

*VI. RECOMMENDATION RE INTEGRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

In the light of current events, local and national, and in considering the problem from a long-range viewpoint, I do not feel now is the time for the University of Houston to integrate. I do not feel that integration has progressed to the extent we first thought, and since this is a political year, making it difficult to get a clear picture of the real problem, I feel the University should not make a decision at this time.

From Dr. Williams' report which was mailed you a week ago, you learned we do not expect to have any suits on our hands. With the nation as a whole holding this matter in abeyance as it now appears to be doing, I do not feel the University of Houston should take the lead in integrating. For this reason, I recommend that the University of Houston continue its study on the subject, following the same policies we have observed in the past. If and when Houston becomes integrated, it is not my belief that the University should be the first to do so.

This matter is not for publication, and it does not appear on the newspaper's agenda.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

..... May 30, 1956

DATE

Memo to: Dr. Williams

This is an excellent paper! You may want to incorporate some of the thoughts in it in your paper.

B.

- Please answer, sending me a copy.
- Please draft reply for my signature.
- Please furnish data for my reply.
- Please take charge of this.
- Please note and return.
- Please note and see me.
- Please route to members of department.
- Please note and file.
- For your information.
- For your recommendation.
- For your approval.

RECEIVED

MAY 30 1956

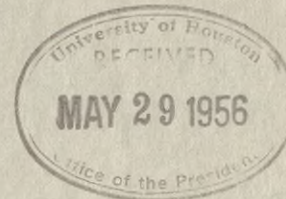
OFFICE
VICE PRESIDENT
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

CULLEN BOULEVARD
HOUSTON 4, TEXAS

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF MEN

May 29, 1956



MEMO TO: President A. D. Bruce
FROM: J. E. Williamson, Dean of Men
SUBJECT: Integration

The subject of integration has never been a matter of much discussion among the students at the University of Houston. I have heard both extremes of philosophy expressed. There have been instances of acceptance of the colored race where group meetings involved our students and negroes.

On one occasion our student leaders gave transportation to T.S.U. students for a meeting held in Beaumont. This contact was agreeable except for an embarrassing situation arising at a drive-in enroute when they stopped for refreshments. A waitress refused to serve the mixed group in the car.

Isolated expressions of violent opposition have been noted. One student called a few weeks ago, having heard a rumor that the university would receive negro students this fall. He called to report that if the University of Houston accepted negroes he would transfer to T.S.U. since it would be much cheaper.

University of Houston students, of their own decision, refrained from entering into the debate on integration at their state meeting this spring.

I believe the student body would desire to retain the present status, but the overwhelming majority would support the administration, should it be desired to effect gradual integration. I mean by that, let the first negro students be graduates seeking education in fields not offered at Texas Southern University.

In the event of the latter decision, I urge a conference with student leaders well in advance of the advent of the first negro enrollee.

JEW:mb

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. E. Williamson".

Dr. Williams,

The report to the board on integration will have to be brought up to date in light of current events; the next meeting is the 11th of June. Agenda will go out June 5th; study should be in our office by Friday, June 1.

June 1:
Put in
June Agenda
Folder

May 31, 1956

June Agenda

TO: President A. D. Bruce

4

FROM: Clanton W. Williams

SUBJECT: Integration

DATE: March 13, 1956

The Problem

At the instructions of the president a University-wide committee was established to assemble the facts and to present conclusions and recommendations to the president relative to admission of Negro students to the University of Houston.

Assumptions

- legal*
1. It is assumed that the University of Houston will be so far regarded as a state institution as to make it subject to the laws and court decisions of the State of Texas and of the United States on segregation in such institutions.
 2. That being the case, and in view of the series of pertinent court decisions, it is inevitable that Negroes must be admitted to the University of Houston.
 3. It is assumed further that it is in the best interests of the University and all concerned that the transition to integration be accomplished with a minimum of emotional disturbance and adverse publicity.

