

#33 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. Have you decided upon a college major?
If yes, what?

Biology.

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

I think so far a C+ maybe.

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

BA

BS [science or commerce]

BS

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

Maybe neonatal physician.

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

yes.

6. While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church? Yes / No
If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.

Yes. Church of God. We helped the homeless, choir, night watch service, like going around in the neighborhood.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

Well I attend first Baptist church, and I try to go every Sunday.

7. How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?

I know that I can't really do too much. I was really active in high school, but now at Washington and Lee I have to, I'm only doing band right now and MSA.

You said you cant really do as much?

No, I guess it's the work. I'm afraid, I want to stay on top of things, I don't want to get too involved.

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

W&L literature

W&L admissions counselor

Relative

Adult friend

Peer

Other

I attended a scholarship forum and I met Angela Allen. So we talked and she told me about the school.

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

No I didn't.

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

If yes, under what circumstances?

Visited on your own

Participated in the Summer Scholar's Program

Visited during a Prospective Student Weekend

Other:

I think they had a open house during the spring and I came down.

Was that for accepted students, or prospective..

Prospectives.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

I stayed with a host, and attended some classes and we did some activities on campus to get a feel of what life is on W&L. I loved it, cause it was a small environment, everyone was nice and friendly, I remember everybody saying hi to you going down the colonnade. It was nice.

10a. Was W&L your...

First choice

Second choice

Third choice

Less than third choice

It was my first choice.

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

No other

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

I think it was three other ones.

10c. How many other colleges accepted you?

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five
Six
All three.

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

It was close by my house, cause I live in DC, and I wanted to attend some place that was near. And also I received a scholarship from W&L so that was one of the factors that contributed.

Why don't you glance at this list and see if anything else jogs your memory.

I heard it had a great academic reputation as well from my counselor in high school. The size of the college, small and that's what I wanted. And the rankings in the magazine.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

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

Well, most of my friends and relatives didn't know where, or didn't, never heard of W&L, so they were kind of wondering what W&L was about.

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

No, not really.

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

Yes.

Can you describe generally what that meant for you - what you expected it to be like?

Challenging, the work challenging. Just getting a feel of like, I guess the people here are nice and everything, and that's basically it.

If the school differed from the way it seemed when you first heard about it or visited the campus, please describe how it differed.

14. Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee.

How have you dealt with it?

I guess the work. the academic load is a lot. Just trying to get my time management together and trying to stay on top of everything.

So just basically working hard and managing your time is your way of dealing with it.

Yeah.

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

Well, it's like I'm kinda struggling now, but in high school. I think high school was much easier.

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

x Undergraduate library

x Science library

x Computer lab at Gaines,

I talked to Dean McCould on time management, she had a study session.

did you have a tutor in a subject as well?

No, I think it was too late, but I looked for a Math tutor, it's just hard to get one during that time. And I visit my professors as well.

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

Probably more computers. I find that's difficult. And when you want to do your work sometimes - a lot of people leave their work on the screen - and you can't really get to the computer. They might not be in the room, right then, so it's difficult to find, especially if you don't have one in your room.

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

*Promise of earning a handsome salary after graduation,
Interest in the particular academic discipline,
College friends recommended this major,
Adult relative recommendation etc.
Other*

I guess I was always interested in Biology. In high school my biology teacher was really nice and I had a lot of fun in that class.

18. Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?
If yes, please describe that change.

No.

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 guess cause everyone holds to this honor code, and it would be wrong just to let it go on by without anyone telling, so I think I would tell.

In order to support the honor system.

Yeah.

20. Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?
Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

I find them easy to approach.

In what way?

Well, their office hours they always make themselves accessible, and great flexible times, and they'll fit you in their schedule, even if they have like meetings and stuff.

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

No.

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

Kind of dry. I guess you have to just find things to do, like the movies or other things.

What do you mean by kind of dry?

Well, I know that some of my friends. Well, I have a boy friend back home, so, .. well I know most of my friends they're looking for someone, and it's difficult here, cause there's not that great of a selection if you want to date.

And does the kinds things you find to do include..

Well we've gone to the bowling alley. Went to some of the frat parties. and musicals and plays. The gong show, magic show. Anything that the Fridays committee puts out.

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

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

It's not very - doesn't mean anything to me.

Do you drink at all?

No.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

I don't do drugs, so

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

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

I haven't really had any types of experiences, ..

You said you didn't rush. You have visited some of the fraternity parties. How have your experiences been with that?

Pretty good.

You felt welcomed?

Yeah.

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

I've had swimming, and I really enjoyed it. The teacher was really nice and really patient. I didn't know how to swim, so.

The facilities.

Oh, it was great. The pool was great.

Have you had any experience with teams?

No.

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

It's not... Well it depends on the person really.

How's that?

Cause I guess if you want to date someone of a different color from yourself you'll have better opportunities, right? If you don't and you want to stick to your own race and so forth, it's going to be really limited.

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

Why/why not?

Because I think W&L is a great place for me.

If yes, what factor(s) influenced you to stay?

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

No.

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

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. Because I think W&L is a great school for all their students. It offers a lot. The reputation, like I said before, and it's a great school for anyone. Academically?

Yeah.

Would you elaborate on what you said about how W&L is a great place for you?

Oh, because I was looking for a small college and it just fits all the things I was looking for.

