

During the latter half of the twentieth century, African Americans across the country mobilized in search of equity in law and practice. As laws changed, blacks gained better access to educational and employment opportunities. Although access to education improved, colleges and universities across the country made small strides to reflect that change. During the 1960s, black faculty at predominately white institutions was near zero percent. By the end of the following decade, that number had grown to two percent. Colleges and universities in the United States overall reached four point three percent black faculty by the end of the 1970s.¹ Despite this growth, black students still found themselves seeking a more predominant black presence in faculty and administration. Black college students throughout the United States found themselves drawn toward the growing notion of black consciousness.² Students found solace in each other; however, they grew distant from white faculty and administration.

Mirroring the movements happening throughout the US, black students sought black faculty at Lake Forest College. Feeling a lack of representation, LFC's black students vocalized their concerns beginning in the late 1960s. Led by the group Black Students for Black Action, the College's black students demanded that the LFC increase its number of black faculty. Students expressed their growing

showed strong support of BSBA's call for black faculty. The "Ad Hoc Committee Concerned with Black Students at Lake Forest College" was created comprised of black students and "sympathetic faculty members" who took on the task of seeking black faculty.¹¹ The committee explained that although the enrollment of black students has increased, there were currently no black faculty or administrators at LFC.¹² It was only four years prior that the College hired its first black professor, Nathan Huggins in the history department, who taught from 1964-1966.¹³ According to President William Cole, Huggins only left LFC to fulfill his desire to teach in Boston.¹⁴ However, despite the hiring of Huggins, the College failed to initiate any concrete steps to diversify the faculty body. The ad hoc committee stated their current efforts to recruit black administrators to fill positions in the Dean of Students office and as dormitory counselors.¹⁵ However, as the committee goes on to state, these positions do not address the need for black professors. BSBA's initial concerns were aimed at providing students with black professors who could provide both representation and assist in their desire to educate within the black community. The responsibility of the search for black faculty was then expanded to departments within the College. The committee requested that each department "institute a preferred Black hiring policy for any and all openings which may arise in the department for the next couple of years."¹⁶ The steps taken by the ad hoc committee seemed to show a commitment to hiring black faculty.

While the ad hoc committee listened to and worked along with BSBA, their efforts began to diminish. Gaining initial attention from the College administration quickly proved to be the simplest step in BSBA's efforts to recruit black faculty. The search for black faculty continued into the following school year as black students became more vocal in expressing the challenges they have faced. One of the main concerns LFC's administration had with recruiting black faculty

¹¹ "Committee Looks for Black Faculty, Impossible Quest?" *Stentor* (Lake Forest, IL), May 17, 1968

¹² "Ad Hoc Letter," *Stentor* (Lake Forest, IL), May 17, 1968

¹³ Arthur H. Miller and Susan L. Kelsey, *Legendary Lake Forest Locals* (Charleston Arcadia Publishing), 24

¹⁴ "Cole says college actively seeking black instructors," *Stentor* (Lake Forest, IL), Feb 21, 1969

¹⁵ "Ad Hoc Letter," *Stentor* (Lake Forest, IL), May 17, 1968

¹⁶ *Ibid*

was the need for qualified black professors. In the letter written by the initial ad hoc committee, they stated that "Qualified Black teachers are extremely difficult to find, but a serious search is called for."¹⁷ The College was persistent in requiring potential candidates, black and white, to have a master's degree or higher to be considered qualified. Black students recognized that there numerically aren't enough black professors to teach at every college across the country. However, a representative of BSBA argued that there shouldn't be formal requirements for potential faculty. He stated, "I don't think there should be any formal rules set down. If a man has some background, he has knowledge, he should be allowed a (a vsN

initially stating the need for black faculty, black students once again found themselves having to take charge.

The conflicting beliefs about the ability to find qualified black faculty raised the issue of recruiting existing black faculty from other colleges. LFC's black students favored going to schools in the south to recruit black faculty. Students argued that Lake Forest College is willing to "raid black high schools to get black students," so recruiting faculty is no different.²³ However, President Cole remained adamant in refusing to bring faculty from other colleges to LFC. He stated that although he is willing to recruit graduate students from black colleges and universities, he would not do the same with already teaching faculty.²⁴ Cole stated, "For a white institution to go to a black institution and steal students or faculty to be the height of selfishness."²⁵ However, when addressing the issue of "raising" black colleges, Charles Webb refuted President Cole's position and explains that he was actually recruited by LFC admissions officers while studying at a black college.²⁶ The inconsistencies in the College's words and actions shed light on the larger challenge of students and administration working collaboratively. Black students

statement²⁹

are taking this opportunity to tell you what's really happening³⁴ The

Lake Forest College's black students found hope in their new Black Dean of Black Students, however they still struggled to see more black professors. In response to the perceived lack of effort on the administration's part, LFC's black students sought to advance efforts independently. President Cole went as far as to assign BSBA with the

of 1970⁵⁸ The three faculty positions, as well as the hiring of James Ganett for an administrative position, showed signs that student efforts were slowly paying off. However, the College had yet to meet BSBA's goal of five full-time black professors by September 1970.

The process of recruiting black faculty to Lake Forest College proved to be a daunting task for LFC's black students. Although BSBA's demands were altered and met to varying degrees, students found hope in the few additions made. Eganbi Dalizu was set to begin in September 1970, however it appears that he did not teach.⁵⁹ In addition to James Ganett in administration, Calvin Stewart in the philosophy department, and Pauline Slaughter in history, Eula Powers was hired as a biology lab instructor and Doris Haynes took a position in educational psychology.⁶⁰ The efforts students made through BSBA's review board proved to be beneficial for both students and the new faculty. Eula Powers told students that she enjoyed seeing students so invested in their own education and wellbeing.⁶¹ The new black faculty seemed to fit black students' desire to have instructors who can relate to them in both academic and personal ways. The struggle for black students to find and use their voice at a predominately white college proved to be a challenging yet rewarding process. An article in *Black Rap* articulates the various feelings saying "Setbacks, there were many of them, along with frustrations, and for a time it seemed as if the entire venture was worthless. The dedicated students, however, never abandoned their pursuit."⁶² *Black Students for Black Action* showed that black college students are capable of successfully challenging the status quo at predominately white institutions.

The call for Lake Forest College to hire black faculty resulted in students taking on roles they were ultimately unprepared for. The initial demand for black faculty was brought to LFC's administration by

58 Howard Benson, "Committee Moves: Faculty/ Curriculum Committees," *Black Rap* (Lake Forest, IL), Apr. 1970 <http://www.lakeforest.edu/live/files/1472/blackrap-volume-2-number-3-april-1970.pdf>

59 Howard Benson, "Committee Moves: New Black Faculty" *Black Rap* (Lake Forest, IL), Oct. 1970 <http://collections.lakeforest.edu/items/show/4323>

60 *Ibid*

61 *Ibid*

62 *Ibid*

**Black Students for Black Action during the 1968-1969 academic year:
BSBA made efforts to put the issue in the administration's hands and
were even eager to work alongside college faculty and administration**