Facts Bearing on the Problem

1. In recognition of this problem, on August 31, 1955 the president of the University appointed a University Committee on Integration "to study the problems relative to integration." That Committee, on February 27, 1956, submitted a report to the president, a copy of which is attached as part of the "Facts Bearing on the Problem."
2. On February 28, 1956, after consultation with the Board of Regents, the president issued instructions that that Committee should be enlarged, and that the new Committee should assemble all additional information pertinent to the problem and should assist in preparation of this study on the subject. Consequently, the Committee was enlarged to include Dean A. A. White of the College of Law (a native Texan), Dean of Women Bessie Ebaugh (a native Houstonian), and Dr. Howard F. McGaw and Dr. Theo Hatfield (both Southerners), and Dr. Alfred Neumann (Vice Chairman of the Faculty Assembly who is scheduled to be Chairman next academic year).

This Committee's deliberations have been held in secret.

3. This enlarged Committee set forth the following additional facts bearing on the problem:

a. Since the Supreme Court handed down its decision rejecting the "separate but equal doctrine," a growing number of institutions of higher learning in the South have taken action in compliance with that ruling.

b. In most of these cases the transition has been handled with very little or no emotional outbreaks or adverse publicity. Among those institutions are the following: University of Arkansas, Southwest Louisiana Institute, University of Kentucky, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, North Texas State College, and Wharton Junior College. The University of North Carolina, anticipating a court order, admitted last September a group of Negro undergraduates.

c. The following institutions have complied by judicial order: University of Texas, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma University, Midwestern University, and (technically) the University of Alabama (which later expelled the student involved). The University of North Carolina last week was told that it must keep those it had admitted.

d. The University of Houston has certain areas of curricular offerings which are not common to institutions of higher learning, certain others which are not available in any other Texas institution (i.e., Optometry, Radio-TV), and still others which are not available at any other institution in this immediate vicinity. Even so, in view of the "separate but equal doctrine," the University of Houston by law would still be required to take qualified applicants, despite the fact that Texas Southern University may offer courses of study similar to those offered here.

4. Besides the legal considerations here noted, the Committee took cognizance of moral and ethical responsibilities here involved. It also recognized the sociological factors, and pointed up the fact that any program of integration should be developed with great care and deliberation.

5. Whether or not the above considerations are germane to the problem, the University is faced with the immediate necessity of accepting or rejecting several applicants; among these are the three cases set forth in the attached study under Paragraph 1 (e). It was observed that all three of these cases involve graduate students, and that one of these students would be a transfer from the University of Texas.

6. It was noted by the Committee that we may have no legal grounds for rejection of applicants, either graduate or undergraduate, but that because of our relatively high tuition it is believed that the number which we may expect will not be large and therefore this University will not face in the same measure as other state institutions the sociological problems involved.

In connection with the above, however, it was observed that a number of Negroes may see fit to take their first three years of work at Texas Southern University, Prairie View, or other Negro colleges, and then transfer to the University of Houston during their senior year in order to become graduates of the University of Houston. This possibility may create a problem relative to the acceptance of transfer credit from institutions which even though accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools under an arrangement which allows considerable leniency in the cases of Negro institutions, may not be acceptable to the University of Houston from the standpoint of standards of scholarship. It is quite possible, therefore, that the University of Houston may see fit to require special examinations for transfer students.

7. Further facts are these: Already the University of Houston is testing Negroes for the Veterans Administration for placement purposes in other schools; we are allowing Negroes to borrow books from our library; our teams are engaging in intercollegiate athletics with Negroes; and we are permitting Negroes to participate within certain limits in campus meetings of national learned societies and organizations.

8. The Committee, in taking cognizance of the various sociological problems which must be faced as a result of integration, pointed out the possibility of Negro athletes on our teams participating in contests scheduled with institutions who would be opposed to playing against Negroes; Negro students seeking admission to various student organizations; the problem of whether or not Negro students would be housed in our dormitories, accommodated in our dining halls; etc.

9. The Committee also was apprised of the fact that there are certain accrediting agencies which will not grant accreditation to institutions which bar qualified Negroes. A case in point is the Association of American Law Schools.

a. Students transferring from our College of Law to certain other law schools which are accredited by the Association of American Law Schools are finding that credit granted by the University of Houston is not being recognized because our College of Law is not accredited by the above organization.

b. The Order of the Coif, an honorary legal order of high prestige, will not establish a chapter in a school which is ineligible for membership in the Association of American Law Schools.

c. A complementary fact is that some governmental agencies are reluctant to grant, or are prohibited from granting, contracts to institutions which bar qualified Negroes from attendance.

