

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

THE GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AND UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM:
1970-1980

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Abstract

The Grambling State University of Louisiana and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire student exchange program ran from 1970 through 1980. The exchange program primarily involved white students from UW-Eau Claire attending one fall or spring semester at Grambling State and black students from Grambling State spending one fall or spring semester at UW-Eau Claire. This essay explores how the G.S.U. and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program is an example of how the integration of universities continued even after the eventful desegregation era of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the exchange students who participated in the program valued their experiences. Students encountered a semester as a minority student at either Grambling State University or UW-Eau Claire. The student exchange program was implemented to increase cultural awareness amongst whites from UW-Eau Claire and blacks from Grambling State.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The desegregation era in American public education during the 1950s and 1960s was an eventful period. Many blacks struggled to gain access to equal education at numerous schools in the United States. On May 17th, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in public education was in violation of the United States Constitution.¹ This overturned the 1896 ruling reached in *Plessy v. Ferguson* which legalized “separate but equal” accommodations throughout the United States. However, those “separate” accommodations, like those in public schools, were not always equal.² Many historians claim that the decision of *Brown v. Board* was the turning point of the mid-20th century Civil Rights Movement.³ After the *Brown* decision, segregation within United States public education could not legally take place if those schools were publicly funded. Much of the United States population, especially in the south, did not immediately accept integration, even though the *Brown* decision made it

¹ Juan Williams, “The Ruling That Changed America” in Introduction of *Brown v. Board of Education: It’s Impact on Public Education 1954-2004*, Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, New York (2005): 21.

² When *Plessy* ruled the U.S. during the late 19th, early, and mid 20th-centuries, it is important to understand that the “separate-but-equal” doctrine was not actually true. Separate facilities for blacks were not always equal to those of whites. Many predominantly black schools were not equal to those of whites.

³ In the book *Brown v. Board of Education: Its Impact on Public Education 1954-2004*, edited by Dara N. Byrne and published by the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, historians reflect on how *Brown* dramatically changed public education along with other segregated public facilities. It was after the *Brown* decision when well known Civil Rights events occurred such as the desegregation of the University of Mississippi, Little Rock Central High School, and the Montgomery bus boycott.

illegal for segregation to persist. According to Mitch Yamasaki, black integration into southern white schools was gradual. Yamasaki states,

States in the deep South, with large black populations, waged 'massive resistance' campaigns against desegregation. Ten years after Brown, less than one percent of black students in the deep South attended integrated schools. It was not until the 1970s, when passions had died down and the enticement of federal aid to schools (conditioned on desegregation) became irresistible, that the majority of black students in the deep South began attending integrated schools.⁴

At times, universities and communities resisted integration.⁵ When this occurred, the United States federal government often brought in the National Guard or U.S. Marshals to deter rioting by those who were against integration. Bringing in federal troops to ensure safety at universities and public schools across the United States, most notably in the Southern United States, happened often. One example of this which occurred at the secondary education level is when nine black high school students desegregated Little Rock Central High School in the fall of 1957.⁶ A white mob formed on the grounds of the high school and prevented the students from entering. Another such example occurred at the higher education level in 1962. At the University of Mississippi, James Meredith a black university student tried to enter the university but was refused admission. At both of

⁴ Mitch Yamasaki, *Civil Rights Movement 1954-1968: We Shall Overcome, Some Day*, (Carlisle, MA: Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1998) 17.

⁵ Not only did the universities resist the integration, but communities did as well. Protesters would often arrive at the university where black student(s) were trying to enter, and often, a riot occurred to prevent integration. This is when the National Guard was brought in by the U.S. Federal Government to ensure safe entrance for the student(s).

⁶ Juan Williams, "The Ruling That Changed America" in Introduction of *Brown v. Board of Education: It's Impact on Public Education 1954-2004*, Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, New York (2005): 24.

these publicly funded schools, whites protested the black integration and riots occurred. When the National Guard was brought in,⁷ the rioting eventually ended and blacks were allowed into those schools.

One may wonder what happened within American public education after the eventful desegregation period of the 1950s and 1960s. Did increased integration continue amongst American schools? However, if integration did persist, was it of a different magnitude? Did it differ from the desegregation of the 1950s and 1960s in American public education? The answer to these questions regarding integration is yes. Integration did continue; however it was of a different magnitude than the desegregation era. The implementation of student exchange programs is one example of how integration persisted during the late-1960s and throughout the 1970s.⁸ One of these student exchange programs occurred between the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Grambling State University of Louisiana during the 1970s.⁹

The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program began in 1970 and came to an end in 1980. During that decade, 45 UW-Eau Claire students and 40 Grambling State students participated in the program. Primarily, the exchange program involved white students from UW-Eau Claire attending one semester at Grambling State and black

⁷ At Little Rock Central High School, the National Guard actually had to occupy the school for some time to ensure the students were safely attending classes. This also occurred at the University of Mississippi.

⁸ Desegregation did not end during the 1970s but continued throughout the later 20th century. An example of this is the desegregation of the Boston public school district.

