ABSTRACT

SMITH, LINDA FARRIS. “Nothing Short of Revolution”: Black Power on North Carolina College Campuses. (Under the direction of Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron).

This thesis explores the relationships between the national Black Power Movement and desegregation politics in North Carolina higher education in the late 1960s and 1970s. During this time, North Carolina’s system of higher education remained embroiled in a battle to stall integration despite extensive federal intervention. Meanwhile, black college students in the state employed the politics of self-determination and sophisticated organizing tactics to wage their own campaigns for the power to shape their higher education experience. This thesis shows how these two issues – desegregation and Black Power – affected the activist goals and protest strategies of black students at both historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and predominantly white institutions.

Although recent scholarship has begun to address the Black Power Movement on college campuses in other regions of the United States, studies of the South remain underrepresented. This analysis offers the first comparative view of black student activism at HBCUs across the state, and reveals a more complex narrative of Black Power politics that manifested in rural and urban regions, and whose chronological scope extends beyond national trends. It also reveals the overt failures of North Carolina higher education desegregation policies, thus challenging depictions of the state and its actions during this period as progressive. Relying on university governance records; institutional funding, enrollment, and academic program data; oral history interviews; campus newspapers; and other student publications, this thesis documents black students’ struggle for educational access, institutional equity, and student autonomy.

“Nothing Short of Revolution”: Black Power on North Carolina’s College Campuses

by
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BIOGRAPHY

Farris Smith was raised in Johnston County, North Carolina. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2017, where she studied History with a minor in campaign management. After graduating, she was selected to serve in a one-year appointment as a Presidential Fellow to the University of North Carolina System President and Board of Governors in Chapel Hill. She began her graduate studies in History at North Carolina State University in 2018.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Black Campus Movement
BSM	Black Student Movement
BSU	Black Student Union
ECSU	Elizabeth City State University
FSU	Fayetteville State University
HBCU	Historically black colleges and universities
NC A&T	North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University
NCAAP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCCU	North Carolina Central University
NCSU	North Carolina State University
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
PWI	Predominantly white institution
SAAC	Society for Afro-American Culture
UNC	University of North Carolina
UNC-CH	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
UNCC	University of North Carolina Charlotte
WSSU	Winston-Salem State University

INTRODUCTION

"No means for the minority to protect their interests"

By the time Julius Chambers began his tenure on the Board of Governors for the University of North Carolina (UNC) System in 1972, North Carolina had entered a tumultuous period of political upheaval and campus unrest. In just six years, the UNC System had expanded to encompass all state-supported institutions of higher education, growing from three to sixteen campuses, including five historically black colleges (HBCUs). During that same time, the federal government charged the UNC System with operating a "centralized but racially dual" higher education structure, igniting a decade-long dispute between university, state, and federal officials.[1] Meanwhile, African American students, increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of desegregation and the limited opportunities available to them, launched significant protests on both black and white college campuses.

Black campus activists and Chambers used different methods in pursuit of the same goals because the enormity of the problems required multiple approaches. Students attacked those that had the most direct impact on their daily lives and educational experiences. Chambers, a native of Mount Gilead, North Carolina, and civil rights attorney, relied on legal and administrative methods. Both groups believed that the UNC System's gradual approach to desegregation threatened the vitality of black colleges and continued to restrict educational opportunities for black students at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Both also advocated for new policy measures that would enhance HBCUs and advance the interests of black students at traditionally white schools. Yet Chambers' white colleagues on the UNC Board of Governors and in the UNC

[1] David W. Bishop, "The Consent Decree Between the University of North Carolina System and the U.S. Department of Education, 1981-1982." *The Journal of Negro Education* 52, no. 3 (1983): 359.

System met all efforts with resistance and maintained a hardline stance against substantive reform. Even when pressured by federal officials and student activists, white leaders consistently demonstrated an unwillingness to abandon past policies and practices that preserved segregation.

Chambers estimated that he had already "lived with all deliberate speed for fifteen or twenty years" before joining the Board of Governors.[2] After graduating from Durham's North Carolina College for Negroes in 1958, he became one of the first black students to attend the law school at UNC Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), which had only desegregated in 1951.[3] Disquieted by his disparate educational experiences, he later recalled, "I knew I would never be able to make up for what I had lost."[4] Yet despite the limited resources accorded to his undergraduate institution, the professional, social, and cultural tools imparted by the black college experience invariably proved necessary for his success. Chambers' personal experiences nevertheless kindled a dedication to eradicating educational inequalities in North Carolina. In 1969, he represented a group of black student activists at UNC-CH who faced charges for organizing a demonstration on campus. The following year, shortly after arguing the landmark *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* case before the U.S. Supreme Court, Chambers assisted colleagues at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund (NAACP-LDF) in filing suit against the federal government.[5] In this action, the NAACP-

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[2] J.L. Chambers deposition, UNC-HEW case file, University of North Carolina General Administration [System Office] Archives, C.D. Spangler Building, UNC System Office, Chapel Hill, NC.

[3] Negroes Numbers vary across records, but approximately 9-15 African American students attended the law and medical programs at UNC-CH between 1951 and 1959. See Donna Nixon, "The Integration of UNC-Chapel Hill -- Law School First," *North Carolina Law Review* (2019), 97, no. 1741.

[4] The North Carolina College for Negroes changed its name to North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in 1969. NCCU is one of the five state-supported historically black colleges in the state. See Julius Chambers interview with William Link, June 18, 1990 L-0127, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC. [Interview hereafter cited as Chambers interview, 1990; Southern Oral History Program hereafter cited as SOHP; Southern Historical Collection hereafter cited as SHC; library hereafter cited as Wilson Library].

[5] Julius Chambers interview with Judith van Wyk, March 6, 2007, L-0266, SOHP, SHC. [Interview hereafter cited as Chambers interview, 2007]. The 1971 U.S. Supreme Court *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* decision upheld busing as an appropriate means of expediting public school integration.

LDF claimed that the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had failed to enforce constitutional mandates to desegregate higher education in several states – including North Carolina.[6] "Part of the problem," Chambers later observed, "is the fear that by integrating, you simply merge everybody out of existence. And those who dominated society in the past will continue to dominate, with no means for the minority to protect their interests."[7]

Importantly, UNC System's reorganization in 1966, the student protests that erupted on campus, and the NAACP-LDF's legal action coincided with the rise of Black Power in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Ideologically, the Black Power Movement (BPM) emphasized celebrating African American identity and culture as a catalyst for political empowerment. The movement manifested on college campuses across the nation, as students sought to expose and challenge the inherent limitations of desegregation politics through self-deterministic organizing. In North Carolina, black student activists filtered their concerns over desegregation and UNC System reorganization through a Black Power lens; they insisted on the rehabilitation of HBCUs, and fought for the power to control those institutions as well as for greater measures to expand access to PWIs for black applicants.

Until very recently, scholarship on civil rights and New Left student activists in the 1960s has subsumed Black Power campus activism. In that decade, lunch counter sit-ins, and anti-war and women's liberation protests emerged in quick succession on the nation's college campuses. Historian Van Gosse describes the proliferation of activism and social change during the 1960s as the "Movement of movements," an idea which David Farber, Ibram Kendi, and Fabio Rojas

[6] In 1972, U.S. District Court Judge John Pratt ruled in favor of the NAACP-LDF in this suit, which directly prompted increased federal supervision of the UNC System's desegregation process. See *Adams v. Richardson,* 351 Supp. 636 (US District Court DC 1972).
[7] Chambers interview, 1990.

have since used to contextualize the surge in college student activism and its many forms.[8] Though useful when analyzing broad themes in protest politics, this framework can cloud the complexities of discrete student-led struggles, the shape those took in distinct geographical contexts, and the extent to which tactics and motives for campus activism changed over time. Historians such as Robert Cohen and Jeffrey Turner also illuminate commonalities between black campus activism and other student movements in the mid-twentieth century. In studying student activism as a whole, Cohen and Turner identify and analyze the intersections of key social movement themes such as imagined communities, identity formation, and the rejection of paternalism. Their scope and methodology emphasize the larger social and cultural context of student activism but sacrifices depth when describing specific struggles.[9]

Additionally, scholars of Black Studies and social movement history have analyzed a small number of individual campus struggles that offer a window into the broader BPM in higher education. For example, in his analysis of the Black Campus Movement at the University of Pennsylvania, Wayne Glasker complicates the links between black nationalism, rigid separatism, and the aims of student activists. He finds that activists on campus embraced nationalist tenants and cultural self-definition by forming black student organizations and pushing for Black Studies curricula. At the same time, however, they often coordinated activist efforts that crossed racial

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[8] Van Gosse, *Movements of the New Left, 1950-1975* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005); David Farber, "Afterward," in *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*, edited by Robert Cohen and David Snyder (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 312-322; Ibram Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement*: *Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). Gosse uses this term to describe the various ways in which social movements in this period were linked to one another; though each movement had different aims, they were guided by shared principles and values. "Movement of movements" in higher education, then, refers to commonalities like advocacy for student rights and the campus as an environment that both provoked and supported protest; Note: Ibram Rogers has changed his name to Ibram Kendi since publishing *The Black Campus Movement* and is referred to accordingly throughout the text of this thesis.

[9] See Robert Cohen, "Prophetic Minority versus Recalcitrant Majority: Southern Student Dissent and the Struggle for Progressive Change in the 1960s," in Cohen and Snyder, eds., *Rebellion in Black and White*, 1-41; and Jeffrey Turner, *Sitting In and Speaking Out* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

lines, demonstrating pluralist and biracial tendencies that contrast with conventional Black Power narratives.[10]

Recently, comprehensive studies of the BPM on college campuses have begun to elevate the discussion by framing black campus activism as an entangled series of models, moments, and motives spanning several causes. Works by Ibram Kendi and Martha Biondi critically frame black student activist history at the national level in the 1960s and 1970s.[11] Kendi maintains that the Black Campus Movement produced the most significant effects on its "segment society" – college campuses, student bodies, and university faculty and administrations – than any other branch of the BPM.[10] Biondi takes a similar view, arguing that the call for self-determination in academia during this period encouraged cultural and academic ownership for black students and scholars, empowered black intellectual production, and thus legitimized an African American presence in scholarship and on campus.

To date, no historical monographs have thoroughly investigated the topic of Black Power activism on North Carolina campuses, either predominantly white or historically black. Historians William Chafe and Jelani Favors both place Greensboro, North Carolina, at the forefront of the southern BPM, but neither dedicate significant discussion to the Black Campus Movement despite the city's college-rich landscape.[12] Moreover, focusing on one place, both

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[10] Wayne Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); See also Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Stefan Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009); and Donald Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[11] Ibram Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

[12] William Chafe: *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Jelani Favors, ""North Carolina A&T Black Power Activists and the Student Organization for Black Unity," in *Rebellion in Black and White,* 255-280. There are two public universities in Greensboro, including one of the HBCUs featured in this study, (NC A&T and University of North Carolina Greensboro) and three private colleges (Guildford College, Greensboro College, and Bennett College, an

authors privilege urban perspectives, and draw broader conclusions that do not hold for the entire state. According to Chafe, a "progressive mystique" informed white North Carolina leaders' responses to the era's activists. He defines this as a white elite politics of moderation, which preserved white-dominated power structures by making gilded, limited concessions to civil rights protests. If Chafe's conclusion challenges the depictions of the state's relative progressivism in earlier political histories, it remains limited to metropolitan areas in its in geographical scope.

Earlier waves of black student activism laid the groundwork for Black Power ideology to emerge on college campuses. In the New Negro Movement of the 1920s, African American students organized to protest stringent campus policies. These efforts transitioned into protests against segregation in the post-World War II years, and the civil rights movement energized black student activists in the 1950s and early 1960s as they waged a monumental struggle for access and inclusion in educational systems and in broader society.[13] By the early 1960s, they also enjoyed select, but hard-won, freedoms at HBCUs and, in some cases, the opportunity of admission to white colleges. As had each generation before them, student activists in the Black Power era faced unique challenges. As meaningful desegregation of southern higher education systems stalled until the late 1960s and their own disillusionment with assimilationist civil rights polices grew, black students in the late 1960s and early 1970s established and mobilized black nationalist organizations on campus to demand a role in defining their higher learning experience. The broader changes in society, including civil rights gains and a new degree of federal support, distinguished their efforts from earlier generations. At the same time, as this

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all-female HBCU). Although Favors examines activists at NC A&T, his focus is primarily on early 1960s demonstrations and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee off-campus activism.

[13] For more on black student activism on HBCU campuses in the decades leading up to the Black Power Movement, see Elizabeth Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar: Historically Black Colleges and the Struggle for Equality, 1930-1960" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018); and Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

thesis will demonstrate, federal oversight could complicate the pathway to campus activists' achieving their goals.

Philosophically, students in the late twentieth century drew upon a long tradition of black nationalism. As an ideology, black nationalism rejects the exclusionary and oppressive structures of white America and emphasizes the importance of achieving sociocultural autonomy through black control of black institutions based on a shared sense of identity. With roots in nineteenth-century abolitionism, black nationalist impulses reemerged in the twentieth century during the World War I era, most prominently espoused by the Pan-Africanist politics of Marcus Garvey. Three years after Garvey's deportation from the United States in 1927, W.D. Fard established the Nation of Islam in Detroit. It would become black nationalism's most important post-World War II vehicle under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and his star minister, Malcolm X. World War II also renewed widespread interest in Pan-Africanism and, more significantly, fostered anti-colonial struggles in Africa that captured the attention of many Black Power supporters.[14]

During the Black Power era, many forms of militancy emerged, which historian William L. Van Deburg has separated into pluralist and nationalist camps.[15] Almost all Black Power advocates operated on the premise of "community control." Turning inward, pluralists embraced community organizing to develop a strong, unified base from which to build greater political influence in the broader society. Territorial nationalists endorsed separatism and sought sovereignty through black control of land and resources. Cultural nationalists held that the best approach to empowerment and developing a shared value system would be through celebrating and asserting the distinct "vitality and grandeur" of black culture and infusing it with Pan-

[14] See, for example, Mark Newman, *Black Nationalism in American History: From the Nineteenth Century to the Million Man March* (Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[15] William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Africanism. Revolutionary nationalists, on the other hand, thought that liberation required a total upheaval of racial capitalism, which would entail waging a socialist struggle within the United States as well as with allies abroad in the Global South.[16]

By the mid-1960s, a new generation of black student activists applied the concepts of Black Power and black nationalism to reinterpret the structure and mission of higher education. Inspired by the black nationalist rhetoric of prominent BPM leaders, such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, young black activists on college campuses organized to challenge extant systems of white elite power in higher education by emphasizing the need self-determination, celebrating racial pride, and advocating for continued black control of black institutions. Students at historically black colleges organized to preserve their institutions as vital spaces of black autonomy, and those attending the newly integrated predominantly white schools insisted that their institutions become active, relevant resources for local black communities.

This thesis documents the Black Campus Movement in North Carolina by examining both African American and white institutions. It offers the first comparative perspective of student campaigns at HBCUs, and expands on previous studies by considering the movement's complexities at schools in both urban and rural regions. I also document the prolonged opposition to meaningful reform by state and UNC System leaders. Indeed, I contend that what most distinguishes the Black Campus Movement here is the concurrent UNC System consolidation and the state's battle with the federal government over desegregation, which remained unresolved throughout the 1970s. Following student protesters' responses to these developments reveals how they intersected with Black Power campus politics and lengthens the

[16] Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon*, Ch. 4, quotes on 64 and 171, respectively. See also Ch. 1.

chronology of the Black Campus Movement, which most scholars agree had ended by 1970. African American student activists in North Carolina also fought on two fronts. At HBCUs, they sought to expand student power, overturn traditional conduct and disciplinary policies, and espoused cultural nationalism to promote black history and culture through academic reforms. At PWIs, they agitated for greater representation on campus, the creation of black cultural spaces, and on behalf of African American service workers at the university. Only by adopting a comparative approach does the breadth and depth of their movement come into focus.

Examining the struggles for power and authority over black higher education in North Carolina, this thesis asks: How did Black Power ideology manifest in state and campus contexts, and in what ways did these social, cultural, and political forces shape black student activism? How did the UNC System's resistance to meaningful desegregation in the 1960s and 1970s affect the infrastructure of black higher education? How did black students perceive their campus environments as a result? Finally, how and why did African Americans at historically black and predominantly white colleges respond to the "crisis of education" differently?

Drawing on administrative and legal records, the first chapter illuminates the UNC System's failure to confront or repair the enduring legacies of the state's long history of hostility toward black education despite new federal directives. I document North Carolina's purposeful neglect of public HBCUs in terms of funding and academic programming during segregation, and how that pattern endured after consolidation. As former Secretary of Education Joseph Califano later observed, "When we tried to enforce the civil rights laws for blacks, we had resistance everywhere. That was true north, south, east, and west. But North Carolina was by far the most resistant."[17] Once the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare solicited revised

[17] Joseph Califano, interview with William Link, April 5, 1991, interview L-0125, SOHP, SHC, Wilson Library.

desegregation plans to mitigate extant racial duality, UNC System leadership engaged in strategic political maneuvering and delay that perpetuated discrimination against black students. The disparities between HBCUs and PWIs occupied the crux of the dispute. Even after consolidation, university and state governing bodies consistently and methodically underfunded and under-resourced black colleges. Desegregation policy paradoxically diminished access to higher education for black students by threatening closure of HBCUs, which had historically served students whose preliminary education may not have ensured their admission to PWIs. In 1977, Chambers summarized the effects of the UNC System's methods: "And so we have a student who went to the only institution he could attend, suffering from deprivation in public schools and even more deprivation in higher education."[18] When the federal government maintained that North Carolina effectively preserved "separate but equal" institutions of higher learning, white UNC System leadership countered that federal directives would encroach on the governing authority of the University. Importantly, neither approach provided for the enhancement of black institutions, leaving HBCUS "underfunded and unallowed to play an equal role in providing educational programs."[19]

Chapter Two chronicles student activism at the five public HBCUs within the UNC System: Elizabeth City State, North Carolina Central, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State, Winston-Salem State, and Fayetteville State University.[20] At a time when desegregation and UNC System consolidation threatened to "merge everybody out of existence," HBCU

[18] Chambers quoted in Bernie Ransbottom, "Chambers criticizes UNC desegregation stance," *Daily Tar Heel* [UNC-CH], November 4, 1977.
[19] Chambers interview, 1990.
[20] Formerly: Elizabeth City State College (renamed in 1969), North Carolina College (renamed in 1972), Agricultural & Technical College of North Carolina (renamed in 1967), Winston-Salem State College (renamed in 1969), and Fayetteville State College (renamed in1969), respectively. Several UNC System institutions experienced at least one name change during the years studied in this paper. For clarity and consistency, I refer to each school by its present-day name throughout the thesis, unless otherwise noted.

campus activists mobilized to reassert the value and continued relevance of black colleges.[21] I argue that campus activists at HBCUs combined pluralism and cultural nationalism; they organized for a voice in determining the future of their institutions, and targeted both administrators on their campus and UNC System leaders. Their efforts included resistance to potential institutional closures and mergers, but also manifested in less direct ways. Campus activists' unbridled commitment to self-determination drove students' efforts to transform their schools into modern, relevant black institutions. At black colleges across the state, students launched grassroots campaigns to expand students' rights, rejected vestiges of in loco parentis, and demanded curricula reform that would nurture and expand Black consciousness and challenge the pervasiveness of white Euro-American thought and standards. A culture of activism had ripened at HBCUs by the late 1960s, and Black Power politics framed students' expectations of each other, their campus, and higher education in general.

My final chapter analyzes the unique struggles of black students on predominantly white campuses, who simultaneously grappled with politics of desegregation and Black Power. I assess the trajectory, goals, and outcomes of black student activism at three PWIs: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which hosted some of the state's most highly visible demonstrations during this period; the University of North Carolina Charlotte, one of the youngest public colleges in the state and located in a city that was a seedbed for radical black politics; and North Carolina State University, which maintained a relatively more conservative campus culture. I contend that black student activists at PWIs saw themselves as dedicated members of local, national, and even international black communities despite constituting less than two percent of their universities' student body. They organized for better working

[21] Ibid.

conditions for black university employees, protested housing discrimination off campus, and promoted black internationalism. Like their peers at HBCUs, these students blended pluralism and cultural nationalism as they pursued the development of Black Studies departments, enhancing the recruitment of black students and faculty, and increasing black representation in student leadership roles traditionally dominated by white students. In this way, black student activists demonstrated a Black Power ethos of self-determination, racial pride, and solidarity. At the same time, they collaborated with white students and allies to pursue their goals. Black students at PWIs sought to transform their institutions into accessible, relevant, and equitable resources for black students, staff, and local communities.

In North Carolina, the emergence of Black Power politics and organizing tactics exacerbated the structural and political upheaval of higher education in the late 1960s and 1970s, creating a context of crisis for black educational welfare that set in motion a protracted struggle to redefine institutions of higher learning and the role of the black students within them. This movement unfolded on both historically black and predominantly white campuses, and encompassed national and local, campus-centric matters. At the heart of this struggle, black campus activists demanded the power to shape their own higher education experience.

CHAPTER ONE

"Them that has, gets": The Limitations of Desegregation Policy within the University of North Carolina System

By the time representatives from the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) arrived at North Carolina A&T State University's campus in Greensboro in 1979, the battle over desegregating higher education in North Carolina had been ongoing for nearly a decade. In 1969, the director of OCR had issued letters to any state operating a public system of higher education that had failed to comply with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discriminatory practices on the basis of race, nation, or origin from any federally funded program. Ten states received notice of noncompliance, including North Carolina.[22] Over the next decade, OCR and North Carolina's public university system, the University of North Carolina (UNC) System, engaged in a winding, contentious fight over the implementation of comprehensive, meaningful desegregation policy. The means by which such policy should be implemented and monitored – specifically as it related to the state's five historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) – occupied the heart of the dispute. OCR repeatedly insisted that the UNC System's desegregation plans for HBCUs consciously preserved vestiges of *de jure* racial duality, an accusation that the University vehemently denied. After ten years of exchanging correspondence and hosting formal meetings with UNC System leadership in Washington D.C., OCR delegated two individuals, Mary Frances Berry and David Tatel, to visit the state and collect definitive proof that the

[22] William Link, *William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 238. OCR was a subsection of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) tasked with enforcing integration and other compliance actions related to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For clarity, this paper refers to them separately and uses "HEW" only in contexts that are not specific to or do not directly include OCR. The office also sent letters to Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

conditions of its HBCUs fell "far short of adequacy" and exhibited "clearly unequal" treatment.[23] Thus, when Berry and Tatel arrived in Greensboro in 1979, emboldened by the possibility of putting an end to years of unproductive negotiations, the group of twenty-five students that they encountered protesting OCR's investigation likely seemed incongruous.[24]

Stories like this one reflect well the tense relationships between the UNC System, its HBCUs, and the federal government during the desegregation process of higher education in North Carolina. OCR officials supported immediate action, even at the expense of local nuance while UNC System leaders resented the federal government's intervention into what they perceived as exclusively University business. Consequently, UNC System action challenged OCR's compliance standards by deploying excessively stubborn resistance to desegregation disguised as "race-blind" practices.[25] In the middle sat five HBCUs, whose responses toggled between fear of closure and loss of autonomy due to the looming threat of merging with predominantly white institutions (PWI), and frustration with university governance that relegated their campuses to second-tier status. In many ways, both sides jeopardized access to higher education for black North Carolinians in a process that defied "any easy characterization as a conflict between integrationists and southern segregationists."[26]

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[23] David Tatel, interview by William Link, August 7, 1991, L-0201, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [Southern Oral History Program hereafter cited as SOHP; Southern Historical Collection hereafter cited as SHC; library hereafter cited as Wilson Library]. David Tatel was the director of OCR from 1977-1979. Mary Frances Berry was the Department of Housing, Education, and Welfare's Assistant Secretary for Education from 1977-1980. She also served on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1980-1987 and as Chair of the commission from 1993-2004. Berry was the first African American woman to hold a chancellorship of a major research university and has remained an active civil rights figure.

