

December 9 , 1969

TO: Rutgers University- Camden Faculty and Students
FROM: Urban University Department Staff
RE: Report on the Urban University Department

Background: In March, 1969, The Board of Governors established the policies which led to the establishment of the Urban University Department. By September, the University planned to admit recent graduates of high schools in Camden, Newark and New Brunswick who were economically disadvantaged, and who were not academically prepared for regular admission. The University committed itself to providing tuition expenses, and supportive instruction and counseling to allow these students to move as fast as possible into full college programs.

Over the summer of 1969, Staff was recruited at each of the campuses, under the direction of a local director (appointed by the Provost), and students who were eligible under the Board of Governors' guidelines were admitted.

Admissions and Registration: 190 students were admitted before the closing of admissions in late August. Of these, 177 registered. As of early December, 145 of the original 177 were still in attendance, most of whom were planning to continue in the Spring semester.

Early Problems in the Program: The original committment to provide assistance to students only for tuition, fees and books was criticized by staff and advisory committees from the beginning. It was clear that many UUD students would require additional financial assistance. Some of the 32 students who left in the first months of the program did so for financial reasons. The same pattern was reported from the Newark and New Brunswick Campuses. By mid-October, however, state Equal Opportunity Grant monies were ear-marked as available to UUD students, as well as other federal monies. Students were able to process applications for such aid through the Financial Aid office of the Dean of Student's office, and temporary loans against the forthcoming grants helped to ease some of the more severe problems.

Another significant problem developed out of the late scheduling of students during the summer. Most College of South Jersey courses were fully pre-registered prior to the admission of UUD students, so a limited number of courses open to freshmen without pre-requisites were available. UUD students were offered very little choice in their program. Thus, many students had a justifiable complaint that their program was written for them, without any significant freedom to choose courses of interest to them or related to their proposed fields of major. Some corrections of these difficulties were made during the change of registration period, and further changes were made in November through petition for withdrawal.

One other problem was the fact that the skills courses made available were designed and implemented without any significant pre-planning period.

Therefore, individual instructors in the skills courses worked from different premises and towards different goals. Some students found the work in different skills courses duplicating work already taken, others found the work either too elementary or too irrelevant to their own goals in education to be effective. Planning to co-ordinate the curriculum of the skills courses has gone forward, and agreed-upon syllabi and course objectives will be available well before the Spring semester. Many students were critical of the style and content of the courses from the beginning, and hopefully the new curricula will reflect some of the suggested changes and criticisms.

BSUM Proposed Demands: Due to the fact that no channels existed at the outset of the program for expression of student opinion, students active in the BSUM presented 11 proposed demands to the staff of the UUD in November. These proposals were all constructive. The proposals have provided the basis for discussions as to improvement of the program. It should be noted however, that the proposed demands do not represent the views of all of the UUD students, as many of the UUD students have pointed out at meetings and in group discussions. For this reason, the staff is now evaluating the proposals with UUD students and discussing a variety of suggestions for representative elections and UUD student representative elections and UUD student representation, so that the views and opinions of the total UUD student body can be solicited and can become part of the decision-making process.

Prospects: Students are making progress towards the basic goal of rapid movement into the full college program. Almost all the students are increasing the number of credit courses planned for next semester, during the pre-registration. Not all UUD students are failing their credit courses, nor are all those failing freshman courses UUD students. A number are receiving honor grades in early college work and others are performing at an average level. It is true, however, that for many UUD students, further effective work in UUD skills courses and further experience with college study demands will be required before a full program of college courses can be carried with success. Any general statement regarding performance of UUD students is inaccurate for at least some of the students, due to the wide individual variation in the group.

1970-1971: Admission to next year's UUD program is already proceeding. Mr. Tom Warren, in the Admissions office, is coordinating recruiting and admissions work in this office, and should be contacted regarding details of admission. The Talent Search office in the Bureau of Community Services will continue recruiting services for UUD, and provide counseling regarding college admission and applications. It is anticipated that the program will be larger both in number of students and in number of staff serving the needs of the students. The difficulties deriving from the rapid implementation of the program should be ironed out well in advance of the Fall semester.

Cooperation with other Departments: Discussions are currently underway regarding closer cooperation between the Urban University Department and the Office of the Dean of Students, the Departments of Mathematics, English, Philosophy and History