⁹ During this time period, Grambling State University also had student exchange programs with several other universities including UW-Whitewater, UW-Stevens Point, the University of Idaho, and the University of North Dakota.

students from Grambling State attending one semester at UW-Eau Claire. Both of the universities consisted predominantly of one race--UW-Eau Claire a predominantly white university and Grambling State University a predominantly black university. According to Dr. Stoelting, the UW-Eau Claire adviser of the exchange program, UW-Eau Claire had a total enrollment of about 8,800 students in 1974, out of which 100 were black.¹⁰ Regarding Grambling State University, Dr. Stoelting stated that white students at Grambling State University "constituted a minority of about 12 students in a total enrollment of 3,000 students."¹¹ Although forced desegregation continued to take place throughout the 20th-century;¹² the student exchange program was voluntary, students chose to apply and if their application was accepted, they made the choice either to participate or not to participate in the program.¹³ Student interest in the program determined the continuation or the demise of the student exchange program.

This exchange program was implemented by the two universities as a way to introduce students to new racial and cultural experiences.¹⁴ This is different from the desegregation era of American education during the 1950s

¹⁰ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Boston Public Schools came under scrutiny in the 1980s after it was determined that many black public schools were unequal to white public schools. Boston's neighborhoods were largely segregated, and this led to segregated neighborhood schools. The Boston public school district was forced to desegregate because of the inequality.

¹³ Although the exchange program was voluntary for students, according to the Grambling State-University of Eau Claire student exchange program collection, Grambling State was court-ordered to desegregate. The university, because of that court-order, made more of an effort to attract diverse students to the predominantly black university. An example of this is the student exchange program.

¹⁴ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

and 1960s because during that time, minorities like blacks were arguing for access into white segregated schools and equal educational opportunities. The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program was voluntary and demonstrates how students of both races were allowed into predominantly white or black universities. These students were not seeking equal education or opportunities; instead, they sought new racial and cultural experiences.

The students who participated in the program sought new and unique experiences in their liberal education outside of the normal, every-day learning that each student had been accustomed to at their home university. Students desired to experience a new academic life and create new human relations with a different race—something that they had not had the chance to do at their own universities. According to Karen Berstedt, a UW-Eau Claire student who attended Grambling State semester, although life was difficult while adjusting to her minority status, her experiences were to be valued and not forgotten. In a written reflection published in *the Spectator* on February 1st, 1973, Berstedt wrote, “My Grambling experience wasn’t easy, but that made it all the more valuable. I learned things I never could have learned by reading a book or magazine or article like this, and although I am no expert on black people or their problems, my understanding of their problems has been affected by an experience I’ll never regret having had.”¹⁵ It was not just UW-Eau Claire students who valued their time at Grambling State;

¹⁵ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Grambling State students enjoyed their time at UW-Eau Claire as well. According to ConSuElla Wiley, a Grambling State student attending UW-Eau Claire during the fall semester of 1973, "I wanted to go to a white school... I've never been to a school that wasn't black. I think everyone should learn to get along. This was my chance, so I took it."¹⁶

Student exchange programs were not unique to Wisconsin universities. Although UW-Eau Claire participated in an integration-oriented student exchange program, it was not the first to do so. In fact, during the late 1960s, other Wisconsin universities, such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison also participated in student exchange programs with other southern predominantly black universities.

¹⁶ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Chapter II:

Prior to the Grambling State-UW-Eau Claire Student Exchange Program: an initial Exchange Program involving UW-Madison

During the late-1960s, the University of Wisconsin-Madison participated in a student exchange program which involved three individual predominantly black universities located within the southern United States: A & T State University, Greensboro; North Carolina Central University, Durham; and Texas Southern University, Houston. This student exchange program was titled the North-South Student Exchange Program. According to the "North-South Student Exchange Program Analysis" by Sarah C. Baker, the North-South exchange program began in 1966.

The North-South student exchange program is important because it shows that Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire were not the first universities to participate in a student exchange program. The theme of black students attending predominantly white northern universities and white students attending predominantly black southern universities continued into 1970s after the completion of the "North-South Student Exchange Program Analysis".

The reasons why students participated in the student exchange programs are similar to the student exchange programs between the universities of Wisconsin and the predominantly black universities in the South. Students voluntarily participated in both the North-South Student

Exchange Program and the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program. In order to participate, students had to apply; if their application was accepted, those students could enroll in the exchange program(s). This is true in both the North-South Student Exchange as well as the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire student exchange. New cultural and racial experiences were also sought by many students in both programs (the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire student exchange participants, and the North/South student exchange participants). These experiences were possible because of the integration of those students into either Grambling State University or UW-Eau Claire.

There were obvious differences¹⁷ amongst the universities that participated in the exchange program; however, there was one common factor between the universities that determined the integration of exchange students: the universities consisted primarily of one race. Because of the lack of racial diversity on the campuses, integration of minority students occurred in each circumstance. The lack of racial diversity on campuses like UW-Madison, UW-Eau Claire, and Grambling State was not new to the universities.

Throughout history, UW-Eau Claire and Grambling State consisted predominantly of one race: white *or* black.¹⁸ The following chapter takes a closer look at Grambling State University's and UW-Eau Claire's histories, and how this relates to their lack of racial diversity during the 1970s.

