AAA SECURES BUSINESS-AD BUILDING

Students woke up Monday morning to discover that the Association of Afro-Americans was occupying the Business Administration building and also to the discovery that blacks at Lawrence are no longer willing to accept half-measures and intellectual platitudes as a cure for their problems.

The take-over of the building had been in the planning stages for several weeks, according to Gilbert Bond, prime spokesman for the AAA. Originally, the black students had planned to secure the offices and begin their demonstration about 8:00 a.m. However, as Bond explained, "During the entry, the black students were discovered by a Lawrence student who notified the night watchman. And, after deliberating for several minutes, they in turn notified the Appleton police who appeared in force immediately and surrounded the administration building. Because they thought the Lawrence students were burglars, we feared violence from the officers. Therefore, we began the demonstration prematurely, at 2:30 a.m. to convince them of our true intentions."

One female member of the AAA detailed the arrival of the police. "At first, the natural thing, they asked us to come out in five seconds, or something like that. But then they finally decided that it was a university matter, I think."

As attempts to rouse the community had failed during the night, most Lawrence students learned of the AAA move at breakfast or on their way to classes. Participants in the action dropped by Downer about 7:30 a.m. to announce that the administration building was occupied and to distribute sheets explaining their position. In addition to outlining black demands which must be agreed to before the building would be relinquished, the printout stated that, "Since the release of the AAA's statement asking the University to examine its attitudes toward black students and white racism, the community has overwhelmingly failed to respond to our pleas....Too long we have petitioned, caucused, and talked. Now we act."

Petitions were on hand for breakfasters to sign and other sheets were circulated on campus. Response to the petitions was mixed. One student who had canvassed Plants reported, "You wouldn't believe the people around here! Two full floors of that dorm over there and three--count 'em, three--big signatures!"

Throughout the morning, students sat on the steps in front of the old section of the library urging students and faculty to sign petitions. They asked students to lend support by joining their group or sitting on the lawn across the street and abandoning their classes. A loudspeaker system was set up and protestors in turn explained to the community and berated it for its lack of support. There were signs, intermittent chanting, and singing. Periodically, students marched in a circle before the building while the local news media busily took photos and interviewed participants and spectators.

In the meantime, as President Thomas Smith reported later to his faculty in an emergency meeting, the administration was deciding what to do with the AAA demands. As he explained, he was awakened at about 3:15 and handed the printout. He immediately notified his staff. After talking to students, staff, and faculty until 12:30, he began writing his statement which he presented at the 1:30 meeting in Riverview Lounge.

One AAA member explained, "action is the only thing this community understands."
Monday morning at 5:30 a.m., a meeting was held in President Thomas Smith's home with members of the AAA and white students involved in the seizure of the dean's office.

The discussion centered primarily around the list of demands presented to President Smith by the AAA. President Smith went through the demands, asking for clarification on a few points. Specifically, the question of black admissions was explained, because of misunderstanding on this issue. The AAA demanded that a minimum of 35 black students matriculate at LU annually, which would make the number of blacks on campus hover around 100.

President Smith was asked for his personal attitude toward the situation. He said that he had maintained from the beginning that Lawrence needs a viable black community of 80–100. He said it is obvious that black students face many problems in this community, the college, and white society in general. He then stated that while Lawrence has made an effort to recruit black students and hire administrators and faculty members, this effort has failed to produce many tangible results.

Gilbert Bond stated that he didn't believe Lawrence had done all it could. If the priority were high enough, there would have been results instead of six years of fruitless committee work.

Barb Milsap summed up the administration's apparent lack of commitment. She said that so far the measures have not gone beyond the normal outlay of energy. Given the proper priorities, LU can do something. If the school were committed to its alleged goals, when one method failed, it would try another.

President Smith listened to these arguments and replied that he could not make a definite statement at that time. His formal reply was to be given at the 1:30 meeting in Riverview Lounge.

Surrounded by television cameras and reporters, both Gilbert Bond and President Thomas Smith presented their views concerning what commitments Lawrence can and should make to its black students at the 1:30 general meeting held in Riverview Lounge. The meeting was called by the AAA in order to discuss the demands presented to the university by the black students and have the document outlining the demands signed by President Smith and Thomas Headrick, vice-president of Academic Affairs.

Gilbert began his statement by remarking that "many of you are confused, angered, or sympathetic at our actions,...We regret that the degree of misunderstanding and neglect of black students has come to the point that we have no alternative but this: we have tried to symbolize our frustration and failure to make black students a concern, a serious concern of this university."

After describing the lack of commitment to build a viable black community on the part of the administration, Gilbert stated, "Now you, the student body, must fulfill the commitment the university began. In the long run it is your university. Unless you approach this problem with the same intensity of concern and dedication we have, we will never change, but we will not give up. This is just the beginning."

