for any organization to base it on a certain race. There needs to be something else as far as maybe working with the MSA a little more. Making people on campus a little more aware of the role of MSA. I think the MSA has done an excellent job of selling themselves, of advertising that minority doesn't mean only African American. Everyone else on campus has to be a little more aware. *Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L?* I ...think that's a haven for me to go if I need something. If I need to get something off my chest. I love the guys over there. Since freshman year we've always had a relationship. I don't always see them as much as I'd like to. I think that's healthy. You don't always want to be dependent, but you want to have a certain relationship. I can just go over there, express ideas and leave. You don't always stay there and grump. There are too many people on this campus that are like, what are we gonna do? It's healthy to just get something off your chest, leave and get your work done. *Has the Minority Student Association played a role in your life at W&L?* The MSA has been very influential....*Influential in what sense?* In the fact that they're people who have congregated to talk and share feelings. Whether you share a little bit of knowledge that you have, just being an upperclassman to a freshman or a freshman sharing their feelings about their experiences. You don't need to raise your voice, you can just lead by example. Maybe you can do this. You're always offering new ideas.

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

I definitely believe they should. I think that if you increase the number so that they can speak for themselves, it will provide a community that will bring us together. I think the school should not leave it in our hands only. I know they have activities around campus to bring certain students together at certain events, and I think they should also have a situation where blacks have that opportunity to come together. Maybe throw a picnic for us. Just to let us know that they care about us, that we are not just here, and that they are looking out for us and making sure we are having a good experience.

The University should offer activities but they [should] work in conjunction with black students to improve social life. If the University does it not just from within but from without it might be seen as "you're only doing this because they're black, why are they giving so much attention to the black kids?" But if black kids make a concerted effort in

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conjunction with the University, then...they'd get a better appreciation for it also. *Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L?* It definitely has. When I came here, one of the places, if I did hang out, I hung out there. When I was a freshman that was one place to always stop in and say "What's up?" But at the same time I felt like a freshman in a bunch of seniors, which was the only thing. But there seems to be a tradition of black kids that visit it and carry on living there. You hear it in stories and things you can do. People are going to live there and going to have friends there. Whoever you live with for a year or over a period of years there will hopefully be some type of bond that develops. But as you look at the guys who have been there in the past, on the wall, you can imagine what they experienced based upon what you've experienced. Hopefully, it's an incentive for me to actually one day be one of the guys on the wall who passed through W&L and has been successful. I don't know if they still put those pictures on the wall anymore, but they probably should. It's a home base.

Probably not, because I've heard separate opinions like, "Oh, they're trying to bring us together," and you just get these negative opinions. I think it's kind of a self-correcting thing. If it really needed to be done, the black students will take care of it themselves.... So I don't think it should be done. If it really needed to be done, I think someone would take care of it.

Yes. When I came, my freshman year, there was a program before actual freshman orientation, maybe two days before, when we came in for a little program where Anece McCloud introduced study skills...what opportunities there were on campus, if we had problems where we could go. I think it was helpful, especially if you had been accepted and not had a chance to meet other minority students. You feel all by yourself. You're coming to a school where you know no one else, no one from your school is here, you have no friends here, you need to forge some kind of friendship. I know that one of the reasons why that program was stopped was because they felt that black students were becoming too close in the program. The year that I came there were comments from my dorm counselor that maybe that's the reason why we were so close and so tight knit and weren't integrating. There were complaints and they decided to stop it. They felt that it was in some way negative, which I don't believe it was. I wish they hadn't stopped those before-orientation gatherings.

Just over half the students said Chavis House played a role in their life at W&L; twenty-eight percent said they went there only for meetings and 20 percent said it had not played a role. Sixty-three percent said that the Minority Students' Association had played a role in their life; 32 percent said it had not. Five percent did not answer.