¹⁷ They were of different size, different states, etc.

¹⁸ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Chapter III:

The importance in locale of the Universities and their individual histories: why do both Grambling State University and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire lack racial diversity?

The history of both Grambling State University and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is important in understanding the implementation of the student exchange program during the 1970s. The student exchange program was both racially and physically motivated based on locale. Both the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Grambling State University of Louisiana lacked racial diversity. This is due to the locale of the universities and the universities' origins.

Wisconsin & UW-Eau Claire

Wisconsin largely lacked racial diversity during the 1960s concerning blacks and whites with the exception of Milwaukee, Racine, and Rock counties, where a higher proportion of blacks resided than in any other county in Wisconsin. For example, a total of 63,024 black individuals resided in Milwaukee County in 1960.¹⁹ This is considerably more than in Eau Claire County, where only thirteen black individuals resided in 1960, compared to 58,227 whites during that same year.²⁰ This confirms that although Wisconsin does have a substantial black population in the southern part of

¹⁹ University of Virginia Library, Historical Census Browser, online: < <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> > Last Accessed: 9-21-07

²⁰ Hilda R. Carter and John R. Jenswold, *The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, A History: 1916-1976*, (Eau Claire, WI: University of Wisconsin Foundation Inc, 1977).

the state (within Milwaukee County, for example), Eau Claire County, where UW-Eau Claire is located, lacks that racial

Map 1: Wisconsin



Map by Rachel M. Knudson

diversity (when concerning African Americans).

UW-Eau Claire was created in the early part of the 20th century. In 1916, UW-Eau Claire opened as Eau Claire State Normal School on twelve acres of land which was donated to the city of Eau Claire.²¹ In 1927, Eau Claire State Normal School became known as Eau Claire State Teachers College and in 1951, it became a four year liberal arts college.²² In 1964,

²¹ Hilda R. Carter and John R. Jenswold, *The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, A History: 1916-1976*, (Eau Claire, WI: University of Wisconsin Foundation Inc, 1977).

²² Hilda R. Carter and John R. Jenswold, *The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, A History: 1916-1976*, (Eau Claire, WI: University of Wisconsin Foundation Inc, 1977).

the Board of Regents renamed the college Wisconsin State University-Eau Claire. After the merger of the two state supported systems of university education in 1971, the university was renamed University of Wisconsin Eau Claire²³, and this name continues presently.

Eau Claire County in 1920 had a total of 23 blacks.²⁴ This is significantly fewer than the 32,665 whites who were living in Eau Claire County at that same time.²⁵ This shows that at its conception, UW-Eau Claire, then Eau Claire State Normal School, was created in a county which lacked racial diversity. During the 1960s, Eau Claire County as well as UW-Eau Claire continued to lack racial diversity when concerning blacks.

Louisiana & Grambling State University

African American slavery was a major element of Louisiana's history prior to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Louisiana was a slave state, which resulted in a higher proportion of blacks forced by slavery to reside in that state. After the Civil War, African Americans continued to reside in Louisiana. Wisconsin was not a slave state and did not become a state until 1848. The highest population of African Americans was in the southern part of the state.

Below is a chart that shows the difference in population based on race, most notably black and white, between the two states, Louisiana and Wisconsin:

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ University of Virginia Library, Historical Census Browser, online: < <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> > Last Accessed: 10-03-07.

²⁵ Ibid.

Table 1. 1960 Census Data

	Louisiana	Wisconsin
Black Females	540,449	37,629
Black Males	498,758	36,917
White Females	1,121,409	1,940,704
White Males	1,090,306	1,918,199
Total Population	3,257,022	3,951,777

Table created by author

Source:

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/state.php>
University of Virginia Library. Website. Last Accessed 5-03-07

Louisiana's large population of black Americans does not account for all of Grambling State's black population at the time of exchange program.

Grambling State's student population involved persons from Louisiana as well as other states. Louisiana's historically higher African American population is significant to the origin of what is now Grambling State University.

Grambling State University initially was named North Louisiana Agricultural and Industrial School in 1905.²⁶ According to the university, "Grambling State University emerged from the desire of African-American farmers in rural north Louisiana who wanted to educate other African Americans in the northern and western parts of the state. In 1896, the North Louisiana Colored Agriculture Relief Association was formed to organize and operate a school."²⁷ The census data shows that in Lincoln Parish, where

²⁶ Grambling State University: History, online:
<<http://www.gram.edu/about/history.asp>> Last accessed: 9-23-07

²⁷ Grambling State University: History, online:
<<http://www.gram.edu/about/history.asp>> Last accessed: 9-23-07

Grambling is located, there were 11,928 blacks compared to 16,594 whites in 1960.²⁸ Grambling State is a historically black college and African Americans created the college to educate primarily rural African Americans of north-western Louisiana. Although the parish in which Grambling is located in actually has a higher amount of white Americans residing in it, Grambling State still maintained their very high black population into the 1970s. In the brochure for recruitment purposes of exchange students, it explained extra information about Grambling State University, "G.S.U. is a four-year state-supported university, emphasizing the liberal arts and teacher education. Like UW-EC, most students come from within the state. Unlike UW-EC, most of the students are Black Americans. Grambling is located in the north central Louisiana, 60 miles east of Shreveport and 40 miles west of Monroe."²⁹

