

A CONFERENCE ON RECRUITMENT OF BLACK AND OTHER MINORITY STUDENTS AND FACULTY¹

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THE Conference was held in the Board Room of APA on April 18–20, 1969. The participants³ were persons nominated by the Association of Black Psychologists and by the Board of Directors, and also included representation from the Conference of Graduate Department

¹ *Editor's note.* At the Board of Directors meeting held February 13–15, 1969, funds were authorized to conduct a Conference on Recruitment. Such a conference was held April 18–20, 1969, arranged for and chaired by George Albee. A report of this conference was prepared by Albee and was presented to the Board of Directors at its meeting on May 15–17, 1969. After careful consideration of the Report of the Conference, the report was "Received with thanks by the APA Board of Directors and was referred to the APA governance for study and recommendation, noting that individuals in the field and in funding agencies should also play a role." Such action by the Board of Directors will insure continued attention by APA boards and committees to those appropriate matters and issues discussed with representatives of the Association of Black Psychologists and to the matters symbolized by the Statement of Concern.

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³ Invited participants: George W. Albee, Case Western Reserve University; Joseph Awkard, Florida A&M University; James A. Bayton, Howard University; Martin Deutsch, New York University; William Harvey, St. Louis State Hospital; Edward E. Johnson, Southern University; Wilbert J. McKeachie, University of Michigan; George A. Miller, The Rockefeller University; Eugene L. Runyon, Central State University; M. Brewster Smith, University of Chicago; Julian C. Stanley, The Johns Hopkins University; Charles W. Thomas, South Central Multipurpose Health Services Center, University of Southern California; Ernestine Thomas, Case Western Reserve University; Wilse B. Webb, University of Florida; E. Belvin Williams, Computer Center, Teachers College, Columbia University; Roger K. Williams, Morgan State College; C. L. Winder, Michigan State University; Lauren G. Wispé, University of Oklahoma. Resource people: C. Alan Bonaueu, Administrative Officer for Educational Affairs, APA; Charles S. Gersoni, Associate Executive Officer, APA; Kenneth B. Little, Executive Officer, APA; Stanley Schneider and Forrest Tyler, Psychology Section, Behavioral Science Training Branch, National Institute of Mental Health, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Chairmen, and the Committee on Equality of Opportunity in Psychology, invited persons with special technical competence, and resource people from Federal agencies and from the staff of APA.

In the course of the discussions the Conference participants became increasingly aware of the extent of underrepresentation of minority groups in psychology; they became impressed, too, with the urgency with which those in American psychology must act both to put our own house in order and to set an example to other organizations that may be expected to be encouraged to follow our lead. For example, we were impressed with the facts, well documented by the Committee on Equality of Opportunity in Psychology, that the 10 most prestigious departments of psychology in the United States granted only 8 PhDs in psychology to Negro candidates between 1920 and 1966 while granting a total of 3,767 PhDs during this period; six of these leading departments had not had a single Negro PhD. Of the largest producers of PhDs during this period fewer than 1% of the doctorates were won by black students. (It is these same departments, we cannot resist noting, that supply the bulk of psychological consultation to Federal training and research programs.)

The Conference participants are aware of the fact that deeply held attitudes and behavior patterns cannot be legislated out of existence and that pious platitudes cannot change the world. But we also are aware that leaders who truly lead can often mobilize widespread readiness for positive action, and so we urge the APA Council, boards, and committees, and our whole organizational and staff structure, to provide leadership in expanding the opportunities for black and other minority group students and faculty to enter the mainstream of psychology.

The tenor of the discussion was serious and concerned, and seldom unreasonable. Participants generally agreed that large efforts had to be made at all levels—making opportunities available in

graduate departments for qualified black and other minority group students, with special financial assistance earmarked; improving the quality of undergraduate education in psychology at predominantly black colleges; recruiting more able undergraduates to these departments; improving the educational opportunities in elementary and secondary schools for disadvantaged students; and working to eliminate the effects of racism throughout our society. At the same time it was recognized that there is an important substantive body of knowledge in psychology and that graduate work makes strenuous demands. One of the black participants said it well: "There is a great need to avoid the encouragement, implicit or otherwise, of 'half-baked,' non-scientific black departments of psychology for the production of instant black psychologists whose only forte would be some vague 'community psychology'." This same man spoke of the urgency of "recruiting and holding capable faculty members, updating and in most instances creating adequate facilities for laboratory experiences, updating and increasing library resources, and offering financial support to students who frequently are indigent."

