

[1964]

SNCC file

SOUTHERN COLLEGE CAMPUS PROGRAM (Campus Travellers)

I. Purpose of the Program

The Southern College Campus Program is designed to bring about an awareness of the social change in our country and the need for college students to participate. Also to bridge the gap between centers of learning and the work-a-day communities. We hope to organize and guide college communities to some local inequalities of their immediate community and the city community and to perpetuate new ideas on a broad scope and at the same time motivate the students. Also to develop, build and strengthen indigenous leadership. In addition, we hope to bring about a relationship between SNCC and the Southern Negro Colleges for reasons of recruitment, research, scholarships, work-study, and political awareness and its effects on the economics of the country.

II. Background

The Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee was born out of the history making sit-in movement that erupted across the South in the Spring of 1960. At Easter of that year, the first Southwide meeting of sit-in leaders was held in Raleigh, N.C. Here a temporary committee to promote communication and coordination of activities among protest groups was set up. This group met monthly during the summer, opened an office in Atlanta, and at a second conference held in Atlanta, October 1960, SNCC was formally organized. One representative from each Southern state and the District of Columbia made up the Coordinating Committee.

Participation in the Freedom Rides in 1961 and a growing sense of the depth of fear that shackled most Negroes of the South convinced SNCC leaders that someone would have to take the freedom movement to millions of exploited, disenfranchised and degraded Negroes of the Black Belt sections of the South. Thus in 1961, SNCC did just that:

In August 1961 SNCC launched its first voter-registration drive, choosing Walthall, Pike and Amite Counties in Mississippi. This sparked nonviolent direction by hundreds of high school students in McComb, Mississippi, and led to the development of a statewide voter-registration program recently dramatized by the use of snarling police dogs to stop Negroes from registering in Greenwood, Mississippi.

October 1961: SNCC workers went to Albany, Georgia and became a catalytic fuse for the massive protests of the Albany Movement.

By November 1961 some sixteen students had volunteered to take a year or more from school to work in the hard-core areas for subsistence only.

III. Phases of the 1964-1965 College Program

A. Recruitment:

The most important aspect of the program of the campus travelers is that of recruitment. The following are some of the reasons why we think that the colleges are the best places for recruitment. Because the staff of SNCC is composed primarily of students who have interrupted their educational careers either at the high school or college level, it is therefore necessary for these people to participate in the organization on a somewhat transitory basis. When people must leave to return to school, it is mandatory that someone replace them if our work is to continue. We have learned in the past that the colleges have been our greatest reservoir for the replacement of staff members who return to school; therefore one of the primary goals of the campus program is to replace and to add to the present staff of SNCC.

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- B. Scholarships: Southern Negro students often have financial problems when they go to school. these problems often necessitate their working in the summer, and sometimes during the school year. When we ask a student to volunteer to work with us for either one summer, a semester, or even a year, it usually poses a grave financial question in his mind. One way in which we may lighten the burden of the student is to offer him a scholarship when he does decide to return to school. Therefore another aspect of the campus program is that of inquiring about scholarships for students who have worked in the South with SNCC to assist them when they return to school.
- C. Research: This phase of our program can well be implemented on college campuses because it reaches the educational level of the college student and the professor. We want to stimulate student interest in studying and writing compositions and term papers, asking professors to put emphasis on political and social research in their classes in relation to different areas of the South and also the North and in the meantime, we (SNCC) will be allowed to have copies of the research papers. We have mainly appealed to the Department of Social Sciences and English because these are the areas of study that we can clearly relate to on the educational level.
- D. Freedom Schools: At present the Southern Campus Coordinator realizes that the issues and involvements of Freedom Schools are limited in the college community: however, there is need of awareness and understanding of the Freedom Schools by college students and teachers for in this area we are dependent upon their participation. By some technique we must relate the campus community to the structure of the Freedom School and the essential need for their ideas and participation.
- E. Political awareness and how it effects the College Community This phase of our program is somewhat tentative for there is need of more understanding of the FDP and what its goals are, however; we feel that the FDP has something to offer to the College Community and in the meantime there is need for College students to evaluate the Civil Rights Bill and other phases of Government programs and how it relates to them. Also there are hidden issues of politics that have a great bearing on operation of Negro institutions in the South and this in itself is informative and educational into what the plight of the Negro is unless he brings about a change.