²⁸ University of Virginia Library, Historical Census Browser, online: < <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> > Last Accessed: 9-21-07

²⁹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Map 2: Louisiana



Map by Rachel M. Knudson

UW-Eau Claire's history greatly differed from Grambling State University's history; however, the universities participated in the exchange program for many of the same reasons. These universities were formed for separate reasons, and had separate ideals. Grambling State was created to educate Black Americans at a time when *Plessy v. Ferguson* still legalized segregation. UW-Eau Claire was also created when segregation was legal. Even though, historically, these universities did not refuse admittance based on race, these universities continued to attract students of the same race (white or black) throughout the 20th century. The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire exchange program created in 1970 was not unique to the entire United States higher education system; however, it was unique for these two universities. These exchange programs were becoming more

popular at the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s. Predominantly or historically black and white universities were participating in these exchange programs because of their lack of racial diversity, and the desire of students to experience human relations with a race other than their own. Students' integration experiences were not always easy.

At times, integration was challenging for students. The discussion of how challenging experiences were for students is the topic of the following chapter. The challenges of UW-Eau Claire and Grambling State exchange student experiences is also compared to the challenges that many students faced in the South during the desegregation era.

Chapter IV:
The Challenges of Integration

Not only did integration consist primarily of black and white students entering a university in which they were a minority, integration also increased awareness amongst the students of those who are of a different race. The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program created the possibility of this integration for many students throughout the 1970s. Students voluntarily enrolled in the program; thus those students were interested in experiencing the effects of integration from the beginning.

The student exchange program was often described by students as challenging. The students knew when they applied for the program that the experiences of integration were not always uncomplicated. In fact, a UW-Eau Claire and Grambling State University Exchange Program brochure used for recruitment purposes of future exchange program participants states, "Accept the Challenge of a different campus environment.... Spend one of your UW-EC semesters at Grambling." And yet with all the challenging experiences, students still expressed how they greatly valued their experiences at either Grambling State University or UW-Eau Claire. According to Carolyn Walsh, a UW-Eau Claire student who spent the fall semester of 1973 at Grambling State, "Grambling was a tremendous experience, really terrific. It was the most challenging semester I've had in school. We took a trip to Washington D.C. for a game. We got some dirty

looks because of our mixed company during the trip, but I really enjoyed it anyway.”³⁰ Nathaniel Arvie, a Grambling State student who attended UW-Eau Claire during the fall semester of 1971 also described his exchange as a challenging experience. According to an interview with Arvie in the UW-Eau Claire student newspaper *the Spectator*, “Arvie mentioned that a man watched him in an Eau Claire store and accused him of taking something. ‘They think that all blacks steal,’ he said.”³¹ Prejudice, exemplified in the above experiences of those exchange students, did occur. However, the students did not experience the great extent of prejudice and resistance toward integration occurred during the desegregation of the Civil Rights Era.

When compared to the integration of the University of Mississippi by James Meredith, the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire exchange students’ experiences were more peaceful. The University of Mississippi in the September of 1962 rejected the enrollment of James Meredith because he was black.³² The state of Mississippi was federally forced to allow the registration and acceptance of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi. Once he was registered and attending class at the university, federal marshals still had to accompany him to ensure his safety.³³

Resistance to desegregation in Mississippi was widely accepted, whereas there were protests regarding James Meredith’s registration and

³⁰ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Lamar P. Miller, *Brown v. Board of Education: The Challenge for Today’s Schools*, Teachers College Press Columbia University: New York (1996): 41.

³³ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Lamar P. Miller, *Brown v. Board of Education: The Challenge for Today’s Schools*, Teachers College Press Columbia University: New York (1996): 42.

attendance at the University of Mississippi; Ellen Condliffe Lageman and Lamar P. Miller refer to this as the "Mississippi Crisis."³⁴ Not only did regular white citizens resist the integration of James Meredith by protesting and eventually causing a riot, but the Governor of Mississippi Ross Barnett also was involved in preventing Meredith's registration. The NAACP, President John F. Kennedy, and Senator Robert Kennedy were all involved in trying to secure James Meredith's attendance at the University of Mississippi. A huge anti-integration riot soon erupted on the grounds of the University of Mississippi which led to the deaths of four media personnel covering the event.³⁵ Governor Barnett's refusal to provide James Meredith, the marshals, and others protection helped contribute to these deaths.³⁶ According to Constance Baker Motley, "Since we had not encountered, in this century open rebellion by a state against the national government, no one wanted to believe that it was actually occurring. A decision was made to send in troops from other states. Federal troops finally went onto the campus and secured James Meredith's admission."³⁷ Gov. Barnett was trying to nullify the federal constitution by forcing his state law which was invalid under the United States Constitution.³⁸

³⁴ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Lamar P. Miller, *Brown v. Board of Education: The Challenge for Today's Schools*, Teachers College Press Columbia University: New York (1996): 43.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Lamar P. Miller, *Brown v. Board of Education: The Challenge for Today's Schools*, Teachers College Press Columbia University: New York (1996): 41.

