

April 19, 1965

Board of Trustees
Selma University
Selma, Alabama

I, Dorothy M. Rose, Do make the following statement:

I was employed at Selma University for the school years of 1962-63 and 1963-64. While there I taught Business Education. In 1964 I resigned to accept a position with the Federal Government, VAH, Tuskegee, Alabama.

While employed at Selma University I had many difficulties with registration, grade, credit policies and regulations. None of these policies and regulations were written down or distributed either to faculty or students. Rules were made by faculty administration committee meetings, to fit individual situations. The rules, however, were changed often and arbitrarily, and were not applied consistently in similar situations. This made possible manipulation of regulations for or against faculty and students on the basis of personal likes and dislikes.

In my opinion it is worth the Trustees' time to investigate and standardize all the registration, grading and credit policies, procedures and regulations. I believe that these standardized rules should be written down and distributed to all faculty and students before they begin work at the University.

SIGNED: Dorothy M. Rose

WITNESSED:

Charles E. Fager
Howard W. Thompson
Donald C. Malmquist

April 20, 1965

I, Reverend Fairro Brown, pastor of El Bethel, do make the following statement:

In September of 1964, I re-enrolled at Selma University, having attended there full-time in the school year 1957-58, and the summer session of 1964. Mrs. Owens gave to me a list of subjects that I needed to graduate, assuring me that with the completion of these I would be eligible for graduation in January, 1965. Reverend Lee Hayes, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, was given similar information. Both of us were pastors at that time and had duties in the Church necessitating some absences. In January we were informed by Mrs. Owens that we could not graduate. The reason given to us by her was that we had accrued excessive chapel absences. She took a three-hour course away from both of us, which is also the current school policy. Reverend Hayes withdrew from the University. I, however, am continuing for another semester to make up the three-hour course, and pay full tuition.

I had attempted to discuss my situation with Mrs. Owens. I was referred to Dr. Owens, who referred me back to his wife. She sent me back to him. Receiving no consideration and being certain that this was the administration's way of avoiding the question, I dropped my complaint. There was no board of appeal to receive my petition.

I have eliminated chapel absences, however helpful to my pastoral duties that time might be, except for those necessitated by travel, and for these I am penalized.

signed: Fairro Brown

witness: Tish Fager

witness: Dennis Coleman

April 18, 1965

I, Benny L. Tucker, do make the following statement:

In 1963, I attended Selma University summer session. I received an A and a B+ on the examination for two courses, "Acts of the Apostles," and "Evangelism." The tests were the only graded work in the courses. The tests are now in my possession. I had a few cuts in these courses, but not enough to get put out of class or failed. The grade card for the summer session was never mailed to my home. During this time I was working with the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee, doing voter registration work in this area.

I worked with SNCC full-time during the period September through December 1963. In January, 1964, I attempted to re-enroll at Selma University for the second semester of the 1963-64 academic year. At this time President Owens said that I could not be enrolled. The reason, he stated, was because of my grades. When I asked him which grades, he replied that I had received F's in the two summer session courses, "Acts of the Apostles," and "Evangelism." I called Dr. M.C. Cleveland, Sr., chairman of the Board of Trustees, to register a protest. Dr. Cleveland met with me and Dr. Owens on January 22, 1964, in Dr. Owens' office. When I brought up the change in my grades, Dr. Owens ignored it, and never showed any record of the grades to support his claim that I had failed. He asserted that he would resign before he would allow me to re-enroll at Selma University. He offered, however, to recommend me to another school.

I have not attended Selma University since that time. I would like to do so, if possible.

signed: Benny L. Tucker

witness: Charles E. Fager

witness: Dennis Coleman

April 19, 1965

To the Board of Trustees

I, Shirley M. Crear, do make the following statements:

I worked at the Registrar Office of Selma University during the period of September, 1962, through February, 1963. During that period, I worked two hours a day in the Office of the Registrar and two hours a day supervising the practice periods of beginning typists.

The following is a description of Registrar Office policies as I encountered them during this period:

I. Slowness of routine office activities

1. Students often do not know whether they are in good academic standing. This is because grades are not compiled efficiently and notices not posted promptly. These things occurred frequently while I worked in the office.

2. Many students were sent home because of failure to meet grade standards. These students were not notified until after registration and paying all tuition fees for the second semester.

II. Lack of definite written rules and policies and procedures, for registration credits, transfer, and graduation.

1. I never saw a written statement of policies and procedure, for registration, credits, transfer, and graduation. No one that I talked to had ever seen one either.

2. I was told that rules were made by vote at teacher's meetings. Many teachers, however, could not recall ever voting on many of these rules. Nor were any of these rules ever written down or made available to the faculty or student body for reference. This makes possible manipulation of rules and records on a personal basis for or against particular students, and I often heard rumors of such manipulations.

III. Transfer and graduation requirements

1. Students often were not notified of rejection of transfer credits until after they had begun a course of study not including the transfer credits.

2. Students were often not notified of deficiencies in graduation requirements until late in the semester during which they expected to graduate.

Signed: Shirley M. Crear

Witness: Dennis W. Coleman

Witness: Charles E. Fager

April 19, 1965

I, Charles E. Fager, do make the following statement:

I am employed by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and have been working in Selma since January 2, 1965. On March 8 of this year I entered the Selma University campus with the intention of speaking to the students regarding the beating of 600 Selma Negroes the day before. Dr. Owens ordered me to leave the campus, and I did. This was about 10:00 AM. One hour later I returned to the campus and succeeded in speaking to students briefly during their regular class meetings. Dr. Owens ordered me to leave once again, and demanded that I cease "brainwashing," "coercing," and "intimidating" his students. I again left the campus.

That afternoon several dozen students demonstrated and picketed on the campus in protest of Dr. Owens' actions. I did not participate in the demonstration. As the students and I were leaving the campus, Officer Nichols of the Selma City Police Department drove up. He told me that the school had signed a complaint against my being on the campus, and that if I did not leave a warrant would be signed and I would be arrested. Since we were leaving at the time he came, I complied with his advice and again left the campus.

Since that time I have been involved in trying to procure books, funds and personnel for Selma University in order that the institution may improve its facilities and increase its chances for accreditation.

signed: Charles E. Fager

Witness: Howard W. Thompson
Witness: Dennis W. Coleman
Witness: Donald C. Melquist

April 20, 1965

I, Charles Bonner, do make the following statement:

On December 8, 1964, I left Selma and went to Michigan to attend my grandfather's funeral. On the morning of December 8, my mother, Mrs. Bernice Bonner, called the Dean of Men, Dean Akins, to inform him that I would be leaving for a few days, because of the death in the family. Dean Akins told her that he would tell the Registrar about it, and everything would be OK. She said he told her that I wouldn't get any cuts. When I returned I found I was out of all of my classes, and that before I could get back in them, I would have to pay the school money. The reason for this, the Registrar said, was that I didn't leave a written statement in her office stating that I would be out of class, and for how long. I had never heard of such a rule before that time, and, apparently, neither had the Dean of Men, because he told my mother that the absences would be taken care of. I have, in fact, never seen a written copy of the rules and policies to which I am subject. To my knowledge, no other student has seen any of the regulations, either.

(signed): Charles Bonner

(witnessed): Janet Fisor Baker

(witnessed): Dennis Coleman