[24] Sherry Johnson, "Upgrading Black Colleges HEW's AIM," *Greensboro Daily News*, February 22, 1979.

[25] William Friday, interview by William Link, February 20, 1991, L-0151, SOHP. [Interview hereafter cited as Friday interview]. Friday emphasizes the University's superficially non-discriminatory practices.

[26] Link, *William Friday*, 305.

As much as hostile UNC System and state action limited the resources and opportunities available to HBCUs, they remained invaluable to black North Carolinians. Against the backdrop of the oppressive Jim Crow South and its unequal educational systems, black colleges represented autonomous spaces wherein students and community members could receive leadership training and celebrate black achievement. Each campus in its own way, and according to its traditional purpose, provided students the professional and personal tools necessary to succeed in – and resist – the second-class status assigned to African Americans in a segregated society. As black-controlled educational spaces, these HBCUs also pioneered strategies to assist underrepresented undergraduates in their quest for access to higher education, which included surmounting academic under-preparation while according students respect as learners.[27] Though severely underfunded, North Carolina's HBCUs had graduated thousands of black students in the decades after 1920, catalyzing black institution building across professions throughout the state and nation. Their legacy remains unmatched as does the loyalty of their alumni.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, black student protesters and HBCU leaders alike understood that closing or merging their institutions threatened to diminish educational opportunities for those who, through no fault of their own, had not acquired the preliminary education that would ensure admission to a PWI. In fact, integration into the UNC System could very well exacerbate the educational attainment gap between white and black North Carolinians, especially if African Americans lost decision-making power in campus governance. Yet HBCU administrators, who had tactically pursued making separate equal in terms of funding and facilities on their campuses, now confronted a two-pronged dilemma. On one hand, they did not

[27] For more on the historical roles and significance of black colleges, see *Jelani Favors, Shelter in a Time of Storm: How Black Colleges Fostered Generations of Leadership and Activism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

see any reason to abandon historic practices that had enabled graduates to succeed in the broader world, and resisted student protesters' demands that threatened to change campus culture beyond recognition.[28] On the other hand, they saw that the gradualism of UNC System leaders when it came to upgrading HBCUs to achieve parity with PWIs effectively perpetuated unequal education.

Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, North Carolina HBCUs struggled *more* to recruit competitive students, retain faculty, and develop attractive degree programs.[29] Desegregation efforts over the next fifteen years accentuated these problems, as both UNC System leadership and HBCUs grappled with the challenge of implementing them while also preserving the integrity of historically black schools. As the federal government pressed the issue, white UNC System leaders insisted that meaningful desegregation mandated the full integration of HBCUs in addition to PWIs. At the same time, some HBCU constituents, including UNC Board of Governors member Julius Chambers, argued that UNC manipulated investing in the "black character" of its HBCUs in order to avoid making them truly competitive with the state's eleven PWIs.[30] A desire for ownership and authority over the black educational experience drove these diverging responses. Moreover, the failure to address North Carolina's long history of neglecting black education at every level constituted the principal weakness of the desegregation initiatives that emerged from the negotiations between the OCR and the UNC System.

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[28] For scholarship that has documented the various roles played by administrators and teachers at black institutions at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels as they relate to black control of black education, see Elizabeth Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar: Historically Black Colleges and the Struggle for Equality, 1930-1960" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018); and Katherine Mellen Charron, *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), especially chapters 2-5.

[29] Catherine Baltzell, Robert Dentler, and Daniel Sullivan, *University on Trial: The Case of the University of North Carolina* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 27-49.

[30] Albert Samuels, *Is Separate Equal? Black Colleges and the Challenge to Desegregation* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 159.

Indeed, nothing in the UNC System's structure guaranteed an equal voice for African Americans in any aspect of its decision-making. UNC leadership remained overwhelmingly white during its desegregation era, and the system's centralized governing structure made it a "political powerhouse."[31] The majority-white state legislature appointed members to the UNC System Board of Governors, which retained sweeping authority over planning, development, personnel, and even budgetary matters for all of its constituent institutions of higher education. The President of the UNC System, William C. Friday, and his senior administrative staff then executed all policy decisions.[32] Black North Carolinians had little leeway to hold even well-meaning white leaders accountable.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, North Carolina was home to more HBCUs than any other state, and this distinction fostered a rich culture of institutional pride and commitment to black educational systems among the state's African American communities. North Carolina established the first of its historically black colleges in the late nineteenth century, and by 1905 it supported a land-grant agricultural and mechanical college in Greensboro, a liberal arts college in Durham, and three normal schools in Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, and Winston-Salem. The pride black communities across the state felt was especially justified because from the beginning, public black colleges had obtained meager state funding. In 1915, for example, they received only 8.3 percent of the total state funds allocated to institutions of higher education.[33] The General Assembly established four-year degree programs

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[31] Link, *William Friday*, 255.
[32] North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, *The Statewide UNC Board of Governors: Its Selection, Powers, and Relationship to the 16 Local Campus Boards of Trustees* (Raleigh, NC: Author, 2006).
[33] Figures from N.C. Newbold's "Financial History of State Institutions of Higher Education for Negros in North Carolina" as quoted in Sarah Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina, 1919-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 93.

at black colleges in the 1920s, but its continued disproportionately low appropriations to black institutions prevented those schools from renovating campus facilities, purchasing new library materials, or recruiting the most highly credentialed instructors.[34] According to historian William Link, the state's decision to duplicate four-year degree programs available at predominantly white institutions at traditionally black institutions without adequate financial support created "the most extensive Jim Crow higher education system in the South."[35]

In 1955, the *Frasier v. Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina* federal court decision mandated race-blind admissions across all public North Carolina colleges, granting black students opportunity for admission at PWIs for the first time.[36] PWIs continued to collect larger shares of public funding even after the implementation of race-blind admissions. Meanwhile, the court decision allowed white university and state officials to continue to justify shortchanging traditionally black institutions by claiming that race-blind admissions inherently ensured equal opportunity and access. Thus, the chronic neglect and underfunding of HBCUs that had underscored the limitations of early black higher education persisted even after the 1955 *Frasie*r ruling and perpetuated racial inequality in the UNC System. The OCR identified these disparities in its 1969 finding that North Carolina had not complied with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

At the same time, a whirlwind of haphazard policy changes in the late 1960s had profoundly altered the landscape of North Carolina higher education. In 1964, the UNC System encompassed just three institutions, all predominantly white: UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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[34] Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal*, 89-129. North Carolina purchased and incorporated its fifth black college, Durham State Normal School, now North Carolina Central University, in 1923.
[35] Link, *William Friday*, 249.
[36] For a more complete history of North Carolina traditionally black institutions prior to 1955, see Thuesen, *Greater than Equal*, esp. Ch. 3; and James Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

State University (NCSU), and UNC Greensboro. By 1968, however, the General Assembly had launched a massive push to standardize higher education by creating a single supervising body for state-supported colleges. Following that, a rapid series of legislation overhauled the state's higher education structure; the UNC System expanded to six campuses in 1969, and then to sixteen by 1971.[37] In a message to the General Assembly, Governor Robert Scott remarked on the implications of the legislature's vast and swift changes: "We are proceeding with all sail and no rudder."[38] The chaotic organizational shift also initially unsettled UNC System leadership. The restructuring of the state's public colleges had occurred without the UNC System's consultation, and its leaders viewed the changes as a gross politicization of higher education.[39] As a result, UNC System President William Friday grew extremely concerned with reclaiming authority in the following years. His desire to distance the University from the influence of outside parties shaped the UNC System's role in the desegregation dispute throughout the 1970s. Because System reorganization coincided with OCR's charges against the North Carolina higher education system, the process of desegregation and adjustment to a new governing structure merged. Furthermore, the system changes forced HBCUs to relinquish any remaining forms of self-governance in the middle of a tremendous civil rights policy struggle that directly affected black institutions.

When the UNC System began exploring the possibility of restructuring, a report commissioned by the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education concluded that the state could not afford "several great universities," but should "have at least one."[40] The use of tiered

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[37] Arnold King, *The Multi-Campus University of North Carolina Comes of Age, 1956-1986* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 163-165.
[38] Robert Scott, "Message to the General Assembly," May 20, 1970 in *Addresses and Public Papers of Robert Walter Scott, Governor of North Carolina, 1969-1973* (Raleigh: Division of Archives, 1974), 93.
[39] Friday interview.
[40] *State Supported Higher Education in North Carolina: The Report of the Commission on Higher Education* (Raleigh, NC: np, 1955), 54.

categorization sorted institutions into one of three designations based on size and available degree programs: General Baccalaureate, Comprehensive, and Research. Institutions classified as General Baccalaureate offered the fewest degree programs and received the least funding; Comprehensive institutions awarded master's degrees and had some professional programs, but no doctoral programs; and Research institutions offered diverse baccalaureate, professional, and doctoral programs and received the most public funding. To date, no HBCU has ever been designated as a Research institution in the UNC System.[41] Even after state legislators elevated Durham's North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and North Carolina Agricultural & Technical University (NC A&T) to the Comprehensive level, structural and administrative inequalities amplified the stratification of institutional performance for these HBCUs.

The disturbing paradox of the HBCU desegregation problem, of course, exists in the implicit burden placed on black students and educators. The state and federal policy discourse on UNC System desegregation framed the issue as a simple question: Can traditionally black institutions preserve their historic markers of identity without compromising meaningful desegregation? The response from North Carolina's five public HBCUs indicates a more complex narrative. As NCCU, NC A&T, Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), Fayetteville State University (FSU), and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) struggled to enforce more selective enrollment policies, their students, faculty, and alumni opposed UNC System and OCR involvement. Specifically, they challenged those outside groups' interpretations of, and ability to define, the role HBCUs played in higher education and the meaning of their traditionally black character. Marian Thorpe, chancellor of ECSU, expressed this in his 1970 letter to regional OCR

[41] Student Organization for Black Unity, *Save Our Black Schools: What is the Future of Black Higher Education in North Carolina?* (Greensboro, NC: SOBU News Service, 1971), 1-6, file 5, Civil Rights Publications, Elizabeth City State University Archive, G.R. Little Library, Elizabeth City, NC.

director, claiming that the UNC System's "so-called integration … has not been integration at all; it has been the destruction of what has traditionally been the black system of education." Skeptical of both OCR and the university system's ability to deliver fully on either side's promises, Thorpe continued, "We do not, nor do we encourage others to think, that we can suddenly overcome 300 years of history and tradition and law, which have provided for strict segregation of people because of race and of the discrimination and practices of neglect and denial which have been an integral part of the system."[42]

Federal and UNC System overemphasis on desegregating HBCUs as a means of eradicating the vestiges of *de jure* segregation obscured the more pressing educational needs of North Carolina's black college students. It also prevented HBCU administrators from attaining meaningful roles in university system governance. Even so, the legacy of disenfranchisement that had built HBCUs and perpetuated the disparate quality of education they provided created a stigma of mediocrity that discouraged white students from applying. In practice, if not in the policy arguments of UNC System leaders, desegregation in higher education remained a one-way street, with the strongest black students gaining admission to PWIs but not vice versa. Simply put, civil rights legislation, either sweeping and immediate or gradual and deliberate, failed to address the historic and structural limitations of black opportunity in North Carolina higher education. Worse, due to the metrics of state funding, it aggravated the extant shortcomings of HBCUs.

[42] M. Thorpe to Eloise Severinson, May 22, 1970, folder "General, undated," Box 5, in the Division of Legal Affairs of the University of North Carolina (System) Records #40015, University Archives, Wilson Library. [Collection hereafter cited as UNC System Legal Affairs].

The contradictory goals of desegregation and preservation of HBCU identity and tradition profoundly influenced the dispute between the UNC System and the federal government. In 1970, an OCR regional official forwarded a notice of noncompliance investigation to the chancellors of each public college in North Carolina. FSU Chancellor Charles Lyons was one of several who responded. Lyons emphasized the disproportionate power arrangements that characterized the entire system. "There is a certain expectation which we all have of [Fayetteville State University] and all other such institutions," he stated, "but I firmly believe that there has to be a change in the way that these institutions are viewed from the vantage point of those who sit on the thrones of economic and political power before substantial progress along the lines about which we are now discussing can take place."[43]

Other than Lyons' poignant letter, the OCR's initial statement of inquiry did not elicit much response from state policymakers or UNC System leaders. In fact, UNC's response proved so underwhelming that in October 1970, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund filed a lawsuit against the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to enforce Title VI more rigorously. Three years later, U.S. District Court Judge John Pratt ruled in favor of the NAACP and ordered OCR to begin proceedings to terminate federal funds to any of the ten states that failed to submit satisfactory plans for higher education desegregation within 120 days.[44] Nearly eight years of investigations, self-studies, policy drafts, revisions, and contentious negotiations followed as UNC System leadership and OCR officials struggled to control the extent and pace of change in North Carolina.

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[43] Charles A. Lyons to Eloise Severinson, May 23, 1970, folder "General, 1970-22 May 1974," Box 5, UNC System Legal Affairs.
[44] *Adams v. Richardson*, 351 Supp. 636 (US District Court D.C., 1972); King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina*, 207.

The UNC System submitted three desegregation plans to OCR – in 1973, 1974, and 1977 – all of which were subject to constant debate and revision. Because the Board of Governors and UNC System President William Friday often proposed inflexible, vague, or otherwise limited provisions to desegregation, OCR officials ultimately deemed each plan inadequate.[45] The first, submitted in 1973, articulated a commitment from the UNC System to increase the number of black students and faculty members at PWIs, but did not outline specific numerical goals or offer any means by which OCR could measure and track the institutions' progress. Thus, OCR officials rejected the proposal and advised that a new version be submitted within a year.[46] In advance of drafting a revised desegregation plan, Friday's administration requested that each of the five HBCUs complete self-studies to evaluate the strengths and deficiencies of their institutions.[47] Collectively, the institutions reported on factors related to enrollment figures, faculty retention, and degree programs offered.[48] UNC System officials distilled the studies and circulated them among the Board of Governors, which indicated that the material would inform the updated desegregation plan.

The UNC System tendered its new proposal the following year. Despite the fact that the 1974 plan again failed to provide concrete measurables, OCR granted it provisional approval on

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[45] See: The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, *A State Program to Enlarge Educational Opportunity in North Carolina and the State Board of Education* (Chapel Hill, NC: n.p., June 1973); *The North Carolina State Plan for the Further Elimination of Racial Duality in the Public Post-Secondary Education System* (Chapel Hill, NC: n.p., February 8, 1974); and *The Revised North Carolina State Plan for the Further Elimination of Racial Duality in Public Higher Education Systems, Phase II: 1978-1983* (Chapel Hill, NC: n.p., August 22, 1977) in the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library.

[46] Peter Holmes to Governor, November 13, 1973, folder 11, box 50, Office of the Provost, Office for Equal Opportunity and Equity Records, UA 005.009, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC. [Archive hereafter cited as NCSU Archive].

[47] King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina*, 213.

[48] The Board of Governors reported that the results of the HBCU self-studies aligned with the conditions of "comparable" peer PWIs, with the exception of minor facilities issues and subtle differences in student fees, but the excerpts available of the submitted self-studies reference other metrics and assessments. This may indicate that the summary report shared with the Board of Governors omitted certain data, or that the Board decided not to incorporate the HBCU findings in the desegregation plan after all. See: "Predominantly Black Institutions, Deficiency Studies," Box 33, UNC System Legal Affairs, University Archives, Wilson Library.

the condition that the UNC System refrain from instituting new academic programs that could stall system-wide desegregation.[49] Electing to award a new, high-demand degree program to a PWI rather than a historically black college, for example, would needlessly exacerbate institutional differences in enrollment, funding, and development along racial lines. North Carolina officials violated this provision less than nine months later when the state legislature petitioned UNC System leadership to establish a college of veterinary medicine. NC A&T already had an undergraduate degree program in animal science, and its leaders repeatedly requested that their campus be considered for the veterinary school. The Board of Governors nevertheless chose to locate the new program at predominantly white NCSU.[50] When challenged by OCR, UNC System leaders insisted that this decision upheld the state's responsibilities to desegregation.[51] In actuality, it upheld the Jim Crow tradition of supporting and developing white institutions at the expense of HBCUs.

For OCR, the veterinary school decision demonstrated the UNC System's insincere dedication to meaningful desegregation. To avoid any appearance of impropriety, regional OCR director, William Thomas, successfully convinced the Board of Governors to postpone its final vote on the matter until the completion of a racial impact study.[52] Results of the study revealed that a vet school located at NC A&T would likely enroll 20 percent white students, whereas one at NCSU would enroll 18 percent black students. John Sanders, UNC System Vice President for

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[49] "Summary of N.C. State Plan," February 1974, folder 20, box 133; and Peter Holmes to Governor, July 19, 1974, folder 20, box 143, John Tyler Caldwell Records, UA002.001.004, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC. [Collection hereafter cited as Caldwell Records].
Caldwell Records.

[50] "Integration in NC Higher Education Still in Theory," *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, November 16, 1974; Steve Adams, "UNC Board approved Vet School for NCSU," *News & Observer*, December 19, 1974; and Dan Fespersman, "A&T's Dowdy Unhappy with Vet School Site," *Daily Tar Heel* [UNC-CH], October 8, 1975.

[51] Link, *William Friday*, 262-264.

[52] Raymond Dawson, interview by William Link, February 4, 1991. L-0133, SOHP. [Interview hereafter cited as Dawson interview].

Planning, presented these findings in a statement to the Board of Governors, concluding that the racial impact was "about the same" at both institutions.[53] Yet as one insider later admitted, the decision to locate the vet school at NCSU was "already a forgone conclusion," regardless of the racial impact study outcome.[54] The veterinary school decision renewed – and deepened – tensions between OCR and the UNC System. For OCR, the Board of Governors' actions represented a harbinger of future defiance. OCR federal director, Martin Gerry, threatened to suspend all federal funding immediately if the University failed to comply fully and expediently. Despite ongoing heated negotiations, Gerry formally retracted the threat the following summer.[55] OCR attempted to maintain a hard line, but securing the veterinary school's NCSU location without facing substantive consequences empowered UNC System leadership.

The brief stalemate achieved between OCR and the UNC System in late 1975-1976 collapsed when federal desegregation criteria changed again in 1977. Following the NCSU veterinary school decision, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund filed another lawsuit against HEW in an attempt to expedite the desegregation process.[56] The resulting *Adams v. Califano* ruling required the increase of black enrollment at PWIs but did not specify any requirements for white enrollment at HBCUs.[57] Reacting to OCR's renewed allegations of noncompliance, UNC System President William Friday addressed the Board of Governors in April of 1977. "We have tried to maintain and improve all of our constituent institutions – historically black and historically white – recognizing that time is required to change the racial identifiability of institutions since there is,

[53] King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina*, 201.
[54] Dawson interview.
[55] Cole Campbell, "Friday denies charges of desegregation neglect," *Daily Tar Heel*, August 25, 1975.
[56] Interview with Julius Chambers by William Link, June 18, 1990 L-0127, SOHP. [Interview hereafter cited as Chambers interview].
[57] *Adams v. Califano*, 430 F.Supp. 118 (US District Court D.C., 1977).

in higher education, no authority for student assignment," he opined. "But the court has now found that approach to be legally deficient."[58]

Actually, neither the judge overseeing *Adams v. Califano* nor OCR had asked that the racial identifiability of HBCUs be changed. Moreover, OCR officials expressly communicated time and again that strengthening historically black institutions through program and funding enhancement would satisfy federal criteria without compromising the traditionally black character of an institution. OCR also stressed that maintaining racial identifiability for HBCUs was of primary importance in planning and policy. In terms of student body demographics, OCR expected the UNC System to eliminate the disparity in the rates between black and white high school graduates entering PWIs; it did not prioritize the inverse at HBCUs.

The UNC System and OCR's divergent understandings of what constituted segregated or discriminatory practices underscored much of the disagreements between them in the late 1970s. For Friday and the UNC System, desegregating the University fundamentally contradicted OCR's emphasis on maintaining HBCU identity. "We are confronted, therefore, with the assertion that we are in violation of Title VI because we maintain a racially dual or segregated system, and we are simultaneously told to maintain racial duality," Friday complained to his staff in 1977.[59] He, the Board of Governors, and other UNC System leadership also interpreted the issue of racial duality to refer only to student enrollment and faculty employment practices.

In fact, these white officials ignored overtly discriminatory funding models, curricula and degree program development, facility management, and remedial/academic support resources. The UNC System's stance at this juncture is evidenced in its August 1977 desegregation plan, which outright rejected several core aspects of federal criteria that it found "legally unnecessary

[58] Tony Gunn, "Friday: UNC System needs to know how to comply with act," *Daily Tar Heel,* April 12. 1977.
[59] William Friday quoted in King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina,* 215.

and educationally unsound or [those] that establish measures of progress toward the further elimination of racial duality that are arbitrary, mechanistic, or unrealistic." Instead, the document outlined the University's long-term plan based on criteria that it had set for itself, which primarily related to integrating student bodies at PWIs and HBCUs. The plan also included vague promises to "attempt to obtain" funds from the General Assembly for improvement projects at HBCUs, though it provided no definitive descriptions of such projects or any measures of accountability.[60] Unsurprisingly, in his 1977 decision, federal Judge John Pratt determined that UNC System leaders had made no plans to correct their violation of Title VI, nor had they made any progress on those they had proposed in 1974.[61]

Indeed, disparities between HBCUs and PWIs in North Carolina persisted, and remained especially apparent in differences in student metrics. Consistently and across all applicable categories, HBCUs enrolled students with lower academic qualifications than all other PWIs. In 1978, NC A&T incoming freshman had an average SAT score of 690 while incoming freshman at UNC Charlotte, a peer Comprehensive institution, averaged SAT scores of 927. In the General Baccalaureate category, incoming freshmen at ECSU averaged 590 on the SAT, although those at UNC Asheville averaged 867. That same year, UNC Chapel Hill, a Research institution, welcomed freshmen with an average SAT score of 1,063.[62] Importantly, the standards by which universities assessed students, such as SAT scores, often functioned as tools to reinforce systems of white elite power. In studying nearly two decades of test scores from segregated public high schools in Charlotte, North Carolina, sociologist Roslyn Mickelson found that disparate

[60] Nancy Hartis, "Governors criticize HEW rules, send revised desegregation plan," *Daily Tar Heel*, August 25, 1977.
[61] Link, *William Friday*, 299.
[62] Data taken from the *UNC Special Survey of Institutions*, UNC General Administration, Planning and Institutional Research, April 1980, in Baltzell, et. al., *University on Trial.*

distribution of test scores among black and white students are neither reliable indicators of the students' capacity for success nor an institution's educational value.[63] Rather, assessments like the SAT more closely reflect the deep structures of white educational privilege at all levels of education, from kindergarten to the university. Additionally, UNC System leaders could use such data to suggest that black students remained less capable of succeeding at any institution of higher learning. In this way, such metrics normalized continuing discrimination by reframing structural inequality into a case of individual failure.

