

UNDER THE ELMS



Responding to minority students' concerns

The month between March 15 and April 16 seemed longer than usual to minority students and administration officials alike. The students had accused the University of failing to honor commitments made in 1975, and they were caught up in ways to effect change. The administration, meanwhile, spent endless hours in meetings with the students, listening to their concerns and trying to head off actions that might lead to the disruption of University life. The month was peppered with protests—brief sit-ins at the admission office, faculty club, and John Carter Brown Library—as well as demonstrations on the Green. And when it was all over, some understandings had been reached.

After calling a press conference on March 15 to detail their proposals in four areas—security, support services, curriculum, and black faculty (*BAM*, April)—members of the Organization of United African Peoples (*OUAP*) began a series of meetings with senior administrators to attempt to address these issues. More than a hundred minority students marched to the president's house early on March 21, and announced that they would “no longer meet under your terms, at your convenience, or on your territory. We are now setting the agenda.”

A week's hiatus, in the form of spring recess, brought a palpable calm to the campus, yet behind closed doors, the meetings continued. Harold Bailey, Jr. '70, chairman of the Third World Alumni Affairs Committee of the Associated Alumni, joined the meetings with students and the administration, including President Swearer, Provost Maurice Glicksman, Dean Harriet Sheridan, Dean of Student Life Eric Widmer, and Dean of Students John Robinson. On Friday, April 5, the week following spring break, approximately 170 minority students marched to University Hall. Dean Eric Widmer came out onto the Green, and the students presented him with a seven-page list of their demands. Three days later, President Swearer met with the *OUAP* stu-

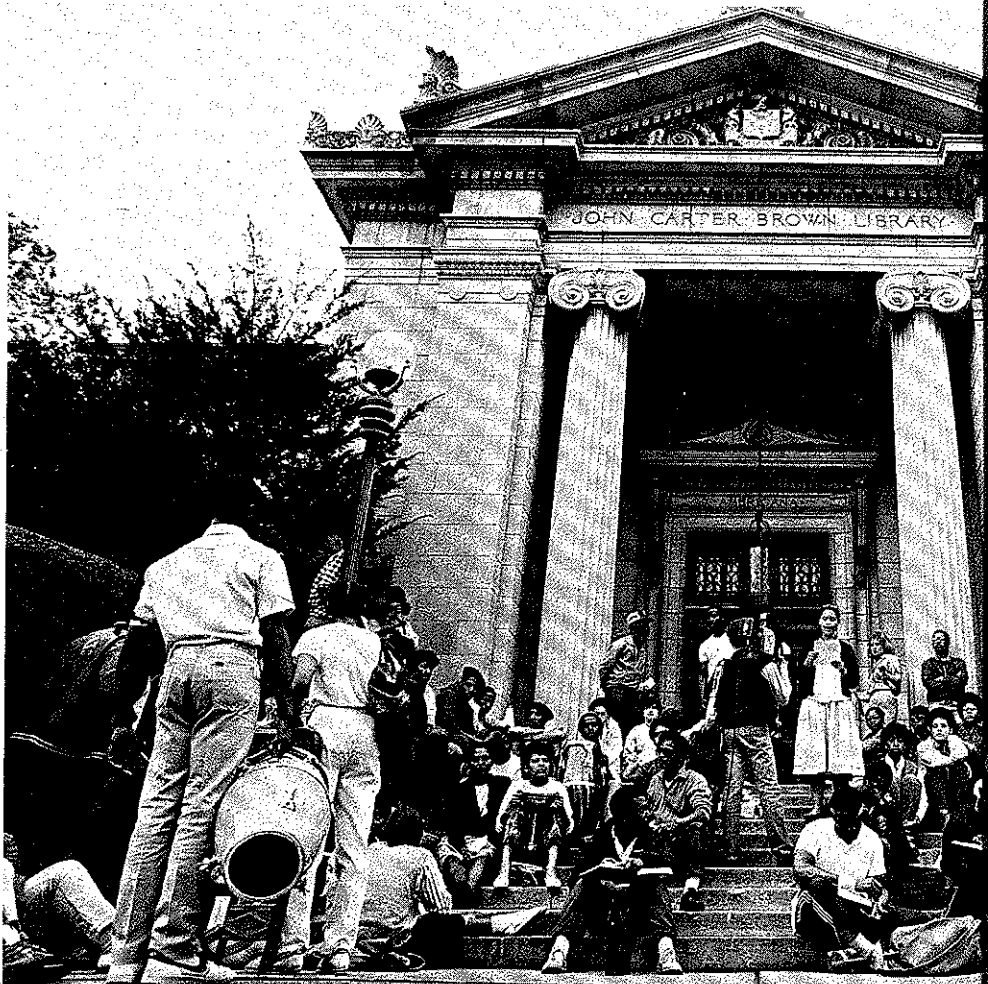
dents and said the University would respond Monday, April 15, a date that was later modified to April 13.

