

Inter-Collegiate Conference On Community Action in Race Relations

OXFORD, OHIO

MARCH 25-30, 1961

General Description of the Conference and its Purpose

The Western College Religion-In-Life Program Council has sponsored throughout the year (1960-61) an extra-curricular seminar on race relations in the United States. To supplement this program, we held a five day conference from March 25th to March 30th, co-sponsored by the Western College Government Association and the Religion-In-Life Program Council. In this conference we focused our attention on community action in race relations. More specifically we examined the following topics: integrated versus segregated housing; the role of mass communications in race relations; economic opportunities for all Americans—the efforts of labor, management, and government to end racial discrimination; community action by national organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the American Friends Service Committee; and community action by locally centered groups such as independent civic organizations and municipal commissions. Throughout the program we tried to note those methods which have been most effective in the particular context in which they were applied.

The program included films, authoritative speakers and student reports. These reports included academic projects and accounts of campus activities. We were especially hopeful that students interested in improving inter-group relations within their own community would have this opportunity to examine a wide variety of approaches, and would, as a result, be more aware of those methods most likely to succeed under a given set of circumstances.

One should note that we did all we could to keep the cost of the conference down; we did not want the registration fee to prevent an interested student from coming. We are indebted to organizations on our own campus which saw the value in having such a conference and contributed to it financially. The conference planning committee relied quite heavily on local resources for our guest speakers. Our aim was not to get well known speakers from all over the country, but rather to take

advantage of the valuable and informative agencies working in near-by communities.

Recognizing that we already had community responsibilities and would soon be assuming them in greater proportions, we wanted to develop and define more completely our own roles within the community setting. Many of us were able to draw from particular community situations with which we were familiar. All of us will be able to relate our findings to our individual communities.

The following is a report of our conference and its immediate results.

Planning The Conference

- A. The idea of sponsoring such a conference was conceived in late November and presented to a few students who discussed further the practical arrangements necessary for holding a conference on our campus during spring vacation.
- B. In early December the same proposition was expanded to include students from other colleges and universities.
- C. Four students met frequently to discuss the practical questions raised in preliminary planning; faculty and students were consulted for suggestions.
- D. December 6th, the proposition was presented to the Dean of Students who suggested that she introduce the proposal in the Administrative Council meeting to be held that same afternoon. The project received support at this meeting and the President of the College requested a report.
- E. December 12th, a four-item report was sent to the President including: (1) a statement of purpose, (2) a tentative topical program, (3) a tentative budget (including: anticipated expense for room and board,



study materials, and travel and accommodations for guest speakers as well as suggested sources of income), (4) a list of colleges and universities to be invited to participate.

- F. During the next week the Government Association and the R-I-L Program Council were approached for financial assistance.
- G. During the first week in January we began to write to individuals and agencies asking them about speakers and suggestions for the conference.
- H. January 24th, letters were sent to Deans of Students, Heads of Sociology Departments, and student editors at 67 colleges and universities. Enclosed were applications including questions as to experience, pertinent courses, and reading which qualified the applicant's participation. We also asked what the applicant hoped to gain from the conference, which helped us in planning the program as well as evaluating the applicant. These applications were to be returned by February 24th.
- I. By March 1st we ordered our reading materials.
- J. During the first week in March, letters of acceptance went out with copies of tentative schedules of the conference program.
- K. Copies of the same program went to the Western College faculty, to people who had helped us in various ways and others whom we thought might be interested. Other copies were posted around the campus.
- L. During the second week of March, provisions for the use of the college library, radio station, student center, dormitory, dining room, college car, bookstore, and gym were completed. A Western College participant was responsible for the use of each of these facilities.
- M. Tuesday, March 14th, final arrangements were made with the Dean of Students.
- N. March 20th, a final letter was sent to off-campus participants with a map of the campus, an emergency phone number, and a self addressed post card to inform us of their arrival time.
- O. March 24th, we met with the other Western College participants to review our responsibilities and aims.