In the context of the desegregation battle, the disparate SAT scores did point to two problems with high stakes for all involved. On one hand, raising admission standards at HBCUs risked plummeting enrollment, which imperiled their existence and dismissed their historic commitment to serving underrepresented students. On the other, recruiting more black students at PWIs or merging HBCU programs with neighboring PWI campuses meant lowering their admission standards to provide improved accessibility for black students. Both potential solutions also ignored the more pervasive problem of curtailing black self-determination in higher education.

Another factor revealing ongoing racial inequality revolved around the courses offered on different campuses. HBCUs demonstrated comparatively underdeveloped curricula, particularly in scientific and technical fields, even as UNC System leadership worked to bolster the same curriculum opportunities at many of its PWIs. Indeed, the UNC System consistently failed to correct the historic deficiencies of its traditionally black institutions, as evidenced in a 1980 analysis of curricula across its constituent institutions, which concluded that the academic disparities between HBCUs and PWIs indicated an "unmistakable … continuation of segregative

[63] Rosylyn Mickelson, "Segregation and the SAT," *Ohio State Law Journal*, 67 no. 157 (2006): 157-198.

practice."[64] Reflecting on this dichotomy, former Board of Governors member and director of NAACP Legal Defense Fund Julius Chambers remarked, "I think Bill Friday has been one of the most effective presidents we've had, and I think he did a lot to build this university, and we are all grateful for it. The fault that I have [is that] he did not bring the traditionally black institutions along with the others to achieve that greatness."[65]

UNC System leadership – specifically, the Board of Governors – approved and distributed academic degree programs for all sixteen constituent campuses, and the institutions themselves had little control over these decisions. When it came to the distribution of courses and degree programs on black campuses during this time, however, those white leaders too often ignored the historical reality that HBCUs had begun as segregated normal schools designed to offer limited education and training to black students. For example, a comparison of specific courses offered at NC A&T, an agricultural and technical school by name and mission, and those at its white counterpart confirm academic inequalities reminiscent of a segregated past. In reviewing available undergraduate engineering courses, NC A&T had no civil or chemical engineering courses in its curriculum. NCSU, a predominantly white land-grant institution, offered more than seventy. More broadly, NC A&T's course catalog indicated a pattern of severely limited depth and breadth when it came to professional and scientific degree programs. For instance, NC A&T, founded in 1891, offered no specialized physical science classes. Meanwhile, UNC Charlotte, a similarly sized PWI established in 1946, had courses in geology, oceanography, aeronautical engineering, and meteorology.[66]

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[64] Baltzell, et. al., *University on Trial*, 63.
[65] Chambers interview. Julius Chambers served on the UNC Board of Governors from 1972-1977. During that time, he also worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and became its national Director in 1984. Later, from 1993-2001, Chambers served as the Chancellor at NCCU. See Richard Rosen and Joseph Mosnier, *Julius Chambers: A Life in the Legal Struggle for Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
[66] "Data on Degree Programs, Courses of Study," in Baltzell, et. al., *University on Trial*, 157-168.

Finally, course offerings at North Carolina's HBCUs revealed the disadvantages black undergraduates confronted when it came to entering emerging technical fields. Advancements in computer science and information systems management at this time generated an increased demand for "high tech" and other relevant degree programs. As such, every PWI in the UNC System offered courses in computer science, including the liberal arts college at UNC Asheville and UNC Pembroke, historically a normal school for Native Americans. Of the five black colleges, only FSU and WSSU provided any substantial studies in computer science, and NC A&T and NCCU had almost none. Similarly, while neighboring PWIs boasted robust curriculum choices in business information systems, those at HBCUs featured heavy concentrations in business education and office administration – a direct reflection of the historic mission of black colleges to train graduates to teach and work in segregated societies.[67] These curricular disparities preserved historic inequalities and prevented HBCUs from creating competitive new programs, which contributed to declining enrollment and retention rates in the mid-1970s. The fact that state funding hinged on enrollment exacerbated such inequalities.[68]

Equalizing the distribution of funds among PWIs and HBCUs remained an indispensable component of Title VI compliance, which meant that resource disparities and strategic funding allocations further stalled the UNC System's execution of desegregation policy. In 1967, state officials dedicated special funding to strengthen "developing institutions," which referred to

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[67] Baltzell, et. al., *University on Trial*, 63.

[68] Data from the *UNC Special Survey of Institutions*, 1980, outlines declines in black enrollment from 1972-1975. Samuel Myers discusses the drop in black college enrollment nationwide in the mid-1970s as a result of "the experiment with desegregation" on traditionally black campuses. He argues that this issue served as a precursor to "enhancement-based" desegregation policy in the late 1970s, though this is somewhat of an oversimplification. Samuel Myers, "Black Colleges: From Prohibition, Encouragement, and Segregation to Desegregation, Enhancement, and Integration" in *Desegregation in Higher Education*, ed. by Samuel Myers (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 1-33.

North Carolina's five HBCUs.[69] Facing increased pressure from OCR, the state legislature expanded those initial appropriations throughout the 1970s. This meant that in addition to receiving state support for the same specified areas of academic resources as PWIs – administrative staffing, institutional research, library improvements, and program improvements – HBCUs also received funds to repair and renovate existing campus structures and to equalize salaries of faculty and staff. These budgetary mechanisms created an illusion of rectifying the historic underfunding of HBCUs.

In practice, however, the appropriations served to mask subtle political maneuvering that continued to shortchange black schools. The combined operating expenditures of the three General Baccalaureate HBCUs (ECSU, FSU, and WSSU) increased from $7.2 million to $15.3 million between 1970 and 1978. Because of the express reservation of additional funds for salary equalization and building restoration, the institutions could only use one-third of the total increase for additional academic resources. The combined operating expenditures of the three peer PWIs (UNC Wilmington, UNC Asheville, and UNC Pembroke) also experienced an increase between 1970 and 1978 from $7.4 million to $15.8 million. Without the need for salary equalization or extensive building renovation, these PWIs utilized nearly two-thirds of that total increase for additional academic resources.[70] Compounded with the privileges that the UNC System's budgetary process afforded to institutions that demonstrated enrollment growth, which

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[69] North Carolina Board of Higher Education, *State Supported Traditionally Negro Colleges in North Carolina, 1967* quoted in University of North Carolina Board of Governors Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs, *Comparative Study of the Five Historically Black Constituent Institutions of the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: np, 1976), 17. [Author hereafter cited as UNC BOG Educational Committee; publication hereafter cited as *Comparative Study*].

[70] UNC BOG Educational Committee, "Allocations of Special Institutional Funds to Constituent Institutions of the University of North Carolina," in *Comparative Study*, 30. Peer institutions include Appalachian State University, UNC Charlotte, Western Carolina University, and East Carolina University. This study defines "academic resources" as instruction, departmental research, other research, and library resources.

restrictions on program expansion in HBCUs impeded, the academic deficiencies at black colleges became self-reinforcing despite state and federal desegregation initiatives.

By the mid-1970s, much of the debate between OCR and the UNC System revolved around the issue of unnecessary systemwide curricular duplication.[71] OCR charged that the UNC System operated "parallel, duplicative, inequitable, and racially separate" academic programs at traditionally black and white institutions, which represented a direct continuation of Jim Crow practices.[72] According to a 1978 inquiry of UNC schools, fifty-eight duplicated programs existed between the four institutions surveyed.[73] OCR asserted that providing the same degree programs at HBCUs as those available at nearby PWIs, and vice versa, deterred integration. Because it would not lead to white students enrolling in HBCUs to pursue their specific career interests, and vice versa, it thereby violated Title VI. Furthermore, supporting the operation of competing programs split University funds, which inevitably perpetuated North Carolina's tradition of underfunding black institutions. Therefore, OCR required that the UNC System take action to eliminate duplicated programs, but contended that doing so did not necessarily mandate program terminations; rather, enhancing unique tracks or concentration areas within a program constituted non-duplicative programs.[74]

HBCU alumni and advocacy groups, like the North Carolina Alumni and Friends Coalition, echoed approval for similar approaches. The Coalition, for example, had supported using the elimination of unnecessary program duplication as a tool for UNC System

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[71] Amy McRary, "HEW adds new requirement: halt duplication to mix races," *Daily Tar Heel*, February 1, 1978.
[72] Baltzell, et. al., *University on Trial*, 60.
[73] King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina*, 233.
[74] Joseph Califano, interview by William Link, April 5, 1991. L-0125, in the SOHP, SHC, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

desegregation as early as 1974. They argued that because the state had maintained black colleges for the express purpose of duplicating academic programs at white schools from which black students had historically been excluded, the preservation of such programs inherently prolonged segregation. In order to equalize the distribution of resources and curricular offerings, then, the Coalition believed that UNC System would need to develop new, high-demand courses and programs at HBCUs that were not available in duplicate at PWIs. To meet this goal, the Coalition and others urged the UNC Board of Governors to diversify and realign degree programs for black colleges so as to develop specialized institutional missions that could grant them enhanced state funding and, more broadly, a more active role in the state's higher education system.[75]

White UNC System officials viewed this approach as unrealistic and balked at what they understood as an all-or-nothing call to terminate duplicated programs, which would jeopardize faculty, student enrollment, and institutional growth at HBCUs in ways that seemed counterintuitive to the goals of desegregation. Developing special concentrations in each of the identified programs would require significant funding, which risked raising tuition and fees for students. Moreover, UNC System officials resented the prospect of having their institutional authority compromised by HBCU advocacy groups and OCR directives. "But, hell," Julius Chambers reasoned, "if you're ordering desegregation of the schools, that is going to invade province of some people that make some decisions anyway."[76]

OCR's pushback with regard to program duplication and economic and curricular deficiencies of HBCUs intensified in 1978, and a formal litigation process ensued. The UNC

[75] Chambers interview; N.C. Alumni and Friends Coalition (Black Perspective) to Board of Trustees, Feb. 1974, folder 20, box 143, Caldwell Records.
[76] Chambers interview.

System's defense, which eventually proved successful, focused on challenging the validity of OCR's interpretation of substantive institutional and educational inequalities as well as its perception of the degree to which the UNC System could reasonably be held accountable for such inequalities. Ignoring the structural problems created by a long history of segregation, system leaders claimed that the increased appropriations to HBCUs amounted to sufficient intervention because closing or merging HBCU programs would limit educational opportunities for black North Carolinians, and any further action would constitute an inefficient use of resources.[77] Thus, the UNC System sought to achieve adequate HBCU enhancement through supplemental improvement funds alone. Because the UNC System considered state funding in terms of whole numbers instead of resource impact per-student, this argument also implied that institutional circumstance, rather than the racial duality fostered by Jim Crow, accounted for any remaining deficiencies.

Disturbingly, the UNC System's defense of itself to OCR explicitly blamed HBCUs for their own underdevelopment, stating that requirements for parity, such as higher faculty salaries or additional resources for student financial aid "are not needs unique to traditionally black institutions." White UNC System leaders contended that black colleges, by all measures, should be "achieving the same educational goals … as those achieved in comparable programs in the traditionally white institutions."[78] Accordingly, the Board of Governors also claimed that, considering the 1955 court-ordered implementation of race-blind admissions and the supplemental funds granted to HBCUs, any remaining measures of inequality lay beyond UNC System control and unrelated to race. To address lingering concerns from HBCUs and OCR, and to limit its liability, the UNC System profiled the characteristics of HBCUs that contributed to

[77] UNC BOG Educational Committee, "General Conclusions," in *Comparative Study.*
[78] Ibid., 145.

their underperformance: the practice of "open-door" admissions, disproportionate admission of economically disadvantaged students, recruitment of faculties without terminal degrees, and most significantly, an inefficient and unnecessary devotion to remedial education.[79]

This final critique exposes the weakness at the heart of the UNC System's defense. By this logic, the obstacles endured by black colleges derived from their own attachment to the HBCU tradition of serving historically disadvantaged students, rather than a history of financial deprivation or limited course offerings on the part of the state or university system. According to a statement made by a member of the Board of Governors in 1977, no "artificial constraints of a racial nature" prevented black students from performing at the same rate as their white peers.[80] Such a claim entirely ignored the historical impact of segregated public education at all levels in the state, and overlooked the elevated admission standards at PWIs or the remedial function of HBCUs. By admitting students with lower test scores or otherwise substandard indicators of college preparedness, HBCUs performed a critically important dual academic purpose.

Of necessity, all five HBCUs incorporated enrichment and remedial programs into standard curricula. In a 1975 self-study, NCCU categorized the need for "catch-up project" funds as its second highest priority, explaining that students brought with them "severe deficiencies in tool subjects" but that with intentional instruction and remediation "such deficiencies can be overcome and the students salvaged." WSSU echoed similar sentiments at the time, stating its intention to restructure admission practices to become more competitive but also acknowledging

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[79] Ibid., 147. Open-door" admissions refers to the admission of applicants who do not necessarily meet standard admission requirements. Specifically, UNC's study and defense focuses on trends of incoming HBCU freshman with low SAT scores, although the reliability of SAT scores as exhaustive measures of college preparedness, particularly for low income and minority students, has been challenged. See, for example, William Trent, "Trends in Black Enrollment and Degree Attainment;" and Edgar Epps and Kenneth Jackson, "The Educational Attainment Process among Black Youth," both in *Desegregating America's Colleges and Universities: Title VI Regulation of Higher Education,* ed. by John Williams (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1988), 112-136 and 137-158.
[80] King, *Multi-Campus University of North Carolina*, 222.

that it maintained an "obligation … to students who, through no fault of their own, are not quite able to come up to acceptable admissions standards."[81] In such statements, it is clear that these schools valued their students and wanted to protect the ability of HBCUs to intervene to help them succeed. Yet the scope and commitment to remedial education at HBCUs, according to the UNC Board of Governors, negatively affected the mission, performance, and reputation of black colleges and contributed to the maintenance of racial duality in the UNC System more so than any other factor. The Board's analysis identified a significant impediment to equalizing HBCUs without acknowledging its own role in overcoming it. The underwhelming resolutions that it provided "woefully failed to do what was necessary to … enhance the traditionally black institutions and make them competitive entities within the system."[82] The UNC System both absolved itself of all liability, placing blame firmly on the black colleges, and created a structure of governance and policy that denied black colleges the autonomy to pursue the institutional changes that UNC System leadership presented as necessary for their improvement.

After more than a decade, North Carolina represented the only remaining state – of the ten OCR originally identified as noncompliant with Title VI – without a federally approved desegregation plan for its public system of higher education. Both UNC System and federal visions for desegregation conflated access and opportunity, decoupling enrollment-focused desegregation and the insidious legacy of *de jure* segregation. The UNC System claimed limited liability for the existence of inequalities in the system, arguing instead that any persisting deficiencies of HBCUs remained characteristic of institutional circumstance, not racial duality.

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[81] "Self-Assessment to the Board of Governors," *North Carolina State Plan for the Further Elimination of Racial Duality in the Public Post-secondary Education Systems, Revision and Implementation of, 1974-1975* in the Office of the Vice President for Planning of the University of North Carolina (System) Records #40013, Wilson Library.
[82] Chambers interview.

Additionally, UNC System leadership's negotiation and defense approach reframed OCR's efforts to enforce desegregation as an unwelcome political intrusion and an unconstitutional violation of state and System sovereignty. At the same time, OCR's unwavering push to eliminate program duplication sparked opposition from some HBCU campus constituents who argued that OCR's proposal posed as much an equal threat to black institutions as the UNC System's negligence.

The fundamental failure of desegregation policy makers and enforcers to understand the needs of black students and adequately enhance HBCUs effectively preserved the second-class status of black colleges in North Carolina. A 1974 report from the Southern Education Foundation reviewed the issues facing public southern HBCUs and found that governance, accountability, financial support, employment, student issues, and comprehensive equity "carefully tailored to meet the particular conditions" of black colleges occupied the chief concerns of black students and educators.[83] In North Carolina, it would be left to HBCU students to demand improvements both on campus and within the system.

[83] Southern Education Foundation, *Ending Discrimination in Higher Education: A Report from Ten States*, November 1974, 28-29. The Southern Education Foundation (SEF) is a research and advocacy organization supporting equity in education for minority students in the South. SEF published this report after hosting a conference in Atlanta, Georgia on *Adams* litigation and racial discrimination in southern public universities earlier that year.

CHAPTER TWO

"Education Hustlers": Campus Activism at Historically Black Colleges

On the morning of October 25, 1971, over 4,000 students from North Carolina's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) gathered in Raleigh to protest a bill on higher education reorganization that proposed consolidating all sixteen public colleges under a single governing board. By extension, it threatened to merge or close the state's five public HBCUs: Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), Fayetteville State University (FSU), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), North Carolina Central University (NCCU), and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). Singing freedom songs and carrying signs that read "Save Our Black Schools" and "FIGHT for our HERITAGE," the group marched from Shaw University, a private HBCU, to the State Capitol Lawn. "Black Monday," as some newspapers called the demonstration, only partially succeeded; the state legislature consolidated the university system the following year, and although none of the HBCUs merged or closed as a result, campus activism continued at black colleges.[84]

Student protest at HBCUs in North Carolina surged in the late 1960s and became increasingly militant. As elsewhere in the nation, campus activists founded new black student organizations, strengthened existing student government associations, and mobilized campus newspaper staffs to fight for higher education reform.[85] They simultaneously pushed to increase Black consciousness among HBCU governance and campus communities. Although student

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[84] "Wide Turnout Supports 'Black Monday' March," *Bennett Banner* [Bennett College], November 18, 1971; "Students Get Support for Demands," *Carolina Times*, October 23, 1971; and John Hudgins, "From Black," *Carolina Times*, October 30, 1971. For more on University of North Carolina System consolidation, see William Link, *William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 160-186.

[85] Here, and throughout this paper, "campus activism" refers to student efforts focusing specifically on issues related to the higher education experience, which is distinct from the work of "activist students" who engaged in community and national activism.

activism affected North Carolina HBCUs before this period, its forms evolved over time. By the late 1960s, student demands centered around deconstructing Eurocentrism in higher education and promoting student autonomy rather than social integration off campus, which had motivated the conventional non-violent black student activism of the late 1950s and early 1960s.[86] Tactical and ideological shifts relevant to campus activism occurred during this time as well.

The collective result of such activity reinforced and intensified a new culture of militancy at North Carolina's HBCUs. In the months leading up to Black Monday, for example, one FSU student likened the fervor for radicalizing higher education and making it more Afrocentric to a religious transformation. "The ritual of protest reproduces the same feeling as the symbolic purification of religious purging," Robert Rehak posited. "Salvation equals liberation."[87] That same year, NCCU administrators shut down the student-run newspaper, *Campus Echo*, after its editor published an inflammatory front-page article condemning the school's efforts to recruit white students.[88] These instances demonstrate fierce loyalty to black identity and student autonomy through bold demands, disruptive tactics, and uncompromising allegiance to the campus community.

By contrast, students on HBCU campuses in the early 1960s had utilized more moderate strategies and engaged in less campus activism overall as they focused on civil rights campaigns in southern cities and towns.[89] Writing in his school newspaper in 1963, WSSU student Larry

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[86] For more on black student activism on HBCU campuses in the 1950s and early 1960s in North Carolina, see: Elizabeth Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar: Historically Black Colleges and the Struggle for Equality, 1930-1960" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018); and Sarah Thuesen, *Greater Than Equal: African American Struggles for Schools and Citizenship in North Carolina, 1919-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

[87] Robert Rehak, "A Religion of Protest," *The Voice* [FSU], February 15, 1971.

[88] David Bishop, "Civil Rights and Race Relations in Durham and the State: The Shepard, Elder, Massie, and Whiting Models," in *A History of NC Central University: A Town and Gown Analysis*, ed. G. W. Reid (Durham, NC: North Carolina Central University, 1985), 78-79.

[89] In the early 1960s, black North Carolina college students participated in off-campus, community-based activism, most notably through the 1960 sit-in demonstrations in Greensboro and Winston-Salem. See Jeffrey Turner, *Sitting*

Womble took issue with such activism and urged his peers to keep their heads down, noting, "We are not here to play. We are here for an education." He implored readers to act maturely and responsibly, and assured them that they could find success "as long as they do not endanger the reputation of this institution."[90]

Respectability politics also played a more prominent role in earlier iterations of campus activism. Womble's appeal to protect the reputation of his school dramatically contrasts with the militant condemnation of white student recruitment by the *Campus Echo*; and his endorsement of mature, studious behavior diverges markedly from Rehak's investing protest at FSU with a spiritual purpose akin to liberation. Unpacking this shift in campus protest culture prompts key questions about race and higher education. How did campus activists at HBCUs read the stakes of University of North Carolina (UNC) System consolidation? What methods did they use to address their concerns, and were they effective? Lastly, how does southern HBCU campus activism align with national trends in the era of Black Power?

Believing that UNC System consolidation could lead to the closure of HBCUs, campus activists organized both to save and to reimagine black higher education in North Carolina. They demanded a relevant learning experience – one that bolstered student power, embraced Black Studies curricula, and challenged the paternalism of black HBCU administrators and white UNC System leaders. Students created new campus political action groups and mobilized extant student government associations, using collective action and sophisticated strategy to pursue their aims. As elsewhere, southern HBCU campus activism reflected the growth of the national Black Power Movement, which drew upon black nationalist ideologies to champion self-

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in and Speaking Out: Student Movements in the American South, 1960-1970 (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 44-63.

