

## #6 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. *Have you decided upon a college major?*

*If yes, what?*

So far I haven't made a final decision yet, but I'm considering Journalism and Mass Comm. I want to pair it with something else. Computer Science, French, I'm not sure yet.

2. *(If the answer to question 1 is no, skip #7.) What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?*

3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*

BA

4. *What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?*

Well, I want to be versatile. I see myself in the media, not like as a reporter or anything like that, but probably working in the background with either print media or broad media.

5. *Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?*

Yes, I want a master's.

6. *While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes*

*Give denomination, etc.*

Well, I grew up in the church. I'm a Baptist. I'm a Christian. My family--I'm from a religious family, always gone to Sunday School. I'm a church person.

*So Sunday School, worship service. Were there youth groups?*

Yes, youth fellowship, I was member of that back home.

*Evening prayer meetings during the week?*

Yes, not very regularly with that one. Involved in the youth activities and the youth department that plans the retreats, the concerts.

*Did you give concerts or did you invite people to play?*

We gave concerts. Sometimes we'd invite people. Most times we had an annual production.

*Is it a big church?*

Not very big, but it's quite a big congregation. The church building itself isn't that big, and we've been expanding. It's full.

*Lots of kids? Good. Did you have parties together?*

Yes, we have little get-togethers, usually on public holidays like Christmas and during the summer. We'd help with Vacation Bible School for the little ones. I taught not last summer but the summer before. I taught one class. Just get involved. Clean fellowship, it's good.

*How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?*

So far I've been attending on and off the First Baptist. The first one I attended was far away. So I used to get a ride with Clavel [a student]. More recently it's been the First Baptist Church. I like it. I haven't been there in a while, but I try to go at least every other Sunday.

*Are there youth organizations in town?*

So far, no.

7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high*

*school and at Washington and Lee?*

I was definitely more involved in high school because, since I've been here, I've been trying to get my academics fixed. I have been thinking of picking up either one of the club sports, like club softball or hockey, because I did that in high school. But so far I'm not on any sports team.

8. *How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?*

First I have a friend here who's a sophomore. She mentioned it. But then my guidance counselor in high school, she's very good at picking out the best colleges in the U.S. for students....study. She told me about W&L. I read .....Eventually, with the elimination process, it looked real good. It was actually my second choice of all I applied to, but then Bryn Mawr, which was my first choice, I changed my mind about--all girls. I went to an all girls high school. I didn't want to go to an all girls college.

9. *To what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee?*

I don't think I know--don't have any contact.

10. *Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student?*

Yes, I visited in May?

*If yes, under what circumstances?*

I was invited by the school for a Prospective Student Weekend. But I didn't make it. I think that was in April, but I came in May. They said I still could come and look at the campus, get a feel of it before coming.

*So you were more on your own that weekend. It wasn't with a group of students. Did you have a host?*

I stayed with Dawn. Dawn volunteered to keep prospectives, and as it turned out she took me around.

*Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.*

First of all it was during the spring term when many people were off campus, so it was very quiet. I was like, where is everybody? But I did like the campus itself. I liked the red buildings. I wanted to go to a college with old buildings. I like the look. It's very pretty. I thought it was really small. I was surprised by the size. I was wondering "Where do they have classes?" It was a positive reaction, generally.

*Did you attend classes when you were here?*

I didn't, no. There were hardly any. It was like a Friday. But I was told about them. I went to the d-hall. Everyone was really friendly. They were having a carnival that weekend, I think, in the gym. I met a couple of people.

10a. *So you said W&L was your second choice.*

10b. *About how many other colleges did you apply to?...*

Well, I applied two years in a row. So it came up to a total of about 12.

*Some of the same both times both times?*

Right, some of the same. The first, I messed up the application process. I didn't get my financial aid forms in on time. So I--and I wasn't ready to start college. I didn't want to go the college back home.

*How many was it the second time around?*

6 or 7.

10c. *How many other colleges accepted you?*

Two. American University and.....

The first series, out of all of them only two were completed. The same two accepted me the year before.

*So two others accepted you.*

11. *What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee?*

Well, for one I had a friend here. My best friend from high school. The financial aid package was good. It was better than all the others. The school itself is a good school. The Interdepartment program --commerce and science (?) program. It caught my attention because that year when I was trying to make up my mind what to do. I was thinking of some kind of combination with psychology and computer science, whatever and that just matched it perfectly. I'm still thinking about it. But I have to do many math courses. I'm not sure. The course listing was impressive.

*You mean across the board, all the course listings? Why don't you glance at this list and see if there's anything else that you can think about.*

Academic reputation, financial assistance, special programs you wanted, tuition...., high school guidance counselor, friend suggested attending, size of college, ranking in national magazines.

*Had you noticed that?*

Yes, like Princeton Review and all those listings.

*You had those in your high school?*

Yes, and we also have the .....Information Service in Jamaica. We have shelves on colleges.

*Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?*

I think it was just all of those that I mentioned combined.

