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ISU blacks can feel culture shock but programs aid adjustment

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Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series dealing with black and minority enrollment at ISU, plus minority student support services at ISU.

Imagine yourself as the only white student attending an all-black school. Everywhere you look, black faces, black language, black culture. Brenda Conway, Soc 1, St. Louis, said she is experiencing a similar situation, only in reverse; Conway is a black student at Iowa State University.

Conway, a freshman from an all-black urban school, said she experienced a "culture shock" when arriving at ISU. "I think it took me the whole quarter to get over it," she said. "All of a sudden I'm in the minority instead of the majorit

AND the other 264 black graduate and undergraduate students at ISU are in a minority. Their enrollment has been increasing and more students are remaining in school, partly due to an administration change in the summer of 1973.

In the spring of that year, black students submitted a criticism of the minority programs at ISU, concluding that "the attempts made in the past have been hampered by vague job descriptions, unkept commitments and various other inadequacies." They suggested an overall, consolidated program of minority recruiting, minority staff increases, financial aid and academic tutoring, as well as a proposal that the minority

enrollment be increased to 400 by Fall 1977.

Although the "Project 400" proposal was rejected, Vice President for Student Affairs Wilbur Layton said important elements of the plan were initiated. "The most significant point was a statement of commitment by the university and specifically by President Parks," he said. Layton said the commitment was to increase the number of minority students by approximately 50 persons per year, similar to the black students' proposal, and to increase the amount of financial aid available.

SPECIFICALLY, Layton said four changes occurred:

- 1) the number of minority staff members was increased
- 2) the financial aids budget was increased by \$75,000 a year to allow 50 students \$1,500 financial aid packages
- 3) Dean Daniel Zaffarano of the Graduate College budgeted \$20,000 for more minority graduate assistants
- 4) Bob Lott, who was serving as Assistant Dean of Students, was appointed Layton's assistant and coordinator of minority student programs.

And although Lott left last fall after serving one year in his new position, administrators say the minority programs at Iowa State have become more coordinated.

In the fall of 1972, figures showed 170 blacks enrolled. After summer recruiting in 1973, the number increased to 200, and by the fall of 1974, reached 265.

THE JOB of recruiting minority students belongs to Vern Hawkins, in the admissions office. "ISU has always traditionally recruited non-minority students," Hawkins said. "We've just begun to concentrate our efforts to recruit minority students."

Hawkins tries to sell prospective minority students on Iowa State's academic reputation in engineering, science, and the pre-professional programs, and on the availability of academic support services, such as the free tutoring service open to all disadvantaged students.

In-state minority students are Hawkins' first priority, with his other recruiting visits being to the surrounding cities of St. Louis, Chicago, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Minneapolis. "The greatest majority are from out of state," he said. "The ones here (living in

Iowa) want to get out."

Hawkins said that when judging admissions requirements, he is usually more flexible on marginal students with low test scores as long as they have a favorable grade point average, class rank and teacher and counselor recommendation. He said he takes into account that blacks don't normally perform as well as whites on standardized tests. He said his criteria is on whether a student has a reasonable chance of succeeding.

EVEN SO, Hawkins said, the 1974 figures show that 88 per cent of the minority students accepted were clearly admissible, compared to 91 per cent of the non-minority students.

Two minority staff vacancies have yet to be filled in the financial aids office, so Hawkins also discussed the aid program. He said financial need is established identically for all students, using the Parents Confidential Statement. His most recent figures showed that 63 per cent of the black students received some form of financial aid, compared to 33 per cent of the total university student population.

Note: Tomorrow's part will discuss a special, optional six-week summer orientation program for minority students who will be attending ISU.