We were impressed with the findings of the Wispé Committee on Equal Opportunities that more than half of all Negro psychologists live in the South, and an even higher percentage were born there and received their bachelor's degrees there. We agree with this Committee that "More active steps should be taken . . . to recruit and train for careers in psychology graduates from Negro colleges, especially located in the South."

To back up this rather pious-sounding recommendation we would urge that APA use its influence to encourage special summer workshops around topics where there may be specific deficiencies (e.g., statistics), and as a way of reinforcing motivation; also desirable are individual faculty fellowships, funded by Federal sources, for the continuing education of faculty members at southern Negro colleges. We would encourage efforts by such organizations as the Southern Regional Education Board and the Southeastern Psychological Association to find resources for the organization of joint efforts to augment and enrich the facilities for the teaching of psychology in black colleges in this region.

The Committee on Equal Opportunities has been

studying the problems of recruiting minority group students for careers in psychology, and is presently preparing a proposal that, after being approved by APA governance, will go to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It is the belief of the Committee that existing programs such as the National Science Foundation Visiting Scientist Program, the Careers-in-Psychology program, etc., are not especially suitable for this purpose; their proposal will use integrated visiting teams carrying out a carefully planned program.

We note the encouraging fact that the prestigious Council of Graduate Department Chairmen has appointed a committee to concern itself with ways of encouraging the admission of more black and other minority group students into graduate study in psychology. We urge this organization to find creative ways quickly, and we concur with the recommendation of the Wispé Committee that "More elasticity in admission requirements for graduate training should be considered by the . . . Conference of Graduate Department Chairmen."

The matter of admission requirements, particularly the predictive value of highly verbal tests, is a complex subject, but the Conference spent some time discussing these problems. While recognizing that verbal tests are unquestionably predictive of college and graduate school grades in a system that emphasizes verbal performance, the Conference also noted the relatively low predictive value of graduate school classroom performance for later scientific or professional success. It may be that a broadening of the psychological curriculum to make it more relevant to pervasive human problems would attract a more diverse group of applicants and also have a beneficial effect on student motivation and performance, and on ultimate career patterns.

In this regard there was discussion of the question of the relevance of much of the content of graduate education in psychology to critical human problems on which man's survival itself may depend—problems like war, overpopulation, racism, and the increasing pollution of our social and physical environment. APA cannot tell university departments what to teach, but we do know enough about reinforcement theory to suggest that both APA and NIMH (and other Federal funding agencies) should be prepared to reward programs as they begin to approximate scientific and profes-

sional concern with these problems. We note with approval that the theme of the 1969 Annual APA Convention is "Psychology and Problems of Society."

Each board and committee, each division of APA, and each state psychological association should examine its current activities and its committee structure to see what steps it can take to deal with current problems of the black psychological community.

We encourage divisions and state associations to devote more attention in their newsletters and at their annual programs to the creation of a climate that encourages the application of psychological research and knowledge to reduce racism and the problems it creates. We would hope, for example, that those divisions and state associations that sponsor postdoctoral institutes and workshops might devote time to the psychological aspects of racism.

We suggest that divisional and state psychological groups consider what they might do to acquaint qualified minority group students in high schools and colleges with career opportunities in psychology; we recommend also that some of the obvious energies of the state associations, so long expended in legislative and other professional matters, be directed toward finding creative ways of increasing the number of disadvantaged students in undergraduate and graduate programs in psychology and increasing the participation of black psychologists in psychological association programs.

Among the other recommendations coming out of the Conference are the following:

We would ask APA to recommend that NIMH add extra stipends to existing training grants, stipends specifically earmarked for higher risk minority group students who might be encouraged in some cases to spend a "bridge year" in courses selected as preparatory to graduate study.