10. Although a survey of the faculty has not been made on this matter, it was generally agreed among the Committee members that the faculty would accept integration with a high degree of tolerance.

11. There is a problem involved in the prospect of announcing that the University of Houston is desegregating. The Committee was of the opinion that the admission of all three of the graduate students noted in the attached report might be accomplished concurrently, with the least amount of fanfare possible under the circumstances. Being a fait accompli, it would likely be accepted more graciously and with less disturbance than if announced at considerable length in advance.

Conclusions

1. It is inevitable that the University of Houston must undertake integration.
2. This should be done before court action is instituted.
3. It is highly desirable that this be accomplished with a minimum disturbance of any kind.
4. The acceptance of three well-qualified Negro graduate students, whose applications now require decision on our part, might facilitate a relatively quiet, dignified transition to integration.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Board authorize the admission of these three graduate students concurrently at the opening of the academic year 1956-57.
2. That if between now and September cases comparable to these three arise, that they be added to the group noted above.
3. That thereafter the University administration be empowered to admit well-qualified Negro students under its standards of admission.
4. That the matter of public news releases preparatory to their admission be carefully studied and undertaken by the University under the most propitious circumstances possible.

/s/ Clanton W. Williams

Excerpt from Preliminary Report of Faculty Committee given at Board of Regents meeting on February 27, 1956:

. . . e. There are currently three cases which may not be so easily dismissed, even though we have handled them in the same noncommittal manner as above:

(1) One woman, Dr. Freda C. Gooden Richardson (O.D.), of La Marque, Texas, without indication as to race in her earlier correspondence, has submitted an application for admission, in which application she indicates that she is a Negress. She wants to take refresher work in Optometry (apparently as preliminary to taking the State Board examination). She can get this at no other institution in Texas.

(2) Assistant Instructor Clarence W. Mangham of Texas Southern University (the Communications Department), who has been pursuing a Ph.D. degree at Leland Stanford University during the summers, wants to take some specialized courses in our Department of Radio and Television. He is highly qualified and we are one of the few schools in the country (and the only one in the South) where he may take this work.

(3) Rachael D. Gardner, a "Junior High Special Education Teacher" in Houston (Burrus), holds an M.A. degree from Texas Southern, "plus 6 hours of Graduate Study at Texas University in Special Education," with "a B+ average" (though her letter does not indicate so high a degree of scholarship). She wants to pursue work in Mental Retardation, a field which only we, the University of Texas, and San Marcos offer. Her letter of February 16 concludes, "Please let me know as soon as possible."

Mr. Vitulli, the Registrar, in submitting this letter to me for reply (I am now preparing all replies) states, "This could be a genuine test case. I hope I'm wrong."

Excerpt from preliminary minutes of the Board of Regents March 19, 1956

. . . 8. REPORT ON INTEGRATION

General Bruce reported that he had mailed a study to the Regents outlining the faculty committee's recommendation on integration. He stated that he did not expect the board to discuss this problem today, that he would rather that they study the matter with him for the next two months, taking into account all current events relating to the problem and then together at the June meeting a decision would be made.

Mr. Hutcheson stated that the University might be running quite a risk in that he did not believe any warning was given before suits were instituted. Col. Bates explained he did not believe a suit could be instituted or there would be any reason for the institution of a suit unless Negroes had actually been turned down. General Bruce said he felt this was a calculated risk the University must take as he felt public relations involved were well worth the risk.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
3801 CULLEN BOULEVARD
HOUSTON 4, TEXAS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 16, 1956

C

Dear Mrs. Houston:

I am sending the attached report from the Faculty Committee on Integration for your study. I rushed it up so that we would know their thoughts in case of an emergency. I do not plan to make my recommendations until further study and consideration of current events as they develop between now and June.

O

I do not want to include this matter on any of my agenda, due to its confidential nature, but we will discuss it at the preliminary meetings.

I am sending you this report in advance in order for you to have plenty of time to study this controversial problem.

