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April 8, 1968

TO: ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

I am sure you have seen reports of certain unfortunate developments at Tuskegee Institute which caused the cancellation of Founder's Day activities and the temporary closing of school.

The letter which follows presents the student issues and Board responses. The committee representing students found the answers unacceptable and intensified their blockage of the normal use of Dorothy Hall and in other ways accelerated campus confusion.

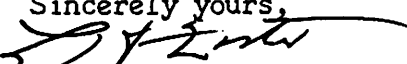
Trustees and others were unable to leave the building until late in the evening; subsequently, the Macon County Sheriff--with the assistance of the National Guard and the Alabama State Patrol--came to the campus to check the law and order situation. There was no direct student-police confrontation and the Sheriff and other law officers left the campus after about two hours.

These developments grew out of a complex of personal, local, national, and international influences at a time of great uneasiness almost everywhere. While only a small fraction of the campus was directly involved in the disruptive activities and in the pursuit of their program demands to a point of uncompromising unreality, there were many on the fringes who were easily led to thoughtless actions. There were, undoubtedly, some influences from off-campus but that was not compelling in the situation. The vast majority of students were opposed to these disruptive tactics and wished for reasonable solutions to the issues. Unfortunately, it is not easy to galvanize the many "quiet ones"--in this or any situation--sufficiently to offset the intransigent influences of a determined small core.

The school is now closed for at least two weeks. We shall be examining carefully the credentials of students and determining their eligibility for return. Legal action will undoubtedly be taken in some cases. In addition, we have many things to do in clarifying and implementing program changes that have been decided on in recent weeks by faculty, students, administration and the Board of Trustees.

This has been a difficult and unhappy experience for us all. We can only hope--and with some reason for optimism as we read the history of Tuskegee and of society generally--that we shall all be stronger, wiser, and more dedicated in our efforts to enable Tuskegee to serve young people in the finest possible way. Your sustained interest and support are always a genuine help.

Sincerely yours,


L. H. Foster, President

L. H. FOSTER, PRESIDENT

H. K. LOGAN, VICE PRESIDENT
FOR BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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FOUNDED BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, 1881

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NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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April 6, 1968

TO: THE STUDENTS OF TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee Institute, I am sending to all Tuskegee students this response to several matters presented to the Board on yesterday by your student committee. So that there may be wide understanding of the issues before us and the position of the Board, we are also making this information available to members of the faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as to the parents of Tuskegee students.

We have been pleased to note the deep concern of Tuskegee students that the work of this institution be further strengthened and that its purposes be kept clear and consonant with the needs of Tuskegee students. The Trustees are committed to the zealous pursuit of these purposes and we will continue to seek the large amount of money and make the broad program decisions required to achieve our Tuskegee goals.

The President of the Institute has discussed many of these matters with the Board, and it is clearly evident that several issues have either been fully resolved or are well under way to solution. Specifically, the following items have been concluded as mentioned in President Foster's letter to you of March 25:

2. Representative representation on all Institute and Departmental Policy Making Boards involving students. Voted by the faculty on March 26 and details now being worked out.
3. Reinstatement of Student Judicial System. Done on March 26.
4. Moderation of disciplinary action against students, stemming from protest demonstrations in mid-March. Done on March 28.
5. Extension of library hours. Done on April 1.
6. Establishment of a "publications" requirement for faculty. Referred to all employing departments for their serious consideration.
7. Furnishing course outline and information about grading system by each teacher at the beginning of the semester. Done on April 1.

8. Revision of the speaker policy. Voted by the Faculty on April 4, following intensive study by a committee of students and faculty.
9. Clarification of the status of "required, stated-electives, and free electives." Done on April 1.
10. Clarification of the role of the Dean of Students. Under active consideration and will be done not later than the beginning of the new school year.

In addition, the Board advises you at this time of its decision on two other items from the President's letter of March 25.

1. Voluntary ROTC. The Board has carefully reviewed the concerns of students, faculty, and administration in this matter. It has considered the purposes of the Institute and particularly the educational implications of major changes in the program. The Board is greatly impressed by the decisions of the Educational Council and the full faculty in response to the specific recommendations of a faculty committee which studied this matter. We have also the recommendation of the President endorsing the action of the faculty. The Board, after careful deliberation, can find no reason to act on this issue different from the determination of the faculty and President. Accordingly:
The requirement of ROTC for the sophomore year will be eliminated, beginning in the fall of 1968, with the result that all freshman men will be expected to take the course but ROTC will be voluntary for all students beyond the freshman year. A more detailed statement of this program is included in the report of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, dated April 2, 1968.
11. Scholarships for Athletes. The Trustees have studied this matter in some depth and are cognizant of the complexities involved. The Board has approved recommendation of the President that the awarding of scholarships to students include a careful assessment of student potential such as athletic, musical, dramatic, leadership, and other constructive talents. We have noted also the vote of students--by a wide margin--that they would be willing to assess themselves a \$10 per semester fee to assist in financing a broadened scholarship program for athletes and other students with special talents. Accordingly:
Provision will be made in next year's budget for additional scholarships for athletes substantially along lines of recommendation #11 in President Foster's letter of March 25; a broadened program of scholarship awards will be provided for all students; and a special fee of \$10 per semester will be charged students to assist in financing this new program.

