

Provost Outlines Gains for Minorities at the UR

To the Editor:

Several items in recent editions of the *Campus Times* have drawn attention to the concerns of blacks at the UR. These items have not acknowledged the many steps already taken to meet the desire, shared by the whole UR community, for increased numbers of black students and faculty, and for open and friendly relations throughout the community. Here are some of the steps; I hope it will be apparent that special efforts have been expended by numerous departments and colleges.

In a single year, as a result of determined activity by the faculty, the deans and the UR administration, the number of full-time black faculty in the UR was increased from two in 1981-82 to 11 in 1982-83. We will not invade the privacy of these individuals by publishing a list of their names, but they are known within the several colleges in which they are located.

The UR is embarking in 1983 on a Campaign for Admissions which includes a special effort for minority undergraduate enrollment designed to bring more people and resources to bear upon the recruitment of black students. The chairman of the minority committee is Patricia Thompson '58, a lawyer who is manager of workmen's compensation at Kodak. As part of that special effort we are working with the Rochester Urban League, and will work later with the National Urban League, towards a program of special undergraduate scholarships for students identified by the League, eventually 60 in number.

We have conducted annual receptions for minority applicants in New York City, and other cities with large black populations. Financial aid policy has been directed for many years to offer superior financial aid packages to minority students as an aid to recruitment. In the spring of 1982 a special brochure "University of Rochester-For Minority Students" was prepared by Vice

Provost Backscheider to help in our recruitment of black students.

Four graduate fellowships at the Ph.D level were created in 1981 for minority students and are held in public policy, psychology (two), and electrical engineering.

Workshops on race relations are a regular part of the training for Resident Advisors, the students who are the "front-line" counselors living in the dormitories.

A minority peer counseling program has been created by which upperclass minority students provide support to minority freshmen on a one-to-one basis, and a program linking minority students with alumni in the city is about to be launched.

A program of summer research fellowships for minority undergraduates has been created within the School of Medicine and the College of Arts and Sciences by which 19 undergraduates have a summer experience in research laboratories to help them towards future careers in medicine or graduate school.

The Development Office has for several years worked with Afro Inc. in training black development officers.

Last year it was noted that an unduly high level of black undergraduates were on probation. By the combined efforts of a variety of people in the offices of Dean Hunter and Dean Kountz, that level was almost halved this year.

The Black Student Union has expressed interest in an Afro-American Studies program, such as existed at one time. Dean Hunter is exploring the question of whether such a program would be appropriate in today's circumstances. There are many courses offered which are directly about or have a strong bearing on the black experience in America; whether or not a formal program is appropriate we shall do a better job of pulling together the description of these courses in the announcements.

The Rush Rhees Library has developed a particularly important col-

lection of historical writings relating to minorities and human rights. In the area of entitled Black American Heritage the University has one of the best collections in the Northeastern States.

On February 25 there was a meeting of UR administrators and librarians with 17 leaders of the black community in Rochester, in order to initiate a Frederick Douglass Fund designed to improve greatly the above collection, both by building an endowment and by providing immediate acquisition funds, with the objective of making the collection one of the finest in the country.

In January the Eastman School of Music commissioned from Joseph Schwanter a splendid work in honor of Martin Luther King, based on his speeches. It was presented by our Philharmonia Orchestra in Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Rochester, narrated by Willie Stargell, and commanded

national attention.

A survey will soon be released by the Vice President of Student Affairs on "Race Relations at the University" designed to explore attitudes and experiences, as a basis for action to improve these. Meanwhile the UR has and will pursue vigorously reports of any incident involving prejudice or racism, and will take appropriate steps to avoid repetitions.

This list of activities is not presented with any complacency. There is still only a small number of black graduate and undergraduate students and black faculty and administrators at the UR. The whole climate of the UR for minorities should be a continuing matter of study and possible improvement. The above facts show that concern and action continue to exist throughout the UR, and we all need to continue that effort.

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March 15, 1983