12. *Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?*

They were happy for me, because they knew this was what I wanted. My mom was really proud. Most of my friends, because I was out of high school for a year, most my friends I wasn't really in contact with. So it was really just my relatives. They were just happy for me in general and tried to get stuff for me to go.

*Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?*

One minor one--some of my friends mentioned to me that W&L is down south. Southerners aren't very tolerant of minority students. I didn't have any evidence, but it's just here say. So I was worried about that at first, if I would feel comfortable. But I was like, well, other black students are there. That was the only thing I was a bit worried about. It wasn't enough to make me change my mind.

*When you visited, did people talk to you about that that were here?*

No, it didn't come up.

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?*

At first, yes. Even though my impression is still changing--for example, the impression that I got like what was expected, like I expected all my classes to be like really discussion classes, a lot of people excited and wanting to talk. I haven't really found that. Especially last term, I didn't have any class like that.

*Last term was your first term, right?*

Yes. The professors, some of them, aren't as open-minded as I expected. Like open to different

views or have knowledge of other cultural impressions of different things.

*What form does that take?*

For example, in discussion in some classes, like maybe history classes or religion, like opinionated stuff. I've heard other international students complain about the same thing. Sometimes they don't seem to be aware of the fact that they have students in their classes from different backgrounds, different countries. They tend to restrict it to America sometimes.

*In the point of view of their lecture for instance?*

Yes, their lecture, what they expect on tests.

*What do you mean? Do they ask questions that are totally about the US point of view?*

Not totally. Just sometimes it just tends to be leaning to that way and like, not being a US citizen, sometimes I get confused and I realize I'm supposed to pretend that I'm an American to be able to understand it.

*Can you give me an example?*

In French class, the French teacher said that we needed to do an interview of someone from a French speaking foreign country who came to our country. We are comparing it. By "our country" she meant compare America to that country. So at first I was like, someone who came to Jamaica--from what she was saying, I was a bit confused. Wait, we are supposed to be in America. She didn't understand why I was asking the question. She's like, yeah. Sometimes it could be more serious, because it could be misinterpretation for a test. That's the most recent one.

*And you wish they were a little more aware.*

More conscious.

*Let me go back to another thing you said related to this. Once you were enrolled, did you find the university to be as you expected. You said that you were a little concerned about it being in the south. There might be a problem about that. How did that turn out?*

I get the impression that the campus in general is very conservative. Many people here are very conservative. I'm sensitive to it. Back home I don't have to think about racial issues. Here I didn't know what to interpret--if I be given a negative vibe from someone, the first thing I think is...I even say hi to some people, and they draw their look away. Sometimes for a whole day that would happen like all day. It would just ruin my day. It upsets me. African Americans, because they are used to it, they live in it. They tend to be like the other extreme. Like reverse racism. Like they're all always guarded against whites. There is this barrier. I think it's probably a cultural thing here in the US between black and white, this barrier. Coming from Jamaica where that's not an issue, I didn't really understand at first. So I was like in between, not just me but my other Jamaican friends, not being sure exactly where--I'm getting used to it now. The more I communicate with them the more I understand both points of view. I guess that's just something time will have to deal with.

*So how are you dealing with it. Are you getting more like the other black students on campus?*

I don't want to get like that. That's ridiculous--barriers like that. Any kind of prejudice is ridiculous. I don't want to get like that. I try to mix with everyone, the blacks, the whites--I have close friends who are black, international students, Asians, whatever. I pick up each person's point of view and try to understand exactly where they're not connected and why. I don't want to--sometimes I'm afraid if I hang out with African Americans too much, I'll become brain washed and start talking and thinking like them, like the way they talk negatively. It's not that they're racist, it's just resentment, I don't know. I find that the whites, on the other hand, they don't...the blacks. They pick up this cold air. They are not sure--they feel like blacks are unapproachable sometimes. I try to keep a balance. ...I'm dealing with it more.

*Just like experimenting as you go.*

I'm not uncomfortable....

14. *Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee. How have you dealt with it?*

Getting awesome grades.

*That's your goal and your challenge.*

The standard here is high. They demand a lot of us. That's what I was told at the beginning. I felt that they do. Last term I felt almost lost. This term I've been handling it a lot better. My GPA was low last term. I'm not on probation. I'm really trying to bring it up. Right now that's my greatest challenge. Balancing my academic life and my social life. I don't want to completely wipe out my social life. I would be the other extreme.

*Why don't you describe a little more details about how you're dealing with it.*

Well, I'm just basically trying to not lose focus. I think last term at some point, you know, slack up. Like I'd know that I'm not spending enough time studying, I'd procrastinate a lot. I'd keep putting off and then I'd run out of time. So I'd fall behind and stay behind. That just didn't work. So I'm really trying to. It makes me feel better to say "I have all my work done. Now I can go to a party." I wake up the next morning and don't have to feel guilty. My work is done, I had fun, I'm rested. I'm cool. It's been going ok. I hope I can, I have to, keep up with it.

*So the way you deal with it is to remind yourself of your goals.*

Remind myself constantly.