Now we ask some background information:

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

State: Washington DC

*In what type of **area or community** did you spend most of your growing up years?*

Urban

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

Urban

Predominantly

Black

30. *Please give the kin relationship(s) between you and family members in your home when you were growing up.*

We were really close. My mother and my brothers, we all lived together. I have two brothers.

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

I think she had one year of college.

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

She's a secretary.

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

Meaning, like middle class? I think middle class.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

I don't see any kind of serious way it effects me.

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.

Like what, ..

Well how do you consider yourself if you think "I am a.." Do you think of yourself first in terms of your race or your nationality, or the fact the you're a woman or American. Do you think about that first or do you think student.

I think African American.

It says please explain.

I don't know really. Maybe like from high school, then coming here - I don't know.

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.*

I think they really stick together.

Do you think they're similar in terms of racial identification, political perspective, social class position, or is there a lot of variety?

I think a variety.

So, could you address those issues, the...

I know most of my friends, they would consider first thing themselves as student. They don't want to really label themselves. And political, I think you have democrats and republicans, so there's variety there. Social class position, I think we come from basically like different backgrounds as well.

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 similar. I guess political aspect, we have different republicans and democrats. I think the white students here maybe come from different backgrounds as well, economic wise and so forth.

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

Inadequate. Well, I think we need more black students here, definitely. It's like there's just only a few of us here and maybe if you had more numbers it would add something more to the campus.

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

I've only seen one black professor here. I think it's DeLaney, so I don't know any more, so I think it would still really help to have some more black professors. Just knowing, it's nice having black professors in the school and not just having white professors.

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

Inadequate.

Explain.

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

I think so. I don't know what else, cause we have MSA right now, but well maybe, I don't really know what sort of activities to bring us all together, but I think we should have some more activities.

If not, why not?

If yes...do you have suggestions?...

Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Yes. Well, we have meetings there and that's the time we all come together and talk about different things and we talk about how we are doing in school and everything, so it's more like a family gathering there.

Do you go there other times besides for meetings?

No.

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

Yeah. Well we only have meetings there, but I think just seeing everyone together, cause we don't hardly see - even about the meetings or the Chavis House that's when we all come together. If we just see each other on campus we not really sitting down together and talk about things.

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 guess because it's good to know that African Americans have been doing some things also in the humanities and social sciences. They've done their recognition as well, cause we, there are people out there who are doing things.

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

Inadequate.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*

I think it's comfortable.

So you haven't run across any problems?

No.

If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties?

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

I don't know.

Do you know what that is?

No.

That's Dean McCloud's office.

OK. I think she sees where you're going so far, if you need help in an area. She's the one that assigns tutors and so forth. She'll help you acaemic wise.

How can the role of this Office be improved?

No. Maybe she'd like just call us, like frequent check-ups and everything, instead of just.. cause I think I only met with her twice in the whole year, so maybe a little bit more.

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.)*

I guess from my church family at home, my friends, and my family back home. They really are supportive when I'm going through times I can just talk to them and they will help me, give me advice, and keep me up working.

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

I don't really know percentage. My friends are, I guess, all black, white and international. Not selective or anything.

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

No.

What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment).

Who was responsible for that behavior?

Individual students

Student groups

Greek

Non Greek

Faculty

Staff

Security

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

I think somewhat. I guess having little, the papers, publications, there will be like references to like ebonics, and little jokes, and even when Spike Lee came down here people were saying "I'm going to wear my confederate tie."

You overheard someone?

Yeah, it was in the library. A couple of guys said, "I'm going to wear my confederate tie and my suspenders. I'm going to see what he'll say then."

So you sense racial tensions based on things you've read and heard?

Yeah

So how do you think those kinds of tensions could be eased?

I don't know. I think it's just ignorance on their part, because.. I don't know what the answer is.

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?*

Yes.

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

Yes.

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.*

I think it's open to black students as well.

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

Well, like the ebonics situation, I didn't really like that at all. It was like making fun of the ebonics language and more so directed to the blacks and so forth. That kind of like really..

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.*

I think they are probably different. Like for blacks, you have to adjust to the atmosphere here. Quite an adjustment trying to fit in. Just trying to adjust.

Tell me more about that adjustment, what that involves.

Well, for me it was quite an adjustment, cause I'm coming from a black high school and then come in to a all white school, so you just had to adjust to a new atmosphere, cause I had never been to a school that was prodominately white.

What is the atmosphere like, particularly?

Well, it's not racial tensions or anything. I just know its really competitive, so you are really competing with everyone.

Academically?

Yeah.

So, different because it's an adjustment, different kind of setting..

And you know that you are in a minority here and you're trying to uphold - like if your doing bad or something, it's like you're looking bad for the whole black ..

Do you feel that people are looking to you in that way to measure you as a representative of ...

Yeah.

Do you get that feedback directly from people or a feeling?

Feeling.

- *47. Sex F
- *48. Age? 18
- *49. Year in college? FRESHMAN
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]?
- *51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? AMERICAN

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

53. Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?

No.

I would like to go back and ask you if you could elaborate on what you meant when you said it was good for the black students community to all come together almost like an extended family.

I think it would help us, especially if you are an upperclassman to give us support and tell us, what to expect, or so forth, kind of coach us along. I think it would help all the rest if we did all come together.

Do you feel like you do come together, or would you like to see happen more?

I would like to see it happen more. Like the freshmen students all stick together, but we hardly ever talk to the upperclassmen. So it's like we're all in it together, but we don't talk with other people really.

In it together as freshmen?

Yeah. Freshmen.

You'd like to have more contact with upperclassmen?

Um hum.