[90] Larry Womble, "Student Conduct Should Improve," *The News Argus,* March 1, 1963.

determination, cultural pride, and liberation from all forms of white oppression.[91] The academy represented a significant front upon which activists could wage this struggle. Black Power manifested on both historically white and black campuses nationwide, ranging from small public regional institutions to private Ivy League universities, and black student protest took on more radical forms at its height in the late 1960s.[92] In North Carolina, however, integration policies and the consolidation of the UNC System created additional challenges for activists into the early 1970s. Thus, it required HBCU students to extend their activism beyond their individual campus and establish a statewide organization. Even after Black Monday in 1971, students continued to demonstrate in response to fallout from UNC System reorganization. Their protests succeeded in prompting changes to administrative, admissions, and academic policies.[93]

Scholars have begun to illuminate the intersections between Black Power and campus activism. William Van Deburg's history of the Black Power Movement briefly discusses Black Power on campus, establishing the shift toward campus-based activism in the late 1960s and detailing the importance of Black Power ideology in the formation of campus activists' demands.[94] Van Deburg also provides a broad description of the Black University, an activist institutional model for the black experience in higher education.[95] It promoted curricula centered on African American culture and scholarship, and the concept remained central to Black Power-era campus activism. Van Deburg effectively synthesizes formative themes in the Black Campus Movement but fails to extend his view beyond this structural framework. He offers a general,

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[91] William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[92] Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 16.
[93] Arnold King, *The Multi-Campus University of North Carolina Comes of Age, 1956-1986* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); and Link, *William Friday*, 249-264.
[94] Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon*, 64-82, 68. Van Deburg notes that over 90% of sit-in demonstrations performed by black student activists in 1968 occurred on campus, rather than in the community.
[95] William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon*, 77-78.

though necessary, introduction to black student protest that serves primarily to situate black campus activism within a broad cultural and ideological context.

Other historians have conducted individual campus studies and analyses of specific protests during the Black Power Movement, though the bulk of the scholarship focuses on higher education outside of the South.[96] Joy Ann Williamson-Lott's monographs on the University of Illinois and Jackson State University and Stefan Bradley's research on Columbia University best balance local campus studies and national contextualization, offering meaningful contributions to our understanding of students' ability to affect change. Williamson-Lott argues that black students not only participated in protest culture, but also determined the trajectory of social reform.[97] Her contention that scholars cannot divorce activists from their "campus reality" — meaning, they were students first and activists second — refocuses the narrative of campus activism.[98] Whereas the literature fixated on the pervasiveness of protest culture had previously obscured student agency, Williamson-Lott asserts the power of student autonomy. Bradley builds on this approach by deconstructing the notion of monolithic campuses. He examines inter-institutional communities and conflicts to detail how students politicized campus spaces to advance their causes while balancing the perspectives of students, administrators, and community members.[99]

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[96] See, for example, Stefan Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Donald Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Wayne Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Richard McCormick, *The Black Student Protest Movement at Rutgers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Joy Ann Williamson-Lott, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003); and Joy Ann Williamson-Lott, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower: Black Colleges and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2008).

[97] Williamson-Lott, *Black Power on Campus.*

[98] Williamson-Lott, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower*, 2.

[99] Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University*.

Recent scholarship also works to incorporate individual campus histories into a comprehensive study on the national struggle for black student power. Debates over decoupling black campus activism from other movements or causes continue to complicate the field, though historians Ibram Kendi and Martha Biondi have pioneered new directions.[100] To distinguish the Black Power struggle on campus from the Black Student Movement of the early 1960s and the Black Studies Movement, Kendi suggests the term "Black Campus Movement," which scholars have adopted to refer to black student protest for higher education reform in the late 1960s.[101] Like Bradley and Williamson-Lott, Kendi emphasizes black consciousness, student agency, and the successes of student efforts. Kendi's work aligns closely with Martha Biondi's research on the rise of black campus activism and its legacy within American higher education, but the two differ in their treatment of HBCUs. Kendi stresses the homogeneity of the Black Campus Movement by studying HBCUs and predominantly white institutions side by side, noting minor differences. Biondi, on the other hand, creates distance between the two and places black colleges at the center of the movement.[102]

Biondi embraces an "entanglement" model, wherein the social and political currents guiding campus activism, the Black Studies Movement, and other social movements do not exist separately.[103] Biondi's analysis suggests that student activism both informs and is informed by the successes and trajectories of similar social solidarity-oriented causes; she contends that the Black

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[100] Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; and Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement*. Note: Ibram Rogers has changed his name to Ibram Kendi since publishing this book and is referred to accordingly throughout the text of this paper.
[101] Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement*, 3.
[102] Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*, 31-34, 113-136.
[103] Jonathan Fenderson, James Stewart, and Kabria Baumgartner, "Expanding the History of the Black Studies Movement: Some Prefatory Notes," *Journal of African American Studies* 16, no 1 (March 2012): 1-20; and Paul Zeleza, "African Studies and Universities Since Independence," *Transition* 101 (2009): 110-135. Fenderson, Stewart, and Baumgartner draw from Zeleza's work to argue that the Black Studies Movement can be understood as a series of entanglements with other groups and causes. Here, I use this concept to describe the idea that the Black Campus Movement is inherently linked to the ebb and flow of other social justice issues, which guides Biondi's methodology.

Campus, Black Power, and Black Studies movements grew as expressions, rather than extensions, of one another. Kendi's work, however, distinguishes black campus activism as a distinct movement. While acknowledging that black campus activism at times "overlapped" with other concurrent social movements, he maintains that these movements primarily ran parallel to each other. Similar tension and anxieties emerge in the works of Noliwe Rooks, Peniel Joseph, and Fabio Rojas.[104] At their root, these important debates raise questions of causality: did the rise of Black Power ideology and tactics revolutionize pre-existing demands for higher education reform, or did the shift provoke new demands, echoed and strengthened by concurrent Black Power social movements?

Even so, scholarship on HBCUs in the Black Campus Movement, particularly in the South, remains extremely limited, and no comparative studies of North Carolina HBCUs yet exist. Although historians have not overlooked HBCUs altogether, very few have conducted studies exclusively on HBCUs. Williamson-Lott's research on Jackson State University currently stands alone as the only history of black colleges.[105] Finally, historians generally agree that the Black Campus Movement emerged around 1967 and declined by 1970. Most suggest that the movement slowed due to a combination of widening ideological divisions, fear of violent

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[104] Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2007);Peniel Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement." *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (2003): 182-203; and Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radial Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[105] Williamson-Lott, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower*. Although Tim Spofford's *Lynch Street: The May 1970 Slayings at Jackson State College* does provide a thorough account of the Jackson State killings, in which police officers shot and killed two HBCU student protestors, Spofford does not adequately place the shootings in the context of Black Power. See Tim Spofford, *Lynch Street: The May 1970 Slayings at Jackson State College* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1988).

repression by police, and the escalation of concurrent student movements.[106] Kendi contends that by 1970, Black Campus Movement demonstrations overall became defensive rather than offensive, thus signaling the beginning of the end. Yet in North Carolina, the major university system reorganization in 1971 and 1972 affected this timeline and reignited student resistance at a time when black campus activism declined nationwide.

The threat posed to HBCUs by UNC System consolidation first began to take shape in the early 1960s, when new legislation pertaining to higher education demonstrated the state's overtly disproportionate prioritization of different kinds of campuses in the UNC System. In 1963, the Governor's Commission on Education beyond High School published a report that led to massive higher education reorganization in North Carolina. In accordance with the commission's recommendations, the state legislature organized all public colleges into a pyramid-style tier system based on institutional mission and degree programs offered.[107] An institution's rank within the tiered system dictated not only its amount of annual state funding, but also the rate of its future financial support and degree of development. From 1963-1967, technical schools and junior colleges at Wilmington, Asheville, and Charlotte (now UNC Wilmington, UNC Asheville, and UNC Charlotte) occupied the bottom tier. The legislature designated the next tier for four-year teaching colleges, which included FSU, ECSU, and WSSU as well as Pembroke State College and Appalachian State College (now UNC Pembroke and Appalachian State University). The second tier consisted of colleges offering degrees to the

[106] Kendi argues that the movement lasted from 1965-1972, though Joseph and Rojas locate the beginning of the movement in 1967 and Williamson-Lott points to 1968. Still, there is a general consensus that the movement had fizzled around 1970.

[107] Student Organization for Black Unity, *Save Our Black Schools: What is the Future of Black Higher Education in North Carolina?* (Greensboro, NC: SOBU News Service, 1971), 1-6, file 5, Civil Rights Publications, Elizabeth City State University Archive, G.R. Little Library, Elizabeth City, NC. [Archive hereafter cited as ECSU Archive].

masters level, which included NCCU and NC A&T as well as Western Carolina College and East Carolina College (now Western Carolina University and East Carolina University). State leaders reserved the final tier for the multi-campus University of North Carolina, which then consisted of UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Greensboro, and North Carolina State College (now NC State University).[108] The same year that the state legislature implemented this system, it also restricted the authority to offer doctoral programs to institutions with first-tier status and developed a procedure whereby they could absorb additional campuses.[109] The three top-tier campuses, therefore, received preferential treatment across the board – in terms of funding, development of advanced degree programs, and maintenance and expansion of their physical campus presence. Resource allocation for the remaining schools followed in accordance to their position on the descending levels of the pyramid. Because the pyramid system relegated most HBCUs to third-tier status, they received minimal state support.

North Carolina's General Assembly revised the pyramid funding structure several times throughout the 1960s, but new models continued to fail to improve the status of black institutions. For example, the establishment of East Carolina College's medical program in 1967 led to legislation that modified the pyramid from a four-tier to a three-tier system. The new model bumped NCCU down from its second-tier status and dissolved the pyramid's lowest level, placing all junior colleges with ECSU, FSU, NCCU, WSSU, and Pembroke State on the third tier. NC A&T became the only HBCU above the bottom level, and the three UNC System campuses remained at the top of the pyramid. Pembroke advanced to second-tier status two years later, at which point the UNC System also absorbed the remaining junior colleges. Therefore, by

[108] Catherine Baltzell, Robert Dentler, and Daniel Sullivan, *University on Trial: The Case of the University of North Carolina* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).
[109] King, *The Multi-Campus University of North Carolina Comes of Age*, 46.

1969, every public college qualified for second-tier status except ECSU, FSU, NCCU, and WSSU – four of the five historically black schools. The state legislature dissolved the pyramid model within the year. However, although no longer bound to a tiered system, state resource allocation remained almost completely unchanged – particularly for HBCUs.[110]

In fact, the enormous growth that the UNC System experienced during the 1960s often came at the direct expense of black institutions. All historically white institutions reaped the benefits of higher education reorganization of the decade, whereas HBCUs continued to suffer, both financially and in terms of facility improvements, from underfunding. HBCU students recognized this pattern; more importantly, they mobilized around it. On May 9, 1969, approximately sixty students from HBCUs throughout the state convened on NC A&T's campus to establish a new organization to advocate for the needs of black colleges.[111] Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) aimed to devise and implement strategies, programs, and campaigns to "preserve and further develop traditionally Black schools."[112] Though SOBU established branches in other states and accepted membership from private HBCUs, preventing decisions that would negatively affect their campuses due to UNC System changes remained one of the organization's primary concerns.[113] When reports emerged of the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education's plans to consolidate all remaining public colleges under the UNC System, SOBU mobilized hundreds of delegates from each of the state's HBCUs to coordinate a unified campaign of resistance.

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[110] Student Organization for Black Unity, *Save Our Black Schools*; and Link, *William Friday*.
[111] "SOBU May Replace NSA," *Bennett Banner*, May 27, 1969.
[112] Nelson Johnson to Marion Thorpe, October 11, 1970, file 3, Civil Rights Publications, ECSU Archive.
[113] North Carolina students, led by Nelson Johnson, founded SOBU and established the first chapter in Greensboro. Later, the organization expanded to other states.

Believing that further higher education reorganization could lead to the closing of the state's HBCUs, SOBU leaders of the Save our Black Schools campaign compiled data on the declining status of black institutions and disseminated subsequent reports to black state legislators, college presidents, and various HBCU campus organizations. They also coordinated workshops for SOBU delegates and other interested campus activists, wherein students from across the state developed unified strategies to engage and serve their campus communities effectively.[114] Essential to the Save Our Black Schools campaign was the belief that in order to truly "save" black colleges, activists would need to achieve substantial control over higher education at HBCUs in addition to protecting their institutions from closures and/or mergers.

Addressing the 1970 Student Organization for Black Unity Conference, which convened in Atlanta, SOBU Chairman Nelson Johnson imbued his speech with the language and ideology of Black Power. "There is no need, for example, to preserve Spelman College as it now exists," he explained. "We have to struggle not to save Spelman as a neo-colonialist, 'Negro' institution, but rather struggle for the right to preserve the opportunity to build Spelman into a relevant, Black institution," he asserted, "because of the great number of Black minds that can be reached if such a change is successfully brought about."[115] For SOBU and other black campus activists, the crisis facing black institutions in North Carolina, and elsewhere, represented both an extension of the historic and chronic oppression of African Americans and a legitimate reason to demand self-determination for their campuses. As such, SOBU's platform reflected the values of many student government associations, black student organizations, and other individual HBCU

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[114] See Student Organization for Black Unity, *Save Our Black Schools*; Hilliard Hines, Jr., "Johnson Becomes SOBU National Leader," *The Register* [NC A&T], May 17, 1969; "SOBU Meeting Set October 22-26," *Campus Echo*, October 3, 1969; and "Over 600 Attend Conference," *The Register,* November 7, 1969.

[115] Student Organization for Black Unity, *For Immediate Release: National Save Black Schools Day,* April 15, 1970, file 3, Civil Rights Publications, ECSU Archive.

campus activists at the time: securing the resources necessary to create institutions that embraced the needs of black students within the context of HBCU racial identifiability, rather than in spite of it.

The degree of activism on campus and student engagement differed across HBCU campuses in North Carolina. Generally, students opposed the poor conditions in the dormitories, inefficient registration procedures, white faculty hires, and compulsory entrance exams. In the late 1960s, student government associations frequently petitioned their chancellors and the Boards of Trustees for resolutions to such grievances. Local conditions also shaped the forms of student protest that emerged on each campus. Particularly in urban areas, Black Power ideologies in nearby communities influenced campus activists and strengthened their endeavors. Yet HBCU students in rural eastern North Carolina evinced Black Power principles as they protested a potential merger with a white junior college. Inverting white southerners' traditional justifications against school integration, they argued that it would imperil the quality of black education. Others in this part of the state sought to eradicate the influence of white paternalism on their campus. More broadly, campus activists at HBCUs fused their initial calls for "student power" with the discourse and strategies of Black Power.

At ECSU, neither local newspapers nor the school's official published history covered the civil rights and the Black Power movements on campus, and only a few mentions of campus activism appear in the student newspaper, *Compass*.[116] The limited evidence that exists indicates that ECSU students organized and demonstrated far less often than other North Carolina HBCUs, but not because they did not share similar values. On this relatively small campus, the major

[116] For official ECSU history, see Evelyn Johnson, *History of Elizabeth City State University: A Story of Survival* (New York: Vantage Press, 1980).

difference lay in the fact that students rarely organized large-scale demonstrations at all. Elizabeth City historian, Glen Bowman, suggests that the difference in activist practices at ECSU likely stemmed from the school's rural, isolated location and small student population, which amounted to less than 1,000 students during this time.[117] According to Bowman, the small size of the campus benefitted student visibility and accessibility to administrators, and helped foster a deep sense of trust between the two. When, for example, the 1968 student government president, Charles Singleton, led his peers in a march through campus following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the Dean of Students assured him, "Singleton, you have my support. Your leadership during this time is important."[118] Nevertheless, other instances of protest did occur. Affirming Black Power ideas of unity and solidarity, demonstrations at ECSU emerged in response to violent events involving other HBCU campuses or within the African American community. For example, over four hundred ECSU students gathered in protest following the 1968 Orangeburg Massacre, in which police shot and killed three black South Carolina State University students.[119]

Importantly, ECSU students recognized that their campus remained particularly vulnerable to the negative implications of UNC System consolidation due to its rural location, poor facilities, and small student body. On the cusp of the university system reorganization in 1970, talks of merging ECSU with the nearby predominantly white College of the Albemarle (COA) emerged among state policymakers. State officials recommended that ECSU absorb COA but keep its name and governance structure.[120] This proposal prompted a vigorous response from

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[117] Glen Bowman, interview by author, Elizabeth City, March 8, 2019; see also, Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1984).
[118] Charles Singleton, email message to Glen Bowman, November 9, 2018, in author's possession.
[119] "ECSC Students Protest Orangeburg Massacre," *Compass*, February 1, 1968.
[120] Glen Bowman, *Elizabeth City State University 1891-2016: The Continuity of a Historical Legacy of Excellence and Resilience* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company, 2015), 133.

students and other members of the campus community. Interestingly, integrating the two student bodies did not generate the most alarm; rather, COA's status as a two-year technical college and low admission requirements caused more concern. ECSU students feared the merger would undermine their school's status as a four-year senior college and demean the quality of education they received. They also worried an influx of white students would mean their school "would lose its identity" if it absorbed COA. As ECSU alumna, Evelyn Johnson, later recalled, "The institution would not survive, it was assumed."[121]

In 1971, ECSU chancellor Marion Thorpe reported to his Board of Trustees that the state had halted plans for the merger after a discouraging impact analysis report, but students remained wary.[122] Less than a year later, ECSU campus activists traveled to Raleigh to participate in the Black Monday march to protest UNC consolidation. Student government president Darryl Morris addressed his peers: "This legislation threatens and, more emphatically, will phase out Black identity in our institutions. Without institutions of Black higher learning, we will become mere jesters of an ethnic tie."[123] Despite their isolated location and the lack of protest on their campus, ECSU students played their part in statewide struggle to preserve the integrity of HBCUs.

More broadly, as the implications for higher education reorganization in North Carolina became increasingly clear, campus activists across the state increasingly sought to exercise the politics of self-determination. They blamed policymakers, faculty, and administrators for inhibiting the quality of campus facilities and curriculums, so they looked to each other for

[121] Johnson, *History of Elizabeth City State University,* 214-15.
[122] Marion Thorpe, *1970-1971 Report to Board of Trustees*, file 3, Marian Dennis Thorpe Papers, ECSU Archive.
[123] "SGA Takes a Stand: The Image of a Black University," *Compass*, December 15, 1971.

solutions. Many believed that protecting and enhancing black colleges fundamentally entailed student empowerment, which meant gaining an equal voice in the decision-making process.

Campus activists illustrated their commitment to student empowerment by insisting on an expansion of student rights. This struggle particularly dominated campus activism at NCCU. Students focused on issues specific to the campus environment, echoing earlier generations' challenges to excessive administrative control over daily life, but expanding their efforts to denounce the administration's active recruitment of white students. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the possibility of UNC consolidation lent urgency to their demands. At the same time, the Black Power Movement shaped both the way they framed the problems and the solutions they proposed. What began as a call for "student power" on campus at NCCU soon aligned ideologically with the calls for Black Power reverberating around the nation.

Tensions between students and administrators began mounting as early as 1965, when a group of students presented the Board of Trustees with a list of policy proposals that endorsed the expansion of student rights. The proposals included establishing a Student Honor Court, increasing the student government association's budget, and extending curfew hours for female students. NCCU's Board of Trustees rejected every one – and then went a step further by passing a resolution that forbade students from visiting off-campus establishments "of ill-repute" that could cause "damage to their persons or reputations."[124] The following Friday evening, 1,700 students assembled on the chancellor's front lawn, but not before alerting local news teams, who came out to interview student leaders about their demands. Students asked that the Board rescind the recent off-campus restrictions and that it approve their earlier list of proposals. They held picket signs that proclaimed, "Human Rights! Civil Rights! What about Student Rights?!"[125] The

[124] "Trustees Act to Settle Trouble at NC College," *The Carolina Times*, March 25, 1965.
[125] H. Willoughby, "Students' Revolt March 19 Shakes Campus," *Campus Echo*, March 31, 1965.

Board of Trustees held an emergency meeting the following day, which students also picketed, and within the week, it and the chancellor agreed to fulfill each of the students' demands.[126] Students learned that they could expand their role in campus decision-making through organization and collective protests.

Another target of NCCU student ire was the overbearing role campus administrators played in daily student life. *In loco parentis* had long been a complaint of HBCU students, but those in the latter half of the 1960s adopted more militant language to decry it.[127] "We are engaged in a great revolution on campus," declared NCCU student government president, Charles Daye, in February 1966. "We seek to overthrow the system of ideas that refuse to permit us to grow into adulthood. If our college administration spent greater time administrating and less time trying to baby-sit for grown men and women, [our] colleges would not be so far behind."[128] Daye's comments suggest a dual focus on internal campus problems and external threats to its existence. Three months later, the editor of the campus newspaper announced, "Our every move is controlled." Combining the drawbacks of heavy-handed campus administrators and white state policymaker's control of funding, he explained that black colleges, "which are the last institutions capable of performing a truly liberating function," in fact reinforced a system of oppression.[129]

In addition to poor funding, HBCUs in North Carolina struggled to increase enrollment, develop lucrative academic programs, and maintain campus facilities – all of which also made them seem more vulnerable to closure as the state legislature tinkered with the tier system in the lead up to the UNC System reorganization. Tactically, NCCU students argued that if black

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[126] "Problems Facing the NCC Trustee Board," *The Carolina Times,* March 27, 1965.
[127] Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar," 171-177.
[128] "C.E. Davis Delivers 'State of Campus," *Campus Echo,* February 28, 1966.
[129] "Two Types of Instructors in Negro Colleges - Daye," *Campus Echo,* May 13, 1966.

colleges performed poorly, the fault lay with the misguided priorities of their administrators and governing bodies.[130] Campus activists first demanded autonomy from the administration, believing that freedom from overbearing regulations would grant them a platform for pursuing substantive change on campus, and beyond. At the same time, they wanted administrators to devote their full attention to equalizing conditions on their campuses to preserve them from possible extinction.

By 1966, NCCU campus activists fully adopted the "student rights philosophy."[131] That year, candidates for the student government association and other organizations ran under the Student Party, which sought to achieve "responsible student power" on campus. Those affiliated with the Student Party supported greater student rights, responsibilities, and academic opportunities. They advocated for social freedoms, such as allowing female students to wear pants, and academic and civil freedoms, including student representation on academic disciplinary boards. "The Student Party concerns itself with the use and misuse of authority and power of the institution as a whole," one member explained.[132]

Accordingly, the student government held forums each semester to gauge student concerns and mobilize support for the most popular issues before bringing them to faculty, administrators, or the Board of Trustees. Students expressed interest in the right to own a car on campus and allowing of-age students to drink in dormitories. In 1965 and 1966, students cited a "traditionalist" Dean of Women as one of the most common concerns.[133] Overall, students asserted that the administration's "archaic rulings regarding the social and civil rights of

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[130] Though true in some cases, this argument neglects the "activist politics" required of HBCU chancellors/presidents to keep institutions afloat. See Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar."
[131] "Colleges Seek Higher Student Role," *Campus Echo*, November 30, 1967.
[132] "Student Party Cites Intentions," *Campus Echo*, October 7, 1966.
[133] "First Fall Forum Treats Morality," *Campus Echo*, October 7, 1966; Charles Clinton, "Policies of Office of Dean of Women Protested," *Campus Echo*, February 1, 1965.

students" directly impeded their educational experience.[134] Campus activists insisted that students claim the power to shape their institution.