President Smith responded to Gilbert's remarks and the specific demands of the AAA in a statement reprinted in full below. In regard to this statement, Gilbert replied, "I'm very disappointed with the President's response to many of our proposals, but unfortunately,
all I can say is that as of now we don't accept," and as the meeting broke up a member of the AAA stated, "We are prepared to stay in there as long as it takes!"

It only took about an hour and the occupation of the Business Administration building by the AAA ended for most Lawrence students as unexpectedly as it had begun. The seeming deadlock between President Smith and members of the AAA was broken with the President signing the statement he made at the general meeting and the AAA accepting his signed statement as a satisfactory commitment on his part to carry out their demands. "We accomplished receiving President Smith's signature," said Robert Currie, AAA president. "This has never been done previously." President Smith, after inspecting the Dean's offices that had been taken over by the black students and finding no damage, stated, "I will not convene the J-Board or press any charges."

Although President Smith's signed statement was acceptable to the AAA, Currie remarked that he would "wait and see" in regard to any long run gains. "After five years," he added, "one has to take that kind of attitude." With a "formal commitment" from the president, Currie said that the AAA will continue working with the group formed two weeks ago composed of black and white students interested in securing black administrators and faculty and adding black oriented courses to the curriculum. He remarked that black students were tired of waiting and that one purpose for occupying the Dean's offices was to get people to realize that you must "get off your ass and get moving."

Currie was optimistic that the faculty, who can play a very important role in implementing the demands of black students, will in fact do so. "When the faculty take time to think about it and explore their consciousness just a little," he said, "they'll see we were right and the action we took was not that drastic at all."

STUDENT ASSEMBLY AND ACCEPTED BYAAA.

"Many of the things which Mr. Bond has just stated I agree with. I think that Lawrence University some years ago...entered into a program of recruiting black students to Lawrence, but I don't think the university has ever understood the extent of commitment which must be made to have a black student enrollment which is viable to the academic and social needs of those students. We have recruited black students but we have not made the other efforts which would make their lives at Lawrence less tense and, perhaps, more successful. We have needed black faculty members and administrators. We need adults in this community with whom the students can relate and who will understand the needs of the black students. I recognize Mr. Bond’s statement, and I’ve written it too, that for the most part the university just doesn’t care.

"Let me respond to the demands of the black students:

1. Recruitment of Black Personnel—I will not relate the efforts we have made. Obviously, they can be interpreted as insufficient because we indeed do not have any black faculty nor do we have any black administrators or other personnel on campus. I will ask the AAA to name three students to work with each of those primarily responsible for recruiting: Tom Headrick, faculty; Charles Lauter, dean and student personnel; and Sherman Howard, other administrative areas. But I will insist that final approval of all appointments will rest with the president. However, we shall use the method that we have used fairly extensively in the past of having students help to recruit, to interview, and to recommend appointment or not appointment.

2. Reasons for a negative recommendation from student groups will be carefully examined as we do now all faculty and administrative appointments. We have included students in meeting prospective faculty, prospective administrators, and we have asked them what their impressions are and what they think of the proposed appointment.

3. Recruitment of Students—We have accepted and planned and budgeted for the admission (matriculation) of 35 new black students next fall. This should raise the total to about 85. As of this moment, we have admitted 65 out of 82 applications and rejected 13. The applicants withdrew eight applications, and nine have paid. There has been a steady growth of black students in the last four years, and this will lead to 100 or more by the fall of 1973.

4. Transitional Program—This was a program that was put together last summer in a rather quick and incomplete fashion. Mr. Gerry Reed of our faculty has volunteered to work out details and implementation of a program with the students of the AAA.

5. Courses of Black Study—I shall ask the various departments once more to reexamine their course offerings with the goal of adding to the program. Some courses which now have
some black orientation are Urban Politics, Labor Economics, Slavery in the Old South, the Negro Since the Civil War, the City as an Historical Concept, the African and Modern World, and next year a course in African Music.

6. We have some unfilled positions on the campus in faculty and administrative areas. A counselor in the Dean's office will be filled by a black. We have an open position in the theater department which will be filled by a black man on a permanent basis only. The English department has a one year vacancy. We need an assistant in the Development Office which will be a black appointment. Next year we will have vacancies in sociology and American history.

7. We will continue the College Methods Lab, and I expect use of it will increase. The objective of the College Method's Lab as well as the transitional program is to increase retention of entering black students. During the last four years about 47 to 50 per cent of the entering black students graduated while the figure was about 55 per cent for the university overall.

