

oldest predominantly Negro college in the country, owned and operated by Negroes.

In 1957, we adopted a program in cooperative education which has had great and meaningful and beneficial results to our student body.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of a greater educational benefit to students from deprived background than the opportunity to work in career related jobs which enables them to find suitable vocational aims and to direct their academic studies and job experience accordingly.

As our program has increased we now become the only predominantly Negro college in the country with the full-scale required cooperative education program.

However, several other Negro colleges have some types of co-op programs and there is a conference being sponsored this summer which will include many of these predominantly Negro colleges to consider ways and means in which more of them may receive the benefits of cooperative education.

I feel that this kind of education has great significance for these predominantly Negro colleges. I cannot overstress the impact and momentum which the introduction of a cooperative education program has brought to the regeneration of our college in terms of stimulating changes in curriculum, in the quality of teaching and in maturing the attitudes of students toward learning and becoming a productive member of society.

One result was that we have had to liberalize all of our puritanical social regulations because students have said you have thrown us on jobs in major cities without supervising us and then you bring us back to the campus and make us come in at 9:30 in the evening. So that has been a side effect of co-op education.

Up to date, we have had 1,191 students participating in the co-op program. The total enrollment of our college in 1964 was 415. Last fall, it was 939. We attribute much of this growth to the interest on the part of students and perhaps even a greater interest on the part of parents to give their children an opportunity to get exposed to the world of work as they receive their liberal arts education.

On page 4 you will see the kind of significant jobs available to students at Wilberforce University. I think that the experience has convinced us that the following outcome for co-op education experience is reasonable.

Dispelling of doubt and belief that real career opportunities exist and in our situation this has done much to span the credibility gap which young Negroes face as these expanding opportunities are opened to them. Fresh motivation for the student to pursue his education through study and related experiences and so forth.

I will not read these other objectives but they are being realized through our program. The development of cooperative education at Wilberforce and elsewhere has been assisted vitally by the Federal programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

A group of economically deprived students will particularly benefit from the opportunity to study and to have employment experience in a cooperative college. You have discussed with the previous speaker