

Ketter Cites Action On Black Queries

President Robert L. Ketter of the University of Buffalo told a group of black students and faculty members Thursday that most of the demands served on him Wednesday were for changes already under consideration. The delegation's spokesman charged his response was "not specific enough" and broke off discussions.

The stalemate ended the second of two meetings Ketter held with the group, fewer than half of the 200 who confronted him Wednesday with a list of five "Demands From the Black Populace at UB."

But before he took up any of the students' demands, Ketter again labeled them "problems" in his reply issued Thursday.

"If the history of the last several years has taught 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," he said. "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."

Meeting Recesses

The first meeting Thursday began at 1:30 p.m. at Capen Hall, scene of Wednesday's gathering, and recessed after about 20 minutes to permit the group to study the UB president's seven-page response.

The second meeting was convened in the third-floor amphitheater in Hayes Hall at 4:30 p.m. Spokesmen for the delegation, who had called for minority access to the president's office, injected a condition that would bar "any dialogue" between Ketter and a minority member of the campus except with the approval of the "Black Populace," and at a time and place designated by it.

A second amendment to the group's original objectives was the inclusion "of all Caribbean area" studies under black studies, which Ketter understood to include the Puerto Rican program.

When Ketter sought to bring the discussion back to the original five-point agenda, the spokesmen balked and the meeting ended less than 20 minutes after it began.

Status Change

In his written point-by-point response to the objectives handed to him Wednesday, Ketter Thursday disclosed that a move was under way to upgrade the university's Black Studies Program to departmental status. This was one of the "demands."

He assured the delegation, numbering between 80 and 90 at both sessions, that the minority voice will be heard "in such matters as promotion and tenure," as urged, and invited minorities to use already-established channels for dialogue with the president's office.

The invitation was in direct response to one of the original aims of the delegation, now deflected, Ketter said, by new Black Populace restrictions on "dialogue" between minorities and the university president.

Tenure Questions

Of the final point originally raised by the delegation — immediate reappointment and tenure for Charles Gayles, visiting assistant professor of music, and Dr. David J. Banks, assistant professor of anthropology — Ketter said Gayles' situation is under review and Banks' reappointment is certain. He carefully explained the status of each regarding tenure.

The question of elevating black studies to the prestige of a department, Ketter said, was being resolved as the Thursday meetings went on.

Dr. Edwin P. Hollander, acting provost of the faculty of Social Sciences and Administration, went before the Policy Committee of his faculty and proposed a Black Studies Dept. after "several weeks" of discussions.

"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," Ketter said.

Peer Judgment

Regarding the students' bid for a procedure that would expose minority candidates for tenure and promotion to "peer group judgment," the UB president said:

"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."

All-university committees represent the final stage of consideration for tenure and related faculty recommendations, Ketter explained, the first two being departmental and faculty levels.

As for the delegation's insistence on tenure for Banks, the president said: "What is at issue is not his continuation at the university but his request that he be promoted to tenured associate professor."

Ketter explained that the Dept. of Anthropology "has recommended promotion" for Banks but "the Faculty Personnel Committee . . . has recommended that consideration for promotion be delayed another year, since Prof. Banks is only now completing his third year at this university."

Appointment Rejected

He cautioned that the President's Review Board is to consider Banks' case today and that "it would be improper and, in fact, possibly prejudicial to Prof. Banks, for me to make any statement on this issue until I have the board's recommendation."

In Prof. Gayle's case, Ketter said, "the Dept. of Music has overwhelmingly voted not to renew that appointment."

Nevertheless, he said, the Personnel Committee of the faculty of Arts and Letters is reviewing the case and "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."

Responding to the black delegation's call on him for "immediate dialogue with minority group students in professional and graduate schools for the purpose of alleviating their problems," Ketter said he has met "a number of times" with Law School and health sciences students.

Seminars Noted

"I would be happy to continue these meetings, either on a periodic basis or as specific issues require," he said. "Other graduate student groups could also be included in these discussions."

As for "regular dialogue between the president's office and minority students and faculty," Ketter pointed to his regular Tuesday morning sessions with students and faculty and staff members. He offered to "explore whatever arrangements might be necessary or desirable to improve or regularize . . . existing modes of communication" and, referring to the delegation's agenda of "demands," said:

"I believe that the discussion 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."

Ketter said he is ready to begin discussions "for the greatest benefit of our minority students and for the entire university committee . . . at the earliest possible occasion." But, he emphasized, they must:

—Be approached by all parties with a sincere desire to arrive at a constructive solution.

—Be approached as common problems, whose solution is the common interest.

—Involve only students who represent and are recognized by "their student constituents."

"I ask, therefore, that you proceed to designate individuals who are to meet with us in the discussions," Ketter concluded.

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