We were presented on yesterday with a "Mandate" describing several program improvements the students of Tuskegee Institute desire us to implement at once. The deep concern of Tuskegee students in the work of this institution is reflected, in part, by this document; and the Board has found the experience of studying this with you to be most interesting. Some of the matters have already been attended to; others require careful consideration of faculty and administration in order to determine specific feasibility and timing; and still others will need substantial new financing if they are to be introduced at a proper level of quality. We respond now as fully as we can to your presentation as we understand it:

General Philosophy - A Black University Concept. Consideration of people in the world context in which they live is of continuing concern. Tuskegee Institute has throughout its history been particularly sensitive to the unusual needs of its students and the requirement to provide a variety of special experiences and orientations so they would be able to live effectively in the world. The questions you raise deserve the gravest consideration, and it is our intention to see that this is done over the coming months through the comprehensive study of Tuskegee's future role and scope. In this endeavor, students will have ample opportunity to share in the deliberations and this important long-term planning.

Academic Revisions and Implementations: Improvement of the Current Academic Situation. The President has advised the Board that the specific questions raised by you in this area, involving the offering of additional courses and the initiation of an African Studies Program, will be referred immediately to the Tuskegee faculty for consideration.

Policies Regarding Speakers, Civil and Political Activities. Voted by the faculty on April 3 and approved by the President. Publication of the revised statement will be done during the week of April 8.

Proposal on Research and Publication. Your request that faculty evaluation rest heavily upon a requirement that each faculty member be engaged in research and publication poses a number of problems, including the matter of financing large blocks of faculty time for research. We concur in the President's proposal to have the faculty give serious study to your request in the immediate future.

Education. Tuskegee recently underwent a comprehensive evaluation of its teacher preparation programs by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and we expect the results of that study during the summer. Undoubtedly it will be helpful in making more specific the general recommendations in your Mandate. Particularly as regards the special problems of black people, there will be opportunity for working this out carefully in the Tuskegee Future Role and Scope Study, mentioned earlier in this letter. In the meantime, we concur in the President's plan to refer your recommendation immediately to the School of Education for such specific actions as may be appropriate and for careful study and discussion with students in Tuskegee's teacher preparation programs.

The School of Mechanical Industries Committee Report. The Board regrets that it has not been possible to raise all the money required for the further strengthening of this program along lines outlined in your Mandate. Several things are now under way which we believe will be significantly helpful: (1) combining the agriculture-home economics-mechanical industries programs into a new School of Applied Sciences so as to establish a more clear-cut and vigorous thrust for these programs; (2) recently approving the purchase of equipment to meet some of the needs expressed by you; and (3) accelerating the architectural work for renovation of facilities in the Willcox Halls. We concur in the President's proposal to refer your requests to the faculty for further immediate study and consultation with student representatives.

Voluntary ROTC. The Board's response on this matter has already been presented on page 2 of this letter.

Engineering. It is hoped that a full resolution of the concerns in the School of Engineering can be worked out in time for classes to resume on April 8.

Fine Arts School. This would be a major undertaking requiring extensive study and substantial financing--both for physical facilities and for support of the annual budget. We acknowledge the important contribution that would be made to Tuskegee's program if a Fine Arts School could be established, and it would certainly afford important new career development opportunities. The President has proposed that your request be referred to the College of Arts and Sciences faculty with the request that it arrange for study of the possibilities, drawing on other faculty personnel--such as the Department of Architecture--that could be helpful in establishing the dimensions of this major suggestion from the student body. We concur in the President's plan.

Free Student Press. The relationships of a student press to the faculty and administration of an institution, including such matters as liability to the public, accountability for fees collected to support the paper, and responsibility of the paper to the entire student body present a complex problem. The President advises us that the basic elements of this concern were considered by the Educational Council a few weeks ago at the time when approval of the "Statement on Student Rights and Freedom" was voted. We concur in his proposal to arrange for an appropriate student committee to begin immediately a comprehensive examination of these issues to the end that the Institute's basic policy of academic freedom may be enhanced through the role of the student newspaper.

Proposal for a Free Student Theatre. A free student theatre which is separate from the teaching curriculum takes on the character of a voluntary student interest group that reflects primarily the interest of its individual membership. We certainly encourage the development of dramatic talent and the exercise of initiative by students in achieving this, but we do not at this time have sufficient information to enable us to make a wise determination in this complex situation. The President has recommended--and we concur--that the interested drama students work with the faculty, and with an outside consultant if this seems needed, to see just how the proposals you make might be implemented.