By 1967, the momentum behind mounting student concerns coalesced with Black Power rhetoric and ideology and infused campus organizations. Campus activists across the nation founded new student groups and, as those at NCCU had done, reconstituted existing ones to use as "pressure groups" in the struggle for campus control.[135] As NCCU's student newspaper asserted in 1968, without students' ability to create a relevant higher learning experience, a school's "chances of meeting its goals are close to zero."[136] Campus activists' demands for student rights extended beyond the ability to overrule restrictive university policies. Like students elsewhere during this time, NCCU activists fought for the right to define and shape their learning experience on their own terms.[137]

Though students' demands did not extend beyond campus, local authorities charged with maintaining public safety sometimes reacted as if they confronted Black Power militants. In 1968, for example, Durham police aimed fire hoses at NCCU students participating in a peaceful march in the wake of the Orangeburg Massacre.[138] "We endorse with all our might the right to a peaceful protest," campus activists maintained. "As far as the college is concerned, this should

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[134] H. Willoughby, "Students' Revolt March 19 Shakes Campus," *Campus Echo*, March 31, 1965.
[135] Rogers, *Black Campus Movement*, 3, 108-111; and Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 16-25. This shift occurred nationwide on both HBCU and historically white campuses. Kendi primarily focuses on the growth of black student unions, which he identifies as beginning in 1966. Biondi tracks black student organizations in general and finds that their growth accelerated between 1966 and 1969. Although student government associations had existed on North Carolina HBCU campuses for years, many appear to have undergone a noticeable shift in membership and mission beginning in 1967. The number of black student organizations reported in campus newspapers also seemed to increase in the last three years of the decade. See, for example, Robert Spruill, "G.A.S. Is In," *Campus Echo*, October 31, 1967; "Letter to the Editor: Grass Roots Association," *The News Argus* [WSSU], November 1, 1967; "Afro-American Club Organized on Campus," *The News Argus*, January 1, 1968; and "Afro-American Student Group," *The Voice* [FSU], November 15, 1968.
[136] Faculty Blamed for Rebellion," *Campus Echo*, November 28, 1968.
[137] The push for student rights appeared on HBCU campuses nationwide in the late 1960s. For example, in the spring of 1969, Alabama A&M University conceded to student demands for the establishment of joint student-faculty committees to evaluate faculty teaching performance. See Rogers, *Black Campus Movement*, 150.
[138] Douglas Gills, "SGA Prexy Views Demonstrations," *Campus Echo*, February 29, 1968.

be the proper place for encouragement of the defense of our human rights."[139] In this way, they challenged administrators to protect them from overzealous policing. Two years later, campus activists turned their attention to the more mundane but equally critical issues of inefficient registration procedures and unfair grading practices. NCCU students boycotted class and deployed the same militant tactics used by others: they disrupted administrative meetings to express a sense of urgency. When administrators made no concessions and threatened disciplinary action, leaders of the protest sought a restraining order against the chancellor.[140]

The struggle for student rights at NCCU culminated in the fall of 1971 and combined more explicitly with anxieties over UNC System consolidation. After the student newspaper, *Campus Echo,* published an article condemning the university for recruiting white students, Chancellor Albert Whiting eliminated all funding for the publication.[141] In the article, titled "Is NCCU Still A Black School?," editor Jae Joyner announced that, in protest of the possibility of HBCU mergers under UNC System reorganization, the newspaper would no longer run white advertising. Joyner and student government president Harvey White claimed that Whiting's decision to shut down the newspaper violated student rights. "Because the chancellor did not include students in making this decision, we felt that it should not be his prerogative to permanently cut the funding," explained White.[142] In a bold assertion of student power, Joyner and White filed a lawsuit against the chancellor – and won. NCCU reinstated *Campus Echo* in 1973 after a two-year hiatus, and the paper continued to function as the voice of activist campus politics.

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[139] "Fundamental Right to Protest," *The Carolina Times*, February 24, 1968; "SGA Prexy Views Demonstrations," *Campus Echo*, February 29, 1968.
[140] "NC Central University President Fights Boycott," *The Carolina Times*, February 14, 1970.
[141] Bishop, "Civil Rights and Race Relations in Durham and the State," 78-79.
[142] "Exile and Trial of Campus Echo," *Campus Echo,* May 15, 2010.

Those same politics, in the form of revamped student government associations and new black student organizations popped up on other HBCU campuses across North Carolina. Student activity at NC A&T in the late 1960s best exemplified this trend, as social and political action student groups proliferated on campus during this time. They also represented a full range of Black Power interests and political orientations.

Historically, students at NC A&T had channeled grievances and concerns through the student government, which acted as the main outlet for campus politics. In the mid-1960s, however, the traditional student government struggled to balance productive politicking with the rise of Black Power, impeded temporarily by the "immaturity of the [campus] movement."[143] Consequently, alternative black student organizations emerged on campus and provided new avenues for addressing student issues. Black student organization leaders ranged from moderate nationalists to radical militants, and the mission and strategy of any organization varied accordingly. Radical black student organizations, such as Students Organized for Unified Leadership, tended to focus their efforts on student bodies and campus activism, whereas moderate groups, such as Grassroots Association for Students, often worked with outside communities to form alliances and increase off-campus support for student concerns.[144] Despite their differences, black student organizations collaborated regularly, thus demonstrating a shared

[143] Pryce Baldwin, "Election Aftermath," *The Register* [NC A&T], May 13, 1966; "SGA: Willie Drake Calls it a 'Toy Government,'" *The Register*, December 13, 1968; and Nelson Johnson, interview by William Chafe, October 24, 1978, transcript, William Henry Chafe Oral History Collection, University of North Carolina Greensboro Digital Collections. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/CivilRights/id/740/rv/singleitem/rec/18. [Collection hereafter cited as Chafe OHC; interview hereafter cited as Johnson interview].

[144] Lewis Brandon, interview by William Chafe, July 1978, transcript, Chafe OHC. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/CivilRights/id/757/rec/5. Brandon describes the missions of Students Organized for Unified Leadership and Grassroots Association for Students. [Interview hereafter cited as Brandon interview].

value of Black Power principles: self-determination, black unity and solidarity, and grassroots activism for a relevant collegiate and community experience.

The first new black student organizations established at NC A&T during this period grew directly out of off-campus community groups and became increasingly radical over time. For example, local activists had established the Greensboro United Tutoring Service (GUTS) in 1965, which originally aimed to connect local black K-12 students with black and white college students for tutoring and college preparation services. GUTS recruited several hundred volunteers from NC A&T, and the experience proved just as educational for them.[145] "A lot of the children I worked with asked for white tutors," recalled GUTS NC A&T student director, Nelson Johnson. The children's suggestions that white college students would make more capable tutors than black HBCU students came at a time when "the social consciousness of [Black] history as a nation – as a people – was rapidly on the rise," and prompted serious questions about the links between higher education and the pernicious lasting effects of segregation and racial capitalism in North Carolina.[146] Thus, Johnson and several other NC A&T students parted ways with GUTS in 1967 and formed a new black student organization, Grassroots Association for Students, dedicated to improving and defending education on their own campus.[147]

As Black Power ideology and methods continued to garner support among members of Greensboro's black community, some of whom had "really digested the movement," young community leaders enrolled at NC A&T began shifting their attention to the university.[148]

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[145] "Intergroup Relations and University RESPONSIBILITY," *Alumni News* [NC A&T], Summer 1968, 7.
[146] Johnson interview.
[147] Ibid.; and Tom Bailey, interview by William Chafe, July 9, 1977, transcript, Chafe OHC. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/CivilRights/id/749/rv/singleitem/rec/3. [Interview hereafter cited as Bailey interview].
[148] Johnson interview.

Student activity accelerated at NC A&T as the new political consciousness combined with campus issues. Activists formed two new black student organizations, Students Organized for Unified Leadership and Black Liberation Front, within a few months.[149] By the spring of 1968, NC A&T students also began to elect peers who had worked as Black Power community organizers to the student government association. Their organizing experience and strong tactical orientation facilitated a resurgence of student government activism.[150] Specific concerns varied among student groups, but black student organizations found points of unity in demands for extended library and student union hours, improved food service in the cafeteria, and the creation of a faculty-student legislative body.[151]

Student leaders employed a sophisticated strategy for working with one another to achieve common goals as well. In 1967, the Black Liberation Front, "by far [...] the most militant of all of the groups on campus," and Students Organized for Unified Leadership collaborated in a campaign against mandatory ROTC enrollment by combining diplomacy with more confrontational tactics. Like black student organizations elsewhere in the country in the late 1960s, the Black Liberation Front committed itself to Black Power and anti-war ideals. Members carried artillery on campus, protested ROTC daily drills, and accused administrators and U.S. Army Officers of being "Black mercenaries." Administrators expelled a couple of Black

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[149] "The Black Institution has a Commitment," *The Register*, March 28, 1968; Calvin Matthews, "Black Cream of the Crop," *The Register*, March 8, 1968; Johnson interview; Bailey interview. *The Register* sometimes referred to the Black Liberation Front as Student Black Liberation Front and Student Liberation Front, but both Bailey and Johnson use Black Liberation Front.

[150] "Matthews and Smith Cop Student Offices," *The Register*, May 9, 1968; "Matthews Blasts Leaders for Organization Malfunctions," *The Register*, October 4, 1968; Johnson interview; Cleo McCoy, interview by William Chafe, September 6, 1977, transcript, Chafe OHC. Accessed March 20, 2019. http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/CivilRights/id/747/rv/singleitem/rec/2. [Interview hereafter cited as McCoy interview].

[151] See Hilliard Hines, Jr., "University Abolishes Compulsory ROTC, Makes Other Changes," *The Register*, April 25, 1968; Hilliard Hines, Jr., "Another View on Class Attendance," *The Register*, October 18, 1968; "Coeds Speak Out about the ROTC Program," *The Register*, February 15, 1968; Leander Forbes, "SG Hears Students' Complaints about Food," *The Register*, April 14, 1967; and Cohen Greene, "Policy Revised on Grades and Senate," *The Register*, April 2, 1971.

Liberation Front students as a result. Their radicalism, however, subsequently legitimized Students Organized for Unified Leadership's grassroots efforts. This group successfully mobilized the student base, petitioned the Faculty Senate, and obtained voting power on the president's Voluntary ROTC Study Committee, which eventually approved reforms to the ROTC program.[152]

NC A&T student associations also held interracial workshops with nearby colleges to discuss UNC System reorganization and extant inequalities between campuses. At NC A&T, the student government sponsored special sessions to hear grievances about grading systems and lack of funding for faculty hires. Black student organizations even orchestrated campus beautification projects as an expression of self-determination. As one Aggie commented, "Do we as students really believe the state will appropriate enough funds to make our campus look as attractive as UNCG? The answer lies in 'doing for self.'"[153] No effort was too small as these students sought to apply Black Power ethos in their daily lives.

Scholarship depicts NC A&T student activism as a string of staccato moments that ebbed and flowed around major events in the civil rights struggle; however, campus activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated sustained organization, sophisticated tactics, and a deep commitment to improving and protecting black higher education.[154] The explosion of black student organizations at NC A&T reflected a culture of activism that also existed in the local black community and helped to crystallize students' social, political, and academic interests. Campus activists continuously raised demands and strengthened networks of communication,

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[152] Bailey interview; Larry Wren, "War Protests Draw Attention As Officer 'Loses His Cool,'" *The Register,* May 12, 1967; "Committee Votes Unanimously on Voluntary ROTC," *The Register,* April 18, 1968.
[153] Vernice Wright, "Opinions Voiced Regarding Merger," *The Register,* February 27, 1970; Brandon interview; "Campus Clean-Up," *The Register*, October 1, 1971.
[154] William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*: *Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980).

even during periods of limited rallies and demonstrations. Mass demonstrations and protest typically occurred in the wake of major community or national events, such as a campus visit from Stokely Carmichael in 1968 and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. But even in those instances, campus activists ensured that their ensuing protests centered on issues unrelated to the catalyst event because they aimed to use these episodes to build collective power to address student concerns. As Students Organized for Unified Leadership activist Lewis Brendon explained, "It was easy to transfer that momentum to what was going on in the campus community." This generation of HBCU activists in North Carolina believed that a college education that failed to "speak to the liberation and oppression of AfroAmericans" was not only useless, but it also directly contributed to it.[155]

Indeed, another prominent Black Power ideology percolating on black campuses involved the creation of a "Black University" to challenge a long history of white control via funding and oversight. Activists specifically used the language of the "Black University" to contrast with and undermine ideas of a "Negro University," which deferred to conservative white leadership and depended on Eurocentric curricula.[156] In 1968, for example, Howard University students organized a five-day national conference called "Toward a Black University" that featured dozens of workshops designed to articulate the components of Black Power on campus. The following year, seventy-five students took over the administrative building at Voorhees

[155] Brandon interview.
[156] Biondi and Kendi discuss the significance of the Black University in juxtaposition with the "Negro University" in the Long Black Student Movement. See Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*; and Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement*; See also, Vincent Harding, "Towards the Black University," *Ebony,* August 1970, 156.

College in South Carolina and issued demands for the establishment of a Black Studies department.[157]

In North Carolina, HBCU students advocated for curriculum changes to solidify and strengthen the institutions' relationship with the black community. The concept of a Black University reflected this and gained prominence among campus activists, who called for a learning experience that connected students to African American history and culture and promoted altruism and social responsibility. Equally significant, from their perspective, UNC System consolidation threatened to standardize course and program offerings along Eurocentric lines even more, which fortified their opposition to it.

WSSU students especially rallied behind the concept of establishing a Black University. Campus activists saw themselves as "education hustlers," grassroots defenders of black culture and heritage in higher education.[158] As in the case of NC A&T, the ways in which Black Power and its ideology manifested in the local community most likely informed campus activists' agenda – particularly in relation to the Winston-Salem chapter of the Black Panther Party. The group, established in 1968, often focused its activities on protecting and enhancing access to resources in black communities. In 1969, for instance, the branch boycotted a grocery store located in a predominantly black neighborhood in protest of the store's mistreatment of black shoppers and employees. As Larry Little, a leader of the Black Panther Party chapter, stated, "Either you make the [grocery store] relevant to the needs of the Black community, or get out."[159]

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[157] Biondi, Black Revolution on Campus, 115-116; and Ibram Rogers, "'People All Over the World are Supporting You': Malcolm X, Ideological Formations, and Black Student Activism 1960-1972," *Journal of African American History* 96, no. 1 (Winter 2011), 32.
[158] Albert McDaniel, "Education Hustlers," *The News Argus* [WSSU], May 1, 1969.
[159] Larry Little, quoted in Benjamin Friedman, "Picking Up Where Robert F. Williams Left Off: The Winston-Salem Branch of the Black Panther Party," in *Comrades: A Local History of the Black Panther Party*, Judson Jeffries, ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 64.

Campus activists at WSSU echoed this sentiment as they sought to create a more relevant learning experience. They established a Black Student Union and demanded a Black Studies department, as well as more books by black authors in the library and a new cultural center. Many students went further, calling for a full revision of course offerings because they considered WSSU's entire catalog to be "White Studies." Reflecting on the types of humanities classes offered, Earl Hart, president of the Black Student Union, asked, "Were the Greeks and Romans the only human culture?"[160] Students also recognized African history assignments as opportunities to dispel racist myths and strengthen their "sense of historical achievement and involvement in the world."[161] In the spring of 1969, Hart led a campaign to fulfill these demands. Through the Black Student Union, he and others composed a list of student grievances related to enhancing black unity on campus and mobilized the student body to support it. When the group held two mass demonstrations in April, WSSU administrators agreed to establish a Black Studies minor program and to designate space in the library to house Black Studies resources.[162]

Campus activists also believed that Eurocentric "Negro University" curricula, in addition to omitting black history, groomed black students to adopt anti-black values. Graduates from black colleges, they argued, likely identified more with white communities. As a political cartoon in the student newspaper suggested, their degrees in "TOMology" imbued them with the notion that the only means to success lay in assimilation into white America.[163] By extension, campus activists blamed "White Studies" curriculums for causing factions in the black

[160] Earl Hart, "Black Student Union," *The News Argus*, October 1, 1969.
[161] Robert Cummings, "Why Study African History?" *The News Argus*, May 1, 1969.
[162] William Richardson, "Getting Together," *The News Argus*, November 1, 1969.
[163] Political cartoon, "Your degree in TOMology," *The News Argus*, February 1, 1970. The image depicts a black man in business attire lynching another black man. The caption and title reference the "Uncle Tom" epithet.

communities, with divisions erupting among those who adhered to traditional pathways of racial uplift and those who sought a new, more Afrocentric future. One or two Black Studies courses, though an encouraging start, could not remedy the issue; higher education systems required total reconstitution to break this cycle. In one of his many petitions for a Black University, Hart described his concerns about the efficacy of "Negro Universities":

> It is impossible for a chicken to produce a duck egg even though they belong to the same family of fowl. It can only produce according to what that particular system was constructed to produce. W.S.S.[U]. cannot produce freedom for Blacks. It is impossible for this economic system, political system, social system, and educational system, as it stands, to produce freedom for Blacks. And if ever a chicken did produce a duck egg, I'm quite sure you'd say it was certainly a revolutionary chicken.[164]

A university that fully embraced Black Studies, then, would itself be emblematic of black liberation. This became particularly important to students as they discussed the future of black colleges. Concerned with the implications of integration and UNC System consolidation, campus activists needed "more than voting strength" to develop channels for visibility and resistance; they needed curriculum that served to "prepare the black mind to deal with the system."[165]

120 miles away, at FSU, Black Power issues also coalesced around eradicating vestiges of white paternalism, particularly among administrators and faculty. As late as 1968, the school still had an all-white Board of Trustees. Thus, campus activists argued that HBCU chancellors exhibited a "split personality" that provoked their outrage over "White Negro" administrators who did not represent Black University interests.[166] Consequently, most students believed their

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[164] Earl Hart, "No More Inferior Education," *The News Argus*, March 1, 1969.
[165] Robert Cummings, "Why Study African History?" *The News Argus*, May 1, 1969; Albert McDaniel, "I am Curious (Black)," *The News Argus*, May 1, 1969.
[166] Interview with Julius Chambers by William Link, June 18, 1990, L-0127, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In this interview, Chambers speaks to the struggle for HBCU chancellors to balance their responsibilities to their Boards, who often had white members, and their responsibility

chancellor acted merely an extension of the all-white Board. The average FSU undergraduate "looks around campus and, nine times out of ten, in every place he looks, he sees a white face," one student remarked. "These white faces appear in classrooms, dining halls, and believe it or not, the [college] President's office."[167] The embrace of Black Power principles on campus fortified students' critiques of FSU administrators; campus activists resented white faculty and accused administrators of deliberately preventing more Afrocentric forms of institutional enhancement.[168]

FSU campus activists had remained fairly moderate during the first few years of the Black Campus Movement, but the prospect of UNC System consolidation had radicalized the campus community by 1970. In addition to railing against conservative accommodationist faculty and administrators, students organized mass meetings, and delivered lists of demands to the Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees, and even the State Board of Higher Education in Raleigh.[169] Occasionally, student concerns included demands for "social privileges" such as updated dress code regulations and curfew extensions, but an overwhelming majority of campus activists dedicated their efforts to eradicating vestiges of white paternalism on campus.[170] Yet, the announcement of UNC's plans to reorganize and absorb all five HBCUs exacerbated these

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to their campus constituents. To illustrate the "split personality" mentioned, he reflects on A&T's inability to accept a grant for a new engineering program because "that wasn't the role the University [of North Carolina system] wanted A&T to play," despite the institution's desire to increase its competitive programs.

[167] "Black Power on Campus," *The Voice,* [FSU] March 22, 1968.

[168] As recent scholarship argues, HBCU chancellors during this time actually ardently defended their institutions by navigating nuanced political channels and were themselves effective activists. See Lundeen, "Brick and Mortar."

[169] "Do you really know your own thing?" *The Voice,* September 30, 1970; "SGA Releases Findings of Grievance Committee," *The Voice*, February 15, 1971; and "Plan meeting with Board of Education in Raleigh," *The Voice,* February 17, 1971.

[170] "Protests and the Masses," *The Voice,* May 20, 1968. Students in this op-ed refer to curfew and dress code reform as "social privileges" that should not warrant significant protest, but Ibram Kendi argues that those kinds of demands commonly served as the first organized expressions of student power during the Black Campus Movement. Rogers, *Black Campus Movement*, 90-94.

frustrations, thrusting FSU students into a full embrace of what Stefan Bradley terms "black student power."[171]

Patterns of unmitigated criticism and protest of FSU chancellor, Charles Lyons, exemplify the intersections of the Black Campus Movement, students' disillusionment with paternalistic leadership, and the impacts of UNC System consolidation and integration at HBCUs. Unsatisfied with his dictatorial behavior and refusal to practice "good leadership" on issues "vital to the welfare of the university," campus activists accused Lyons of betraying his identity as a black man and challenged his commitment to the institution for several months.[172] Tensions between FSU students and Lyons reached a climax in 1971, when an announcement about the forced resignation of several faculty members incited campus unrest. Lyons had dismissed four high-ranking FSU employees in quick succession, including the University Dean. Most egregiously, he had replaced the only history professor who offered classes in Afro-American History with a white instructor, thus terminating FSU's only Black Studies program.[173]

Within days, hundreds of students convened in the campus auditorium and interrupted a Board of Trustees meeting to hand deliver a petition asking for Lyons' resignation. The petition cited several reasons for the students' dissatisfaction, including: insufficient black representation on the Board of Trustees, recent decline in funding, termination of the Black Studies courses, and rumored change in admission standards, which would negatively affect enrollment of low-income black students. In short, students demanded a relevant education experience. Without

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[171] Stefan Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University.*
[172] "Campus Gripes," *The Voice*, January 6, 1971; "SGA Releases Findings of Grievance Committee," *The Voice*, February 15, 1971; and "Faculty, Alumni Find Fault with University President, Charles Lyons," *The Voice*, January 6, 1971.
[173] "Lyons Seeks Absolute Power;" and "Executive Council Text," *The Voice*, March 30, 1971.

intervention, they feared that soon FSU "would be a white institution, leaving poor black students out in the cold."[174]

Led by student government president James Nesby, the student body coordinated a mass campus boycott, threatening to stay out of class until Lyons and the Board of Trustees met their demands. Over the following week, campus activists used disruptive tactics, such as lay-ins in the administrative building, organized forums with faculty and alumni, and held nightly rallies.[175] Public recitation of demands and marathon meetings expressed the exigency of their requests, and sustained mass support legitimized their struggle to administrators. One night that week, an estimated 1,000 students — almost three-quarters of the entire student body population — gathered on the football field to burn an effigy of Lyons.[176] "Can't Lyons see what he has done to the minds of 1,400 Black students?" asked Selma Kenion, a student leader and activist. "Students are crying out for help because the truth is, Lyons is not a Black man for a Black Man's job."[177] During another evening rally, the president of the FSU Alumni Association addressed the protesters and warned them of "Oreo-type cookies"– black administrators who were "white on the inside" – in FSU and UNC System governance, and the danger that they posed to black higher education.[178] On the fourth day of the boycott, the Board of Trustees threatened to close the school if students failed to return to class, but students stood firm. Campus activists organized as one consolidated group, referring to themselves as the "U.S.B.F.S.U." (United Student Body of Fayetteville State University).[179] Throughout the

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[174] Sue Maloney, "Students petition for Dr. Lyons' resignation," *The Voice,* February 15, 1971.
[175] "Students Recommit Position Against All Odds," *The Voice*, February 17, 1971; and "Patience, Courage, Help," *The Voice,* March 20, 1971.
[176] "Lyons burns in effigy" *The Voice,* February 17, 1971.
[177] Selma Kenion, "Can Charles Lyons See 1400 Black Students Are Crying Out For Help???" *The Voice,* March 20, 1971.
[178] "Lyons burns in effigy" and "Plan meeting with Board of Education in Raleigh."
[179] "Lyons gets Valentine," *The Voice,* February 17, 1971.

boycott, they expressed their Black Power consciousness by stressing the importance of solidarity among students. Additionally, the United Student Body of FSU held a vote to determine group consensus before making any tactical decisions.

