Annual Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Human Rights, 1964-65

The Committee on Human Rights established three components for its work during the academic year now drawing to a close, each of which will be considered in greater detail in the report which follows:

1. A critical review of the functioning of this Committee at UWM, including comparison with its counterpart's work at Madison.

2. Consideration of any problems that might exist involving racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination in the areas of housing for students and faculty and of recognized campus organizations, especially the fraternities and sororities.

3. An examination of the University's general policy and conduct in areas involving human rights, with a view to making recommendations to the Faculty and Administration should such seem needed.

In addition to working on this agenda, the Committee, with the aid of graduate student volunteers, urged faculty participation in the Milwaukee demonstration dealing with the crisis in Selma. Faculty were contacted by both broadsides and telephone, and a group was organized to leave from the Civic Center Campus for those who wished to participate but for various reasons could not depart from the UWM Union or the already established starting points in the city. About 150 non-student University personnel joined in the march and the mass meeting, and we believe this meant a great deal to the students who were involved.

The Committee also circulated to the Faculty both a resolution from the Second Inter-University Conference on the Negro and a relevant excerpt from the Report of the UWM ad hoc Committee on Minority Problems.

I. The Functioning of the Committee

The records of previous Human Rights Committees at UWM were reviewed, as were documents detailing the history of the Human Rights Committee at Madison and its present lines of action. The latter work was supplemented by a meeting with Mrs. Ruth Doyle, the special assistant to the Human Rights Committee at Madison. Several conclusions were drawn from this work:

1. Although for several years the Human Rights Committee at UWM was quite active with respect to problems of discrimination in housing, employment, and campus organizations, that level of activity had not been maintained and the various efforts of the Committee seemed to have relatively little continuity and cumulation in their impact on the University.

2. This seemed to result in good part from:

   a. The failure to maintain the broad conception of the functions of this Committee that has prevailed at Madison during the past decade and

   b. The lack of resources provided for the work of the Committee in Madison by both its student members and its special assistant. The following recommendations are intended to deal with the problem of resources. Our judgments with respect to the proper scope of Committee concerns and actions will be reflected in the next two sections of this report.
1. The Committee recommends passage of the following motion:

Be it moved that the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Committee on Human Rights consist of:

a. Three members of the Faculty, to be nominated and elected according to presently established procedures.

b. The Director of the Institute of Human Relations, to be appointed as ex-officio member with full voting rights.

c. Three members of the student body, also with full voting rights, one of whom will be appointed by Student Government, one by the Dean of Student Affairs, and one jointly by the Panhellenic Council and the Interfraternity Council.

2. The Committee recommends to the Human Rights Committee for 1965-66 and the Institute of Human Relations that every effort be made to arrange procedures whereby the Institute could facilitate and support the activities of the Committee in the coming and future years of its work.

II. Discrimination in Housing and Campus Organizations

Although the Human Rights Committee during its more active years has displayed concern for problems of discrimination in recognized student organizations and in the employment of students, the area of concern which in the past has received the most continuing attention has been University-approved private housing. The planned expansion of UWM and the recruitment of a larger proportion of Negro students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels forecast increasing rather than diminishing problems in this area. It was the intention of the Committee this year to engage in some preliminary study of the problem and then to consult with those officials in the Administration most directly involved. Available time and energy permitted only the first of these two steps, which led to two conclusions and a recommendation for the future: With respect to conclusions, it seems clear that in the past consultation between the Committee and Administrative personnel has led to some minor symbolic actions (such as letters to those on the approved housing list reaffirming the University's policy of non-discrimination in housing) but no effort had been made to determine in a systematic way, what problems students from racial minority groups actually encounter; the absence of specific complaints to Administration personnel has been taken by them in the past as adequate evidence that the problem is practically non-existent. However, an informal inquiry of a systematic sort by the Student Equality Fellowship and experiences of Negro students reported to non-Administrative personnel suggest that the problem may be very great and that what does not exist are adequate means for determining its extent and dealing with it. The Committee therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. The Human Rights Committee for 1965-66 and the relevant Administrative personnel should jointly secure a systematic study of this problem using the most rigorous of social science procedures; perhaps the Institute of Human Relations could provide the vehicle for conducting such an inquiry.

2. The rights of students to housing without discrimination should be emphasized in the orientation for all incoming students, and forms for filing complaints with respect to suspected discrimination by anyone on the University-approved housing list should be made available to all students and should be easy to utilize; all those on the list should be informed of these actions by the University.
The problem of discrimination by campus organizations has centered upon the fraternities and sororities and has been much greater at Madison than at Milwaukee, where all organizations meet superficial and formalistic criterion (no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or ethnicity actually required by constitution or by-laws) presently used by the Administration. It is clear that this is an area of joint concern for the Human Rights Committee, the Student Life and Interest Committee, the Panhellenic Council and the Interfraternity Council, and the Administration. An effort to establish proper boundaries and joint procedures between the two Faculty committees was made at UWM in the past but subsequently appears to have been disregarded. The Committee strongly urges a series of conferences early next Fall among the groups just named to review the issues and the facts in this area of concern.

III. General University Policy and Conduct

In its memorandum to the Faculty of January 18, 1965, the Committee indicated that it would urge the Faculty to review and evaluate the University's implementation of the resolution of the Second Inter-University Conference on the Negro, calling for elimination of discrimination in all educational institutions and the remedying of its destructive consequences even though many of the causes lie outside the formal boundaries of the institution, and of the recommendation of the UWM ad hoc Committee on Minority Problems that the University concern itself with whatever blocks the development of individual talents through higher education, including characteristics of the social and cultural patterns of the larger society. Important progress has been made with respect to the first of these recommendations, and the Committee wishes to commend those in the University--faculty members, administrators, and students--who have taken such implementing actions as the establishment of the Institute of Human Relations, the programs for recruiting and aiding Negro students--especially those from backgrounds of low opportunity, the exchange program with Negro colleges, the Student Equality Fellowship, the Student Tutorial Group, and the All-UWM Human Relations Council created by the student conference held by the Institute of Human Relations. Also to be commended are the strong policy statements from the highest levels of University Administration.

With respect to the second recommendation, calling attention to the continuing efforts of social and cultural patterns in the larger society on life within the University, less progress is presently evident. The Committee therefore recommends passage of the following resolution:

Whereas the development of a profound appreciation for and commitment to the values of democratic pluralism and equal opportunity should be among the goals of education in the United States, including higher education; and whereas the development of such appreciation and commitment is inhibited by socialization within an environment characterized by segregation; and whereas the environment of the UWM student includes the areas contiguous to the campus as well as the campus itself; therefore be it resolved that:

1. The Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee urges that the creation of a pluralistic community--heterogeneous in its racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic composition--in the areas contiguous to the UWM Campus be made an official goal of the University to be implemented by all direct and indirect means available to the University,

2. The Faculty urges that the Planning Office of the University be assigned the task of developing a plan for such a community conjointly with its planning for the physical environment of the University, and
3. The Faculty pledges its full support to such an endeavor, including the contribution of whatever relevant resources and expertise it has among its own ranks.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

W. Bloomberg, Jr., Chairman
R. Hart
J. Teahan