15. *How has your academic performance at Washington and Lee compared with your performance in high school?*

I think it's much better. I'm realizing my high school didn't demand as much as W&L is demanding. I could not study and still do ok, better than most people in my class, while here it will show. If I don't study, I won't pass. I have to do my work. I don't get away with just half effort. Back home I might get away with that. I could be lazy and it would still work. Here it's just that much harder.

*So your grades may be lower, but your performance is actually a lot higher.*

Yes. I feel more ...a lot of things.

16. *What academic resources have you used at Washington and Lee?*

Undergraduate library

Computer facilities.

Tutors in the disciplines-I've used math tutors occasionally last term.

*Where did you find the tutors? Through the math department?*

Yes, I went to the math dept. tutoring services. One time. It was the only opportunity I had. The tutor I got that night, she was very good. She knew her math. Then I got a private tutor for calculus. She was good, but it was too late when I got the tutor. So it didn't really work. I still failed calculus. I think the tutoring facilities are available here.

Study groups, I've been doing more of that lately.

*Is that study groups organized informally among student in a class?*

My study group so far is either when we have class stuff to do or just my friends and I.

Language lab.

Visiting professors in their offices.

*You've done that a lot?*

Oh yes, I do that a lot.

There's a study skills course coming up soon. I registered for that.

*Where did you register for that?*

The forms came. I don't know if it was to all freshmen. They came in the mail. It's with some-- it's an off-campus thing. I think they are doing something with W&L. I think Dean Manning knows about it.

*So the invitation may have come out of Dean Manning's office?*

Right.

*Do you have suggestions for the development of these or other facilities?*

I think we need a bigger language lab. They tend to be packed at the worst time. I thought it would have been bigger. So many students are doing languages, certain things you have to do in the language lab. A few more computers, a bigger lab.

*Anything else that you'd like to see added?*

I haven't thought of anything.

17. *What factors contribute or contributed to your selection of a major course of study?*

Promise of earning a handsome salary after graduation, I definitely have to think of that.

Interest in the particular academic discipline, because whatever I choose, I have to like it. It's like the money, yes, but I have to like it. If I don't enjoy it, I'm not going to do it well. I haven't really had any suggestions from friends or anything like that.

*So interest and looking towards a successful career?*

18. *Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

No.

*You're still exploring the possibilities?*

19. *If you saw a person or group of persons lying, stealing or cheating would you report it as an honor violation? Please elaborate.*

Yes, I would. I respect the honor system a lot. I think it's one of the best things. I probably should have mentioned it before too. It's impressive.

*You thought about it before you came?*

Yes. Even reading about it, I still didn't understand how big it was. When I got here, I realized it's a big deal. It's good to have something like that.

*Tell me why.*

Because I think society's morals are decaying so fast nowadays. Sometimes that burns me, especially being a Christian. Those things really get to me. To have something like this, no matter how small. It's just one college, but it's over 1,000 students. It's good. It actually works. It's such a dishonest world. So yes, I would report somebody, because I respect it. So far I've never actually--I tend to miss things anyway. Like if someone was cheating, because--I have a weakness. I tend to trust people a bit too easily probably. So maybe if someone was actually committing an honor violation, because I tend to think of the positive. So far I haven't--

*That may not be a weakness.*

I tend to miss the negative side.

*So what you're saying is you haven't encountered any.*

20. *Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?*

I find them very easy to approach. That's why I visit them so often in their offices. They are approachable, easy to talk to, willing to listen and help.

*Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.*

Well, they're always inviting us to their offices. "Come in, stop by and talk." If I miss a class and I go in to explain, I'm not made to feel--it's like they understand if I'm not feeling well. They'll postpone a test or something like that. My faculty adviser is very helpful, especially when I was having a hard time with my grades last term. He was very encouraging. They don't doubt that you can improve, that you can do well. It's like "You're a W&L student, so obviously you can do well." I've never picked up that they are actually looking at me and thinking "She just can't do any better." It's like they just think, well, it's just a bad time, you'll get past it soon enough. That's good. It helps to believe that.

*Have you been able to establish close working relationships with a member or with members of the W&L faculty?*

Not really close. Dean Boetsch, dean of the college, I work in his office. He's also my host father. So I go to him about anything, all aspects. He's very nice. I talk to him about stuff. Also my French teacher from last term, she's very nice. French was my best subject. She was just as excited about it as I was.

*Last term it was your best subject?*

Yes, I got an A- for it. Even this term, I don't have her. I have another French teacher, but I went to her and spoke to her and told her I'm not so happy in my new class. It's because I'm not used to the new teacher. She told me what to expect or not to expect, not to worry. I felt better afterwards. She's one of those teachers I can talk to.

21. *What has been your experience at W&L with regard to social life?*

The social is very active, but it tends to be one-sided. It's mainly frat. parties. There's hardly anything else. At first people mentioned that we needed alternatives to fraternity parties. That's why people get so drunk - fraternity party and beer. Maybe if there was some kind of student activity center. Not like the one we have but one with a room with games on a Friday night it would be open, people could hang out there instead of drinking. It's very active. Parties are there. I have fun at the parties. I do go to the parties. But sometimes I wish there other things than just going to another fraternity party.

