

LORAS COLLEGE SUSPENDS  
SIXTEEN BLACK STUDENTS

November 8, 1969

Monsignor Justin A. Driscoll, president of Loras College, Saturday approved the recommendation of the Committee on Discipline that sixteen black students be indefinitely suspended from Loras for their participation in the Monday, November 3 occupation of Henion Manor and the eviction of Loras staff members assigned to the Offices of that building. The indefinite suspensions are effective immediately, November 8, 1969.

The nine man committee established the fact of violation of the rules of Loras College, specifically Regulation 15, 3 b and d of Section IV B, of the Loras College Student Handbook, which read as follows:

"Any student or group of students who disrupts or contributes to the disruption of the orderly operation of the College, or interferes with a duly authorized college program or activity, and thereby infringes upon the rights of others will be liable to suspension."

"The presence of a student in a demonstrating group after an oral warning to disperse has been given by the Dean of Students or a hall director will be considered evidence that the student is a part of the demonstration."

The Committee stated: "We recommend that in light of the violation of the aforesaid regulations, the students involved should receive an indefinite suspension from Loras College. However, in view of the extenuating facts and fundamental and far-reaching issues involved in this case, we recommend that clemency be considered by the President in implementing this judgment in order that the college might restructure a positive, clearly defined Black Program."

2-2-2

The recommendations of the Committee were submitted to the President of the institution. He approved the indefinite suspensions, but stated that he does not believe the facts of the cases warrant a grant of clemency.

The President, however, did recommend that the cases for readmission may be reviewed after July 1970.

Six black students did not participate in the occupation of Henion Manor and are unaffected by the committee's decision.

The Committee on Discipline was in deliberation for twelve hours over a two day period.

A review of the Black Cultural Center proposal which precipitated the action reveals the following facts:

1. In September of 1969, Loras College provided a large room on the fifth floor of Keane Hall for black cultural purposes.

2. On October 16, Msgr. Driscoll received a formal petition for a non-residential Black Culture House "to be situated near the Loras campus, and be furnished by the school for the conveniency and comfort of the students." This petition was immediately taken to the Board of Regents (October 17) and the off-campus house was refused, but an on-campus facility was offered, and Loras agreed to "provide the room-space, the utilities of heat, light, and other utilities." Likewise, a Special Committee was appointed to study the details of the on-campus facility. Appointed to that committee were:

3-3-3

Rev. Stanley J. Hayek (Dean of Students)  
Mr. Gerard B. Noonan (Registrar)  
Mr. Ocia Drake (Black Student)  
Mr. Thomas Jackson (Black Student)  
Mr. Patrick Winn (Student Senate)

Mr. Noonan, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Winn are also members of Faculty, Administration and Students Together (FAST) - a Loras committee to assist minority-group and special students.

3. On October 29 a number of black students called on Msgr. Driscoll to express their dissatisfaction with the offer without giving the Special Study Committee an opportunity to consider the problem.

4. On Sunday evening, November 2, the black students distributed printed materials throughout the residence halls at Loras making many charges and allegations.

5. At 1:15 p. m. , Monday, November 3, the black students took over Henion Manor on the Loras campus. Three attempts were made by the administration to discuss the matter with the students. They were requested by the Dean of Students to leave the building, and the President interviewed their representatives in front of Henion Manor.

Negotiations were carried on Monday night by representatives of the black students and the administration, and the President renewed a commitment which the Loras Administration had made and which was conveyed to the black students through the Dean of Students in a letter dated October 26, 1969. This commitment was to the effect that space would be allocated on campus for a Black Cultural Center. At 2:30 in the morning of November 4, the black students evacuated Henion Manor.

4-4-4

6. The offer of facilities in Smyth Hall for a Black Cultural Center was reiterated by Msgr. Driscoll at a press conference called by the black students on the morning of Tuesday, November 4.

Msgr. Driscoll said Saturday that Loras College has been deeply interested in the welfare of black students, and has looked on its contribution to the education of black students as an obligation of considerable importance. To that end, the College has made available scholarships, federal grants and loans, work grants, and other forms of financial assistance; it has hired a part time black counselor; it has instituted a program of black studies; it has adopted a new program this fall of academic counseling and special assistance for those black students whose academic preparation is marginal.

" In our opinion, we have used every available means consonant with our resources and educational goals to fulfill the academic and other requirements of black students," Msgr. Driscoll stated.

He concluded that "whatever may be our desire to further the education of these students, we cannot tolerate from any student--despite his race or background--the flagrant violation of serious college regulations. The decision to suspend indefinitely these students has been made with deep regret, but with a realization that no other justifiable course of action was open."