CHAPTER VIII: STUDENT RECRUITMENT

On the question of whether the size of the black enrollment at W&L was adequate, we received a strong answer that it was not - 93 percent said it was inadequate, seven percent were not sure and no one said it was adequate.²

There's very few black people. Just look around. I think it would be a better place if there were more black students. However, there's obviously a Catch-22. Because there aren't enough black students, other black students don't want to come here. So unless you lure them in with scholarships — *You think that's a major reason that it's hard to recruit black students to W&L?* Oh yeah. I remember I met a kid during Honor Scholars who said I am probably not going come here because of the minority community here. He said, "How do you feel about it?" I said it wasn't a plus, but I'm going to get a scholarship here so that's going to determine it. I'm sure that's an issue for a lot of people. Just the social life, they don't come here for that. Like I said, if you come from a city kind of environment, you don't see yourself fitting in here. *So, it's definitely inadequate in terms of numbers, in terms of recruiting we can't attract because being so small we can attract decent numbers because we already have such low numbers. What else?* It would be a better place just that I think the kind of input that you can get just makes you a better person. That's part of college and what learning is. You don't just learn from books, you learn about people's culture. And I'm thankful to have been exposed to a lot just because of the way my family is... But I look at other kids that I know, that I am friends with... and maybe if W&L had more people, and there weren't one or two gays kids out of the closet, that may force people to deal with that issue. But the reality is that [at] W&L they can not ever deal with that issue. Whereas most kids in college have to deal with that issue-- so you are less of a well-rounded person, you're less complete when you leave here because of things you haven't been exposed to, which are very important because you're going to have to interact with those people at some point in your life, whatever group they are in, at work or whatever. *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....*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.

²Since these interviews the black undergraduate student population has increased from 2.4% of all undergraduates in Winter, 1997, to 3.3% of all undergraduates in Winter, 1999.

CURRENT PRACTICES

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. I 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... 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... *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 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?* 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 very 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 of four times a week. But a science professor, politics professor, you see those people every week. Probably every day.

Definitely inadequate. I think if there were more black students here, that would help us a lot. Because we wouldn't feel as singled out as we do. Where it is now, a lot of them I talk to, I'm the only one who's the only black person in the class. That's pretty much the norm for everybody. Maybe not in all their classes, but in at least one or two they are the only black person in there. So, I think there needs to be more representation. I think that if there were more of us that would force the whole student body to interact with us, cause right now they don't have to. So I think that's why I'm looked at as a black student, rather than a student, because I'm the only one in your class and you don't ever have to talk to me if you don't want to. If there were more of us at some point you'd have to talk to one of us. Sounds bad, but.. *So if they had to talk to you..then what?* It would help relations in the community, I think. I think there's a lot of stereotyping here. I don't think the racism here is really [that] they just want to be prejudiced, it's just "I don't know you. I don't know anything about your people and I don't ever have to know because I don't ever have to talk to you. I might have to take this history class about slavery, but I don't ever have to

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talk to you so I don't even have to know if you all like rap music or not." *Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?* I think it's inadequate, and I think that makes a lot of people not want to come here. They only see.. There's only one that I know of, I believe there's two now. Two black professors. For me it's not really a problem because I don't care who's teaching the class as long as they can teach. But I think for maybe identification purposes and maybe for some of the students on this campus as well who are not black, because the majority of the black people on this campus who do work here are serving them. I think it's important to keep that balance... it gives the impression that the majority of black people can never achieve the status that a lot of the professors do, in that they only work in a service type of environment because all of them are raking leaves or serving in the D hall. We definitely need more.

Do you remember the movie with the Jewish guy who — he was a Jewish guy and the school uses him for football, and there comes up an honor court case, and he didn't cheat, but because he's Jewish it was said that he cheated. His friends didn't know he was Jewish, but it came out that because he lied about that he's probably lying about the cheating. At the end there's a big quote that said "You used me for football, now I'm going to use you to get through college." A lot of times I feel like you're using me, like a quota or whatever, to say "We do have black students at our school." That's how I think a lot of us feel. I think I feel that way because I don't see so much happening to make us feel like we part of this community. A lot of people think you shouldn't have to go out of your way to make it: you chose to go here. We shouldn't have to go out of our way to make you feel welcome here. But, you kind of have to. This school is far from diverse, but I think some people actually do think it is diverse, while it's not.