*I was thinking about the dance. How fun to be able to go to something where you could do that. Exactly. I can't do that at a fraternity party. Hardly ever. They might play some nice reggae songs - enough of us would be there and we would request reggae songs.*

*How important to you is alcohol at a social event or social engagement?*

Personally, I don't think it's important at all. I don't know why people drink. I don't think it tastes good. The only time I have a beer is if I'm dancing and my throat is so dry and I have to drink something or I'm going to choke.

*Is nothing else available?*

There's nothing else, so I have to take a beer. I'll have like half of it just to quench my thirst. I haven't been drunk. I don't know why people have to do that. I don't think it's important. If I went to a party without alcohol, I probably wouldn't notice. It's just not important

*How important to you are drugs at a social event?*

I don't want it there. Actually, I haven't been aware of drugs being at any of the parties. I don't

know. While the alcohol is popular, I've never really seen or heard of drug use.  
*So you're not interested and you haven't seen it?*  
No.

22. *What experiences, if any, have you had with Greek organizations on campus?*

I guess the only experiences would be going to their parties. I didn't rush.

*What have your feelings been about the organizations at the parties?*

When I do go to frat. parties, it's narrowed to 2 fraternities. Lambda Chi or Chi Psi. Chi Psi, because it's close and I know some guys from Chi Psi. Lambda Chi, because many international students are Lambda Chi. They are very nice. I think they're the nicest fraternity on campus, easiest to hang out with. When it comes to attitudes, those two are—I haven't had any problems.  
*You didn't stop going to others because you had problems, you just feel most welcome at those two.*

Right.

*How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?*

Basically I've answered that. I don't have much experience with them.

23. *Evaluate your experiences with regards to athletic teams/athletic facilities/and physical education classes.*

I'll talk about phys. ed. first. I took one class last term, tennis. It was very good. I get the impression we have very good coaches, not just good in terms that they know their sport well, but they are very motivational. They can actually talk with you about academia also. They know about the rest of things that go on at the school, about other faculty. From what I've heard and from my experience, I'd do more p.e., more than 5. But with the team sports, I guess it's just W&L's bad luck that we aren't very good at many sports, especially more popular ones like football and so on. Sometimes I wish I could get excited about the sports part of it, too, like cheer for a team that's tops. But we can't have everything I guess. I've been to swim meets. I have a friend on the team; she's really good. I've been to one basketball game.

*What about the facilities?*

I guess they are good. I can't speak from an athlete's point of view. The exercise part of it, they are fine. I've used the ones in Gaines. I've only been to the gym once. That one is very convenient.

24. *How would you characterize your opportunities for "dating" while enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

I think opportunities for dating are there, but the culture of dating here is different from home. I'm still not quite understanding that. I think I've been in a few situations since I've been here where the whole dating thing is misinterpreted, like the intentions. One specific example last term shortly after I got here was homecoming. First of all, I didn't know what homecoming was so I wasn't excited. I was just watching, so I didn't have any intention of going or getting a date. A friend of mine, he was going to ask me, he told me, but he thought someone else asked me. It turned out later on that he started to get aloof, like distance himself. It turned out that he thought that I wanted to hook up with him. I don't think it meant sleep with him, but it's like—he didn't say it directly to me, so I don't know the words he used. The thing is that back home what would be interpreted as strictly platonic, like you could go on a date with someone and it would be platonic, here it might be interpreted otherwise. They might think you're talking about sex. So that can be confusing and uncomfortable. So I'll avoid the dating scene for now until I understand the culture better and guys here. Plus you never know who will date persons of other

racers, stuff like that. Instead of trying to guess and figure out, I'll watch for a while.

*Are you saying that the goals are more for hooking up sexually?*

That's the impression that I get.

*So people assume that it's your goal?*

Right. You're never sure who doesn't have that goal or who does. I guess with everyone else it's understood.

*Maybe.*

Even dancing certain ways—I've been told by some guys I'm very close with here that the way we dance, Caribbean people. Here if you dance like that with a guy, they will get the wrong impression. It's just because they're my close friends, why they actually said it to me. At first they were wondering if—but when they got to know me, they realized it's just a Jamaican thing probably, the way we dance with anyone. Little things like that can make life very uncomfortable. You can end up in a misunderstanding.

*The question is how would you characterize your opportunities for dating. You're saying opportunities are there.*

But I'm not sure if I'm ready yet because it's still a bit uncomfortable.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university? Yes, No*

No.

*Why/why not?*

I don't have a good reason to want to. Whatever I'd be trying to avoid here I'm sure it would be at every other college. The ups and downs of college life.

26. *Have you had a paid job on campus (including work-study)?*

Yes, work study. Working in the dean's office.

*If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?*

No, I wouldn't say so. So far it's just been a part of my college life. From the beginning I've been doing work study, so I haven't been able to compare what it would be like if I wasn't doing work study. It's just there. It's in my schedule just like a class. I go one hour.

27. *Would you be willing to recruit other students for Washington and Lee either as a student yourself or as part of an alumni program? Please elaborate.*

Yes, I would. It's a good school. I would invite other people to become a part of the student body. Plus also to help diversify the student body I would invite others from back home, other Jamaicans or other Caribbean islanders.