The week between the delivery of the demands and the University's response was densely packed with meetings: On April 9, a number of senior administrators and Philip Bray '48, professor of physics, met with the *OUAP* steering committee to outline procedures for the April 13 meeting, when the University would present its response. At the April 9 meeting, the *OUAP* presented a changed set of demands. On April 10, a *Spectrum* con-

tingent (self-described as a coalition for “racial and cultural equality”) met with the Faculty Executive Committee (*FEC*) and members of the administration to discuss the concerns and demands. On April 11, Provost Glicksman met with the *Spectrum* group and *FEC* Chairman George Seidel to continue the discussion.

Friday, April 12, the day before the University had promised to respond to the *OUAP* demands, a one-day boycott of classes was proposed by a multi-racial coalition, the Coalition to Overcome Institutional Racism, which asked pro-

Protesting students on the steps of the John Carter Brown.



fessors to cancel classes, so people could participate in a day of "alternative" culture and education on the Green. Robert A. Reichley, vice president for university relations, said that the administration sent out a letter to faculty, informing them that they were expected to hold classes as scheduled. Approximately 500-600 students participated throughout the day in activities that included about three dozen separate teach-in sessions and speakers at noon, but most classes were held. Shortly after noon, about 250 students staged a sit-in at Brown's Faculty Club to protest what they said was a lack of faculty response to the issues they had been raising.

On Saturday, April 13, the University responded point-by-point to the OUAP demands. "The University was determined not to make the same error as in 1975," explains Reichley, "when there was no point-by-point response to the students' demands. Further, this time the president had the weight of the Corporation behind him." The Advisory and Executive Committee of the Corporation had been sent copies

of the OUAP demands earlier in the week, and it thoroughly reviewed the administration's thirteen-page response at its April 12 meeting. The A&E committee issued a resolution stating that it "strongly supports the positions taken by the administration and authorizes their implementation." "The A&E resolution was very important," Reichley says. "It said that the trustees had read the demands and responded, strongly supporting the University's position."

Briefly, the areas in which the students demanded changes and the University's response:

□ **Minority faculty:** The students demanded a Minority Faculty Monitoring Committee to aid in searches and encourage the hiring of minority faculty. They asked for funds to aid in recruiting minority faculty. The students also set up goals for the University to meet by 1990 that included 12 percent black faculty, 7 percent Latino, 4 percent Asian (outside of the sciences), and 2 percent Native American.

The University responded that there is already a faculty committee, the Minority Faculty Hiring Resource Committee, to aid departments in recruiting minority candidates. The faculty was urged to modify the MFHRC's charge to "raise the intensity of and the commitment to the hiring of minority faculty." The University responded that its current policy of providing incentives to those departments in which there is "underutilization of minority faculty" will now be enhanced by offering additional positions in a search that identifies a minority faculty member who satisfies the criteria and standards for appointment. The University will provide four fellowships in the Brown Graduate School for minority graduates of Brown, to "encourage the pursuit of graduate study among our graduates as part of an effort to increase the pool of minority candidates able to compete."

As for the 1990 goals suggested by the students, the University replied that they were unrealistic and could not be realized given the available pools of new Ph.D's held by minorities: "Since we agree on the need for increased numbers of minority faculty, we will make our best efforts to add fifteen minority faculty over the next five years; approximately half of those are to be black."

□ **Curriculum:** The students made specific demands on how the curriculum could be made less Eurocentric, including four new faculty positions in the Afro-American Studies Program, a

position in African history in the history department, a position on Afro-American political thought in political science, and one in social stratification and oppression as they relate to African-Americans specifically in the sociology department. They demanded a task force be set up to evaluate the curriculum and recommend areas of change.

The University said that its major expansion in international studies "already commits it to broadening its curriculum through the introduction of the perspective of other nations and cultures, including the Third World ... A major part of the current campaign for funds is for this purpose." The expansion of courses in the departments listed above will depend on the recommendations of the Task Forces on Academic Staffing and of the faculty of the departments involved. New positions will have to come from reallocations from other positions that become available as a result of loss or retirement. As for the task force, "the representative committee of the faculty—the Educational Policy Committee—is the deliberative body to be involved. The EPC has begun discussion of the most efficacious means of encouraging the development of curricular components dealing with the [culture and experiences of the Third World peoples]."

□ **Minority admissions:** The students asked for more administrative support in the admission office, including the creation of an assistant director for minority recruitment. They set goals for minority admission for 1990: 12 percent blacks, 8 percent Latino, an admit rate for Asians equal to the general admit rate, and 2 percent Native Americans.

The University responded that the idea of a new assistant director for minority recruitment has merit, but "it is not clear at this time that a new position must be created." The need for the position will be assessed.

"A final comment is necessary on the 'Goals for 1990,'" the University's response said. "As we calculate those goals, 32.3 percent of the class of 1990 would be minority students requiring 75 percent of all scholarship funds, leaving 25 percent of the student aid funds to be divided among 67.7 percent of the class. This is unacceptable and inequitable."

□ **Financial Aid:** "The University must guarantee that no black or other Third World student will leave Brown because of inadequate financial aid ... Black and other Third World students'



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admission should not depend on income, regardless of future budget cuts."