Bibliography

The following materials were read in preparation for the conference:

The Nature of Prejudice by Gordon Allport

The Negro In America by Arnold Rose

Annual Report of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, August, 1960

The Metropolitan Area as a Racial Problem by Morton Grodzins, University of Pittsburgh Press.

The Role of the Social Sciences in Desegregation: a Symposium, published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Segregation and Desegregation:

a Digest of Recent Research by Melvin M. Tumin.

Strengthening the Family, published by the United Steelworkers of America and the Baltimore Urban League.

This list was supplemented by field reports published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and books and pamphlets available in the Western College library which was open throughout the conference.



Program

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

- 1:30 Registration
- 3:30 Opening Session
 - Introductory Remarks—SUSAN BAARSCH, Conference Chairman
 - Welcome—DR. HERRICK B. YOUNG, President of Western College
 - Opening Lecturer—DR. DAVID LEWIS, Sociologist, Miami University.
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:00 Student Reports on Race Relations Activities on their campuses
- 9:00 Free Time

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

- 8:00 Breakfast
 - Western and Miami students took Conference participants to the church of their choice in Oxford.
- 8:30 Western College Library was open at this time and at other free periods in the schedule as were the gym and Lodge.
- 1:00 Dinner
- 2:30 MR. MARSHALL BRAGDON, Executive Director of the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee, Cincinnati, Ohio, "The Role of Municipal Organizations in Improving Race Relations."
- 4:30 Free Time
- 6:00 Supper
- 8:00 Student Papers:
 - JOAN FURLONG, DePauw University, "The Negro Migrant Mother in St. Louis"
 - JUDY HAMPTON, Western College for Women, "The Origin of Minority Group Prejudice from Childhood to Adulthood"
 - MARGARET DOBBINS, Miami University, "A Matter of Identification"
- 10:00 Free Time

MONDAY, MARCH 27

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 DR. WILLIAM BILLINGSLEY, representative of the United States Steel Workers of America, Cincinnati, "The Role of Organized Labor in Attaining Equal Opportunity."
- 10:45 Discussion: "The Role of the Union Leader in Industry and the Community."
Student Leader: Rowena Toomey, Western College
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:15 Radio Broadcast, campus studio (Presser Hall), WMOH-Hamilton
- 1:40 MISS SERENA DAVIS, Field Secretary, NAACP, "Civil Rights in the South."
- 3:00 Discussion on civil rights
- 4:15 Film: *The Burden of Truth*, United Steel Workers.
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:00 Free Time
- 8:15 THE REV. MR. RICHARD CHENEY AND THE REV. MR. FRED HUGHEY of Oxford "The Church and its Role in Community Inter-Group Relations."

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:30 MRS. LOIS CONYERS, Health and Welfare Services Director, Urban League, Cincinnati, Ohio, "Urban League Activities."
- 10:45 MR. ROBERT COATES, Southwest Regional Director, Ohio Civil Rights Commission, "The Area of Operation of the State Civil Rights Commission."
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 MISS SERENA DAVIS "The NAACP Approach to Improved Race Relations."
- 2:45 Discussion with Mrs. Conyers, Mr. Coates, and Miss Davis
- 4:00 MR. DEHART HUBBARD, Intergroup Relations Advisor, Federal Housing Administration, Cleveland, Ohio, "FHA Provisions for Better Housing for all Citizens."
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:00 MISS JEAN FAIRFAX, National Representative, Southern Programs, American Friends Service Committee, "School Desegregation."
- 8:15 Discussion: School Desegregation
Student Leader: Marian Robinson, Western College

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:30 MISS JEAN FAIRFAX, "The AFSC Program in the South."
- 10:45 Discussion: AFSC
Student Leader: Pamela Odede, Western College
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 MR. C. E. ISRAEL of Fashion Frocks, Inc., Cincinnati, "The Anatomy of Business Responsibility."