*Diversify in what sense?*

As in getting people from other culture backgrounds. I probably wouldn't want more Jamaicans here. I'd probably want people from some other islands or even another country. I love diversity, so I would recruit for that purpose.

*I asked you because sometimes when people say diversity, they mean different things. Cultural diversity, that might mean social level, racial diversity. You mean internationally cultural?*

Yes.

*You're not thinking racial?*

No. I don't think that should be a significant issue, like to recruit people based on that.

Now we ask some background information:

28. *In what geographical location did you grow up:*  
In Jamaican.

*In what type of area or community did you spend most of your growing up years?*  
Middle class in the city, in Kingston.

29. *Describe the type of high school you attended.*  
An urban high school.

*Predominantly*  
Mixed. I guess it would be predominantly black, but by mixed I mean everyone is mixed with some Indian or Chinese. Every person is mixed. There is no full black. Even the complexion.

30 *Please give the kin relationship(s) between you and family members in your home when you were growing up.*  
There have always been close family ties. It's always been just me and my mom and my brother. My parents are divorced. We've always been close. Stable home.

31. *What was the highest level of education achieved by your parents, guardians, or others with whom you lived when you were growing up?*

My mother, she went to graduate school. She has a master's degree in education. I think it was at Western Carolina where she did that.

*So she came to the U.S.*

Yes, just graduate school. My father - I didn't really live with my father. They were divorced when I was much younger. He, I think his highest level was high school.

*What are the occupations or professions of your parents or guardians?*

My mother is an education officer.

*What does that mean?*

She works with the government at the Ministry of Education, which would probably be your Education Dept. equivalent. What she does is visit schools and analyzes curricula. Basically that aspect of the ministry, they just help to...she works in the guidance and counseling department. So it's basically teacher/student relationships, just helping to make it better. She was a guidance counselor at a high school.

32. *As compared to other W&L students, how would you characterize your overall social class position (based on parents' education and family income)?*

I think I'm among the lower social class as compared to others. I get the impression that many students here are very wealthy. Extremely. I'm among the lower. But it doesn't bother me.

*You said before that at home you would characterize yourself as middle class.*

*How do you think this has affected your experience?*

It doesn't. Maybe because my closer friends here aren't rich. Even those who are wealthy, it's not like they act different about it. I don't think about it really.

33. *In general how do you think about yourself first at Washington and Lee -- as a member of a particular racial/ethnic/national/gender group, or as a student?*

*Please explain.*

As a member of a particular national group. First as a Jamaican. And then I guess student, then racial or ethnic group on the same level. But first the national one. The fact that I'm Jamaican, people treat me differently as a result.

34. *How homogeneous do you believe black students are on this campus? In answering please consider racial identification, political perspective, and/or social class position.*

There is segregation. They have segregated themselves. It's hard to even tell if they are homogeneous. I mean, they fit in with each other, most of them, at least in little groups. There isn't much blending.

*How do they segregate themselves?*

Basically, by eating together in the dining hall. There is a black table. When you see them, they are usually just with themselves, not with other whites. To me it just seems like they segregate themselves.

*So you can't tell if they're homogeneous, because they're hanging out together? Are you saying that you have not had that much experience with them?*

I know a few of them. Those who live in the minority student house. Even then two of those have parents who are from the Caribbean, so they're like half and half. Especially most of the girls, like upperclassmen, I'll say hi to them and know their names. But I don't feel comfortable around them sometimes.

*Do you know why?*

Well, sometimes I feel like I'm being judged.

*In what way?*

One of my white friends said this to me, that when I hang out with that white girl, it's like they send glances in our direction, either saying that I should be hanging with them or why does she always hang with us who are blacks. I don't know. I don't know them well enough to approach them and ask them "Why do you keep looking?" Maybe I just don't understand the subculture as well yet.

*So when you try to approach them, you don't feel as....? So there is a subquestion here. Are your friends predominantly white or black?*

Neither. I'm very close with my hall-mates. They're all white. The only blacks who I really hang out with are the international students, like the other Jamaicans or Trinidadians or like the ones I told you about at the student house. The other ones on campus, upperclassmen, even others in my freshman class, other African Americans, just one or two can I say I'm friends with. That's because they stick to each other. They are not willing to spread themselves the way I do. I don't like sticking to just—I like getting to know everybody.

*When you spread yourself in that direction-*

They are not coming with me.

*So it has just happened that you are close to a bunch of white people and a bunch of international?*

Right.

*So the answer to the homogeneous question is that you can't tell yet, that you don't know them well enough.*

35. *How similar or different do you believe blacks and whites are on this campus? Consider the same categories that are mentioned in number 34 above and add any other factors that you deem important.*

I think they are very similar. Like they have similar concerns, etc. but they are probably just not

aware of it because they just don't communicate enough.

