

THE CITY COLLEGE  
OF  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10031

Huey P. Newton Hall for Political Action

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

On April 22, 1969, the Black and Puerto Rican Community took control of City College. For over six months, their repeated attempts to implement the demands of their five point program failed. The administration's obstinacy and pigheadedness demanded a response. The seizure of South Campus was the response of the Black and Puerto Rican students to the institutional racism manifested by the Administration.

The basis of the Black and Puerto Rican demands is the concept that the people must exercise control over their environment. When they arrive at City College, Black and Puerto Rican Students become immediately aware that everything, from the entrance requirements to the orientation programs to the curriculum, is geared to the needs of the power structure under which the Blacks and Puerto Ricans are exploited.

One day after the seizure of South Campus, a group of white students supporting the Black and Puerto Rican demands entered Klapper Hall and have remained there since. We have renamed the building Huey P. Newton Hall for Political Action. The consciousness that is evolving here, thriving on continual political discourse will long survive our occupation of Newton Hall.

We are here because the resolution of this crisis will affect every student in the university. The future of our education and our lives and this society is being determined to a great extent by what is happening at Harlem University and Newton Hall and the other Harlem Universities and Newton Halls across the country. We, as white students, can either be a part of the solution or a part of the problem. At Huey P. Newton Hall of Political Action we are attempting to become a part of the solution.

The unequivocal acceptance of the Community's demands is a necessity for the future we seek for ourselves. We have occupied this building because we want to show that our brothers and sisters of the University of Harlem are not alone in their commitment to see this struggle through to the end. This solidarity is exemplified by the public pledge of the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community to break off negotiations with the administration if the police are called on campus, and by our pledge to maintain the occupation until the demands are met.

Our solidarity with the Black and Puerto Rican students arises not from sympathy but from a realization that we, too, are oppressed; that though the form of the oppression may differ, the face of the oppressor is the same.

Black and Puerto Rican people are among the most oppressed members of this society. They must struggle daily with a system that attempts to deprive them of their manhood, their livelihood and even their lives.

If Black people are field niggers, then white people are house niggers in a plantation economy. We are the overseers of a society that spills our blood needlessly in wars against the colored peoples of the world. This society consolidates the positions of corporate interests so consumed with greed that they can only blindly seek to expand their influence throughout the world.

We are victims of a corporate society that reduces man to an interchangeable part for an assembly line economy; a society that reduces education to vocational training; a society that has fallen out of touch with the pressing needs of the oppressed peoples of this country and the world.

Equality is a meaningless phrase when racism has been institutionalized through imperialism abroad and class stratification at home.

Do not help the system fake reality, honesty and so-called justice. That fakery is the only force holding off the system's secret fear, the fear and reality of knowing that they are unfit to exist; expose fakery and help the truth destroy them. Your consent is their ONLY grasp on life.

The administration can't respond adequately to the needs of either the urban community or of its students. The actions of the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community have made all that clear. They have resolved to achieve their ends despite obstacles created by white racist institutions. WE ask you to join us as we have joined with them.

There will be a general meeting to discuss the strike and the implementation of the Five Demands at Newton Hall, 135th Street and Convent Avenue, on Monday, May 5, at 12 noon.

COME!!

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!

## THE FIVE DEMANDS

### 1. A Separate School of Black and Puerto Rican Studies

Racism is a barrier which separates people. Racism is hate fed by ignorance and misunderstanding. It is the responsibility of education to eliminate this ignorance and enable people to understand one another. Racism is also fed by the destruction of a people who are denied access to their own history and culture. It is the responsibility of education to provide the knowledge from which dignity and self-respect can grow. An education which omits Black and Puerto Rican studies fails in this task.

The unique needs of these studies requires the establishment of a school with status comprable to that of the school of engineering. These needs cannot be met by merely a program or department, for to study a culture, rather than just history or literature, requires a mobility which even inter-disciplinary programs cannot provide and which inter-departmental politics would fundamentally obstruct. The structure of such a school would make it responsible to the students whose lives are wrapped up with these studies instead of a bureaucratic morass of white faculty committees unable to understand the needs of Third World people.

Call for a "separate" school is not a demand for segregation; it is a demand for control of a relevant education. The school would be open to all students, as the need for education lies with all of them. In the ghetto communities, it is the key to dignity. In the white communities, it is the key to understanding.