³⁸ Not only is this referred to as the Mississippi crisis, but it is also referred to as the "constitutional crisis" by many sources as well when describing Gov. Barnett's lack of regard for the U.S. Constitution when he prevented James Meredith's enrollment.

Mississippi and Arkansas were not the only states that intentionally defied federally authorized desegregation. Jamin B. Raskin discusses in *We The Students* that, "In Virginia, politicians and the White Establishment declared a policy of 'Massive Resistance' to federally sanctioned desegregation. Ku Klux Klan membership swelled across the South and racist violence spread."³⁹ From Arkansas to Mississippi to Virginia, racial violence spread. Most well-known accounts of racial violence against blacks trying to integrate into white schools occurred in the southern United States. Since the time of slavery, blacks were regarded as inferior by the white majority; this was a significant aspect of southern tradition within the United States and the reason why many whites resisted desegregation in general.

During the Grambling State and the UW-Eau Claire exchange program, the universities and communities did not resist the integration of the exchange students like during the 1950s and 1960s. However, as noted above, exchange students did notice some racial tension. Some students did experience unpleasant occurrences of discrimination. In a letter written to Dr. Stoelting on November 19th, 1970, Grambling State students who transferred to UW-Eau Claire made complaints that white students made "racist, subtle, snide" remarks toward the black students.⁴⁰ Racial tension did occur during the decade of the exchange program; however, it was subtle compared to the riots and violence that occurred on many of the predominantly white campuses which refused admittance to black students.

³⁹ Jamin B. Raskin, *We the Students: Supreme Court Cases For and About Students*, CQ Press (Congressional Quarterly Inc.): Washington D.C. (2000), 178.

⁴⁰ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

According to an article published in the Grambling State University student newspaper, *The Gramblinite*, on September 28th, 1973, the 1970s also represented a time of less violence and campus protests. Lennis Holloway of Grambling State wrote an article that reflected a survey on the grounds of Grambling State University regarding the decrease of racial violence on campuses. The article titled, "Has era of campus violence ceased?" states, "Statistics show that the days of campus uprisings and student protests have decreased. Unlike in the sixties when student protests were numerous, students are now trying to get out of college, and then come back and help the causes."⁴¹ Student views on the decrease in campus violence and protests were also included in the article. Dennis Kenealy, a senior from Stevens Point, Wisconsin who was attending Grambling State during that fall semester of 1973 states, "I fully agree with the statistics because I believe that when students did not see a big degree of change when protesting, they are now more willing to settle their differences quietly."⁴² However, the article reflects a generalization in the decrease of campus violence and protests. It is not established within the article the types of protests that had decreased, because during the 1960s and early 1970s, protests and violence on campuses involved not only the desegregation movement, but other movements as well including the Anti-Vietnam War Movement.

⁴¹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁴² Ibid.

As noted above, some experiences were challenging; however, students appreciated their participation in the program. Exchange students' participation in the program actually began prior to their actual relocation for a semester at either Grambling State or UW-Eau Claire. The upcoming chapter discusses in more detail the components and organization of the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program, as well as the exchange students' first involvement in the program prior to the actual exchange.

Chapter V:

The Components of the Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire Student Exchange

There are many aspects of the student exchange program that were not discussed previously in the paper that are discussed in the upcoming sections of this chapter. These aspects are more on the organization and components of the exchange program. Each individual component of the exchange program is important because combined; they form the organization and dictate the integration of students into the universities of Grambling State or UW-Eau Claire. In order to participate in the exchange program and for continued integration to occur between Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire, the students had to participate in the first steps of the exchange program, like the recruitment, application and enrollment process. Components of the exchange program discussed in the upcoming sections include the goals of the exchange program, the recruitment process, and the application and enrollment process. The organization and components of the exchange program show yet again how the student exchange program differed in magnitude when compared to other integration events.⁴³

⁴³ The above discussion of the desegregation of the University of Mississippi differs greatly from the integration generated by the Grambling State-UW-Eau Claire exchange program. James Meredith, initially on his own, was seeking equal education within the University of Mississippi, and the university refused to admit him based on his race. He was not part of a student exchange program that generated integration. The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program was an organized program of integration and differed from the desegregation of University of Mississippi.

Goals of the Grambling State Student Exchange Program

The Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire exchange program first began in 1970; during the first years of the decade, UW-Eau Claire was not the only university involved in a student exchange program with Grambling State University. Examples of other universities participating in exchange programs at that time with Grambling State included UW-Stevens Point, UW-Whitewater, the University of Idaho, the University of North Dakota, and Creighton University of Omaha, Nebraska. According to Dr. Stoelting, beginning in the mid-1970s UW-Eau Claire was the only continuing Wisconsin university involved in an exchange program with Grambling State.⁴⁴

The student exchange program was initiated because both universities desired the implementation of the program. The program's main goal was that students would experience life as a minority and also gain awareness of a different culture and race other than their own. However, there were other reasons for the implementation of the exchange program. Prior to 1954, when *Plessy v. Ferguson* (or the separate-but-equal doctrine) determined segregation as legal, Grambling State could legally have fewer white students than black students. When the *Brown* decision reversed *Plessy*, Grambling could no longer have such a high population of blacks attending. Grambling State, during the exchange program, had a population which was 99% African American.⁴⁵ UW-Eau Claire and Grambling State agreed to