*What sort of concerns?*

I think it just stems back to the whole line between races in America itself which will be found in schools. Schools reflect the rest of society. I don't think they are that different, except they have different backgrounds, so they have different accents. Little cultural differences, like little slangs and dress codes, the type of music they listen to. That's all different. But it's just like us being from this side of the world and liking classical music from Europe. It's different. It's not our background, but you can still appreciate it. That shouldn't be very significant.

*You said you think they have the concerns but they're not aware of it. What do you mean—what concerns?*

Like grades—with academia. Some blacks give the impression that they think that they have it that much more difficult than the white students on campus. Maybe they do have it a bit more difficult, but they think that the white students don't have similar problems with getting good grades because they have more opportunity. I've actually spoken to white students who are having similar problems and having things that I didn't. They also have problems fitting into the whole social scene. Sometimes they feel insecure just as the blacks do for different reasons. Sometimes for the same reasons. We're thinking all the whites are having—they're cool. It's just us because we're the minority. The same problems are there.

36. *Do you believe the size of the black student enrollment at Washington and Lee is adequate or inadequate?*

Maybe it's inadequate, because I don't see that many black students. To say why it's inadequate, I couldn't really answer that. I know the school tries to keep a percentage of black students. I get the impression that many blacks leave every year. So they probably have a problem keeping that quota. Personally I don't understand why color should be an issue. Like how many people of this color should be in a place or whatever. I can't perceive it.

*Why do you think that is, that you can't perceive it?*

I just don't think it's important, skin color and other things like religion. People segregate in terms of religion, denomination, ethnic groups. I don't think human beings should separate themselves from each other because of those. They're too shallow, lacking in depth. It doesn't make you different. If you look different from someone, it doesn't mean you are different on the inside. Why should it be such a big issue?

*Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?*

Truth is, I'm not sure how many are here. I think most of them are in the law school. I guess if it's supposed to be balanced with the number of black students, then it would be inadequate. There aren't too many of them there. I guess it would make some Af. Americans feel more comfortable, having more black professors. I guess they would feel that "Here's a professor who knows where I'm coming from."

*Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate?*

I guess that would be the same answer.

37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together?*

Probably. Maybe if such activities were there—I was saying to you that I don't know many of them very well. Maybe if there were activities in place I probably would end up interacting with them more and I'd have a better understanding, which I think is important, for any new student coming in to understand. The other students are similar, culture, background.

*So as a black student, you would have liked to have had the chance to know the other black students better?*

Yes, just for the sake of understanding them, for better communication.  
*Do you have any suggestions about how that could happen?*  
No, not really.

*Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.*  
Yes. Well, that's where I meet for my study groups. Between the Chavis House and the international house. At first it was the international house because Dawn lives there. She introduced me to many of the people there. But I find the Chavis House, it's very comfortable there, the whole environment. Just this morning—people are there that I can actually hang out with and feel at home. It's like available for me when I don't want to be in the dorm. The freshman dorms have no kitchen, no library. Because my friends and I can meet there, we study there. It's a place where I can be with people that I feel extremely comfortable with.  
*It sounds like you can have your white friends and international friends there too.*  
It's open. Whites are there, everybody.

*Is it a big place? Big enough for lots of people to gather?*

Yes, actually they had a tropical Caribbean party there last night. They had paper palm trees on the wall and reggae music. Many people came, both black and white. They are not racist over there. They have close white friends, the blacks who live there. They just welcome everyone. They are really nice. I hang out there a lot. It's good for study groups. They have different sections. The living room, the study, the library. It's a nice environment.

*So it's physically and socially welcoming.*

Yes.

*Has the Minority Student Association played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.*

As it turns out, I haven't been there. I've been meaning to go to their meetings. I joined the International Club and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship before that. I've even been having problems getting to those meetings. Something always comes up, just bad timing. I've been meaning to at least, even if I don't join it, to go to the meetings so I can interact with them some more. But so far, no, unfortunately.

38. *Do you believe that it is important that courses in the humanities/social sciences include recognition or study of works by persons of color?*

Yes, I think it is important, because if it's not there so many people are going to assume that there are racist motives involved in why there is no black writer involved in any of the study in a certain area. Some people seem to be sensitive to that, so I guess for the sake of peace, no conflict, I guess it would be necessary to try to keep it in. It's a pity that it's necessary..

*What sort of people would be sensitive about that?*

Well, African Americans, I know are very sensitive about that. They are sensitive about TV shows that tend to be biased or seemingly biased. American society is supposed to be trying to achieve harmony between the races and get rid of all that conflict. I think it would be good just for the sake of that.

*If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain.*

So far, from what I've seen, I guess it has been adequate. I've been aware of the fact that it has been included. I get the impression that people think about it. They actually try to include it.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*  
Mainly, most times it's ok, except in probably specific classes. Like in history classes. History

class can be a touchy class. In history class they were discussing slavery. It was American history. I wasn't uncomfortable, but for the strangest reason I became aware of the fact that, I was the only black student in the class, all the students in the class got uncomfortable at one point in the lecture when it got into a lot of sensitive details. To me it was just history—it's history. First of all, I'm not even American. I wasn't there. You don't have to take a history class to know about slavery. Everybody knows about that. I did that in high school. So to me it was just refreshing my memory. The teacher seemed comfortable too. She'd make certain statements and students would glance around at me – almost as if they're afraid to say something to me after class. They're looking at my reaction. I wasn't uncomfortable.