"In our separatist society (e.g. suburbia) we are raising children with specific vitamin deficiencies—"

(Mr. Marshall Bragdon, Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee, Cincinnati)

- 2:30 MR. HARRY BUTLER, WHIO-TV, Dayton, "Mass Communications in the Area of Race Relations."
- 3:15 Discussion with Mr. Israel and Mr. Butler
Student Leader: Donna Shalala, Western College
- 4:30 Films: *Levitown* and *All the Way Home*.
- 6:00 Dinner
- 7:00 Student Reports:
LORETTA MOORE and BEATRICE STANFIELD, Butler University, "The Black Muslim Movement in the U.S."
PAMELA ODEDE and MARGARET GITHARA, Western College, "The African Student in America"

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:30 Evaluation: DONNA SHALALA, Western College
- 12:30 Lunch

Conference Budget

Item	Credit	Debit	Balance
Religion-In-Life contribution	300.00		
Government Association contribution	200.00		
Registration fee (\$15.00 per person*)	420.00		
Housing		175.00	
Meals		337.50	
Transportation for guest speakers		106.86	
Reading materials		49.75	
Mimo, postage, paper		29.49	
Incidentals		9.01	
Total	920.00	707.61	212.39
Printing report and mailing		212.39	
Total	920.00	920.00	000.00

*Of the 28 participants, 16 were Western College students.

Directives for Community Action

"In the world today, we are trying to discover whether people can live together and enjoy their differences." (Miss Jean Fairfax, American Friends Service Committee at the Inter-Collegiate Conference)

Points to keep in mind while working in inter-group relations

1. The initiation of ideas and programs generally arise from an individual's concern for a specific local situation.
2. Do not underestimate the value of the individual. Ideas originate with individuals, and the individual must distinguish between those times when he must work with a group and those when he must venture out on his own.
3. Recognize differences—in any context—for what they are, constantly asking, "What is the significance of this difference?"
4. Note the value of indirect efforts. Caution: Indirect methods and timing are important, but not so much so that you can delay action forever.
5. Help establish or strengthen a community sense of trust and respect among various groups.
6. Be careful not to scare others away by demanding too much of them. Many people will be attracted gradually to your program as they gain confidence in it and themselves.
7. Do not fear the painful process of growth.
8. Remember the value of working together for common goals. Our concern is to provide a community in which we would like to live and raise our families.
9. Emphasize reciprocity: Work with each other for each other. Don't let any individual or group feel that you are acting just to "help" them.
10. Note the importance of routine inter-group experiences beyond the sharing of special occasions.
11. Changes in patterns of living can lead to changes in attitude. Just as habitual discrimination can create and nourish prejudice, enforced laws can initiate its destruction.
12. Temporary artificial processes, such as the quota system in integrated housing, may be necessary to achieve racial integration.
13. Note the importance of supplying available and accurate reports of your activities.
14. Do not neglect to follow through on a project.
15. Learn all you can about different methods of improving inter-group relations. Keep up to date.
16. Be aware of the significant international implications of what we do and say on our campuses and in our communities.
17. If we were to divide ourselves into four groups, 1) the



prejudiced discriminator, 2) the prejudiced non-discriminator, 3) the non-prejudiced discriminator, and 4) the non-prejudiced non-discriminator, most of us would fall under the third category; complacency hides subtle, habitual, and often passive discrimination.

Suggestions for campus activities

1. Attract new people and organizations to your efforts. Personal contact is often better than campus wide publicity. Increased interest on the part of one or two is a step in the right direction. Do not wait for widespread popular support.
2. Try to hold a weekly "coffee caucus" at the student center or hangout. Invite new students to join in discussing the significant issues of inter-group relations.
3. Encourage your school-specific departments and professors, to explore the relation of their work to inter-group relations. Get them to encourage students to do relevant projects and papers.
4. Suggest and help organize an extracurricular seminar in the area of inter-group relations. Make sure your study is relevant to your own local circumstances.
5. Check into housing on your campus and find out what you can do to improve arrangements.
6. Make yourself available to help carry out surveys, etc., for your campus and community.
7. Help make facts available: (1) through your college library and newspaper, (2) through your community library and news agencies, (3) by keeping in touch with organizations working towards improving inter-

group relations, (4) by finding good films and having them shown on campus.