⁴⁴ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

implement an exchange program between the two universities and established a standard quota of five students per semester attending either university.⁴⁶ Twenty students from UW-Eau Claire along with several other students from other universities would increase enrollment diversity at Grambling State, and it would prove that Grambling State was trying to integrate.⁴⁷

Over the period of 1970-1980, 45 students from UW-Eau Claire attended Grambling State, and 40 students from Grambling State attended UW-Eau Claire.⁴⁸ Although the universities desired to maintain that quota throughout each semester as long as the exchange program was occurring, the low number of students who participated shows that the quota was not always achieved. During the spring semester of 1972, for example, only three students from UW-Eau Claire transferred to Grambling. This proves the quota agreed by the two universities was not being met early on in the exchange program's duration. However, during that same semester, Grambling State did send five students, meeting their half of the quota.

This same pattern of less students participating in the program continued throughout the decade. During some semesters, especially

⁴⁶ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁴⁷ Exactly how many exchange students enrolled at Grambling State per semester is unknown because it was not only students from UW-Eau Claire, but students from six universities in total. However, it proved that Grambling State was at least trying to integrate its campus because of the many students that Grambling State was participating in the exchange programs with. If the quota of five was achieved each semester and with each university, it would generate a total of 30 students per semester and 60 students per school year.

⁴⁸ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

beginning in the spring of 1977, the exchange program did not operate because of the lack of students interested in the program.⁴⁹ Recruitment of exchange students was a major first step in the continuation of the program; without prospective students, the exchange program could not exist. Successful recruitment of students for the exchange program was the first step for the continuation of the program.

Continuing the Exchange Program: Recruitment of future Exchange Students

During the first semesters of the exchange program, recruitment for the program was fairly easy. The exchange program was still a rather new attraction on the UW-Eau Claire campus and attracted many participants, some of whom were not accepted to participate. During each semester, there was a significant amount of time dedicated to the recruitment process by Dr. Stoelting, Dr. Young⁵⁰, past program participants, and present program participants. Although those students who participated in the program may have finished their semester at Grambling State or UW-Eau Claire, they were still asked to participate in the recruitment process. Past students knew the program better than the directors; they experienced what

⁴⁹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁵⁰ Dr. Young was the Grambling State advisor of the exchange program, and his duties were similar to those of Dr. Stoelting's.

it was like as a minority on a completely new and different campus, and could answer questions better than anyone else could.

Articles were published in the student newspapers, *The Spectator* (UW-Eau Claire's student paper) and the *Gramblinite* (Grambling State's student paper) announcing when the program was looking for prospective students and applicants. Those student newspapers published interviews with the directors of the program, interviews with past and current student exchange program students, and also made known the names of the students and which institution they were from who were currently at either university. This publicity of the program was important because it kept the discussion of the program active amongst the university population. In an interview with Kathy Philyaw, a Grambling State student who was at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire in the fall of 1977, Philyaw explains how she was enjoying her time at the UW-Eau Claire, and expressed that other students really should participate in the program. Philyaw expressed, "I'm going to encourage my friends to come here, but I'm not giving them any advice—I want them to experience what I have. They wouldn't believe what I've seen here—Water St., the hill and cold weather are so different from Louisiana!"⁵¹ These personal notes of the experiences that current and past exchange participants share are very important in the recruitment process.

Recruitment for prospective students began during the middle of each fall and spring semester. For example, in each fall semester, recruitment

⁵¹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

began in November; in the spring, it began in April. A couple of weeks before recruitment began, past exchange students were contacted and asked to participate in the recruitment process. Recruiting for prospective students lasted approximately three to four weeks. Past exchange students were asked to provide roughly one hour a day during the school week for recruiting. For example, at UW-Eau Claire there were stations set up throughout the campus with each campus's student newspapers, yearbooks, pictures, and slides, and photos of Grambling State University to show interested students what Grambling State University actually looked like. Past exchange students sat at the tables with all the above information on the exchange program and answered any questions that prospective exchange students had. Brochures were also handed out for students to look at and if they wished to, the students could discuss the exchange program with their parents and anyone else interested. These hand-outs included all the basic information a prospective student would need to know. For example, exchange students did not receive extra funding, nor did the schools receive extra funding because of the exchange program. It was the student's responsibility to pay the tuition in full, room and board, and all other expenses during the semester they spent at either university.⁵² Students would actually pay their tuition and room and board at their home university, which in turn would cover their fees of room and board and tuition at either Grambling State University or UW-Eau Claire. This is the agreement

⁵² Other expenses included cost of travel, cost of leisure activities, books, souvenirs, etc.

that UW-Eau Claire and Grambling State had since the implementation of the program.⁵³

As noted above, enrollment in the program continuously decreased throughout the 1970s. This personally affected some students who had participated in the exchange program in the past and thoroughly believed that the program was an excellent experience. Those students believed that the program should continue so others have the chance of sharing that experience. Scott Anderson, a student at UW-Eau Claire, wrote a poem to the editor that was published in *The Spectator* during the spring semester of 1974.⁵⁴ This poem showed Anderson's appreciation of the program and how he wished for the program's continuation. The poem was titled "Grambling exchange dying":⁵⁵

To the editor:

A Message to the Unpeople
You who say you love life
You who dig on the environment
Bag.
You who held compassion for a
Putnam Park bobcat
You who streak for a new
Morality
You who bow before the altars
Of Water Street.
You who heed Bucky but unheed—
Don't even hear Dr. George King
You who seem always too busy during
Black Aesthetics Week.