*So for you it wasn't uncomfortable?*

No, it wasn't.

*Are you saying that the climate of the classroom for you has been fine?*

Yes.

*Maybe I ought to back up a little. Did it feel like a problem to you that other people were having a problem?*

It threw me off a bit, because if you're in a situation where you're fine but everyone else is uncomfortable, that in itself can ... I'd be uncomfortable not for their reason, but that they're uncomfortable.

*So how did you deal with that?*

Just tried to keep myself calm and tried to understand why they were uncomfortable and why I wasn't and tried to let them realize that I wasn't uncomfortable. So they'd be at ease.

*So you did that by managing your demeanor?*

Yes, my whole attitude, like smile and talk. In general, even on my hall at first, all my hallmates I got the impression that they were unaware how to approach me. At first I thought they didn't like me or maybe it's the whole racist thing. I was unaware of the racist thing, since I had never lived here. I realized that they just weren't sure. Eventually, they realized I'm cool. Now they love me, I love them.

40. *What is the role of the Office of Minority Student Affairs?*

Is that where Dean McCloud is? I think the role is to make minority students on campus feel more comfortable to deal with their significant problems. I don't know if they are really doing an effective job. I've never had any problem where I had to go to the Minority Student office.

*You haven't heard about it?*

No.

*How can the role of this Office be improved?*

No.

41. *From whom do you receive the greatest emotional support on campus? Do not use name(s), but please describe the person(s) in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and position (i.e. fellow student, faculty member, administrator, staff member). If appropriate, include more than one individual and describe the type of situations in which the person provides emotional support (i.e. personal, family, religious, etc.)*

The most emotional support I have received so far has been from my fellow Jamaicans simply because they can understand exactly. Some of the problems I have, they have them too.

Obviously no one else can understand. Simply because we're all Jamaicans we can compare.

I've also gotten a lot of support from Dean Boetsch, my host father. I am able to talk to him. If you're comfortable being able to talk to someone, it helps. The other faculty, my French teacher, my faculty advisor (when it comes to my motivation towards academics), my other friends in general. One is actually white. She's just as upset as I am about racial issues, because she's not

American. Where she's coming from, it's not such an issue. She says she feels it too on campus, even though she's not black. I guess the fact that she hangs out with blacks, she gets the impression that some people find it strange or whatever. She is always saying that she's color blind. She doesn't understand why that's important. She just doesn't see color; she doesn't care about color. It upsets her. So I'm able to talk to her. She's white, I'm black and we are able to talk and relate to each other. We come to a common understanding. It's nice to actually have someone who understands exactly and who is from the other side. That helps a lot. I think I've been lucky where friends are concerned. I have some friends, even upperclassmen, who because they've been here longer than I've been here, they are able—sometimes if I'm having problems just because I'm not adjusted yet. They are able to say to me, "I've been through that. This is what you should expect. Don't worry about it. This will happen. That will happen. You'll get past that; don't worry." It's very comforting.

*In what kind of situations does that come up?*

After midterms, I was really worried about my performance. I was out of school for a year, so I came here being worried that my brain wouldn't rev up as quickly. And it didn't. It has now. It's charged again, but at that time it wasn't. So I was really worried, missing a lot of sleep. If you are tired, you get emotional. I'd come close to falling apart. I'd sit talking to them for hours. *You'd like go to their room or call them up or something.*

Yeah, and just talk. That helps a lot. Just to know that someone else understands and came through where you are now and got through it and is still going to school. I guess just the fact that I'm away from home, sometimes I just get sad. So that's probably just a part of it. Just having someone to talk to helps.

*What percentage of your friends are black, what white, what international?*

My best friends on campus, the majority of them are black. Only one is white. Most of them are international. Only 2 of them are black Americans. I'm pretty close with my hallmates. I see them every day. They're all white. I'm real close with only about 8 of them. Where classes are concerned, for some reason I haven't clicked with any classmates. I just don't make friends from classes. I talk to other random people, like guys who love reggae and they're into music. I'm pretty close friends with a couple of the freshmen guys. They're all white. I guess it kind of balances, but my closer friends are black.

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself?*

I have suspected it, but there hasn't been any definite occasion where I can say that was it. There hasn't been any. Usually it's like I say I wonder if it was that or maybe it wasn't really that. Sometimes I can say "I wonder if I'm just being paranoid." I haven't encountered any situation where it was clear.

*Are these just particular behaviors or feelings?*

General attitude toward me.

*What kind of attitude do you mean?*

Not speaking or what is said, facial expression, tone of voice. You can sense stuff from people being around them. Especially when there is no other—it's not like you haven't been nice to the person. So the only possible reason you can think of is discrimination. But there's always the fact that maybe the person was just having a bad day, a bad week, a bad life. It's hard to judge. I haven't really encountered any.