8. Use your student newspaper to encourage students to take a stand on questions of race relations. Emphasize the importance of personal responsibility and involvement.
9. Work with the college administration as much as possible. Be sure to use already established channels whenever possible. Keep the administration informed of activities and their results.

Suggestions for community action

1. Join and actively support an organization that is working to improve inter-group relations.
2. Get other individuals and organizations involved—directly or indirectly.
3. Inquire about policies of the business, union, or association for which you work. Encourage them to take a clear and favorable stand in both policies and practices.
4. Get the PTA and other organizations involved. Look into their policies on inter-group relations. If they haven't formulated any, assist them in taking a clear and favorable stand.
5. Promote attitudes conducive to good inter-group relations among children. See, whenever possible, that children do not learn prejudice from home or school.
6. Explore policies of all agencies benefiting from the Community Chest and similar funds. As contributors you have the right to know and to help determine those policies in seeing that the distribution of welfare is not done on a discriminatory basis.
7. Demand that political candidates take a clear stand on the relevant issues concerning equal opportunity for all citizens.
8. Write your congressmen and senators. Become aware of your state's efforts to improve inter-group relations.
9. Encourage the passage and enforcement of fair employment practice laws and other laws against discrimination.
10. Learn to use your state, local and federal government.
11. Demand accurate and non-discriminatory news reports. Letters to newspapers, radio and T.V. stations can change policies.
12. Use your church as an instrument of social force. Some churches have a social action committee. Note possibilities of joint worship, Sunday school classes, and summer Bible schools.
13. Check into policies of convention halls and hotels which your clubs are patronizing. Let them know that you will take your business elsewhere if they discriminate along racial or religious lines.
14. Advertisers should be convinced that their pictorial presentations should be more representative of our pluralistic society.
15. Note the total disorganization of towns in trouble over racial differences. Help your community avoid such demoralizing developments. Make sure a community resistance to racial discriminators is established before the need arises.



Participants' Comments

The following comments have been made by conference participants in evaluating their 5-day experience. They are included here to emphasize certain aspects of the conference, and to point out the reactions of those who were to benefit most directly from it.

One conference participant has written, "I have noticed some interesting after effects since my experience at the conference. Time and again I have been reading some material, talking to someone, or studying my class notes and have thought of some incident at the conference which related to the material or discussion. The reality of the conference discussions, lecturers, and associations, seem to have an importance in and of themselves; they provided vivid mental images which serve as a reference point." She continues, "... if you want an evaluation in terms of the effects of the conference upon its participants, you may judge by the following results: (1) Last Wednesday, Gloria, my friend, joined us at a BISA meeting (an independent student organization at ...). It really was a history-making event as there is no other Negro on the ... campus taking part in any club activities of any kind." "(2) Gloria and I are attempting to start a Human Relations Club at" "(3) Beatrice and I gave a report to the class which extended over two class periods including the discussion periods. Some of the class members were really interested in knowing what conclusion the conference members had come to and some took an active part in the class discussion. One discussion extended over into an informal C-Club gathering where we discussed the individual vs. group action effectiveness." A student from another campus wrote, "Thank you also for including ... among the schools to participate. I'm sure the sociology department and my friends will be very interested in my report when I return to campus." Another college representative spoke up quite frankly, "There is definitely subtle prejudice on our campus. After the conference I felt that I knew more where it is and what can be done about it." The same student elaborated, "I am now more aware of

the need for small 'stimulation' groups. Groups that will talk on this topic of race relations and make the students more aware of the seriousness of the problem and their individual potential to help."

Each evaluation included some specific references which indicate finer points that were important to them. Referring to the excellent film we saw called "The Burden of Truth" one student wrote, "Emotion can be used to our advantage." This revelation made quite an impression on her. Another student commented, "The approach of the churches seemed to me to be a most effective and lasting solution to the race relations problems . . ." We all discovered, as one girl mentions, that, "There are many and informative reading materials in easy reach." Our reading list only provides a starting point.