⁵³ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁵⁴ Scott Anderson was an UW-Eau Claire sophomore journalism major of Rhinelander, WI and studied at Grambling State University in the fall semester of 1973.

⁵⁵ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

You who believe that the only thing
One should kill is the night's last
Pitcher.
....are now in the process of killing
off one of Eau Claire's last outlets
to the Real World—
the Grambling College of Louisiana
Cultural Exchange Program.
It is dying you know, or maybe
You ain't hip to that yet.
Or maybe you never found the time.
It's a chance to learn—about Blacks,
About humanity,
about yourself.
There's still time but not much.⁵⁶

Scott Anderson hoped the poem would appeal to other students who had not participated in the program at the time it was published. Anderson expressed that there was still time but they should act soon on their desire for a new cultural experience, he recognized that if the enrollment in the program continued to decrease, the program itself would cease to exist.

Students who became interested in the exchange program during the weeks of recruitment could take the next step of applying. The application process was fairly easy and, following the submission of their application, interviews were conducted. Directors of the exchange program (Dr. Stoelting or Dr. Young) along with past exchange students would interview perspective students. After the completion of the interviews, the directors and past exchange students would decide which students were best for the exchange program.

⁵⁶ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

The Application and Enrollment Process

Presently, there is little information on the application process of Grambling Students. However, according to the *Spectator* in a 1972 issue, the process of selecting students for the exchange program was similar at both universities.⁵⁷ The application questions were designed in order to gain more insight into the students who applied for the exchange program.

Questions usually pertained to academic record and the students' personalities and past experiences prior to and during attendance at UW-Eau Claire. The application consisted of three key questions: 1. Briefly outline your PERSONAL background up to the present time; 2. Why do you wish to participate in this program; 3. What are your career plans?⁵⁸ Applicants were required to reveal their total credits earned and their current accumulative GPA. An accumulative GPA of 2.0 GPA was needed for admittance into the program. After the students completed their applications and turned them into either director (Dr. Stoelting or Dr. Young) the interview process began. Interview questions were similar to the questions that the students answered on the applications. Students were asked primarily what they hoped to learn from their involvement in the exchange program. The program's advocates wanted to be sure they were selecting the right students for the program and thus chose students who would benefit the most from their involvement in the program. Students also were not admitted if they were either freshman

⁵⁷ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

or seniors; only sophomores and juniors could participate.⁵⁹ This standard was in place at both universities. Because it was described by many students as a human relations, or “social learning” experience, students had to be open-minded to other racial and ethnic groups and eager to participate in a new student environment. Although student desire to participate in the program continued to drop at both universities during the mid and late-1970s, students who could benefit from the program the most were still admitted; Dr. Stoelting and Dr. Young did not throw out the standards of admittance to simply fill a quota.

After the completion of all the interviews and the students were chosen, students began the process of enrollment at either university. They were required to register for classes at whichever university they were attending; Dr. Stoelting and Dr. Young would assist as their advisor when choosing the right classes to take at the universities. Universities exchanged class catalogues, as well as pictures and maps of the campus grounds, to assist the students in any questions that may arise. The credits that were earned at each university would transfer back to the students’ home university.⁶⁰

Although most students who were chosen to go did indeed participate in the program, some changed their mind during the summer vacation and decided not to participate in the program. The biggest reason students gave as to why they could not participate was that their participating in the

⁵⁹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁶⁰ This was the greatest question asked by the students before entering the exchange program.

program would cause family problems. For example, a UW-Eau Claire student, Barbara Smith, was scheduled to attend Grambling State in the fall semester of 1974. However, Smith wrote a letter to Dr. Stoelting in the summer of 1974 declining her spot as an exchange student. Smith wrote, "It was only two weeks after I accepted the opportunity that I realized it may involve problems I hadn't foreseen. After much deliberation, sometimes painful, and my best personal efforts have been spent, I realize that the trip may result in lasting problems for me, not at Grambling, but in my relations with [those] close to me here."⁶¹ Another student, Susan Sawatske, also withdrew from the program. Sawatske was scheduled to transfer to Grambling for the spring semester of 1972. According to Dr. Stoelting in a letter written to student exchange committee members, "At the time of her [Susan Sawatske's] application she anticipated no difficulty in getting approval for the venture from her parents; however, her parents expressed great objection to the proposal and threatened to withdraw her from school if she persisted."⁶² The reasons that parents wished for their children not to attend Grambling State were not stated in the correspondence between the two students and Dr. Stoelting. It was just stated that the parents "opposed" and refused their child's attendance at the university. Many students relied on their parents' financial support for their education, and could not attend a university without their parents' support.