During the protest, staff of the student newspaper functioned as a temporary black student organization, transforming *The Voice* into, literally, the voice of the protest. They increased print production and dedicated full issues to the boycott. The paper became the primary platform for activists to narrate their own perspectives and experiences of the struggle. Its columns featured contributions from alumni and community members, and detailed coverage of emergency student government and Board of Trustees meetings. Crude political cartoons, satirical pieces, angry rants, and philosophical essays on black unity and strength accompanied the articles. Though varied in form, each component espoused militant radicalism. By exclusively curating pieces that reflected the ideology fueling the boycott, the newspaper staff defined its narrative on their own terms, exhibiting the kind of self-determination and independence promoted by Black Power proponents. Equally important, due to increased print and circulation, they also mobilized additional support for their cause.[180]

Lyons announced that prolonged class strikes would impede school funding, affecting financial aid for 75 percent of the student body. Though the Board of Trustees had not fulfilled all of their demands—namely, firing Lyons—students agreed that they would rather preserve the opportunity to fight for a Black University as FSU students than continue the boycott and risk losing financial aid. After a seven-day boycott, campus activists returned to class.[181]

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[180] For more on print culture, black newspapers (student and community-run), and Black Power media strategy, see Simon Abramowitsch, "The Black Communications Movement." *African American Review* 51, no. 4 (2018): 305-327; and Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

[181] "Lyons Threatens Again," *The Voice*, February 17, 1971; "Must We Fear the Administration," *The Voice*, March 20, 1971.

Yet as *The Voice* editor, Shirley Evans, announced to her readers: "Our work goes on. Another kind of courage will be required of us if our cause is to be achieved."[182] Campus activists remained resolute in their efforts to create a relevant learning experience. They updated the FSU Student Constitution to reflect a commitment to black student solidarity and streamline channels of communication within the student government association. They also continued to demand Black Studies courses, black representation on the Board of Trustees, and recruitment of credentialed black faculty. As UNC consolidation neared, they, like their counterparts across the state, called for improved facilities and graduate degree programs, which they hoped would stimulate enrollment and increase state funding.[183]

Legislators finalized higher education reorganization plans in 1971, and the UNC System fully consolidated the following year. No HBCU campuses closed during the process, but the reorganization did accelerate integration at most institutions. Although black HBCU students' resistance to consolidation ultimately failed, they did achieve significant reform on their campuses during this time. Campus activists used sophisticated tactical organization to enforce student rights, promote Black curriculum, and, most importantly, develop a more relevant higher education experience for black students. They also interacted with, and learned from, Black Power advocates in nearby communities. As one WSSU student astutely suggested in 1967, "perhaps the most lasting impact of student power is that students have realized they are able to form their own institutions."[184] By the early 1970s, HBCU students had transformed their

[182] "Patience, Courage, Help," *The Voice*, March 20, 1971.
[183] "A New Constitution for FSU," The Voice, December 1, 1971; "Lyons' Den: From End to End, or Charades and Masquerades," *The Voice*, April 15, 1971; "Black Board of Trustees Needed at Fayetteville State," *The Voice*, April 15, 1971; and "Restructuring Leaves Much Unanswered," *The Voic*e, December 1, 1971.
[184] Olivia Hamilton, "Student Power Has Potential," *The News Argus*, November 1, 1967.

understanding of “student power” and aligned it with wider Black Power principles. Only by comparing the similarities and differences of student campaigns across HBCU campuses in North Carolina does the full expression of campus activism come into view.

CHAPTER THREE

"From Reform to Revolution": Black Student Power on Predominantly White Campuses

Of the approximately 29,700 students who attended North Carolina colleges and universities in 1965, predominantly white institutions (PWIs) enrolled less than 400 African American students.[185] Although state-supported PWIs had gradually begun to open their admissions to non-white applicants in the mid-1950s, discriminatory practices and lackluster commitment to integration continued to restrict black enrollment at historically white colleges throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[186] At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), a campus chapter of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) provided a vehicle for political and social activities for black students in the early 1960s. The chapter automatically granted membership to all black students upon matriculation, which placed it at the center of black student fellowship and community on campus.[187] Though active in its "campaign against racial discrimination at UNC[-CH]" throughout the first half of the decade, student interest in the organization's activities began to wane by the mid-1960s, and attendance at meetings dwindled.[188] In November of 1967, frustrated with the campus chapter's

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[185] Figures based on 1965-1966 enrollment data from all eleven state-supported North Carolina colleges. Registration records vary across institutions, so these figures are presented in rounded, approximate numbers. The five public historically black colleges and universities collectively enrolled approximately 9,500-10,000 of the total 29,700 students attending state colleges in 1965. See "Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research-Central Office of Records and Registration: Annual Report 1964-1965," in the Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40130, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [Library hereafter cited as Wilson Library]; and "Enrollment Statistics, Projections," SR.103 Long Range Planning File, 1965-1968," University of North Carolina Board of Governors Group [Formerly Board of Higher Education], State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[186] For more on University of North Carolina (UNC) System desegregation and gradualism, see Catherine Baltzell, Robert Dentler, and Daniel Sullivan, *University on Trial: The Case of the University of North Carolina* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

[187] John Sellars, interview with Alex Ford, November 8, 2015, transcript, Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library. Accessed December 2, 2019. https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/27128/rec/1. [Collection hereafter cited as SOHP; interview hereafter cited as Sellars interview].

[188] "NAACP Chapter Begins Drive to End Segregation," *Daily Tar Heel* [UNC-CH], November 15, 1961.

"slow and antique" style and general aversion to direct action, a faction of militant black students quietly planned a coup to overthrow and dismantle the organization.[189] Led by Preston Dobbins, approximately fifty students – almost half of the total black population at the university – attended a regular UNC-CH NAACP chapter meeting on November 9. There, Dobbins introduced a motion to dissolve the chapter entirely, which the students who had accompanied him supported.[190] Because every black student had been guaranteed voting membership, the motion passed despite objection from chapter officers.

The insurgent group then immediately voted to establish a new organization, the Black Student Movement (BSM), in the NAACP's place.[191] BSM represented a militant alternative, and Dobbins, as chairman, soon adopted concrete, short-term goals to protest the marginalized position of black students and employees on campus. These included forging ties with black university employees, petitioning the administration for Black Studies courses, and advocating for increased black faculty recruitment.[192] The transition was not altogether smooth; at the BSM's first meeting, the recently-ousted UNC-CH NAACP chapter president interrupted proceedings and announced, "I want you all to remember that there are now two Negro structures here."[193] The BSM and the overthrown NAACP leadership ultimately decided to coexist as separate groups, but by the end of 1968, most of the black student population – around seventy-five students – had left the NAACP campus chapter to join the BSM.[194]

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[189] Preston Dobbins, interview with Jacquelyn Hall, December 4, 1974, transcript, SOHP. Accessed November 9, 2019. https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/10663/rec/9 [Hereafter cited as Dobbins interview]; and Sellars interview.
[190] Dobbins interview. Dobbins estimates that around ten students regularly attended campus NAACP meetings at the time of the coup.
[191] Steve Price, "Carolina NAACP Ousts President, Pledges Militancy," *Daily Tar Heel*, November 11, 1967.
[192] Dobbins interview; Sellars interview.
[193] Pamela Hawkins, "Negro Group Backs Clay," *Daily Tar Heel*, November 17, 1967.
[194] Ibid.; William Link, *William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 141-142; Turner, *Sitting In and Speaking Out*, 204. Institutional records vary, but generally indicate that UNC-CH enrolled between 100-130 black students in 1968. See "Office of the

The conflicts between the NAACP and BSM at UNC-CH illustrate the shifting consciousness of black student activists on predominantly white campuses in the late 1960s. As BSM activist John Sellars explained, "Either you were going to protest; you were going to challenge the system; you were going to be confrontational; or you were going to sit back and go to class and try to keep good grades and graduate so that you could get a good job."[195] As the national Black Power Movement gained momentum, student activists embraced its urgent rhetoric and ethos of self-determination. Meanwhile, the University of North Carolina (UNC) System's reorganization and prolonged legal dispute with the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare accelerated desegregation, thus forcing black students to navigate and balance the politics of desegregation and the emergence of Black Power.[196] As a result, black students increasingly faced double marginalization on predominantly white campuses. Comprising less than 3 percent of the student body, those at schools like UNC-CH, University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC), and North Carolina State University (NCSU) encountered both isolation and discrimination as they struggled for acceptance on campus. At the same time, many felt that the experience of attending well-funded, traditionally white institutions stood at odds with what they perceived to be "authentic Blackness" – particularly as their peers at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) endured budget cuts, degree program restrictions, and threats of closure. As a result, black student activists at PWIs sought to create separate black spaces to nurture their politics and affirm their cultural identities, but they also worked within the system on campus to accomplish their goals.

Registrar and Director of Institutional Research- Central Office of Records and Registration: Annual Report 1968-1969," in the Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40130, University Archives, Wilson Library.

[195] Sellars interview.

[196] For more on University of North Carolina System desegregation and consolidation, see Link, *William Friday*, 160-186.

Though perhaps the most visible instances of black student activism took place in Chapel Hill, the movement had been percolating on predominantly white campuses across the state for years. At PWIs, black students organized for Black Studies programs, more active recruitment of black students and faculty, the establishment of cultural centers, better working conditions for black nonacademic workers, and open housing measures both on and off campus. Though small in number, black activists at white institutions constructed a broader edifice of dissent by forging ties with local black communities and other nearby schools and embracing interracial partnerships on their own campuses. Although often guided by local impulses, black student activists also embraced Pan-African and black internationalist aesthetics and politics. By the late 1960s, calls for student power and resistance to white paternalism invigorated black activists on North Carolina campuses.

Sustained scholarly attention to the nonviolent, integration-oriented demonstrations of the 1950s and early 1960s has tended to neglect or obscure the complexities of the long black student movement, but a growing body of research examines the individuals and universities that led and shaped black student activism beyond the civil rights era.[197] Several historians have begun to rectify areas of scholarly neglect with regard to the Black Power Movement and college student activism in the late 1960s and 1970s. Clayborne Carson's 1981 study of the Student Non-

[197] Ibram Kendi (Ibram Rogers at time of publication) describes the "Long Black Student Movement" as a series of "separate but interlocking tussles" for the educational advancement of African American college students, lasting from 1919-1972. Other historians have also pointed to a multi-phased movement, with waves of black student activism coalescing in the 1920s, the 1950s, and the late 1960s. See Ibram Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4, 9-29. See also Darlene Hine, William Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey, Combined Volume* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2008), 625-627; Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Jonathan Fenderson, James Stewart, and Kabria Baumgartner, "Expanding the History of the Black Studies Movement: Some Prefatory Notes," *Journal of African American Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 2012): 1-20.

Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), *In Struggle,* provides enduring frameworks for understanding the ideological evolution among black student and youth activists in the 1960s. Carson traces the shift from integrationist, nonviolent community organizing to militant black nationalism by the end of the decade. Although his interpretation of this shift is critical, Carson's nuanced portrayal of SNCC captures a tactically diverse and paradoxical radicalism that bridged the classic civil rights and Black Power movements. More recently, Simon Hall has considered the cross-fertilization between civil rights and antiwar activism on college campuses. Hall analyzes the national peace movement's inability to forge an interracial coalition despite shared opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam among antiwar civil rights organizations, white liberals, and Black Power nationalists. Hall contends that antiwar black activists pushed the white-dominated peace movement to adopt pluralist strategies that connected imperialism to domestic race issues. In doing so, Hall also emphasizes the links between civil rights moderates and black radicals and challenges notions of rigid Black Power separatism.[198]

Similarly, Timothy Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie* and, later, Peniel Joseph's assessment of the Black Power Movement fundamentally expanded scholarly conceptualizations of Black Power politics and consciousness.[199] Tyson's biography of Robert F. Williams emphasizes the political, rather than cultural, hallmarks of Black Power ideology and activism. Focusing on the town of Monroe, North Carolina, Tyson uses place to capture continuities within southern black activism, and characterizes 1950s expressions of black militancy, nationalism, and self-determination as antecedents to the post-1965 Black Power Movement. For Tyson, civil rights

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[198] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

[199] Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2006); Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Peniel Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2006).

and Black Power ideologies not only coexisted in the South, but they "grew out of the same soil [and] confronted the same predicaments."[200] Joseph amplifies and builds upon this work by lengthening the chronology of the Black Power Movement while also expanding its geography. His consideration of this struggle in local, national, and international terms alongside attention to earlier, nonviolent iterations of Black Power ideology challenge popular perceptions of both tangible and intangible aspects of the movement. Joseph argues that Black Power spanned other causes, including calls for tenant rights, antipoverty organizing, antiwar activism, and education reform. Together, these works establish the shared roots of Black Power and civil rights struggles, which broadens our understanding of their expressions in southern settings.

Indeed, the bulk of the scholarship on black college students and Black Power focuses on higher education outside of the South.[201] According to historian Stefan Bradley, the region's comparatively mild activist culture can explain this historiographical aperture. He argues that the confines of conservative campus and community culture prevented southern black student activists from fully embracing radical militancy to the extent that students in the Northeast and on the West Coast had, and thus southern students failed to produce sweeping changes at their institutions.[202] But Bradley's emphasis on the effectiveness of activism, rather than activism itself, obscures the tremendous efforts made by black student leaders in the South and ignores the chronological and thematic frameworks established by Tyson and Joseph. The assertion that

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[200] Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 9.

[201] Recently, historian Claudrena Harold has produced a series of short films on the history of black student activism at the University of Virginia, although the corresponding print volume, *Charlottesville 2017: The Legacy of Race and Inequity*, edited by Harold and Louis Nelson, focuses on the present-day social responsibilities of universities rather than historic narratives. See, for example, *U. of Virginia Charlottesville, VA 1976*, directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Everson (Picture Palace Pictures, 2013); *We Demand*, directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Everson (Picture Palace Pictures, 2016); *Black Bus Stop*, directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Everson (Picture Palace Pictures, 2019); and Claudrena Harold and Louis Nelson, eds., *Charlottesville 2017: The Legacy of Race and Inequity* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2018).

[202] Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University.*

conservative cultural parameters truncated Black Power struggles on southern campuses fails to interrogate how students expressed it, despite this milieu, and inherently negates the scope and complexities—not to mention the importance—of their participation in the broader movement. Instead, we should read these efforts as sophisticated, highly organized, community-minded, and multivalent. Though black student activists were unsuccessful in fully radicalizing their predominantly white campuses, they were themselves radical.

Insufficient scholarly attention to the southern Black Campus Movement impoverishes our understanding of local threads of Black Power and the intersections of race and place-based identities. To the extent that historians have addressed student movements in the South during the late 1960s and 1970s, many depict activism driven primarily by white liberals and relegate black campus activists to secondary roles. Recent scholarship, however, works to incorporate a biracial focus in its examination of Black Power-era student activism in the region. Robert Cohen and David Snyder's edited volume, *Rebellion in Black and White*, for example, illuminates commonalities between black student activism and other New Left student movements in the mid-twentieth century.[203] Additionally, Jeffrey Turner's *Sitting in and Speaking Out* evaluates the roles of racial identity in creating movement culture on college campuses within the context of the post-World War II South, a time in which he claims "the definition of southernness was in transition."[204] Turner ends his study in the 1970s, pivoting his analysis from Black Power to Vietnam-era antiwar activism. Meanwhile, in North Carolina, the restructuring of the UNC System and desegregation battle continued to fuel activist efforts.

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[203] Robert Cohen and David Snyder, eds., *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s* (Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins Press, 2013). For an overview of how historiographic arguments regarding the New Left have been reconceptualized in general, see: John McMillian and Paul Buhle, eds., *The New Left Revisited* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2003).
[204] Jeffrey Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking Out*, 3.

There, Black Power ideology and politics shaped the goals, strategy, and expressions of black student activism.

The BSM's dramatic split from the campus NAACP chapter at UNC-CH offered a prelude to the wave of Black Power-era activism that would dominate the campus climate for the following three years. In its first year of operation, the BSM organized two major demonstrations – one following the murder of two black students in Orangeburg, South Carolina in February 1968, and one following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April – and gained significant momentum on campus.[205] In November, the BSM invited black activist Stokely Carmichael, whose fiery rhetoric and affiliation with the Black Power Movement was perceived by many white members of the campus community to be incendiary, to speak on campus. Carmichael's visit stirred controversy and headaches for university administrators, who received a flood of letters expressing outrage at the BSM for inviting a "Communist terrorist" speaker to campus.[206] The BSM had planned to use the event as an opportunity to raise funds for a scholarship fund or materials for a new community tutoring service, but, perhaps in response to the pressure from dissenting community members, the Director of the Student Union prohibited the BSM from charging admission to the event. The BSM solicited free-will donations from attendees, but the $700 that they managed to collect failed to cover even half of Carmichael's speaking fee. [207] The BSM believed that white university leaders aimed to suppress campus

[205] Dobbins interview; Sellars interview; Link, *William Friday*, 141-142.
[206] Arlan Garvey, "SNCC Labeled Communistic," *Daily Tar Heel*, October 19, 1968; "BSM criticized for new methods," *Daily Tar Heel,* December 15, 1968; "Carmichael, Stokely, Address, 21 November 1968" box 1, folder 22, in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Joseph Carlyle Sitterson Records #40022, University Archives, Wilson Library. [Collection hereafter cited as Sitterson Papers].
[207] "CU, BSM Heads Dispute, Henry Denies Charges*," Daily Tar Heel*, December 10, 1968; Joe Sanders, "What We Have Here is a Lack…" *Daily Tar Hee*l, December 15, 1968; Daniel Pollitt to Bernard Gilman, Robert Konrad, and Forrest Young, December 5, 1968, "RE: Use of Carmichael Auditorium by student groups for Fund Raising Concerts," box 1, folder 13, Sitterson Papers.

discussions of black liberation. Carmichael came to campus anyway, but the event adversely affected UNC-CH administration's and BSM's perceptions of each other.

