

Response to the statements received from the Black Student Union:

Yesterday, after a meeting with black students, I was presented with three documents. I shall focus this statement primarily on the document which presents five "Demands from the Black Populace at U.B." I do this because it seems to be the latest document and also because the problems raised in these five points tend to subsume most, though not all, of the problems raised in the other documents. At the conclusion of this statement I will indicate how I think those other questions might most constructively be approached.

Before turning to specific questions, a preliminary comment is in order. The documents given to me call attention to a variety of problems and concerns. Many of these are very real and we should do whatever is possible to come to grips with them.

If the history of the past several years has taught us anything, however, it is that we do little to solve problems when, even for the best of motives, they are stated in the form of demands. I can understand the circumstances and the factors that lead to the use of

this form. But I think we have all seen that even when genuine problems are stated in this fashion, a constructive solution may be impeded, rather than accelerated. There are more fruitful ways of approaching these matters, a point which I would like to discuss later in my remarks.

Turning now to the five-item document, let me take up the points in the order in which they have been raised.

1. Black Studies

Acting Provost Hollander of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Administration informs me that, over the past several weeks, there have been discussions looking to the redesignation of the Black Studies Program as a Department. A formal proposal for such redesignation was made by him today to the Policy Committee of that Faculty. I am happy to inform you that the Policy Committee has unanimously voted to set into motion the procedures required for the Program to achieve full departmental status.

2. Tenure and Review Procedures

Tenure and related faculty personnel recommendations are made at three levels -- departmental, Faculty, and all-University. I think you know that I have already established the practice of having minority representation on all University-wide search committees. I am requesting all departments and all Faculties to modify, if necessary, their personnel procedures so as to ensure minority representation on all committees which make such recommendations. I will also take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the all-University recommending authority will have minority representation as of the academic year 1972-73.

3. Professors Banks and Gayle

It is essential that the facts in these cases be fully understood.

Professor Banks is already assured of a three-year reappointment at the University. What is at issue is not his continuation at the University but his request that he be promoted to Tenured Associate Professor. The procedure in such matters is as follows: first, a departmental recommendation; second, a Faculty -- in this case the Faculty of Social Sciences and Administration -- recommendation. The Department of Anthropology has recommended promotion;

the Faculty Personnel Committee, however, has recommended that consideration of promotion be delayed for another year, since Professor Banks is only now completing his third year at this University.

Under these circumstances, the matter now goes before the all-University faculty personnel agency, the President's Review Board. The Board is scheduled to consider Professor Banks' case tomorrow. It would be improper and, in fact, possibly prejudicial to Professor Banks, for me to make any statement on this issue until I have the Board's recommendation before me. I expect to receive this recommendation tomorrow.

Now the case of Professor Gayle. Professor Gayle is in the second year of a three-year appointment which runs until June 1973. The Department of Music has overwhelmingly voted not to renew that appointment. The Personnel Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Letters is

currently reviewing the case. The objection has been raised that there has been no minority representation on the two Faculty entities which have dealt with this case. Given this situation, I plan to appoint a special committee, on which there will be minority representation, to study this matter in careful depth and to make an appropriate recommendation to me.

4. Dialogue with Minority Professional and Graduate Students

Over the past two years, I have met a number of times with minority students from the School of Law and from several of the Schools in the Health Sciences. Others in the President's Office also have had meetings with students from these areas. I would be happy to continue these meetings, either on a periodic basis or as specific issues require. Other graduate student groups could also be included in these discussions.

5. Regular Dialogue Between President's Office and Minority Students and Faculty

As you know, I have regularly reserved Tuesday mornings for meetings with students, faculty and staff. A number of members of the minority community at the University have taken advantage of these opportunities. In

addition, I meet, from time to time, with the various advisory groups and committees that have been constituted to recommend courses of action on particular issues. Here again, a substantial number of minority individuals are included in these sessions. At their request, more or less regularly scheduled meetings have been held with officers of many of the organized groups on campus. I would be happy to explore whatever arrangements might be necessary or desirable to improve or regularize these already existing modes of communication.

I believe that the discussions which would occur in these dialogues offer the most fruitful and constructive means of tackling and resolving some of the other problems identified in the documents given to me. This administration shares your desire that these problems be resolved in manners which will provide optimal benefit for our minority students and for the entire University community. I am prepared to begin these discussions with your representatives at the earliest possible occasion.

I should stress, though, that three conditions are necessary if these discussions are to be as productive as we all want them to be.

First, they will have to be approached by all parties with a sincere desire to arrive at a constructive solution. I can assure you of such an approach on the part of this administration. I look forward to your collaboration.

Second, as indicated earlier, the concerns you have raised must be approached as common problems, whose solution is in the common interest. We must be willing to examine alternative solutions in terms of their possible merits.

Finally, I fully agree that the resolution of these matters will require on-going discussions. At the same time, I am sure you will agree, the student participants in these discussions must be representative of, and be recognized by, their student constituents. I ask, therefore, that you proceed to designate the individuals who are to meet with us in these discussions.

It may be that, in the officials you have already elected, you have the representatives you wish; it may be that you wish to hold other elections for this purpose; I ask simply that, by whatever mechanisms you wish to employ, that you identify and authorize those individuals who are to serve as your representatives. I hope you will proceed to this authorization as soon as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Kerrey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Robert" on the top line and "K. Kerrey" on the bottom line.

April 27, 1972