*What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment). You've said maybe looks, maybe tone of voice. Simply not answering when someone says hi to you. I mean looking away. That's so blatant. There are regional styles among white people, among black people, people from Minnesota*

*behave very different from people from Maine, from Georgia, from California.*

Right. So I can never actually say it was that. It could be anything.

*Who was responsible for that behavior?*

Individual students....usually compare it to reaction to other people....it could be discrimination towards me based on anything. It doesn't have to be the fact that I'm black either. It could be a million things. People are funny.

*Have you had any particular discrimination from any group of students? Or from any faculty or staff or security?*

No not from any particular group. Usually just individuals. There is always one from a group that is different from the rest.

*Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?*

No, I don't think so.

43. *Aside from the Honor System do you believe that the student Executive Committee, the Student Conduct Committee or other University judicial committees treat black and white students equally fairly?*

I don't think I know enough to give a judgement on that.

44. *Do you believe that the honor system is applied in an even-handed way to black and white students?*

I think it is. I get the impression that it does.

45. *How would you evaluate student publications (i.e. the Ring-tum Phi, the Trident, etc.), the student radio and television stations with regards to opportunities for black students to participate.*

They also seem pretty open, accepting articles from anyone. They don't seem too biased or narrow in choosing.

*How would you evaluate them with regard to their treatment of news about black students?*

I think it's balanced, too. Even at the swim meet, my friend who swam - she's from Trinidad. She's black. The only photograph that was in that article was her swimming.

46. *Do you feel that black students at Washington and Lee today have problems that are basically different from, or basically similar to those of whites? Please describe in what way you feel they are different or similar.*

They're similar generally. They're only different in the sense that I guess they're approached from different perspectives. Blacks and whites in America have different culture backgrounds. That's what causes the differences. As people in general, living in the same society and being students in the same school, I don't think they are very different. I think the differences are created by blacks or whites. It's not any more different than problems experienced by different individuals.

*And you said before that you thought the problems of every student were problems of academics or fitting in socially.*

Yes. I tend to think that the social aspect can be very difficult, sometimes more difficult than academics. I don't know why. Like there's an air of insecurity. People constantly trying to find--there are many little groupings on campus, like a lot of separation among different groups of friends. They just don't blend. Many people are trying to find what group they fit in. Is it like the fraternity scene? People here are from many different backgrounds and different parts of the country, the world. They are very different. I

guess there's a lack of communication. They don't understand. There isn't a common understanding among students here. People find themselves insecure, trying to find a way of just fitting in and being comfortable and being happy.

*Interpersonal interactions.*

Right.

*I get the feeling when I listen to you that if you were in the culture that you grew up in, that that would not be happening. That culture doesn't have that problem.*

No, it doesn't.

*When groups of people who are different are together in Jamaica, they're more comfortable?*

I think both sides understand the other side. It's not that you can't switch from one side to the other and feel that here is a wall, a literal wall. This air of uncertainty.

*Where is the wall?*

Between the races, between the social classes. I don't know if there is any between Southerners and Northerners. I've heard them making little joking statements like "You Southerners so and so." I don't think that's a real problem. I think that's just for fun. It's like a nice little community, but sometimes when you look close, you realize that it's not a harmonized community.

*You're saying that from the perspective of having come from a community where folks are mingling and enjoying it and not having those problems.*

\*47. Sex Female

\*48. Age? 19

\*49. Year in college? Freshman

\*50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]?

\*51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? Jamaican

52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race?  
Black

53. Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee? Overall, I'm happy here. Sometimes I have my down times. I think it's a very good school. The best thing is that the faculty and staff are—they seem to be in one accord in terms of the ideals of the university and what they want from students. Like if you speak to one faculty member, they basically say the same thing to you about academia that the other one will say. There isn't any disparity there. That helps me as a student to understand what's wanted. There are a lot of nice people here, very friendly people. One parent actually said that to me, that when she's on campus there's this air of friendliness. I guess that's the speaking tradition. People talk. It's not perfect, but overall it's good.

*What would you want to improve if you had a chance?*

I guess the sense of harmony, community. I guess more alternatives to fraternity parties - having activities where more communication outside of the classroom is possible. Then there will be more bonding.

*So a major suggestion that you would make would be to have alternatives to fraternities.*

Some things to bring the students closer, have fun together apart from just dances. It's hard. You go to a fraternity party. The music is blasting. You can't really talk. It's dancing and having your own fun. But like it's personal stuff. Apart from clubs there is not just plain social thing that you don't have to join but just go and you want to go. Something that will appeal to....not just some.

*Like what? Can you think of anything?*

Maybe some lounges like with a piano and maybe table tennis facilities, whatever. There's only like the gym. You go to the gym for sports. A lounge, something like that, something in the dorm buildings. The freshman dorms have no—it's just the rooms. Graham-Lees has one common area for the whole area

and it's not very nice. Not very inviting. It's small. Have some dorm activities. Gaines has some activities, I'm not sure if it's a dorm thing. I think it's Student Activities and they use Gaines, the building. I think...dorm activities apart from just narrowing it down to hall activities for the freshman class every year. If you start with the freshman class...That might help.