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Blacks In Academia Are Beautiful

185

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a three part series by Alligator correspondent Larry Jordan concerning black faculty recruitment at UF. This installment deals with the availability of black Ph.D's and faculty raiding.)

By LARRY JORDAN
Alligator Correspondent

After decades when being black was a professional handicap, and then years when the ethic was never to mention race, black today in academic circles has never been more beautiful.

Black Ph.D.s and masters degree-holders now are the object nationwide of the most feverish talent

hunt since the days of harem-scram bidding for promising athletes.

Florida A & M University, UF's sister university and the only predominately black institution in Florida's state university system, is feeling the pressure of this hunt: It's faculty is being raided.

"Of course we've had raids on our faculty by white institutions," said Dr. Benjamin Perry, president of FAMU, "but mostly by schools outside the state."

"State schools have been very reasonable with me," Perry said. "There is an agreement between the state university presidents that we don't raid each other's faculty."

Perry has lost 12 faculty members to

white institutions within the last two years. Most of these have gone to northern or midwestern schools, but at least one former A & M faculty member is now teaching at FSU.

Even with the "gentlemen's agreement" between the state university presidents, the number of faculty members A & M has lost to state schools would probably be greater if a Board of Regents guideline did not severely restrict raiding within the state university system.

"If you offer a person more money," Perry said, "he's at liberty to take it. Most of my good people are just staying

(SEE 'BLACK' PAGE 2)

B-1



185

Black Ph.D's Subjects Of Faculty Raiding

FROM PAGE ONE

because of dedication."

Raiding was never a problem when Florida's university system was smaller. But, with expansion and several new state schools about to be opened, staffing has become an acute problem.

Newer institutions are having problems finding faculty members of any color. With student demands for black-studies programs, and for more black faces on faculties, their problems have intensified.

A survey completed last fall by the Ford Foundation showed that of 37,500 doctoral degrees awarded between 1964 and 1968, by a representative group of 63 major universities, only 294 — less than 1 per cent — went to black Americans.

Added to this severe scarcity of available black Ph.D.s is the fact that many black scholars on predominantly black campuses want to leave.

Black colleges have been noted in the past for inadequate facilities, authoritarian administrations, low salaries and an anti-intellectual faculty-student atmosphere.

All of these things, together with the

desire of white institutions to add black faces to their faculties, are causing an increasing exodus from black campuses each year.

What college and university circles are seeing in pandaromatic detail is the law of supply and demand operating with an extra added push — the desire to leave black campuses that have been wastelands for many black scholars.

Any hope that the seller's market can be relieved by a dramatic upsurge in the numbers of black Ph.D's is folly according to current logistics.

Last Year's Ford Foundation survey found that the number of blacks now in graduate schools would have to multiply sevenfold, and the annual output of new black Ph.D's upped 15 times, to bring a ratio of black scholars equal to the percentage of blacks in the total U.S. population.

"All the current black recruitment programs will not bring off such increases," the study said.

Long-range alleviation of the problem, many experts say, is dependent upon more programs to encourage and fully finance more black undergraduates into winning academic credentials for college teaching.

UF has several such programs now getting underway in Agriculture, Education and through the office of minority Students' Affairs.

What these programs will mean for the future is still a matter of speculation. In the meantime the black institutions of Florida are prime targets for faculty pirating.

UF itself is feeling this pressure, but many chief administrators say raiding A & M is not the answer.

"I wouldn't approach any A & M faculty member without first consulting with President Perry," said Vice-President for Student Affairs Lester Hale, who recently hired UF's first black administrator.

"It would be unfair unless there was complete understanding about the idea between the presidents of the two universities," he said.

"Out of respect for Dr. Perry and his situation, and for A & M as a sister school, I would not do this sort of thing," Hale said.

Hale echoes the sentiments of many UF administrators who feel that raiding black colleges within the state is absolutely taboo.

"There is an absolute rule that under

no circumstances will we raid black colleges of their faculty or students," said Hal Stahmer, assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

"We will encourage them (black faculty and students) to come to graduate school here if similar facilities are not offered at their schools. But we will not raid their schools," he said.

This is not a unanimous view of UF administrators and faculty members.

"I have no objections to raiding," said Dr. Irving J. Goffman, an economics professor and a member of the Presidential Committee on the Disadvantage.

"There is no reason why bright people should not be paid whatever the market requires that we pay them," he said. To have "hands off" policy on black scholars from predominantly black schools would, in Goffman's opinion, penalize outstanding black faculty and prevent them from gaining prominence in their field.

Goffman is, however, against raiding that would academically cripple black institutions.