In December, just three weeks after Carmichael's visit, BSM activists presented a list of twenty-three demands to the administration. These included changes to admission and financial aid policies to increase black enrollment, more black faculty hires, the creation of a Black Studies department, and that it make an effort "to improve the intolerable working conditions of the Black non-academic workers."[208] The latter referred to recent complaints made by black cafeteria employees, who accused the University of creating a hostile work environment and shortening their paychecks.[209] The demands received considerable attention from local news outlets, but public opinion on the matter was not unanimous. Again, university administrators began fielding angry letters and calls from alumni and community members. One particularly curt writer encouraged UNC-CH chancellor, Carlyle Sitterson, to "tell [the BSM] that people in hell want ice water."[210] At the same time, many black community members and white student activists and faculty immediately demonstrated their support for BSM, creating a divisive, charged atmosphere on campus.[211]

Sitterson waited six weeks to respond to the BSM demands. On January 24, 1969 – at the end of the final exam period after many students had already left campus – the Chancellor released a nineteen-page, point-by-point response to the BSM demands. His statement explained that some of the changes requested were already underway, such as increasing recruitment of black students and faculty, but that ultimately, "the university cannot make its policies so as to

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[208] "Demands of the Black Student Movement," December 11, 1968, box 1, folder 13, Sitterson Papers,
[209] Elizabeth Brooks, interview with Beverly Jones, October 2, 1974, transcript, SOHP. [Hereafter cited as Brooks interview].
[210] C. Mitchell, Sr. to Carlyle Sitterson, December 13, 1968, box 1, folder 13, Sitterson Papers.
[211] John Dixon to Preston Dobbins and BSM, December 18, 1968 and Delegation to the NSA Southern Area Conference, "Statement of Support to Afro-American Society and The Black Student Movement," undated, box 1, folder 13, Sitterson Papers; Sellars interview.

give special privilege to any single race, color, or creed." Predictably, Sitterson's statement did not satisfy the black student activists or their allies, but BSM leaders agreed to work with the chancellor's new interracial faculty-student committee to examine the needs of minority students.[212]

Meanwhile, ten miles away at Duke University, black student activists waged their own battle against institutional discrimination, which culminated in an explosive confrontation between activists, university officials, and police. The uprising emboldened the BSM, whose leadership had been in direct contact with the activists at Duke.[213] On their own campus, BSM activists intensified their efforts. In early February 1969, BSM leaders resigned from the chancellor's faculty-student committee, insisting that black students be given the opportunity to speak for themselves without having to mediate with white students or faculty. "We weren't mean or angry at whites," BSM activist, Patricia Ricks, later recalled. "It was that we didn't know them, and they didn't know us."[214] Still, white activist organizations on campus continued to support BSM. On February 17, over 200 students marched through campus to Sitterson's office, where four BSM members forced a meeting with the chancellor. They reiterated previous demands and threatened to shift their tactics "from reform to revolution" unless the administration took immediate action.[215]

The tipping point came a week later, on February 23, when the university food service division terminated a black cafeteria employee on what black student activists perceived to be

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[212] Carlyle Sitterson, statement to university, "Reply to the Demands of the Black Student Movement," January 24, 1969, box 1, folder 13, Sitterson Papers; Sellars interview.
[213] Link, *William Friday*, 143.
[214] Patricia Ricks, interview with MaKayla Leak, March 2, 2016, transcript, SOHP. [Hereafter cited as Ricks interview].
[215] "'Revolutionary'" tactics promised by UNC blacks," *News & Observer*, February 19, 1969.

unjust and discriminatory grounds.[216] At that point, UNC-CH administration still had not responded to the BSM's renewed demands, and this new instance of the mistreatment of the black campus community catalyzed and crystallized the activists' frustrations. BSM met with the black cafeteria workers that evening to organize. The workers wanted to strike but worried that they would not be taken seriously by university officials. BSM president Preston Dobbins reportedly told them, "Come in [to work tomorrow], set your counters up as if you're going to work, and leave the rest to the black students. We'll get the publicity out."[217] The next morning, thirty-five members of the BSM marched through campus dressed in all black, chanting, "We're gonna burn this place down."[218] This public display of feverish militancy attracted the attention of both university administrators and state officials, but it belied sophistication of the activists' methods. Although the employees initiated and led the strike, the BSM distributed pamphlets to students and newspapers and coordinated picket lines and demonstrations[219]

The BSM's support for the cafeteria workers grew out of the organization's Black Power-minded commitment to grassroots altruism, black solidarity, and commitment to economic self-determination, which the underpaid cafeteria workers could not exercise. "We felt that we were obligated to help them […] and we felt that we were in a place where we could; we were in a position to help them and to speak up for them because they were not able to speak up for themselves."[220] Although UNC-CH enrolled less than 110 black students at the time, almost 100 percent of nonacademic staff employed by the institution were African American. Chapel Hill's town population in 1969 barely totaled three-quarters of UNC-CH's student body, and many of

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[216] Bobby Nowell, "Food Service Employees Strike, Call for Boycott," *Daily Tar Heel*, February 25, 1969. The exact reason for the employee's termination is not clear.
[217] Brooks interview.
[218] Erica Meyer, "Campus Men Protest," *Daily Tar Heel*, February 28, 1969.
[219] Link, *William Friday*, 144-147.
[220] Ricks interview.

the university's black custodial and cafeteria staff commuted from Durham.[221] Thus, black student activists felt that "the closest thing [they] had for contact with an aspect of the black community was the cafeteria workers right here on campus."[222] In addition to helping stage the walkout, BSM activists aided in prolonging the strike by raising money to help the employees support themselves in the interim. Student activists shined shoes and collected donations from sympathetic town residents. They also set up a makeshift "soul food cafeteria" elsewhere on campus, where striking employees brought meals that they cooked at home to sell and serve to the activists and their allies, who boycotted all other university food services as a sign of solidarity. White students from campus organizations such as the Southern Students Organizing Committee also participated in these efforts, but importantly, "they didn't jump in and try to make decisions."[223]

The strike ended on March 21, after weeks of negotiations between the university, state officials, and the workers, but the BSM remained active throughout the year.[224] In the process of coordinating and publicizing the cafeteria workers' strike, the BSM had delayed pursuit of the other goals outlined in their initial list of demands. Without losing steam, black student activists turned their attention back to their education-related goals – most importantly, increased black enrollment and the development of Black Studies curricula. Things moved quickly for the BSM

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[221] Chapel Hill town population was an estimated 12,500, and UNC-CH enrolled approximately 16,500 students in 1969. Student, worker, and town population data taken from Derek Williams, *"It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore": Foodworkers' Strike At Chapel Hill, Spring 1969* (Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 8, UNC Carolina Digital Repository. Accessed January 25, 2020. https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/parent/cf95jc18c/file_sets/gb19f652r; and "Political Awareness in the Black Community: An Interview with Velma Perry, a life-long Chapel Hillian," in *Chapel Hill 200 Years: "Close to Magic,"* Chapel Hill Bicentennial Publication Committee (Chapel Hill, NC: Bicentennial Commission, 1994), 79.

[222] Dobbins interview.

[223] Brooks interview; Ashley Davis, interview with Russell Rymer, April 12, 1974, transcript, SOHP. [Hereafter cited as Davis interview].

[224] Governor Bob Scott agreed to raise the workers' wages to $1.80 an hour, and UNC-CH hired a third party, SAGA Food Services, to manage its dining halls and eventually paid cafeteria staff $180,000 in back pay. See Link, *William Friday*, 150-155; Jeffrey Turner, *Sitting in and Speaking Out*, 210-214.

that spring; without organizing any significant campus demonstrations, activists worked directly with Sitterson to accomplish several goals. In describing this period of negotiations between the chancellor and black student activists, BSM member John Sellars explained simply, "The BSM's purpose was to talk back."[225] Also during this time, BSM began print its own newspaper, *Black Ink*, to publish news and opinions about black student issues. The inaugural issue stated: "If at all possible, the BSM's new newspaper would be printed black letters on black background. However, one must be realistic. Therefore, the best thought […] would be a concept of black ink expressing black ideas."[226]

BSM's tactics and efforts in this vein proved successful. Before the end of the year, university officials had approved a new degree program in African and Afro-American Studies, which would begin in the fall of 1969, hired a black admissions counselor, and significantly increased the number of black students admitted as freshmen for the 1969-1970 academic year.[227] The BSM's successful involvement in the food workers' strike and the sustained support that they received from white faculty and students legitimized the organization's cause and tactics for university leadership. Moving forward, black student activists at UNC-CH continued to call attention to needs for racial equity on campus. During the UNC System's long battle with federal officials over desegregation in the 1970s, BSM expanded community tutoring programs, sponsored annual recruitment weekends targeting "minority group and disadvantaged high

[225] Sellars interview.
[226] "Black Ink," *Black Ink*, November 1, 1969.
[227] Raymond Dawson to Claiborne S. Jones, memorandum, July 23, 1969, box 1, folder 17, Sitterson Papers. The number of incoming black freshman in 1969 almost doubled from the previous year, increasing from 37 to 60. See "Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research- Central Office of Records and Registration: Annual Report 1969-1970," Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records.

school students" and organized a statewide coalition of black student activists to "strongly and effectively address the UNC Desegregation Plan issues."[228]

Just three days after the cafeteria strike began in Chapel Hill, Ben Chavis, black student activist at UNC Charlotte (UNCC) and future national director of the NAACP, presented his chancellor with what came to be known as the "Black Demands." Unrelated to the events in Chapel Hill, these also included calls for Black Studies curricula; increased recruitment of black students and faculty; the "dismissal of all racist members of the administration;" increased wages for black employees; and the extension of university resources to non-student members of the local black community. The chief demand was that the administration officially recognize the activist student organization, Black Student Union (BSU).[229] Chavis and his peers had spent over a year trying to charter the BSU, but the administration and all-white student government had repeatedly denied their applications and constitution proposals.[230] One week after issuing the Black Demands, on March 3, 1969, Chavis and approximately forty other black students marched through campus with signs declaring that their chancellor had "Blackitis." Most audaciously, they stopped in front of the campus flagpole to replace the American and North Carolina state flags with the Black Liberation flag. Having captured attention, black student activists debated counter-protestors and delivered speeches about the need for achieving equity

[228] "Too Racist or Too Much Truth?" *Black Ink*, October 20, 1971; Phil Geddie and Larry Williams, YOBU works for Blacks," *Black Ink*, November 1, 1972; Mary Lacewell, "Little Rock again?" *Black Ink*, November 1, 1972; Lenox Rawlings, "Project Uplift Begins Seminar," *Daily Tar Heel*, April 9, 1970; Janice Mills, "HEW rejects plan," *Black Ink*, October 1, 1973; Phil Geddie, "Student congress organized," *Black Ink*, October 1, 1974.
[229] Bill Billups, "Black Demands are a Reaction, Not a Solution," and "Blacks Demand Ungraded Courses, Black Professors" *Carolina Journal* [UNCC], March 5, 1969; James Cuthbertson, "The Black Demands: Have They Been Met?" *Carolina Journal*, September 17, 1969.
[230] "Chavis Runs – In Circles," *Carolina Journal* [UNCC], April 2, 1969; "Student Legislature Acts, Governor Scott to be Contacted Soon," *Carolina Journal*, March 5, 1969; "Legislature Rejects BSU Constitution Again," *Carolina Journal*, November 19, 1969.

without sacrificing racial identity. Afterward, they entered the administration building and chained themselves inside to force a conversation with university leadership.[231]

The struggle to charter the BSU dragged on until November of 1969, when the activists' constitution finally received approval from the student legislature. Chaired by Chavis and T.J. Reddy, a student and community organizer, the BSU aimed to express and defend the interests of black campus community members and to transform UNCC into an inclusive university through "academic pursuit, freedom of speech, and calling for justice in the community."[232] Radical militancy and political activism coexisted in BSU, and both indicate that a robust, Black Power-minded commitment to politics of self-determination undergirded the movement at UNCC.

The emphasis that BSU leadership placed on utilizing grassroots tactics, militant posturing, and racial pride to galvanize campus and community reveals deep currents of Black Power cultural politics. Black student activists defined and affirmed blackness in numerous ways. Although not all BSU members presented as radically as Chavis, who often wore a fifty-caliber machine gun bullet on a chain around his neck, many curated a personal image that indicated their ideology, such as matching a dashiki with black armbands to represent Black Power antiwar sentiments.[233] Community ties also served to affirm cultural and social identities. Reddy and other BSU members, for example, would "spend most evenings over at Johnson C.

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[231] "Black Demands are a Reaction, Not a Solution," *Carolina Journal*, March 5, 1969; Benjamin Chavis Jr. interview with Bridgette Sanders and Lois Strickell, February 7, 2005, transcript, UNC Charlotte History and Life Series, Oral History Collection, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Accessed January 26, 2020. https://goldmine.uncc.edu/index/render/object/pid/uncc:2046/parentPID/islandora:root. [Library hereafter cited as Atkins Library; interview hereafter cited as Chavis interview].

[232] Chavis interview.

[233] Chavis interview; Kenneth Sanford, *Charlotte and UNC Charlotte Growing Up Together* (Durham, NC: B. Williams & Associates, 1996), 117; James Cuthbertson, interview with Bridgette Sanders and Lois Strickel, July 28, 2004, transcript, UNC Charlotte Civil Rights Series, Oral History Collection, J. Murrey Atkins Library. Accessed January 26, 2020. https://newsouthvoices.uncc.edu/interview/uacu0008.html. [Library hereafter cited as Atkins Library; interview hereafter cited as Cuthbertson interview].

Smith," a nearby private HBCU, for fellowship with other black students. As BSU grew in membership and gained influence on the campus community, its members would collaborate with Smith activists on community projects, such as youth breakfast programs modeled after those run by the Black Panther Party.[234] BSU also encouraged its members to volunteer for other organizations on and off campus, such as the Charlotte SNCC chapter and the city's Black Cultural Association. As Chavis later recalled, "In those days you didn't join one organization. You joined as many organizations as you could."[235] On other occasions, BSU members hosted social and cultural events at what they called the Black House, which headquartered Charlotte's Black Cultural Association. Students had helped paint the house black – inside and out – and filled it with black furniture.[236] BSU activities also included cultural and intellectual activism that reflected Pan-African impulses in the national Black Power Movement. For example, members protested South African apartheid and passed out information about instability in newly decolonized African state. Their efforts facilitated campus dialogues about Blackness in international contexts and demonstrated engagement with Black Power reverberations beyond campus borders.[237]

In contrast with the national Black Power Movement's hypermasculine image and militant posturing, black women acted as student leaders at UNCC and addressed gender issues.

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[234] Ronald Caldwell, interview with Bridgette Sanders and Lois Strickel, May 31, 2005, transcript, UNC Charlotte Civil Rights Series, Oral History Collection, Atkins Library. Accessed January 26, 2020. https://nsv.uncc.edu/interview/uaca0005.html [Hereafter cited as Caldwell interview]; T.J. Reddy, interview with Lois Stickell, June 28, 2004, transcript, UNC Charlotte History and Life Series, Oral History Collection, Atkins Library Accessed January 26, 2020. https://goldmine.uncc.edu/index/render/pid/uncc:2599

[235] Chavis interview.

[236] Chavis interview; Dorothy Dae interview with Bridgette Sanders and Lois Strickell, October 11, 2004, transcript, UNC Charlotte History and Life Series, Oral History Collection, Atkins Library. Accessed January 26, 2020. https://nsv.uncc.edu/interview/uada0009.html [Hereafter cited as Dae interview].

[237] William Browner, "American Apartheid," *Carolina Journal*, April 23, 1969; James Cuthbertson, "From the Black Viewpoint: God bless everyone," *Carolina Journal*, December 17, 1969; "The Bridge over troubled waters," *Carolina Journal*, March 4, 1970.

They mounted sophisticated and long-term efforts to force the recognition of black women's beauty and power into spaces traditionally dominated by white femininity. In 1968, UNCC elected its first black homecoming queen, Diane Scoggins. "That was a bloc vote and campaign issue," recalled Dorothy Dae. "We learned to work within the system."[238] Later, in 1970, the BSU launched a campaign to integrate the UNCC cheerleading squad. Female BSU members trained each other and practiced together throughout the 1970 academic year, and when none were selected to join the squad that summer, the women pursued discrimination charges.[239] The university judicial committee investigated the all-white cheerleading squad and BSU members continued to prepare for tryouts. The following season, all twenty-five female BSU members tried out, and two made the squad. The BSU continued to run nominees for Miss UNCC, but they also developed new strategies to raise black female representation outside of conventional feminine roles.[240]

In many ways, black women formed the backbone of community-minded political Black Power activism at UNCC.[241] Scoggins and Dae campaigned among the student body to gain final approval for the BSU charter. Having secured the legitimacy of their organization, female BSU members pursued a foothold in campus politics. First, they successfully infiltrated student government and advisory boards. Once elected or appointed, they developed a volunteer rotation system wherein activists took turns serving on appropriations, scholarship, and funding

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[238] Dae interview.
[239] James Cuthbertson, "Give us black cheerleaders," *Carolina Journal*, November 12, 1970; "Cheerleaders reprimanded, BSU still waiting," *Carolina Journal*, October 31, 1972; and Dae interview.
[240] Cuthbertson interview; Dae interview; "BSU Names Queen," *Carolina Journal*, January 7, 1971. See also Shirletta Kinchen, "Beauty and the Black Student Revolt: Black Student Activism at Memphis State and the Politics of Campus 'Beauty Spaces,'" in *An Unseen Light: Black Struggles for Freedom in Memphis, Tennessee*, Aram Goudsouzian and Charles McKinney Jr., eds. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), 330-345.
[241] Christina Greene examines the politics of southern Black Power feminism in local, community-based movements. See Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

committees specifically to "funnel some money back" to black students and organizations on campus.[242]

As UNCC enrollment and funding increased during UNC System reorganization in the early 1970s, black student activists responded to the university system's federal dispute over desegregation as well as campus-specific instances of discrimination. Until 1971, commuters comprised the student body; that year, the school opened on-campus dormitories for the first time. Space remained limited, and white campus housing officials denied several black students who applied due to "undisclosed information about the students' activities gathered from outside sources." Many black students interpreted this as the university's effort to keep black student activists literally at a distance.[243] Students also demonstrated for increased black enrollment and for new black faculty hires, which aligned with federal directives for the UNC System.[244]

As black students organized to protect and assert their racial identities at newly desegregated institutions, dedication to community and solidarity structured the trajectory of their activism. As John Sellars explained, black student activists like himself at UNC schools "identified with the people who were oppressed by the University."[245] At UNCC, perhaps of necessity at a commuter school, black student activists exhibited a strong sense of accountability to black communities off campus. Students developed extensive activist networks, cultural and political alliances in local black neighborhoods, and inter-institutional partnerships.

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[242] Caldwell interview; Dae interview.
[243] Michael McCulley, "Students Denied Housing," *Carolina Journal*, April 29, 1971.
[244] Susan Sutton, "UNCC Charged with Discrimination," *Carolina Journal*, April 29, 1970; "Discrimination Action," *Carolina Journal*, April 22, 1972; "Protest, Oustings, Liberation, and Non-Restrictions," *Carolina Journal*, April 26, 1973; Sanford, *Charlotte and UNC Charlotte*, 183-186.
[245] Sellars interview.

In Raleigh, the campus culture at NCSU in the 1960s was considerably more conservative than both UNC-CH and UNCC. Founded in 1887 as the white land grant institution, NCSU's low tuition and academic strengths in agriculture and engineering programs historically attracted in-state students from rural eastern and central North Carolina. Additionally, NCSU's long tradition of technical, applied learning, professional-track curricula produced "intensely career-oriented students" whose reluctance to hold massive demonstrations in the 1960s and 1970s has since been misinterpreted as having been unaffected by the social unrest that occurred on other college campuses nationwide during that time.[246] This cultural climate undoubtedly shaped protests and student movements at NCSU, but it did not curtail black student activism. Even so, it manifested in different ways in Raleigh. Unlike their peers in Charlotte and Chapel Hill, black student activists at NCSU did not organize class boycotts and rarely used the overblown rhetoric and tactics classically associated with Black Power. Instead, Black Power activism at NCSU took subtle forms, occasionally punctuated by distinct flashes of resistance.

On August 12, 1966, approximately forty-five NCSU students gathered in downtown Raleigh to protest a Ku Klux Klan rally that had been planned for that afternoon. When Raleigh police shut down their counter demonstration, the activists returned to campus and assembled in an empty classroom, where they drafted an organizational constitution and held the inaugural meeting of Direct Action for Racial Equality (DARE).[247] At the time, DARE constituted the only organization on campus dedicated to coordinating and sustaining activist efforts around black student issues, and its establishment and mobilization represented "the first sign of major civil rights activity" at NCSU.[248] DARE, which recruited both black and white students, grew from 45

[246] Alice Reagan, *North Carolina State University: A Narrative History* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers), 223.
[247] "Negroes in Raleigh Invade Klan Rally Attended by 5,000", *New York Times*, August 15, 1966; "Anti-Klan Organization Sets Meeting," *Technician* [NCSU], September 13, 1966.
[248] "Success is Ambition Plus Action," *Technician*, September 13, 1966.

to 150 members by the beginning of the 1967 academic year. Although the group initially defined itself as an anti-Klan organization, its rapid membership growth empowered DARE activists to take on broader, more pragmatic issues that affected the daily lives of black students and community members.[249]

Black NCSU students faced housing discrimination both on and off campus, and the struggle for open and fair housing motivated much of DARE's activities throughout late 1966 and 1967. Property owners and landlords in the area surrounding the university refused to lease to African Americans, which forced black students to live and commute from further distances or "accept inferior housing" in on-campus dormitories.[250] At the same time, patterns of race-based roommate and dormitory assignments revealed lingering Jim Crow practices in the NCSU Student Housing Department.[251]

Led by black student activist, and Air Force veteran, Jim Lee, DARE organized to challenge housing discrimination on both fronts. Students developed activist networks with local community members to gather and disseminate information on temporary housing options or unlisted properties that rented to African Americans. When the Student Housing Department published local listings for students that warned "no foreign students," DARE activists lambasted the university for endorsing and perpetuating housing segregation.[252] The Student Housing Department soon became deluged with complaints and threats to open an investigation on discriminatory practices in dormitory assignments.[253] In an effort to stamp out the growing

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[249] Jim Lee, interview with Joshua Davis, 16 November 2010, transcript, SOHP. Accessed December 10, 2019. https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/27726/rec/4 [Hereafter cited as Lee interview]; Margaret Paschal, "DARE Set For Racial Crusading," *Technician*, September 25, 1967.
[250] Robert Hudgins, "To the editor," *Technician*, October *7*, 1966; Reagan, *North Carolina State University*, 185.
[251] Pete Burkhimer, "DARE Claims Housing Shows Discrimination," *Technician*, February 27, 1967.
[252] Jim Lee, "To the editor," *Technician*, November 8, 1966; "Readers Support Housing Action," *Technician*, November 18, 1966; Lee interview.
[253] Lee interview; Curtis Ross, "Writer Claims Discrimination," *Technician*, 5 April 1967.

dissent among his student body swiftly, NCSU chancellor John Caldwell announced the following month that although the university had "neither the desire nor the authority to police off-campus housing," it would no longer advertise off-campus listings that had been reported as discriminatory.[254] By removing its sanction of discriminatory landlords, the university pacified protesters; at the same time, it offered no resources – or promise of resources – to provide housing security for black students. Black student activists recognized that Caldwell's statement did nothing to alleviate the root issue, but they also discovered an ability to force a response from the administration – and even a campus policy change – through urgent rhetoric and collective protest.

By early 1968, changes to university policy, Raleigh's escalating housing shortage, and the growth of Black Power organizing in the local community and at neighboring colleges engendered unrest among black students at NCSU.[255] For DARE, these new challenges and evolving perspectives and ideologies sparked internal conflict.[256] The organization's involvement with campus housing issues motivated many of its members – particularly white students – to narrow the organization's focus to campus-specific issues. Other members, including Lee and his vice president, Richard Shackleford, wanted to increase efforts in the community and respond to national and international events. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April, Lee, Shackleford, and other members parted ways with DARE to form a new organization, the

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[254] Pete Burkhimer, "Caldwell: Segregated Listings Out," *Technician*, November 8, 1966.
[255] "Letter to Mayor Tomlinson from the Good Neighbor Council," November 1, 1968, Box 3, Folder 3, UA 022.053 North Carolina State University, Committees, Good Neighbor Council Records, 1966-1979, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC [Library hereafter cited as NCSU Archives]; "Transition Almost Complete" and "Strange Sense of Values," *Technician,* May 10, 1968; "Death of Apathy?" *Technician,* December 7, 1967; Lee interview.
[256] "Campus Crier," *Technician*, February 16, 1968.

Society for Afro-American Culture (SAAC).[257] SAAC sought to expand the political power of black students at the university to combat racial biases in and around the campus community. During its first two years of operation, SAAC activists sought to increase Black awareness among their peers by cultivating working alliances with students at Shaw and St. Augustine's University, nearby private HBCUs, activists in the local community, and black NCSU employees.

