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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

3801 GULLEN BOULEVARD

HOUSTON 4, TEXAS

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

September 26, 1957

Members of the
Board of Governors
University of Houston

Attached are two items of interest concerning the
University which I thought you might like to read:

1. Report on the status of desegregation;
2. Reprint in part of standards of the Southern
Association.

The first item is of such a nature that we do not
wish to take it up at a public meeting and since no action
is required, is being sent you for your information only.

The second item is for your files, in order that
we may record in the minutes that we have sent you these
standards.

A. D. Bruce
Lt. General, USA Retired
Chancellor

Memo to: General A. D. Bruce

FROM: Clanton W. Williams,
President

SUBJECT: Desegregation

DATE: September 26, 1957

1. On September 13-14, 1957, two Negro youths, Walter Petteway and Lorenzo Lucas, appeared at registration seeking admission to the Downtown School. One of them, Petteway (whose name was formerly Lee), explained to the Director of Admissions that a class in Accounting at Texas Southern University, offered at a convenient evening hour, had been discontinued. It had been learned by them that the University offered this course at the hour desired. Some aspersions were cast at TSU for failure to act in their behalf.

2. It was explained to them: a) that the matter of desegregation was under serious study by our Board of Governors; b) that when a policy of integration had been established, they would doubtless read about it in the press; and c) that it was the opinion of the president that this policy would likely involve integration at the graduate level first.

3. Director of Admissions Swiss states that his private conversation with Petteway lasted about twenty minutes, was most polite, and free of any emotional display.. Petteway, as had others before him, appeared to accept the explanation in good grace.

4. On September 18, Mr. George West of A. J. Folger & Co., talked with the University Attorney Reagan Cartwright and later with President Williams. He explained that the two boys had told Mr. West, their employer, that they "had strong backing of" NAACP to bring court action. They wanted to know whether or not their jobs would be endangered should they proceed. Mr. West replied that he did not intend to try to stop them. He did warn them that should they become party to a move to force desegregation upon the University, before the atmosphere were cleared for such they would have to expect that the Folger Company employees would be divided into dissenting segments, as would be the whole of Houston, and that they personally would be the focal point of the resulting ill will.

5. In his conversation with Mr. West, President Williams asked whether or not Mr. West would excuse the young men from work for an appointment with the president at 9:30 a.m. on September 19. Mr. West replied that he would be glad to arrange such a meeting.

6. Immediately thereafter President Williams called President Nabrit of Texas Southern University. The latter knew nothing about the matter, stated that he would investigate, and would furnish any information he could prior to the September 19 appointment. He stated further that he would re-establish the discontinued class rather than have the University of Houston embarrassed by a law suit.

7. At 10:00 p.m. President Nabrit called President Williams and informed him that initial circumstance which had led to the discontinuance of the Accounting class was TSU's inability to find an accounting professor to teach the evening class. He asked that President Williams ask the University of Houston Accounting Department to supply a teacher and that if such could be done and a class could be developed, TSU would offer the course. It was agreed that such an attempt would be made unless it were ascertained that Petteway and Lucas with NAACP backing were determined to bring a test case anyway.

8. At a conference in the president's office, 8:45 - 9:15 a.m., on September 19, 1957, Dr. I. E. McNeill, Chairman of the University of Houston Department of Accounting, agreed to work out instructor problems. He telephoned Mr. Cook, Acting Dean of TSU's College of Business, and between them it was ascertained that the plan was feasible.

9. At 9:20 a.m., Messrs, Petteway and Lucas appeared for conference with President Williams, Dr. McNeill, and Dr. Alfred R. Neumann, Assistant to the President. The boys were told of developments and were quite pleased. Petteway, a member of NAACP, stated frankly that he had used the threat of court action as a "big stick" to force action in their behalf.

10. At 10 a.m., the boys left for TSU apparently satisfied. President Williams called President Nabrit and explained what had transpired. President Nabrit had called Acting Dean Cook authorizing establishment of a class at the hours desired. Dr. McNeill and Mr. Cook are to take joint action to the end desired. President Williams explained that the TSU class might utilize the UH telecourse in Elementary Accounting (lectures by Dr. McNeill) with TSU administering the necessary matriculation and supplementary course conduct, using their own graduate assistant for this latter purpose.

11. During the afternoon of September 19, Dr. McNeill contacted Mr Cook, who stated that the class had been established for the two boys, that no effort was to be made to increase the size of the class, and that he understood that the University of Houston was to "supply" the teacher.

12. On the morning of September 20, President Williams called President Nabrit who between them agreed:

a. That matriculation was TSU's responsibility and that efforts would be made to seek a larger enrollment;

b. That the students would take the same telecourse of Dr. McNeill as do students of the University of Houston;

c. That a graduate assistant would be found by the University of Houston who would be paid by TSU a stipend of \$100 for laboratory conduct of the course (If he is a C.P.A. his stipend should be more.); and

d. That Dr. McNeill and Mr. Cook would take necessary action which must follow.