Coming to the essential aim of the conference a student from St. Louis wrote, "I learned a great deal about the organizations currently active in race relations work, the opinions of others, and my own position in the race situation. I see more than before that there is a grave need for strong Negro leadership, and also my place as a young Negro college student—how I can work and use the organizations that we discussed." This same student added, "Looking at these organizations on the Ohio state level makes me wonder more about the activities of these same organizations in my own state." "I see that we also need to adopt more tolerance on both sides of the colorline, if there be any. We need to laugh and not become too serious."

One criticism came up repeatedly in the evaluations, "There should have been more free time to think over what we had learned and heard, and also to get better acquainted with all the participants." My own opinion is that the discussion sessions should have been briefer. This would have provided more free time during which those students who wished to continue discussing issues with guest speakers could do so while others go on to other activities.

To help the conference participants get acquainted we planned our first two evening sessions as student programs. From our own observation and the following remarks we assume that this approach was quite successful. "Another thing I liked about the conference was that everything was directly connected with our purpose for attending." "Because each of us was attending the conference with a 'common goal' it would have been ridiculous to plan programs whereby we got to know others. I think this came quite naturally to almost everyone." One participant commented, "We all felt at home immediately and in turn felt free to participate in the discussions. The Western College student's friendliness and willingness to show us around provided for a very pleasant atmosphere." Another wrote, "The thing I liked best about the conference was the atmosphere which prevailed, not only at the sessions, but in the dining rooms, the Lodge, and at the bull sessions. Never before had I discussed openly and frankly the 'Negro problems' with Negroes."

One of our own students commented at length, "Another thing is that we should publicize the conference more by sending the news to many newspapers in the big cities. This not only would give moral support to those who are struggling with the racial problems, but would also let the people know that this is not a silent or apathetic generation, that we are also deeply concerned with the problems of the American society. I will also try to write a report on

the conference and send it to the newspaper in Taiwan this summer, because this issue is also a great concern to other countries as they look at how the leader of the free world works at solving its own domestic problems."

Conference Participants

- Susan Baarsch, Senior, Western College for Women (Deerfield, Illinois)
- Patricia Bobby, Senior, Miami University (Amsterdam, Ohio)
- Tom Castlen, Senior, Miami University (New Richmond, Ohio)
- Rosa Chen, Sophomore, Western College for Women (Pearl River, New York)
- Margaret Dobbins, Senior, Miami University (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- Myrna Eikenbary, Graduate student, Miami University (Hobart, Indiana)
- Janet Faust, Sophomore, Western College for Women (Tarrytown, New York)
- Joan Furlong, Senior, DePauw University (University City, Missouri)
- Margaret Githara, Junior, Western College for Women (Nairobi, Kenya)
- Judith Hampton, Freshman, Western College for Women (St. Louis, Missouri)
- Deborah Hunt, Sophomore, Western College for Women (Cleveland, Ohio)
- Joan Kowalski, Sophomore, Western College for Women (Teaneck, New Jersey)
- Judy Leitsch, Junior, Miami University (Hamilton, Ohio)
- Sara Matlock, Sophomore, University of Illinois (Yorkville, Illinois)
- Loretta Moore, Junior, Butler University (Indianapolis, Indiana)
- Pamela Odede, Senior, Western College for Women (Nairobi, Kenya)
- Martha Preston, Senior, DePauw University (Dixon, Illinois)
- Linda Prier, Junior, Western College for Women (Endicott, New York)
- Marian Robinson, Senior, Western College for Women (Houston, Texas)
- Loretta Ryder, Sophomore, Western College for Women (New Bern, North Carolina)
- Donna Shalala, Junior, Western College for Women (Cleveland, Ohio)
- Beatrice Stanfield, Junior, Butler University (Indianapolis, Indiana)
- Parmalee Taff, Junior, Western College for Women (Woodbury, Connecticut)
- Rowena Toomey, Junior, Western College for Women (Honolulu, Hawaii)
- Ann Tudor, Junior, Western College for Women (Kenton, Ohio)
- Diana Wells, Freshman, University of Illinois (Northbrook, Illinois)
- Roberta Wright, Freshman, Western College for Women (Portland, Oregon)