

January 31, 1964

SUBJECT: Organization of the Students from Georgia Tech, Agnes Scott College, and Emory University

TO: James Foreman
SNCC

FROM: Rick Stevens
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1. During the past few weeks definite attempts have been made towards the organization of the college students at Agnes Scott College, Emory University, and Georgia Tech. The total student population of these three universities is near 12,600 white students and about 15 Negro students. (All three colleges are integrated and are accepting Negro students each year.)

2. It was discovered that through various organizations several small campus groups have voiced open opinion sympathizing with the "movement" and have sparsely participated in various demonstrations throughout Atlanta. The majority of these students do not know what is happening in Atlanta now, do not know what is planned for the future, and why the events are anticipated and are being planned. These students have indicated a strong desire to keep up-to-date on the events in the Atlanta area and throughout the South, but have no media through which to find out the information they want.

3. These three colleges have a very good representation of the finest students in the South. The colleges are very conservative (as most southern universities are) but do have comparatively large segments of students within them who are extremely sympathetic with the activities of SNCC and other similar organizations through the South.

4. It is my opinion that these students ought to be brought up-to-date on the activities of the civil rights organizations in the South and be given tangible ways that they, as a group or individually, might be able to aid in the cause.

PROPOSALS AND PLANS:

5. I am holding a meeting of these students (ones that I have contacted personally) on Saturday (February 1) at my apartment to discuss the void information outlined in paragraphs 1-4 above. I have almost fifty students who are planning to come, with a group planning to bring friends.

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6. The meeting will include:

a. Danny Lyons is planning to talk to the group on the organization and aims of SNCC, what is being planned for the future, and what has been done in the past. He will include the successes and failures of SNCC and the activity of the other committees in the South, to include their aims and organization. He will also give any way that we, as students, might be able to help SNCC in their aims and any plans that are open during the summer which might interest this group.

b. Sam Shira has told me that he will be back from Nashville in time to speak to the group on his plans and proposals-- particularly the proposition of an eventual all white picket line.

c. Two students from Morehouse and two students from Spelman are going to speak on: why the students in the Negro community are behind the movement and behind SNCC. They are going to try to convey the feeling of the Negro community and "why they want total desegregation now and not a year from now". It has been my opinion that this is extremely hard for the white community to totally understand, but I do not doubt that this group will be able to accept it as these Negro students relay it.

d. Following these speakers we plan to conduct a group discussion between everyone about the possibilities of introducing various proposals on our campuses and what we will be able to do as a group or individually.

7. I plan to continue these meetings each Saturday for the next few months and after a period of time space them out as deemed necessary depending on activity.

8. I firmly believe that this will bring these students together as a group in a much better way than if done through each individual college. The ideas will be given as a collective group and discussed as they would be conducted on each individual college campus.

9. Names will be kept by myself and a complete mailing list will be maintained and given to SNCC (if desired). Literature concerning the activities will be distributed as they are received from SNCC on Saturday.

10. Plans are definitely being pursued to talk to the eight individual religious organizations on the Georgia Tech campus about the "movement" and the operation of SNCC. I have already spoken to the Baptist Student Union and the Episcopal Canterbury and both organizations have received the proposals very well. Both these organizations have been spoken to previously by myself concerning the beginning of an exchange between similar religious organizations on the Negro college campuses in the Atlanta area and throughout Georgia. Both have begun to do this and have definite dates planned for the future. Through these small individual organizational activities I believe the student body of Georgia Tech (as well as the other two universities) will be better able to accept a big
PUSH LATER.

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11. Concerning definite desegregation attempts or at least a movement in that direction: I mentioned to a very influential member of the Georgia Tech administration that The Varsity was one of the establishments in the Atlanta area which is being considered as the scene of possible demonstrations providing they refuse to desegregate. This was done as an attempt to discover if the administration of Georgia Tech would act collectively or inidvually in requesting that this place be desegregated prior to any demonstrations. The reaction that I received was as I had expected; one of almost panic. The student body of Georgia Tech, particularly the almost 3,000 students in the dormitories immediately across the expressway from The Varsity, have demonstrated that in the past any small bit of excitement will succeed in drawing them away from their rooms in order to investigate the commotion. The fact of some sort of activity at The Varsity above and beyond the normal amount of commotion would attract almost everyone of the students in this dormitory area. Just the Number of students congregating here in a already extremely congested area would almost immediately precipitate a situation bordering on mass violence. Because of the possibility of demonstrations at The Varsity, definite attempts have been made and are being made to get the students ready for this event if and when it is necessary for SNCC to demonstrate. Besides my appeal for the school to take these precautionary measures (which are serving a dual purpose; the second one being that of informing these students that "something" is happening in the city of Atlanta and that the demonstrations are beginning to effect these students more than they have in the past) I made an additional appeal for the faculty and administration to ask Mr. Gordy (the owner of The Varsity) to desegregate his facility thereby (from the point of view of the school and that of Mr. Gordy) preventing any possible demonstrations bringing about almost definite violence. The administration had stated that it will not come out openly and definitely supporting measures towards immediate total desegregation of Atlanta but that it will make attempts (through influential individuals) to appeal to the establishments surrounding the Georgia Tech campus and those patronized by the students. A measure that is being initially done is that of having the captain of the campus security force approach Mr. Gordy asking him if he knew of the eminence of a demonstration at his place if he was not to desegregate. The security chief is not going to ask him to immediately desegregate, but is going to act as sort of a "spring board" for further measures to be taken by officials of the administration. If necessary the president of the school will request it of the manager to desegregate. It will be necessary that I work on this from my position as a student and one who has been working with SNCC and one who is aware of what is happening in Atlanta. At this time (or can I even see in the future concerning this) there is no need to consider demonstrations at The Varsity because of the almost fruitless possibility of maintaining a state of non-violence at this place. If you desire for me to detail a further report on this place concerning desegregation, I will be very willing. I will submit follow-up reports concerning this and any other programs I have previously mentioned.

Richard L. Henry