John Andrew Hospital. The provision of additional hospital services will be difficult. The student health fee is quite modest and broader services cannot be provided with existing finances. We are sure all of us are aware, also, that

the supply of medical personnel is extremely limited. The President has advised the Board that he and representatives of the Hospital met for about two hours on March 28 with the Joint Student-Faculty Committee, of which you are members, and that some useful suggestions and clarifications came out of that session. Specifically, the follow up was to include the establishment of a small student committee to work directly with representatives of the hospital on these matters. The President advises that this program will be implemented just as soon as he has a response from your committee.

Withdrawal from Course. This is an academic matter which needs the consideration of the faculty. We are sure they will want to make their determination in keeping with accepted standards in higher institutions so as to assure the integrity of Tuskegee's program. The President is referring this matter to the Educational Council for study and such action as seems appropriate, and we are sure your student representatives on the Educational Council will keep you apprised of developments.

A System of Checks and Balances. Your proposal of a system to evaluate instructors and materials can help clarify the responsibilities of students, faculty, and academic administrators in these matters. Experience has shown that this is a highly complex and difficult problem which needs some modification from department to department in order to reflect special needs of some of the professional areas. There are faculty committees now studying these matters, and the President has proposed that your committee designate a small group to work intensively with the faculty. We believe this is a good approach.

Nameless Dormitories. The usual practice is to name buildings in memory of persons who provide the money for their erection, and we have been delaying action on this as we sought additional funds through Tuskegee's Comprehensive Development Program. There is a Board Committee on Honors to act on these matters in detail; and there is a joint faculty-student committee which could actively consider your suggestions. The President has proposed that your committee provide more detailed information which can be given to the appropriate committees for expeditious attention.

Definition of Administrative Position of Dean of Student Affairs. As the Board understands your request, we believe it will be taken care of through the response in item #10 on page 2 of this letter.

Chapel Name. A letter from the President of the Student Government Association requests the Board to name the Chapel in memory of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Board agrees that there should be at Tuskegee Institute some enduring recognition of the late Dr. King and his magnificent contributions to the welfare of all mankind. Your proposal will be referred to the Trustee Committee on Honors and to the Alumni Association, the latter of which is presently engaged in a major fund-raising effort for the Chapel.

The Board has found its discussions with the students a most useful experience. Our three-hour session on yesterday, and our two meetings today have combined to add considerably to our understanding of student concerns. It is our intention to give serious consideration to all the matters you have brought to us. Moreover, we are arranging for follow up with you in this

situation so all of us at Tuskegee together will make maximum progress in advancing this institution's work. More specifically, the following things will be done:

1. The President will continue his weekly meetings with Tuskegee students to discuss and seek answers to specific student concerns, so far as that is possible under the circumstances.
2. The Board plans to initiate the study of Tuskegee's Future Role and Scope in the very near future. This study will deal with the complex program and policy issues which underlie many of the matters you have brought to the Board.
3. In order to assure ourselves that we are making maximum progress, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board will return to Tuskegee before the close of school in May and at least once during the summer to discuss these matters and progress thereon with students, faculty, and administration.

Tuskegee Institute is a center of higher learning which is called upon to render near-miraculous services in these times of gravity for our entire nation. We must make today's program relevant, and we must also anticipate the future with its still more pressing demands. Our major energies--students, faculty, and trustees--must be directed toward the personal and intellectual growth of each Tuskegee student. We must do this on our own initiative individually and combine our talents into an institutional commitment that reinforces what each of us does on his own.

A disruptive atmosphere is not conducive to student learning nor for the kind of productive demands required of all who are a part of the university effort. We as a Board of Trustees shall continue to be concerned about the growth and development of this Institute just as we expect that each of you will put your best efforts into the development of your own potential.

The Board of Trustees has expressed its complete confidence in the soundness and wisdom demonstrated by President Foster in attempting to resolve these complex issues within the framework of Board policy and good administration. The Board, furthermore, is confident that President Foster will give unstinting support to all constructive measures which will improve Tuskegee Institute and the quality of the educational experience for its students.

Sincerely yours,



Basil O'Connor
Chairman

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE
Tuskegee Institute, Alabama


April 7, 1968

Because of additional circumstances since the meeting of the Board of Trustees on yesterday, it has been decided that Tuskegee Institute will be closed until further notice, and it is not expected that classes will resume for at least two weeks.

Students are requested to vacate the dormitories and the campus immediately; and in any event not later than noon on Tuesday, April 9, 1968. All persons are hereby notified that any unauthorized person remaining on campus after noon on April 9 will be considered a trespasser and will be subject to legal prosecution.

Those students who are interested in applying for readmission to Tuskegee Institute should execute a "Statement of Intent," which will be available in dormitories, cafeteria, College Union, and other places. This should be done prior to leaving the campus.

This statement supercedes all previously issued statements concerning student applications for readmission to Tuskegee Institute.


L. H. Foster
President

Tuskegee Institute

**PRESIDENT
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