The University pointed out that it has accorded the "highest possible priority in its financial and budget arrangements to the provision of financial aid," and that 41 percent of financial aid recently offered the class of 1989 has been offered to minority students. Unfortunately, federal financial guidelines and equity among students constrains the University's ability to assist as much as it would like, and the University responded that while its policy is to prevent any student from leaving for financial reasons, there are no guarantees.

□ **Support Services:** The students asked for an increased budget for the Third World Center, plans for the construction of a new center, and new staff structure. The University said it would provide future support for black, Asian-American, and Latino month-long cultural celebrations for the community to participate in. And a task force will be set up to explore alternatives to the current Third World Center location and structure.

In addition to these demands, the University was asked to abolish and restructure the current judicial system (the University Council on Student Affairs). The administration said that it had already begun considering recommendations to revise the UCSA.

The University concluded its response by recognizing the vital resource provided by the University's growing number of minority alumni. Several new programs to expand minority alumni involvement were described, including a minority mentor program, and a minority resource bank.

The students and administrators met for several hours on April 13 to review the response, and held another long meeting April 15 after the weekend. "It was a long document," Reichley says, "and they needed a chance to read it over after we clarified our positions.

"This was not a negotiable document," Reichley says. "We had planned to clarify our position and begin implementing things we agreed to do such as the composition of the task force on the Third World Center, or the charge to the Minority Faculty Hiring Resource Committee. But there was so much discussion about the issue of negotiating, we never got around to that.

"The administration did its very best to listen to the concerns the minorities expressed," Reichley points out. "There were nineteen meetings

between the students and the administration—most involving the top academic side of this institution. That is *not* an insignificant amount of time."

"The 'demands' presented were far-ranging and involved," Swearer explained in a letter to the students, "affecting many facets of the University, including the curriculum and the faculty. We determined to answer them seriously, which required discussions with the Faculty Executive Committee and other faculty members and the Advisory and Executive Committee of the Corporation. The University's response was formatted and framed according to the demands received, and took into account the views expressed by those groups which would be directly affected by proposed changes. Their understanding, support, and input are crucial for policy-making at the University. Thus, it is not possible for the senior administration to make agreements with a group of students about important issues affecting such matters as the curriculum, the faculty, expenditure of millions of dollars, and the significant re-ordering of priorities already arrived at through established University mechanisms. The University does not—and should not—operate in such a manner."

The minority students were frustrated by the University's unwillingness to negotiate. The Tuesday following the release of the response, fifty students, mostly black, entered the John Carter Brown Library and sat quietly on the rug. Their spokesman, Harold Jordan '85, said they were there to stay until the University listened to them.

Two hours later, the students emerged, having met with Eric Widmer, dean of student life. The University had agreed to: move quickly to form a task force to explore a new location for the Third World Center; write a letter explaining why the University didn't "negotiate" the students' demands; an investigation into why John Kuprevich, director of police and security services, hired a plainclothes officer to watch the TWC; establish a task force to look into charges of racism within the University's security force; and establish a "blue-ribbon committee" to study minority life at Brown.

Reichley says that the University told students the sit-in at the JCB could not last indefinitely: a restraining order had been obtained, on the grounds that the students were "a threat to a priceless collection of Americana." The students had been informed of the restraining order. "The administration

took the position that you can't run a University with flying sit-ins all over the place," Reichley says. "We had them at the admission office, the faculty club, the JCB. The temporary restraining order would have been used. Everyone felt better that it didn't have to be used."

Reichley points out that two of the demands the students made in the JCB—a commitment to a Third World Center task force and an explanation of the University's response—had been accomplished before the sit-in began. And the idea for a blue-ribbon committee had been proposed originally by Dr. Augustus A. White III '57, chairman of the Corporation's Minority Affairs Committee, and was mentioned at an April 15 meeting between minority student leaders and administrators.

The students left the JCB, having agreed not to engage in further demonstrations this semester.

Since then, the various committees and task forces to look into improving minority life at Brown have begun to take shape. Professor Bray will chair the committee examining allegations of racism in the security force; the new TWC task force will be chaired by Edward Greene, professor of chemistry. The blue-ribbon committee will begin its work next fall. K.H.

Career Insights: A dream becomes a successful publication

In the old Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney movies, inevitably there would come a point when Mickey or Judy would say, "I know! Let's put on a show!" and everyone would obligingly burst into song and dance.

When Jonathan Eaton and Paul Herzan graduated from Brown in 1979, they were infused with entrepreneurial spirit. Maybe it wasn't inevitable, but one of them said, "I know! Let's publish a magazine!" And while the supporting cast of printers, advertisers, and interviewees did not immediately fall into step, their first issue was published in the fall of 1982.

Career Insights is a glossy, perfect-bound, annual publication crammed full of information about the job market for liberal arts students. "We realized the need for a magazine like this when our own career panic set in," recalls Herzan, who is listed on the masthead as publisher. "We wanted to fight the myth that liberal arts students are