Inadequate. Disgusting. I think for the school to say that they're making these great attempts at increasing student diversity. I think they're doing a horrible job of it. To have the statistics--you send out 70 acceptances, and you only receive 20 people back who decide to come to school here. I don't think you're putting forth that much of an effort to get those other 60 students. If you were, they would be here. You would have a higher percentage of them coming. *So you think the efforts at recruitment are inadequate?* Oh, yeah. Pretty bad. Kids want to see something more than a party and athletics. They want to come and see what the school is really about. *Are you talking specifically about Prospective Weekend?* Yeah - and just other times they come. They come at such off-set weekends that they really don't get a chance to get involved with the students to get something more. And just with the fact that you have only 40 black students here now. They're being really naive, I think, to think they're really gonna get 50 students one year, when they only see 40. It would be great to have 90 black students here, but you know, if you have a small population, you're gonna continue to have a small population. You're not gonna bring that big shift unless you just go out hard-core to get them. I just learned that VMI has 80 black students, and I'm like, yeah.... they have more, they see the numbers, they see the black students, they see each other on television, they play sports. It's like, yeah, it's a military school but there are other black faces that I can interact with.

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But here, just like those blacks who come, we're stopping you because you're the only black person we've bumped into. That's pretty bad, as opposed to -- I think the worst stat at the school is the fact that there are more black employees here than there are black students. They don't shy away from hiring black workers. *Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?* Completely inadequate. Right now, currently, 1997, there are 3 black professors at this university in undergrad. One in history, one in politics, one in geology and yeah, that's pretty sad, pretty disgusting. I think it's really difficult to tell people you're looking for diversity and your racial make-up is that small. There are more Asian professors here than there are black professors. That's pretty rough.

Eighty-three percent said the number of black professors was inadequate compared with seven percent who thought it was adequate. Five percent were not sure and five percent said it didn't matter. Seventy-three percent said the number of black administrators was inadequate compared with 10 percent who thought it was adequate. Some were not sure or thought it not relevant.

Eighty-three percent of these respondents said they would be willing to recruit other students for W&L while they were students or when they became alumni. Ten percent said they would not be willing. Some weren't sure.

Absolutely. I've done that. I go home and... tell people what W&L is like. I lay down the facts. This is what it is like. It's not for everybody. *What do you say?* They usually ask questions. I try to answer as honestly as I possibly can. *What do you mean when you say I lay down the facts because it's not for everybody?* Well, in them asking questions, I try not to make the campus look as if it's something that it's not. I tell them that it's a lot of work, tell them about the fraternity which plays a big part, especially for the guys. Now that they've pushed back rush, I find that the guys are more relaxed. That probably helps. I talk to them about that. Sitting here on campus, we need to get out there. I can't say for other campuses. But here you really do need to go and talk about the professors. They're good guys. It's a different culture altogether, so this might be different for a lot of people. I tell them what it's like. It's not all fun and games; it's a lot of work.

I've been doing it since I was a freshman. *Really? Even when you were miserable?* Uh-huh. I came here and I was part of the community and I would tell them the same thing I've always told everybody. If you come here, it's because it's your choice. It's not because of my experience.... The school isn't horrible. There's certain things you have to realize real quick or you will go crazy. There is this problem, there is this problem, there is that problem. Doesn't mean it's going to stop the whole school. Doesn't mean that's the way the whole school thinks. *What would you tell someone you have to know right*

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away? Be yourself and just don't let people bother you. It's so easy to do. Like when the black students, they still ask me, "how can you go to school with a confederate flag?" I'm like, well, still difficult. But I don't let it stop me.

Yes, I've done some of that with calling students on the phone. They had an alumni day at my high school, and I went back. I was telling some of the students about the school and everything. Just trying to get more people here. I tell them it's a really great school. They'll say "I've never heard of it." So I try to explain. I tell them if you're looking for a small campus, it's a great place to be. If you want accessible professors, they're here. The library is open 24 hours. I tell them straight up, if you're looking for a party school for blacks, it's not here. Cause I don't want them to get here and be disappointed. When I got here I was disappointed, but if that's what they're looking for in a school, I advise them about that. I talked to some people who did come to visit.

No. The only thing I would be willing to do to bring a student here would be to talk to the student, to tell them what the experience here, from my perspective, is and let them make their own choice. I would not go to some college fair and represent this school... To me, if I were listening to me, I would not go here. Why do it if you know that if that was you, you wouldn't have gone here? If they want to entice someone to go here through some other person who enjoyed it or has a very, very positive spin about the whole thing, then do that. Then when they are really considering accepting it—they do this a lot—they bring these students here and have panel discussion and we sit down and talk to them. They ask questions and we tell them what we have gone through, some of the same things we are saying here. You let them make up their own mind. You just set out—this is what to expect, this may happen, this is what it's going to be like. If you think you're going to be a strong enough person to get through everything, then you come on down and try to make your experience a better experience. I cannot see myself at this point in time in my life saying "Go down to W&L, it's going to be great for you."