P

Sincerely yours,

A. D. Bruce
President

Y

Mrs. James P. Houston
3666 Wickersham
Houston, Texas

ep

TO: President A. D. Bruce

FROM: Clanton W. Williams

SUBJECT: Integration

DATE: March 13, 1956

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2. That being the case, and in view of the series of pertinent court decisions, it is inevitable that Negroes must be admitted to the University of Houston.
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This Committee's deliberations have been held in secret.

3. This enlarged Committee set forth the following additional facts bearing on the problem:

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b. In most of these cases the transition has been handled with very little or no emotional outbreaks or adverse publicity. Among those institutions are the following: University of Arkansas, Southwest Louisiana Institute, University of Kentucky, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, North Texas State College, and Wharton Junior College. The University of North Carolina, anticipating a court order, admitted last September a group of Negro undergraduates.

c. The following institutions have complied by judicial order: University of Texas, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma University, Midwestern University, and (technically) the University of Alabama (which later expelled the student involved). The University of North Carolina last week was told that it must keep those it had admitted.

d. The University of Houston has certain areas of curricular offerings which are not common to institutions of higher learning, certain others which are not available in any other Texas institution (i.e., Optometry, Radio-TV), and still others which are not available at any other institution in this immediate vicinity. Even so, in view of the "separate but equal doctrine," the University of Houston by law would still be required to take qualified applicants, despite the fact that Texas Southern University may offer courses of study similar to those offered here.

4. Besides the legal considerations here noted, the Committee took cognizance of moral and ethical responsibilities here involved. It also recognized the sociological factors, and pointed up the fact that any program of integration should be developed with great care and deliberation.

5. Whether or not the above considerations are germane to the problem, the University is faced with the immediate necessity of accepting or rejecting several applicants; among these are the three cases set forth in the attached study under Paragraph 1 (e). It was observed that all three of these cases involve graduate students, and that one of these students would be a transfer from the University of Texas.

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Board - Mar. 19
To Pres. Bruce by
Tulla, Mar. 13

Staff Study on Integration--March 2, 1956

Those Present: Dean A. A. White Dr. Howard F. McGaw
 Mr. D. R. MacLaury Mrs. Bessie Ebaugh
 Dr. Alfred Neumann Dr. Theo Hatfield
 Mr. Ramon Vitulli Dr. Clanton W. Williams

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2. That being the case, ^{and in view of the series of pertinent court decisions} it is inevitable that Negroes must be admitted to the University of Houston.
3. It is assumed further that it is in ^{the} best interests of the University and all concerned that the transition to integration be accomplished with a minimum of emotional disturbance and adverse publicity.

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2. On February 28, 1956, after consultation with the Board of Regents the president issued instructions that that Committee should be enlarged, ^{and that the new committee} should assemble all additional information ^{should assist in preparation of this} pertinent to the problem and ~~prepare a staff study~~ on the subject.

~~The result of its study contained the following additional facts:~~

a. During the past _____ months since the Supreme Court handed down its decision ^{rejecting the "separate but equal doctrine"} adverse to segregation, ^{a growing} number of institutions of higher learning in the South have taken action in compliance with that ruling.

b. In ~~most~~ ^{most} number of these cases the transition has been handled with very little or no emotional outbreaks or adverse publicity. Among those institutions are the following:

University of Arkansas, Southwest Louisiana Institute, University of Kentucky, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, ^{North Texas State Teachers College,} University of North Carolina, ^{and} Wharton Junior College, ^{and} The University of North Carolina, ^{last September} a group of Negro undergraduates.

c. The following institutions have complied by judicial order: University of Texas, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma University, Midwestern University, ~~the University of North Carolina~~ and (technically) the University of Alabama (which later expelled the student involved). The University of North Carolina last week was told that it must keep those it had admitted.

d. The University of Houston has certain areas of curricular offerings which are not common to institutions of higher learning, ^{certain others} some which are not available in any other Texas institution (i.e., Optometry, Radio-TV), and ^{still others} some which are not available at any other institution in this immediate vicinity. Even so,

Consequently, the committee was enlarged to include Dean H.A. White of the College of Law (a native Texan), Dean Bessie Ebaugh (a native Houstonian), Dr. Howard F. McGraw and Dr. Theophilus (both Southerners), and Dr. Alfred Neumann (Vice Chairman of the Faculty Assembly, who is scheduled to be chairman next academic year). ^{anticipating a court order, admitted a group of Negro undergraduates.}

deliberations have been held in secret.

