

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION

JOHN F. KNIGHT, JR., and ALEASE S. SIMS, et al., individually and on behalf of others
similarly situated, *

Plaintiffs and Plaintiffs-Intervenors, *

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *

Plaintiff-Intervenor, *

v. *

Civil Action No.
2:83-cv-1676-HLM

THE STATE OF ALABAMA, et al., *

Defendants. *

**KNIGHT-SIMS PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
WHY DEFENDANT AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN CONTEMPT**

EXHIBIT E: Editorial, "*Auburn diversity still far too low*," MONTGOMERY

ADVERTISER, February 20, 2005



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EDITORIAL

Auburn diversity still far too low



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The elimination of the jobs of two black administrators at Auburn University has refocused attention on the university's abysmal record of racial diversity on campus.

On Thursday, the Alabama Legislature's Black Caucus put Auburn President Ed Richardson on the hot seat, urging him to rehire the two black athletic administrators and chastising him for Auburn's record on racial diversity.

Richardson responded that he is committed to increasing the number of minority administrators, telling the legislators: "Ask me back one year from now, and if I don't have any improvements to show you, then skin me."

The interim president at Auburn should be careful about the promises he makes, or he could end up with his hide on the wall of the Black Caucus meeting room next year. Similar commitments to improving diversity by his predecessors have produced only marginal results.

It will take more than hiring two or three administrators at Auburn to really change the diversity picture there.

Consider the following statistics, keeping in mind that 26 percent of the state's population is black:

Ê 1,710 black students were among the university's total enrollment of 22,928 this past fall, or almost 7.5 percent. While that is up from the 6.8 percent black enrollment at Auburn five years ago, progress on diversity is clearly painfully slow.

Ê Only 74 black students were among the 1,387 freshman who enrolled this past fall, or about 5.3 percent. However, blacks made up about 9.7 percent of the 3,594 transfer students who enrolled.

Ê In fall 2003, 54 black full-time faculty members comprised 4.7 percent of the total full-time faculty.

Ê The 14 black administrators in 2003 made up about 4.3 percent of the total number of administrators. (An Auburn spokesman said it would be early this week before the university could provide more up-to-date numbers for administrators or faculty.)

Ê Even at the top the university board of trustees the commitment to diversity is questionable. Two of the 14 trustees are African American, or 14 percent. While that is a higher percentage than black enrollment, faculty members or administrators, it is still short of the racial makeup of the state.

Do these numbers mean that reorganizing the administration of the athletic

ON THE WEB

To see further statistics and information on Auburn University diversity efforts, go to the university's Office of Diversity and Multi-Cultural Affairs' Web site at:
www.auburn.edu/oma/about.htm

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department must be off limits if it results in the elimination of positions filled by blacks? (Three positions were cut, including one filled by a white administrator.) Not necessarily. If the jobs were not needed, and if they were not being eliminated as a ploy to remove the black administrators, perhaps the changes can be justified.

The cutbacks also need to be viewed in the total context of the changes Richardson has been making at Auburn. These three athletic department positions are far from the only recent reductions. Since Richardson assumed his already lengthy interim status as president, he has lopped several key administrators from the payroll.

But considering the university's diversity history, Richardson should not have been surprised by the outcry over the changes.

Some points need to be made in fairness to Auburn. First, Auburn is not the only state-funded campus in Alabama with problems attracting minority students and faculty. (And the state's two majority black campuses don't come close to reflecting the state's racial makeup, either). Second, progress has been made at Auburn over the past decade, even if it is was glacially slow. Third, there does seem to be a pattern across the nation where colleges located away from urban centers have trouble attracting black students and faculty members alike.

But that having been said, Auburn (and several other public colleges in Alabama) must do a much better job of attracting minority students and faculty members. If Richardson comes back before the Legislature in a year without being able to show substantial increases in the number of black administrators at Auburn, as well as continued progress in attracting minority students and faculty members, he deserves to lose his hide.



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