8. The admission's office needs student workers and a staff officer who shall be black.

9. I shall visit the Dean's office about one half hour after the meeting to examine the condition of the building. If I can go into all the offices and if no damage has occurred, then I will not ask for the convening of the J-Board.

10. As for signing the statement which has been presented at this time, I will not under the conditions of coercion that now exist on our campus.

FACULTY BALKY AT EMERGENCY MEETING

President Thomas Smith called an emergency meeting of the faculty, Monday at 4:30 in 161 Youngchild to review his response to the demands of the Association of Afro-Americans and poll professorial opinion.

After summarizing his 1:30 speech to the AAA and the Lawrence community, President Smith explained, "I have made some statements here which are commitments of this faculty without consulting you. I'm not sure that anything we'll do will solve the problem. The problem being, as I see it, the black students feeling lost and invisible, not cared about, not having sufficient faculty to go to.

"I've stepped near the edge of departmental autonomy. I've even stepped near the edge of academic freedom." He mentioned a meeting held two years ago during which the faculty rejected ideas which President Smith in his Monday statement to the AAA proposed to put into effect. He stressed, "I'm hoping you'll change your minds."

Smith added, "I will be charged with capitulation to the black students' demands. But compromise is the only way to get things done."

He also emphasized that, "Everything I mentioned is covered by our budget." New faculty positions "may cost us a little bit of money because blacks are more expensive these days."

Faculty response was measured, but intellectually heated. However, a large majority remained silent during the hour and a half discussion.

Professor of History Charles Breunig summed up the sentiments of a large portion of the faculty which spoke out when he delivered a prepared statement. "I should like to protest against what seems to me a very important concession that has been made today by the president of this university. A principle basic to the integrity of any academic institution has been violated; namely, that the selection of faculty should be based on the academic and professional qualifications of the candidates—and not upon the color of their skin. The commitment that has been made regarding the appointment in the Theater Department, the implied commitment that has been made regarding several other departments including my own is one that I cannot approve of. I shall continue (and I am sure my faculty colleagues will continue) to seek out and give careful consideration to qualified black candidates for any vacancies that occur on the Lawrence University.
faculty, but the ultimate decision on the appointment must be based on the individual's academic and professional qualifications and not on other considerations.

"I am well aware that I shall be viewed as a racist by the black community for my attitude but, if I am, I would suggest that the charge will be based on a new definition of racism, i.e.: a racist is someone who believes in treating all men alike regardless of race, color, or creed."

Opposition to this point of view, in support of President Smith's actions, was summarized by Assistant Professor of Spanish Hugo Martines and Vice President for Academic Affairs Thomas Headrick.

Professor Martines suggested that the implication of Professor Breunig's statements was that "color would far out weigh academic qualifications." Professor Martines emphasized that black students are not requesting black faculty with low academic requirements and added that Lawrence's standards are not fail-safe as they stand. "In the six years I've been here, I've seen some outstanding failures in the classroom." He stressed that "black faculty might be able to offer something none of the rest of us can offer," and asked how one measures the importance of "superior qualifications" against what a black professor can offer in the way of counseling.

Vice President Headrick said, "We've worked with a generalized commitment of sorts. It's produced some very noble efforts but it hasn't borne any fruit. We've seen where we're going to be hiring faculty and have said, 'Let's try and fill the position with a black.'" He explained that the best way to hire black faculty is to find a focal point and set up a network of information in order to contact qualified blacks, as is done in other schools.

President Smith did not ask the faculty to vote or make a decision Monday and the meeting broke up at 6:00 p.m. into small discussion groups within Youngchild and on the campus lawns.

Gilbert Bond, in light of the faculty meeting, stated, "The point remains that we can best get our programs passed through a very vigorous administration. I have come to realize that the administration is far, far in advance of the very, very conservative faculty. I think ultimately the faculty is the real enemy and that's what most Lawrence students don't realize. They haven't even yet begun to attack or even tackle a monumental problem: the 125 some people that they supposedly put their faith in and invest in with their tuition payments.

"The reason for the take over mainly was that we didn't think any other means would accomplish the proposals that we've made. And these aren't new proposals, this isn't a new idea, it isn't a new affair. It is very old and I've brought that point out again and again.

"For some reason, the implementation of these ideas has been congested. And it's hard to lower the blame. Smith is a very young president at Lawrence, so is Headrick a young vice-president. They haven't been here very long but they inherited a problem also. So it falls upon their shoulders to help us correct it.

"We do appreciate the outstanding support Thomas Smith and Headrick have given us in realizing that we do have needs in spite of the faculty's very narrow-minded, very conservative, even hostile reaction to the very few concessions that were made."

EDITORS NOTE: Due to space limitations, we were unable to cover the faculty meeting in the depth we would have liked. Therefore, we will run this story in more detail on Friday.