⁶¹ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁶² University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Students who did not back out of the exchange program, for the most part, enjoyed their time at either Grambling State University or UW-Eau Claire. There was a period of adjustment; however, those students were aware from the beginning that their time at either Grambling State or UW-Eau Claire would at times be challenging and not always easy. In order to keep close ties with their home campus, many exchange students had their school newspapers, *The Gramblinite* or *The Spectator*, mailed to their dormitories. This kept the students up-to-date on current events at their schools and also, according to some students, eased the adjustment period.⁶³

Although many students expressed their desire for the exchange program because they believed the program was successful, it unfortunately came to an end in 1980. Many reasons contributed to the end of the program; however, the lack of interest by students was the main reason for the exchange program's demise. The reasons why the exchange program came to an end is explained in the next chapter.

⁶³ Ibid.

Chapter VI:

The End of the Grambling State & UW-Eau Claire Student Exchange Program

The goals of the exchange program described in the previous chapter were not continually achieved—especially the goal of maintaining a quota of five students per semester participating in the student exchange program. Throughout the decade, students continually expressed less and less interest in the exchange program. In 1974, only four years after the implementation of the program, recruiters of prospective exchange students were already experiencing the challenge of finding students who were interested in the program. That same year, Dr. Stoelting was interviewed by *The Spectator* concerning the lack of students interested in the program. Dr. Stoelting stated in that interview, “We used to have [in the first years of the student exchange program] more applicants than we were able to send. Then we could choose who to send on the basis of who would profit from the experience most.”⁶⁴ However, as noted above, student interest continued to decrease. Dr Stoelting goes on, “I’ve gotten so desperate that I’ve literally grabbed students in the hall and said, ‘Hey, do you want to go to Grambling?’”⁶⁵ During the mid and late-1970s, there were even instances in some semesters, for example in 1978, which no students participated in the program.

⁶⁴ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Dr. Stoelting offered a personal opinion in 1979 on why students were losing interest in the program. According to Dr. Stoelting in a 1979 interview, "Student interest in the exchange has dwindled in recent semesters. I think young people today are less interested in civil rights and racial affairs, and this has contributed to the declining interest in the exchange program."⁶⁶ Students expressed greatest interest in the exchange program during the early 1970s; this was just shortly after the official end of the Civil Rights Movement in 1968.⁶⁷ Since the Civil Rights Movement occurred roughly ten to 20 years prior to the cease of the exchange program, it is not unlikely that students lost interest in civil rights and racial affairs.

⁶⁶ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

⁶⁷ Historians often use the time period of 1954-1968 to define the years of the Civil Rights Movement.

Chapter VII:

Conclusion

The Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program is an example of how integration continued after the Civil Rights Movement. Historians often use the time period of 1954-1968 to define the years of the Civil Rights Movement, and this paper uses that time period as well. Although integration continued after the Civil Rights Movement, the Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program is an example of a more peaceful integration event when compared to the violence in southern desegregation. Because the exchange program generated integration that was more peaceful, it was of a different magnitude from the intense desegregation era of the 1950s and 1960s. The violent white resistance to desegregation that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s in the south did not happen when the student exchange program occurred during the 1970s.⁶⁸ Students did report some racial tension; however, no riots or protests occurred regarding blacks and whites exchanging universities.

Another major aspect to remember on the Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire student exchange program is that it was neither the only or first integration-oriented exchange program for Grambling State, nor was

⁶⁸ However, this does not mean that in general violent opposition to desegregation did not occur after the 1960s or even outside of the south. The Boston, Massachusetts public school district desegregated during the 1980s and there was resistance to that desegregation as well.

it unique to universities of Wisconsin. Grambling State University was involved in additional student exchange programs with other universities. The University of Wisconsin-Madison was also part of a student exchange program that involved a few other predominantly black southern colleges. This proves that the Grambling State University and UW-Eau Claire exchange program was not unique to the United States. Integration-oriented exchange programs in general existed during the late 1960s and 1970s.

One may wonder if the Grambling State and UW-Eau Claire integration oriented student exchange program was successful. The main goal of the exchange program was not necessarily to encourage mass integration between the two universities,⁶⁹ but that through integration, exchange students would gain awareness of cultural and racial groups other than their own. For those students who did participate, the program was valuable and successful. Many students like Scott Anderson and Karen Berstedt, whose exchange experiences were discussed in the previous chapters, valued their exchange experiences. Students like Anderson and Berstedt desired for the continuation of the program.

Although many students conveyed their desire for the program to continue, the program did officially end in 1980. Dr. Stoelting, the UW-Eau Claire exchange program advisor announced in interviews located in the UW-Eau Claire student newspaper, *The Spectator*, that interest in the program lacked throughout the middle and late-1970s and this is why the exchange

⁶⁹ Grambling State did hope to integrate more racial minorities into their university and that is why they were involved in additional exchange programs with several universities explained early on in the paper.

program ended. Stoelting blamed this on a lack of interest in both “racial affairs” and also lack of interest in civil rights.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire Grambling State University Student Exchange Program, 1970-1980, AS182. Special Collections & Archives, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

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