No. I wouldn't. Well, I can't say.. No, definitely as part of alumni program, no. As myself, just as a student, I doubt it. I haven't done it in the past. I still think this place is a bad place to come if you can go anywhere else. Boston, preferably, go, get out of here. My speech probably has been the same since freshman year. This year I think the prospective weekend is going to come, they're probably going to do the same thing I did and look me and my roommate and say well these guys aren't doing too bad. They got this house, they seem to know people. They don't seem to be lost. I can go borrow someone's car and go drive wherever I want anytime. So these people have rides, they don't even need to do anything. They're not in fraternities, they have their own house! So they'll probably see that picture and come anyway, but I would still tell them all the negatives cause I think there are far more negatives than positives here. I'm from [a southern state] and this place is south to me. So I would not be recruiting them, nor would I be giving them any money either. After you graduate and they ask you for money every year, they won't get any of that from me. Not for a long time, that's for sure.

CHAPTER IX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Black students at Washington and Lee share much in common with their white peers; both groups experience similar problems in adjusting to W&L social life and the academic demands of our curriculum. Much of what we heard in these interviews struck familiar notes because we had heard similar comments from some white students. Advisors and counselors to black students might do well to point out that black students share many problems with many white students in the academic and even social realms; knowing they are not alone might help overcome some feelings of isolation and alienation. Nevertheless, we believe there is ample evidence that race places an overlay on these students' experience that intensifies and exacerbates their problems. To ignore that fact is to trivialize the very real and unique problems these students face and the courage with which they address them.

For Washington and Lee, recruitment of black students must present something of a moral dilemma. The University mission dictates the necessity of assembling a student body with some measure of diversity. We cannot content ourselves with simply providing an educational environment that never challenges the assumptions students bring here, and gathering students of differing backgrounds is an important way of providing that challenge. Some might add that our institution's history as a slave owner and practitioner of segregation make it doubly fitting that we offer our educational benefits to the modern day descendants of those who were slaves or were discriminated against³. So the University brings black students to this campus, often with generous grants of financial aid, but is not fully prepared to provide them with the complete college experience they deserve. Yes, we can warn them in advance that things may not be as happy for them here, especially at the start, as they might be elsewhere. But that is not enough. The University must continue to address the problem of providing these students, whose presence is especially advantageous to us, with a more fulfilling life both inside and outside the classroom. To fail to do so is to deprive these students of the full advantages of a Washington and Lee education. Education is not just a classroom experience; it is the sum total of living the

³W&L became a slave holder by inheritance, not purchase. In his will Jockey John Robinson bequeathed some slaves to the then Washington College. See the Trustees' Papers, folder 115 in the University Archives.

campus experience outside, as well as inside, the classroom. A well-designed University Commons with a well developed program will benefit black as well as white students.

At the same time, we need to note the qualities that seem to have contributed to some black students having a more satisfactory experience than others. A willingness to challenge their own preconceptions benefitted many of these students and eventually led them to a happier resolution in their search for ways to settle their relationship with the University. When we recruit new students, we might put some emphasis on those qualities of independence, flexibility and determination that seem to contribute to a good adjustment at W&L.

These students make a strong case for an increased black presence in the student body and the faculty. When we conducted these interviews, only 40 students identified themselves as black including 6 non-residents. This year we have 55 such students including 12 non-residents. Increased University efforts to recruit black students who are resident Americans seem appropriate and we particularly call for stronger administrative leadership in the recruitment of black undergraduate faculty.

Whatever should be the institutional response in these matters, at the individual level each of us can do more. Few of our black interviewees have suffered overt discrimination, but many have suffered from unthinking slights—the failure to make eye contact or to exchange greetings, the tendency to see one individual as a spokesman for a whole race, the extravagant display of southern symbolism which means one thing to white southerners but something quite different to blacks, the unconscious assumption that a W&L student would not have black skin or simply the ignoring of a black student until some necessity compels recognition. We can all take renewed care to make eye contact on the campus, to exchange greetings, and to recognize and respect, in the myriad ways necessary, the members of our community who are black. Washington and Lee prides itself on its civility; it accords well with that tradition for whites to go out of their way to respect the sensitivities of those blacks among us who share with us the heritage of America's racial past.