3. This enlarged committee set forth the following ^{concluding} facts bearing on the problem:

in view of the rejection of the "separate but equal doctrine",
under the inadmissibility of separate and equal opportunity,
the University of Houston by law would still be required to
take ^{qualified} applicants, ~~to pursue courses at the University of Houston,~~
~~and this~~ despite the fact that Texas Southern University may
offer ~~similar~~ courses of study *similar to those offered here.*

Besides the legal considerations here noted,
4. 3. The Committee took cognizance of ~~the~~ moral and ethical
responsibilities here. It also ~~the~~ sociological factors, *and pointed up the fact that*
problems involved, ~~and~~ recognizes ~~that~~ any program of integration
should be developed with great care and deliberation.

5. 4. Whether or not the above considerations are germane to
the problem, the University is faced with the immediate necessity
of accepting or rejecting several applicants; among these are the
three cases set forth in the attached study under Paragraph 1 (e).
It was observed that all three of these cases ^{involve} ~~are~~ graduate students,
and that one ^{of these students} would be a transfer from the University of Texas.

6. 5. It ^{was noted} ~~is observed~~ by the Committee that we may have no legal
grounds for rejection of applicants, either graduate or under-
graduate, but that because of our relatively high tuition it is
believed that the number which we may expect will not be large
and therefore this University will not face in the same measure
as other state institutions the sociological problems involved.

In connection with the above, however, it ^{was} ~~is~~ observed that a
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leniency in the cases of Negro institutions, may not be acceptable to the University of Houston from the standpoint of standards of scholarship. It is quite possible, therefore, that the University of Houston may see fit to require special examinations for transfer students.

7 6. ~~It is further~~ ^{are these: already} facts that ~~as of now~~ the University of Houston is testing ^{Negroes for the Veterans Administration} for placement purposes in other schools; ~~Negroes~~ ^{we are} allowing Negroes to borrow books from our library; ^{our athletic teams are} engaging in athletics with Negroes; and ^{we are} permitting Negroes ^{in campus meetings} ~~who are members~~ of ^{intercollegiate} learned societies and organizations ~~which are meeting on our campus~~ ^{national} to participate within certain limits.

8 7. The Committee ^{in taking} took cognizance ~~also~~ of the various sociological problems which must be faced as a result of integration, ^{pointed out the} ~~e.g.~~ possibility of Negro athletes ^{participating in contests} playing on our teams ^{to playing against Negroes;} when games are scheduled with institutions who would be opposed ^{would} Negro students seeking admission to various student organizations; the problem of whether or not Negro students ^{would} might be housed in our dormitories, ^{accommodated our} ~~participating in~~ ^{halls} dining facilities; etc.

9 8. The Committee also was apprised of the fact that there are certain accrediting agencies which will not grant accreditation to institutions which bar qualified Negroes. A case in point is the Association of American Law Schools.

- a. Students transferring from our College of Law to certain other law schools which are accredited by the Association of American Law Schools are finding that credit granted by the University of Houston is not being recognized because our College of Law is not accredited by the ^{above organization} ~~Association of American~~ ~~Law Schools~~.

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^{c.}
~~b.~~ A complementary fact is that ^{some} governmental agencies are reluctant ^{to grant} or prohibited from granting, contracts to institutions which ^{are} bar qualified Negroes from attendance.

10 ~~9.~~ Although a survey of the faculty has not been made on this matter, it was generally agreed among the Committee members that the faculty would accept integration with a high degree of tolerance.

11 ~~10.~~ There is a problem involved in the prospect of announce^{ing} ~~ment~~ that the University of Houston is desegregating. The Committee was of the opinion that the admission of all three of the graduate students noted in the attached report might be accomplished concurrently, with the least amount of fanfare possible under the circumstances. Being a fait accompli ^{it} would likely be accepted more graciously and with less disturbance than if announced at considerable length in advance.

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2. It is highly desirable that this be accomplished with a minimum disturbance of any kind.

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