### 2. A Separate Orientation Program for Black and Puerto Rican Students

The Freshman Orientation program (FO) has been condemned by the entire college including the deans.

For all students, its value is dubious. It is particularly meaningless for Black and Puerto Rican students. They have grown up in the unique world of the modern urban ghetto. They have been excluded from American society. The problems they must deal with cannot be fully understood by white students. The white upperclassmen who staff FO have agreed that they cannot address themselves to the special problems of a people ostracized from our society.

Black upperclassmen, on the other hand, have faced the same problems which black freshmen have yet to experience. For the good of the freshmen, as well as the college community, they should be permitted to run their own orientation program. The administration must fulfill its responsibilities and accord the Black and Puerto Rican orientation program the same status and funding as the current program--elevating it from the extra-curricular level to become established College policy.

3. A Voice for SEEK Students in the Setting of Guidelines for the SEEK program, including the Hiring and Firing of Personnel

Education, ideally, should not only be centered around the process of the students's efforts to "learn" a collection of facts, but also his right to decide on the relevance and direction of that process as well as the personnel with whom to implement it.

Since education should be geared to the needs of the student, irrespective of whether his goals are vocational or academic, he must have control over his curriculum, to insure that his education is serving HIS needs, and not those of any other individual or structure. Student control is especially important in the SEEK program, which is presently under the authority of a white college administration, which cannot truly understand and meet the needs of Black students. The student also deserves to have some voice over budgetary matters, since the budget determines the implementation of the very guidelines and priorities which the student himself helps establish. Further, the student must have a voice in deciding which personnel should be hired or fired since he alone is in the position of constantly observing whether or not a faculty member is an effective teacher.

It should be clear that this applies not only to the SEEK program but to all divisions of the College. Each department, each school, from English to Engineering, must be responsible to the students of that department.

4. That the Racial Composition of All Entering Classes Reflect the Black and Puerto Rican Population of All New York City's High Schools

We are a college which has traditionally led in opening the doors to educational opportunity for those peoples whose opportunities were otherwise limited. The most complete extension of this tradition and the most effective way of meeting the needs of the people of New York now is through a policy of open admissions, for with such a policy higher education would be available to all students who desire it regardless of ethnic grouping. Education for all people is a right.

The present procedure of selecting students on the criteria of examinations and grades is both arbitrary and discriminatory. It is discriminatory in that it is clearly certain ethnic groups which suffer by the standards due to inferior education in ghetto schools. (While 52% of the high school population of the city is either Black or Puerto Rican the figure is only 15% at the college even with the predominantly Black SEEK program included.) And examinations and grades are an arbitrary rather than qualitative measure of a student's ability. They force a student to be more concerned with competition than with education, more concerned with doing well than with learning well.

There is a growing body of evidence that these criteria are not even accurate means of predicting success in college. Students who would not normally have been accepted have come to college under such programs as SEEK and have performed much better than high school averages indicated. In view of this evidence, as well as an awareness of the basic justice of this approach, universities across the country are adopting policies of open admissions.

Open Admissions to the City University is the ultimate goal. The Black and Puerto Rican Community has fully endorsed our statement of this goal as a corollary to their demand. But these groups cannot wait until the university grows to accommodate the influx of students who would come under open admissions. The fair treatment which has been denied them cannot be postponed any longer.

So it must be assured that the burden of any possible enrollment cut not be borne by these people alone. A fair ethnic balance which will automatically maintain itself under open admissions must be established next year whatever the size of the class.

5. That Black and Puerto Rican History and the Spanish Language be Required of All Education Majors

The one-year requirement of Spanish for education majors recently approved by the College's Department of Elementary Education is insufficient. One year of study is rarely enough to afford a working knowledge of a language. The only realistic requirement is one of proficiency.

The School of Education at City College exists to provide teachers for the New York public school system. A student preparing to teach in this urban environment must have knowledge and skills immediately relevant to the students. Black and Puerto Rican students comprise the majority in New York City's public schools.

Without the ability to talk to the student in his own language or to communicate the history and culture of his people, the teacher becomes at best an alien in the classroom and perhaps even an obstacle to learning.