Just as their peers in BSM at UNC-CH played an integral role in the cafeteria workers strike, SAAC activists also supported, helped organize, and demonstrated on behalf of black nonacademic employees at NCSU. On February 21, 1969, black employees from the Physical Plant Division, NCSU's custodial and maintenance division, held a secret meeting to discuss dissatisfaction with their working conditions. According to a university report, a student activist addressed the assembled Physical Plant workers to offer guidance about organizing strategies.[258] In keeping with a Black Power ethos of racial solidarity, SAAC published "A Statement of Support to the Non-Academic Workers by the Society of Afro-American Culture" and organized a series of demonstrations to support other issues affecting black NCSU workers.[259]

White activists initially supported the Physical Plant workers and SAAC as well. On February 28, nearly 200 students gathered in front of an administrative building on campus to call for better working conditions for university employees. The collaboration between white and

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[257] Brick Miller, "Racial Strife, Curfew Continue Over Weekend," *Technician*, April 8, 1968 "Charter Members of the Society of Afro-American Culture," North Carolina State University, Student and Other Organizations, Society of Afro-American Culture Records, UA 021.513, NCSU Archives. [Collection hereafter cited as SAAC Records].
[258] J. McCree Smith to John D. Wright, Finance and Business, Campus Planning, "Unrest 1969 (campus)," December 16, 1969, box 27, folder 4, John Tyler Caldwell Records, NCSU Archives [Collection hereafter cited as Caldwell Records]; Pete Burkhimer, "Janitor Criticizes Seniority System," *Technician*, February 14, 1969. The student speaker is not identified in any records of the meeting, but Jim Lee and several other former DARE activists had become involved in City of Raleigh sanitation workers' unionizing efforts earlier that year. See Lee interview.
[259] "A Statement of Support to the Non-Academic Workers by the Society of Afro-American Culture," March 18, 1969, folder 1, half box 1, SAAC Records.

black student activists occurred "almost spontaneously," but their efforts failed to provoke a meaningful response from the administration.[260] NCSU chancellor, John Caldwell, called a campus-wide assembly to address the protests the following week, where he denied accountability for the workers' concerns. He urged activists to "stop being so disgustingly self-righteous," and explained that only the state legislature, rather than the university, could issue wage increases.[261] Unsatisfied, Physical Plant workers continued their efforts, but university administrators moved slowly to address their demands. With no substantive progress made after two months, white student activists' participation in the protests fizzled, and black student activists embraced more confrontational tactics. For SAAC, tensions peaked when NCSU administrators implemented a series of disciplinary actions against the protesting employees.[262] On April 14, SAAC, along with students from Shaw and St. Augustine's, orchestrated a torchlight march on the chancellor's front lawn. The protesters – a crowd of 100-150 students – insisted that Caldwell take immediate action to reverse the disciplinary actions. Violence erupted during the demonstration, and a bystander assaulted a black NCSU student with a chain.[263] Approximately thirty white student activists orchestrated their own, separate, demonstration outside of the student union the following week, but ended their protest early.[264] Other students' condemnation of the violence that had erupted on the chancellor's lawn, which blamed SAAC for its outbreak, appeared in the campus newspaper throughout the month. Soon the few white

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[260] Pete Burkhimer, "SAAC, 'Group, Demonstrate For Non-Academic Employees," *Technician*, March 3, 1969
[261] "Caldwell calls for unity, action, saneness*," Technician*, March 7, 1969; "Caldwell Presents Answers to Workers," Technician, *March 26,* 1969.
[262] Black nonacademic employees participated in a protest that ended in the termination, demotion, and arrest of several workers. "Caldwell Responds to Workers' Letter," *Technician*, April 14, 1969; Craig Wilson, "All Janitor Service Ended," *Technician*, April 16, 1969; Mary Porterfield, "Workers Say Firings Weren't for Neglect," *Technician*, April 23, 1969.
[263] Craig Wilson, "Blacks March to Chancellor's Home," *Technician*, April 16, 1969; Letter from Jeanie Covington to Chancellor Caldwell in Support of James Dewey Smith, April 17, 1969, Folder 13, Box 84, Caldwell Records, NCSU Archives.
[264] "Letter to the editor," *Technician*, May 7, 1969.

students still involved in the Physical Plant workers' cause called for unity through peaceful, moderate tactics. Black student activists, on the other hand, argued that moderation and civility would only further stall progress.[265] By the end of the academic year, the administration had still made no significant concessions, and many of the workers' and black student activists' grievances remained unresolved. Unlike the BSM-supported labor strike at UNC-CH, which occurred the month prior, the protest at NCSU was largely unsuccessful and, at times, violent.

Black student activists at NCSU continued their protracted struggle against institutionalized racism into the 1970s, but change happened slowly. Relationships between black and white activists continued to deteriorate in 1970, by which point many white students had shifted their energies to antiwar activism. White activists reacted to the May 1970 shootings at Kent State by initiating a multi-campus march to the state capitol, but when shootings at historically black Jackson State failed to elicit a similar response, SAAC members chastised their white peers.[266] Having lost campus allies, black student activists struggled to facilitate sustained attention to their cause. As the UNC System finalized consolidation and confronted federal discrimination charges, black student activists became increasingly frustrated with apathy on campus. "As far as I'm concerned, there are no true blacks on this campus," wrote SAAC member Karaan Rabu, in 1972.[267] Rabu and his peers called for renewed radicalism among other black students and for sympathetic white campus community members to support SAAC's goals without attempting to drown out or control black voices.

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[265] "Blacks can alienate Caldwell with tactics*," Technician*, April 16, 1969; "Caldwell was Wise," *Technician,* April 18, 1969; "Workers Supported," *Technician,* May 16, 1969.
[266] Chris Broadhust, *The Silent Campus Speaks: North Carolina State University and the National Student Protest, May 1970* (Ph.D. Dissertation, North Carolina State University), 360, NC State Theses and Dissertations Repository.
[267] Karaan Rabu, "No Blacks on Campus," Society of Afro-American Culture newsletter, SAAC Records.

In 1973, NCSU was the most populous university in the state, but enrolled less than 200 black students.[268] Small in number and without the sustained support that other black students received at schools like UNC-CH, SAAC struggled to win political battles on campus. Instead, black student activists dedicated more attention to cultural issues, such as expanding Black Studies curricula and opening an African American Cultural Center on campus.[269] They achieved these goals in 1974 and 1975, respectively.

Although on average, African Americans accounted for less than three percent of the student body at North Carolina PWIs in 1968, black student activism fundamentally shaped the student movement culture of the 1960s and 1970s.[270] On white campuses, Black Power ideology and politics manifested in different ways, percolating around the daily struggles of the black students who experienced and resisted inequity and discrimination at their universities. National trends collided with local issues, and activists associated racial liberation with the struggle to create space on campus for black students and community members. Black students embraced Black Power tenants of nationalism and cultural self-definition on campus by forming black student organizations and pushing for Black Studies curricula. At the same time, however, they often coordinated activist efforts that crossed racial lines, demonstrating pluralist and biracial tendencies that contrast with the separatism in some conventional Black Power narratives.[271] Still, black students illustrated the use of activism as a marker of identity and cultural affirmation

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[268] Regan, *North Carolina State University*, 163.
[269] C. Ray Dudley, III, "SAAC offers black self identity," *Technician*, September 17, 1973; Jean Jackson, "Request met: Talley gives black students first floor Print Shop," *Technician*, March 13, 1974.
[270] Link, *William Friday*, 195; "1968 Annual Report," no. 1 in the Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40130, University Archives, Wilson Library.
[271] See Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower*.

by organizing around issues affecting black campus constituents, such as working conditions for black nonacademic staff.

As the UNC System expanded and black enrollment at PWIs increased, black student activists sought to create a more socially, culturally, and politically relevant campus experience for themselves and for the surrounding black communities. Later, and throughout the 1970s, the federal discrimination charges levied against the UNC System forced administrators at NCSU and other PWIs to begin to address some of the areas of institutional racism inscribed on their campuses and respond to issues that black student activists had raised for several years. And, in many ways, the activist legacies of this generation of black students continue into our own time.

CONCLUSION

"A whole lot of things need to be done"

In April of 2018, campus police arrested Maya Little, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), for dousing a university-owned statue in a mixture of red ink and her own blood. The statue, known as Silent Sam, commemorated Confederate soldiers and had been standing on UNC-CH's campus for 105 years. Little's demonstration was but one in a series of increasingly dramatic student protests targeted at Silent Sam in 2018.[272] Students, faculty, and Chapel Hill community members pressured university administrators to remove the statue from campus, charging that its presence created an environment of racial hostility. Debates over the monument drastically intensified in the wake of the 2017 fatal white nationalist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, but students had protested Silent Sam's placement on campus for years.[273] Black student activists at UNC-CH first vandalized the monument in 1968 during campus demonstrations that erupted in the days following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Activists in the late 1960s also held annual demonstrations at the monument, in which they would cover the base with graffiti or hang signs supporting their organization, Black Student Movement, off the statute. One student later recalled, "Once we found out who Silent Sam was and what he stood for […] we would try to do everything we could to show our disrespect."[274]

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[272] Will Michaels, "UNC Student Douses Confederate Monument in Blood and Red Ink," WUNC, April 30, 2018. Accessed February 17, 2020. https://www.wunc.org/post/unc-student-douses-confederate-monument-blood-and-red-ink

[273] For more on how the violence in Charlottesville renewed national debates over Confederate symbolism, especially on college campuses, see Claudrena Harold and Louis Nelson, eds., *Charlottesville 2017: The Legacy of Race and Inequity* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2018).

[274] John Sellars, interview with Alex Ford, November 8, 2015, transcript, Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Fifty years later, black student activists like Maya Little continued those efforts, and their methods often resemble those employed by earlier generations. Beginning in 2017, students participated in round-the-clock sit-ins at the base of Silent Sam and created educational programs and tools that aimed to contextualize the monument for other students and community members. They delivered formal demands to administrators and regularly disrupted Board of Governors' meetings to insist on the statue's removal. Students also formed activist coalitions on campus to organize demonstrations and rallies in front of the monument. In response, university officials offered strategically diplomatic statements that avoided taking real action, echoing the race-blind rhetoric and political maneuvering used by UNC System leaders during the desegregation dispute decades earlier. Months passed without substantive action from the university, and by August 2018, activists had grown impatient. On the evening before the first day of the fall semester, hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of Silent Sam, where several student activists addressed the crowd before toppling the monument.[275] In a statement issued the following day, the chancellor incorrectly described the "highly organized" protest as unprecedented for UNC-CH. In fact, black student activists had been coordinating such sophisticated, large-scale demonstrations on campus since 1969. Shortly after protestors brought down Silent Sam, Maya Little commented on the interwoven legacies of black student activism and of administrative inaction: "A lot of what's been built up this year – and I would say these past fifty years of black student activism at UNC – is an antiracist community that's willing to stand up when the university refuses to."[276]

[275] Jane Stancill, "Protestors topple Silent Sam Confederate Statue at UNC," *News & Observer*, August 20, 2018.
[276] Cole Villena, "Maya Little Isn't Done Fighting White Supremacy at UNC," *IndyWeek*, December 18, 2018. Accessed February 17, 2020. https://indyweek.com/news/northcarolina/maya-little-white-supremacy-unc/

By contrast, HBCUs have not experienced the same sustained student activism seen in the Silent Sam struggle over the last half century, but flashes of resistance still surface around issues that threaten their futures. Today, HBCUs in North Carolina continue to endure challenges born out of the same structural faults and racial disparities that plagued the UNC System fifty years ago, including underfunding, degree program consolidation, and the possibility of closure.[277] In recent years, state and university officials have particularly targeted Elizabeth City State University (ECSU); between 2010 and 2016, enrollment at ECSU plummeted nearly 60 percent, dropping from 3,307 to 1,357.[278] This dramatic decline led to major budget cuts, which crippled institutional growth and performance. In 2014, the North Carolina State Senate pushed forward a draft budget that included provisions to close the "small, unprofitable" institution entirely.[279] The Senate ultimately dropped the provision, but threats to ECSU persisted the following year as the UNC System Board of Governors began talks about "right-sizing" the UNC System. The chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee elaborated: "You've got to have a conversation about HBCUs and how many you need. We've got five."[280] The university then audited ECSU, which revealed twenty-one severe operational deficiencies and compliance violations. UNC System officials blamed the findings on instabilities in campus-level leadership,

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[277] In 2015, the UNC System Board of Governors passed a resolution that terminated or consolidated forty-six degree programs across the university system. Of the forty-six programs identified for discontinuation, nearly one-third were from HBCUs. Sarah Ovaska-Few, "UNC Board of Governors moves to discontinue, consolidate 46 degree programs (list included,)" *NC Policy Watch*, May 26, 2015. Accessed February 17, 2020. https://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2015/05/26/unc-board-of-governors-moves-to-discontinue-46-degree-programs-list-included/

[278] Enrollment and budget data taken from "Elizabeth City State University Fact Book, 2010-2011," and "Elizabeth City State University Fact Book, 2016-2017," Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment, Elizabeth City State University. Accessed February 17, 2020. https://www.ecsu.edu/documents/factbooks/factbook2010-11.pdf and https://www.ecsu.edu/documents/factbooks/factbook2016-17update.pdf.

[279] Herbert White, "Budget: Close Elizabeth City State, NC Senate proposal targets 'unprofitable' campus," *Charlotte Post*, March 29, 2014.

[280] Sarah Ovaska-Few, "Effort to 'right-size' the UNC system in the works," *NC Policy Watch*, March 3, 2015. Accessed February 17, 2020. http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/03/05/effort-to-right-size-the-unc-system-in-the-works/

disregarding any link between institutional performance and the state's long history of neglect towards black colleges.[281]

By 2016, the closure of ECSU seemed imminent. State legislators introduced a bill that proposed slashing tuition at three "underperforming" black colleges, ECSU, Fayetteville State, and Winston-Salem State, to attract new enrollment.[282] The bill sparked outcry in HBCU communities, who believed the dramatic tuition cuts would gut their universities and jeopardize their financial stability. Campus activists responded in ways that mirrored the 1971 "Save Our Black Schools" campaign. Students formed an inter-institutional coalition, rallied at the state capitol, and pressured administrators to issue statements opposing the legislation.[283] Unlike the other two HBCUs affected by the bill, ECSU students expressed willingness to remain included in the proposal – but on their own terms because activists recognized an opportunity to shape policy to their benefit. For them, a revised plan could finally stabilize enrollment, which would keep the school's doors open after years of uncertainty and, equally important, preserve the opportunity to strengthen their institution in the future. Within weeks, legislators dropped the other two HBCUs from the bill entirely and agreed to renegotiate its terms with ECSU.[284]

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[281] UNC General Administration Compliance and Audit Services, "Review of Financial Aid Administration and Office of Admissions at Elizabeth City State University: Operational and Administrative Review," February 2016, in March 2016 Committee on Audit, Risk Management, and Compliance Materials, item 3, Board of Governors Meeting Records, University of North Carolina System Office; Jane Stancill, "ECSU audit shows violations in admissions, financial aid," *News & Observer,* March 9, 2016. Accessed February 17, 2020. https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article65084232.html

[282] North Carolina S.B.873, 2016. The bill also targeted Western Carolina University, a predominantly white institution.

[283] Kennon White, "Rally at North Carolina's General Assembly to Push Back Against SB873," NewsOne, June 1, 2016. Accessed February 18, 2020. https://newsone.com/3447220/rally-at-north-carolinas-general-assembly-to-push-back-against-sb873/; Herbert White, "NC tuition cuts bill seen as threat to state's historically black colleges," *Charlotte Post*, May 23, 2016. Accessed February 18, 2020. http://www.thecharlottepost.com/news/2016/05/23/local-state/nc-tuition-cuts-bill-seen-as-threat-to-state-s-historically-black-colleges/; For then-UNC System President Margaret Spelling's statements on the protests, see Margaret Spellings, "In wake of SB 873 protests, welcoming a productive discussion on UNC future," *News & Observer,* June 4, 2016.

[284] Jordan Scrader, "HBCUs still under consideration for lower tuition," *News & Observer,* June 24, 2016; Latisha Catchatoorian, "Black college student protest sparks tuition bill reversal," *Charlotte Post*, June 4, 2016. Accessed February 18, 2020. http://www.thecharlottepost.com/news/2016/06/04/local-state/black-college-student-protest-

Just as the legacies of black student activism continue to reverberate on North Carolina's college campuses today, inequality and racial duality also remained rooted in the UNC System beyond the 1970s. In 1981, university and federal officials negotiated a consent decree agreement that finally brought an end to the extended legal dispute over the UNC System's failure to strengthen black higher education. Under this agreement, the UNC System committed to increasing black student recruitment at PWIs and establishing new programs and upgrading existing ones at HBCUs. In exchange, the Department of Education agreed to end its supervision of the university's desegregation efforts.[285] The settlement, which relied on "good faith" efforts, provided no concrete measures for assessment and included few specific figures for funding commitments.[286] For many black North Carolinians, the consent decree signaled "the complete abandonment of any meaningful effort to eliminate the vestiges of past discrimination."[287] On several campuses, black students expressed dissatisfaction with the settlement's vague terms; recognizing the document's limited promises, one UNC-CH student surmised that System president William Friday and the Board of Governors believed that "blacks will be pacified by whatever crumbs the administration leaves at the table which feeds its sixteen schools."[288]

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sparks-tuition-bill-reversal/. The final version of the bill reduced tuition at ECSU, Western Carolina University, and UNC Pembroke, which has historically served American Indian populations.

[285] *North Carolina v. Department of Education*, Consent Decree, no. 79-217-CIV-5 (United States District Court for the Eastern District Court of North Carolina); In 1979, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) was dissolved and succeeded by the Department of Education. Previously, HEW had housed the Office for Civil Rights, the agency responsible for monitoring North Carolina's higher education desegregation progress in the 1970s.

[286] *North Carolina v. Department of Education*, Consent Decree.

[287] Interview with Julius Chambers by William Link, June 18, 1990, L-0127, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. David Bishop, a faculty member at NCCU at the time of the consent decree settlement, has noted that "it [was] the consensus within Black academe" that neither system president William Friday nor the Board of Governors consulted HBCU chancellors or any other relevant black UNC System constituents before finalizing the settlement, although Bishop does not elaborate or provide further evidence for this claim. See David Bishop, "The Consent Decree Between the University of North Carolina System and the U.S. Department of Education, 1981-82," *Journal of Negro Education*, 53 no. 2 (1983), 351.

[288] "Blacks cannot afford dream," *Black Ink* [UNC-CH], September 1, 1981.

Despite prompting critical statements such as these, the underwhelming outcome of the desegregation dispute and the UNC System's "business as before" attitude failed to engender significant activist response outside of the broader context of the Black Power Movement.

As this thesis has shown, Black Power politics fundamentally informed and animated black students' response to institutional discrimination and inequity in the UNC System in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The upheaval of North Carolina higher education structure and policy during this period triggered struggles for power on campuses across the state, as black student activists lobbied for autonomy over their educational experiences. Their efforts reveal much about the development and range of Black Power ideology among student groups in North Carolina.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, state and university officials fought to preserve racial duality in the UNC System. The restructuring and extension of North Carolina's system of higher education in the 1960s established new predominantly white regional universities, and accelerated development of new degree programs at UNC-CH, North Carolina State University, and other Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) – largely at the expense of black institutions. During this time, the state legislature also constructed a hierarchical system for appropriating funds to state-supported colleges, which effectively ensured the ongoing denial of adequate financial support to black institutions. As a result, despite the rapid growth of PWIs, HBCUs struggled to maintain physical facilities, offer competitive wages to faculty and staff, and provide sufficient academic resources to students. Moreover, the impending university reorganization plans entailed standardized admission requirements and tuition models across all institutions – black and white. Because HBCUs consistently enrolled students with lower academic qualifications and served low-income communities more often, these measures cast black

colleges as untenable. At the same time, discriminatory enrollment practices also severely limited black students' access to PWIs. When the federal government charged North Carolina with upholding a segregated system of higher education in 1969, President William Friday and the Board of Governors engaged in political maneuvering and race-blind rhetoric that obscured the extant inequalities between the educational welfare of white and black students. Having been denied their educational needs by university leadership, black students at HBCUs and PWIs mobilized for the power to shape their own college experience.

On historically black campuses, student activists mounted resistance against the threat of program mergers and institutional closures, but more importantly, they organized to reform and enhance their institutions. "A whole lot needs to be done," explained one activist from WSSU in 1970.[289] Their self-deterministic emphasis on "student power" and commitment to black unity reflected the goals of the broader Black Power Movement. Students strived to achieve an active role in campus decisions and championed the expansion of student rights, often challenging restrictive regulations such as curfews and dress codes for female students. Similarly, HBCU activists rejected conservative administrators and governing boards that they perceived as paternalistic and denounced the active recruitment of white students and faculty. They established and mobilized militant student organizations and cultivated a sense of urgency around their concerns through disruptive tactics. Activists also embraced the philosophies of the "Black University," which aimed to speak authentically to the black student experience by promoting grassroots altruism, celebrating black cultural heritage, and empowering student leaders, among other goals. Students successfully manifested aspects of the Black University ideal by organizing community tutorial services, calling for increased funding for arts and

[289] Student quoted in Arnold King, *The Multi-Campus University of North Carolina Comes of Age, 1956-1986* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 89.

cultural programming on campus, and most significantly, demanding the development of Black Studies courses.

Whereas HBCU activists primarily focused on student-centered issues, black students at PWIS organized to transform their institutions into relevant resources for its black constituents and nearby communities. In addition to demands for increased minority enrollment and faculty hires, student activists at PWIs participated in community organizing, supported off-campus cultural associations, demonstrated in support of black nonacademic employees, and demanded fair housing on and off campus. Like their peers at black colleges, these activists also formed new student organizations – or radicalized existing ones – to pursue their demands. In some cases, these organizations maintained all-black memberships, but their efforts were neither wholly separatist nor totally interracial. Black student activists worked alongside sympathetic white activist groups – but not at the expense of their autonomy. Pamphlets distributed at a 1967 student-led Black Power forum described this dynamic: "Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people are able to do things themselves. […] This does not mean we don't welcome help, or friends."[290] Black student activists executed pragmatic strategies, and often worked within the system to accomplish their goals, utilizing electoral politics to gain seats on student government and advisory committees to legitimize and advance their interests. At the same time, black student activists also demanded resources such as black student centers, funding for activist newspapers and Black Studies departments, whereby they could nurture cultural pride and Black consciousness.

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[290] "Power & Racism," Black Power Forum pamphlet, November 1, 1967, UA108.2 University Archives Subject Files, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University of North Carolina Greensboro Libraries. In 1967, black student activists at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, a PWI, organized a three-day forum on Black Power to discuss the social and political implications of the growing movement. Students from both predominantly white and historically black colleges across the state attended the forum.

In their mission to pacify federal agencies without compromising the status quo, President Friday and the Board of Governors prioritized appearance over substance. Regardless of their stated intentions, both pursued policies that overlooked the needs of black students and institutions seemingly at every turn. Perhaps one of the black student activists' most significant achievements is that they forced university officials to hear their perspective despite having been deliberately excluded from the table. This thesis documents black student activists' deep commitment to improving black higher education, the legitimacy of their tactics, and the justice of their cause. When asked in 2005 why activism had waned at UNC Charlotte, Ben Chavis explained, "I didn't ever see it taper off. I saw it always growing, but taking different manifestations."[291] As seen in recent examples from UNC-CH and ECSU, the iterations and immediate goals of black student activism have evolved since the Black Power era, but some guiding impulses have endured. And although racial discrimination and institutional inequalities have remained constant – particularly for HBCUs – black student activists in the 1960s and 1970s accomplished some lasting, concrete gains that reverberate on college campuses today.

[291] Benjamin Chavis Jr. interview with Bridgette Sanders and Lois Strickell, February 7, 2005, transcript, UNC Charlotte History and Life Series, Oral History Collection, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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