We further urge that APA use its influence with NIMH, the Office of Education, and the Social Rehabilitation Service to seek new and effective ways to fund programs for minority group students, especially at the undergraduate level, with the goal of increasing the pool of potential graduate students for the human service professions. Such support might carry over to the early years of graduate school in the way Social Science Research Council support is now given.

In this context we would also ask that Federal granting agencies make a more effective effort at involving qualified black and other minority group psychologists and social scientists on their panels, study sections, and staffs. As noted elsewhere in this report the most prestigious universities, which supply a large proportion of government consultants and panel members, have not been distinguished as producers of black PhDs and so may not be expected to have special qualifications in this general area.

The Education and Training Board of APA has extensive contacts with nearly every graduate doctoral program in the country. Questions asked by its site visitors receive careful attention and may promote desirable changes. While the Education and Training Board cannot and should not dictate admissions or patterns of graduate training it could seek out and encourage demonstration programs more consistent with the needs of minority group students and experimentation with curriculum changes.

As another example of what APA could do, the Committee on Subdoctoral Education in Psychology could develop recommendations for special programs designed to remedy critical shortages in such fields as MA-level black counselors for community colleges or of Mexican-American and Puerto Rican school psychologists. The various curriculum programs being developed can focus on problems of relevance and also on recruitment of minority group students. It is expected that representatives of the Association of Black Psychologists and other minority groups might make useful contributions to these developments.

The APA Committee on Precollege Psychology and the Division 2 Committee on Psychology in the High Schools could pay special attention to the problems of largely black or Mexican-American or Puerto Rican high schools.

We cite these merely as examples of actions possible at many levels of APA governance structure.

One of the recurring themes throughout the Conference was the urgent need for black role models in psychology—persons who might be examples to black undergraduates of the opportunities available to them in psychology. Because of the relatively small number of black psychologists and especially black college teachers, and because the large and affluent largely white universities are

hiring black faculty away from the predominantly black southern colleges, this is an increasingly serious need.

We recommend that APA develop a series of training films featuring black and other minority group psychologists for use in classrooms in both largely black and largely white institutions. APA's demonstrated competence in this area (e.g., "Focus on Behavior") and the potential attractiveness of such a project to NIMH suggest that this proposal be given high priority by the Board.

Numerous other examples will occur to members of various boards and committees to whom we hope the Board will direct proposals for action.

The Conference noted with concern the fact that a large number of black psychologists belong neither to APA nor to state or local psychological associations. While there may have been good reasons in the past why these psychologists felt that APA, and the other professional groups, had little to offer them, it is our hope that this situation no longer obtains. Other special groups in psychology have found that an organized effort, even by a relatively small number, can have dramatic effects on the APA governance structure, including changes in the distribution of budgeted activities; black and other minority group psychologists may note that this Conference, and many other current APA activities, have been triggered by the

"Statement of Concerns" of the Association of Black Psychologists presented to Council in October 1968. We hope this lesson is not lost and that organizational activity within APA by black psychologists will increase.

The Conference asked that APA use its influence to assure itself of nondiscriminating practices among its service users and contractors—printers, advertisers, employer listings, etc. A statement to this effect should be carried in contracts, promotional material, and publications.

We also recommend to the Editor that a new and regularly scheduled section of the *American Psychologist* be created, to report on "Psychology and Problems of Society," which might serve as a source of information to our members about significant developments in research, in Federal and state programming, and in the activity of our science as a means of promoting human welfare.

We further recommend that eventually a position be created in the Central Office under the general direction of the Executive Officer to be concerned with relating psychology to social problems including those dealt with in this report.

We urge that the Board of Directors of APA approve the spirit of these recommendations and refer them as appropriate for action to boards, committees, divisions, and state associations.

The *Convention Program* was mailed in July to the subscribers of the *American Psychologist*. Since this is the only copy of the program that you will receive, please bring it to the Convention. Only a limited supply will be available at the Convention, for a charge of \$1.00 per copy.