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ERB MEMORIAL UNION

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
EUGENE, OREGON 97403

October 28, 1970

MEMORANDUM

To: Robert Clark
President

From: Richard C. Reynolds *RCR*
Director

I would like to take this opportunity to outline the conditions and problems which led to the recent over-expenditure of ASUO funds for the Racism Symposium.

The group sponsoring the Symposium is called the Cultural Issues Center. This is an ASUO agency which was formed this year out of the old Speakers and Debates, Cultural, and Social Divisions. The four members of the CIC are appointed by the ASUO President and ratified by the ASUO Senate. Although one of the four CIC members is acknowledged as the coordinator, the other three do not necessarily represent each of the three areas which make up the Cultural Issues Center. In reality, however, they do tend to specialize. Marty Bennett works more with speakers, Carl Blackburn with concerts and films, and Herman Miles fills in with cultural.

The purpose of the Center was an attempt to coordinate and integrate the three divisions in a way which would give depth to programming. Because most of our contemporary problems are dealt with and reflected in all aspects of our culture, this seemed like a most logical way to approach these problems. A difficulty which has been experienced is not a direct result of the concept of the Center, rather, it is an outgrowth of a conflict between the philosophy of the New Community and the realities of bureaucratic need. Marty Bennett and Gunner Lundberg both represent the New Community. Marty is socially and politically a radical. Gunner is somewhere between an activist and radical and is much more soft spoken and easy going than Marty. The other two members are moderates.

Mrs. Sheila Wheeler, Departmental Program Consultant; Neil Murray, Assistant Director of this Department; and Tim Parrott, Graduate Assistant, have each worked with the CIC in the development of this program. Since September, the bulk of the work has fallen upon Mrs. Wheeler and Mr. Parrott.

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The development of the Symposium on Racism began in July. From the onset, the Program Consultants informed me that Mr. Bennett was both devious and untrustworthy in regard to his dealings with other members of the Center and with members of the New Community. We held hopes for several weeks that the checks and balances which normally emerge in student organizations would effectively put a check upon this. Unfortunately, the personalities represented on the Center Committee did not lend themselves to such an action. Some time in mid-September, Mrs. Wheeler and Mr. Murray brought the situation to the attention of Ron Eachus. Several times after that, both Mr. Parrott and Mrs. Wheeler confronted Ron with the worsening situation. Mrs. Wheeler on several occasions, toward the end of September and the first of October, emphasized with Ron the fact that the budget was going to be drastically over-expended by the time the program ended. Throughout this Ron and Mike were concerned, however, failed to intervene because of their loyalty to the New Community, to the subject matter being dealt with and with a firm belief that students could best manage their own affairs.

It should be pointed out at this stage that my staff and I, within the limitations of institutional, State Board and State policy and laws, allow students as much latitude as possible in their decision making. Some traditionalists might consider this too liberal a policy and such an over-expenditure of funds would lend fuel to that feeling. However, we are most careful that the decisions which the ASUO makes are within policy and are within their scope to finance them. Although this program exceeded the budgeted limits for it, there is no reason to be concerned that the bills will not be paid. The total CIC budget is more than ample to cover the cost.

Most of the allegations being printed in the newspaper regarding the financial situation of the program are correct. Mr. Bennett did in fact make verbal commitments on his own which the CIC felt obligated to keep. Mr. Bennett had the firm backing of the New Community and the militant blacks in getting his demands made and met. The ASUO, sensitive to the goals of the New Community and to the program was placed in a most awkward political situation throughout. They have not yet escaped this political predicament and Ron, if he is not careful, may bear the brunt of the exercise.

If you desire further background information on this issue or if you have recommendations on how it should be handled, I would be most appreciative of a chance to talk with you about it.

RCR:jb

cc: Ray Hawk
Gerald Bogen
Robert Bowlin