

Black Student Protest at the University of Oregon: Fifty Years in the Making



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Research Question:

- Nearly 50 years apart, why are the Black student demands to the University of Oregon administration almost identical?
- America has seen large strides and steps-backwards in racial advancement; why did the UO receive the same complaints decades later?
- Has the University of Oregon, at any point in time, prioritized the social, academic, physical and cultural existence of its Black students?

Argument:

- Both time periods of protest experienced little or delayed longstanding social, academic or cultural change at the institution.
- Lack of institutional change for Black students at UO, has influenced the lack of increase of the Black student population, lack of increased retention rates of Black students, and lack of opportunity to cultivate a strong social and cultural community amongst each other.

UO Black Student Union Task Force Demands 1968

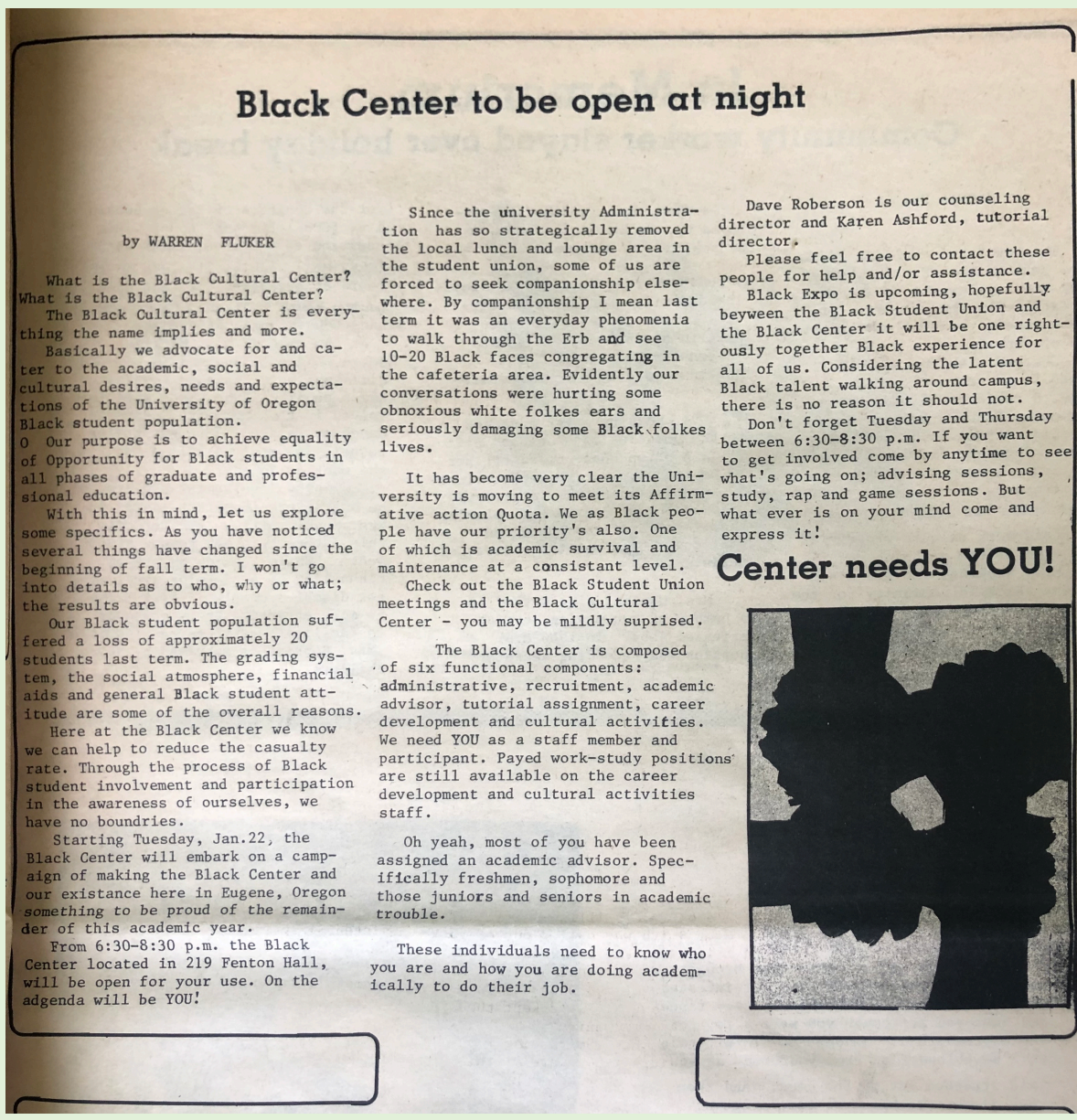
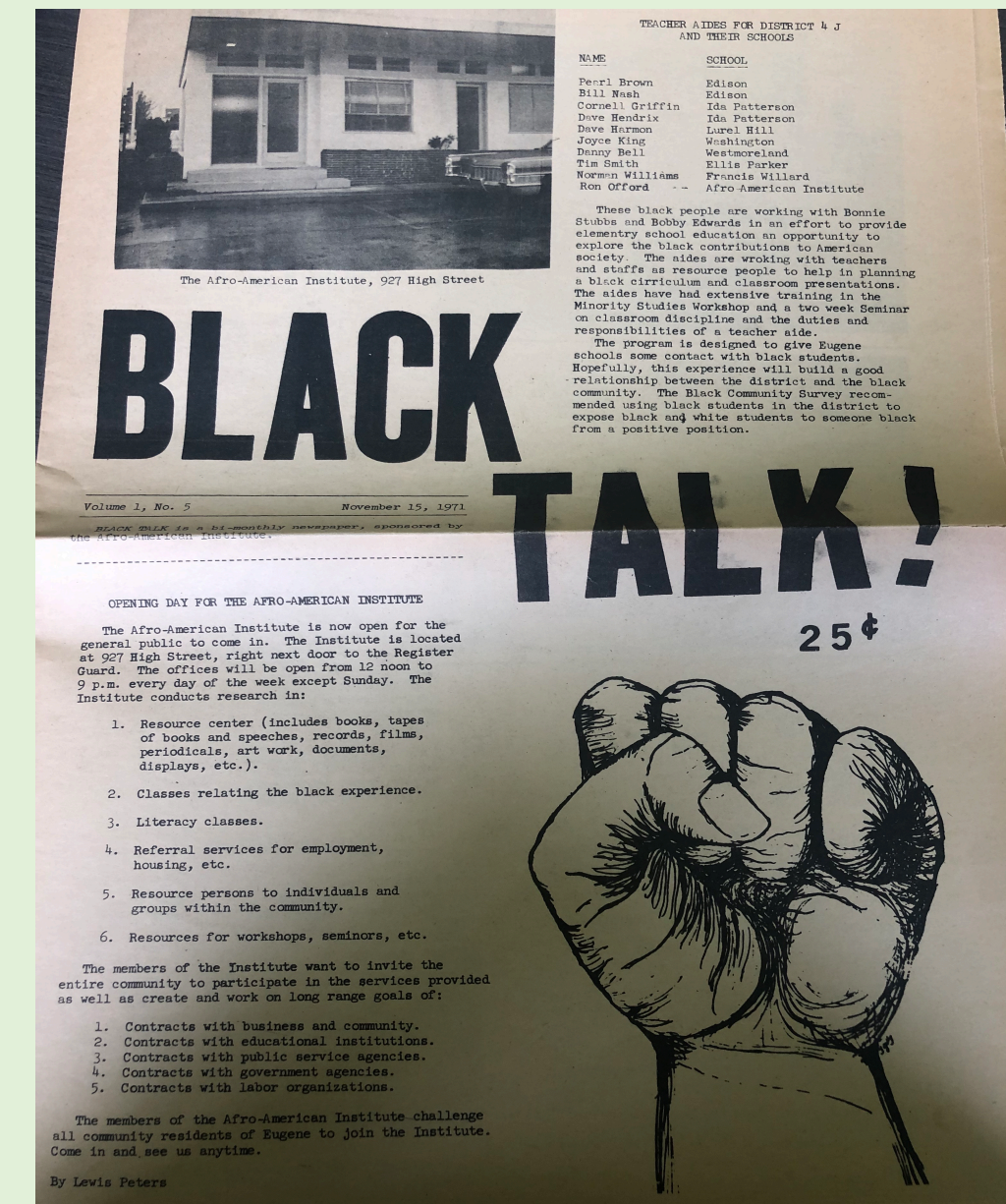
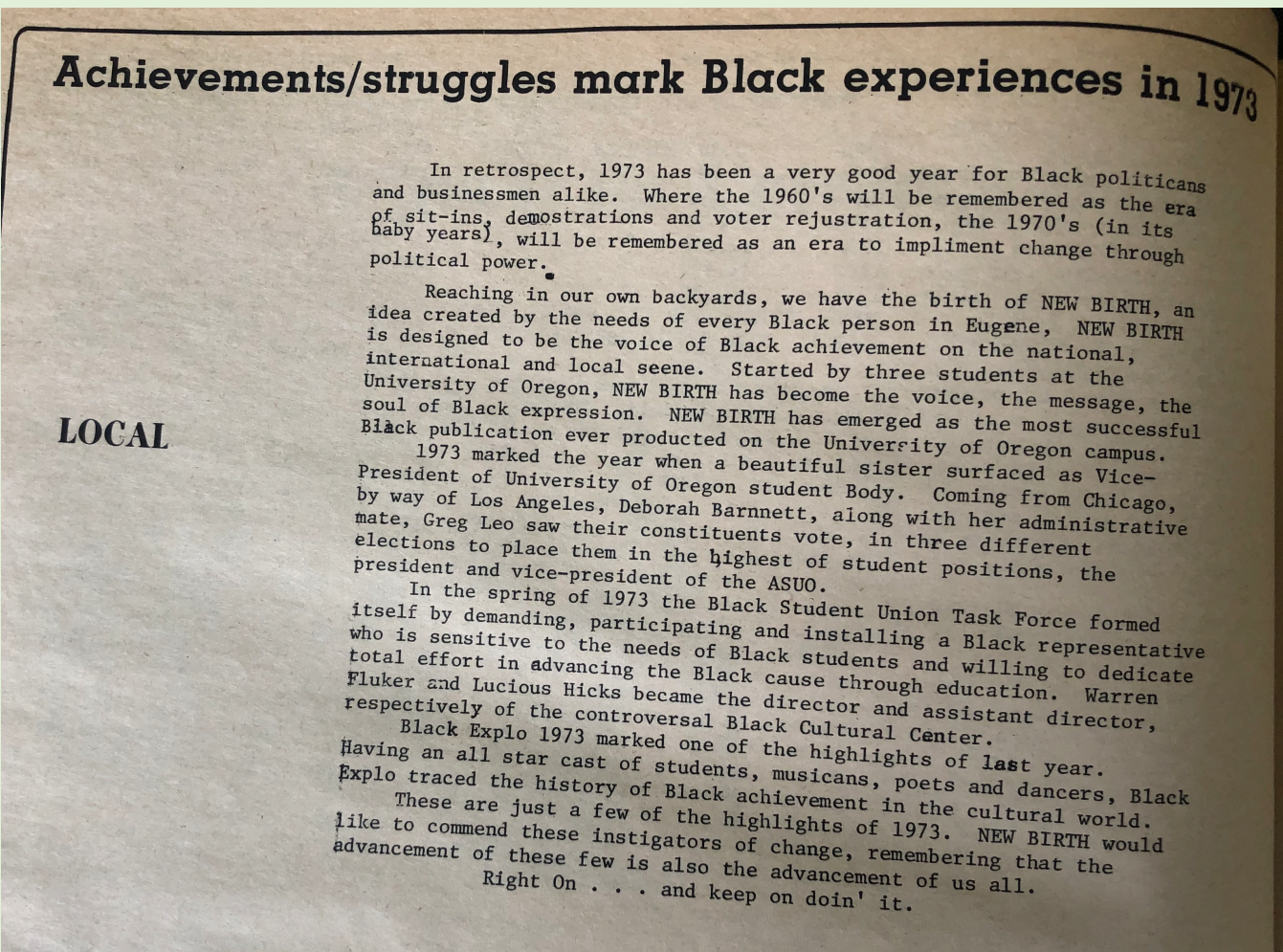
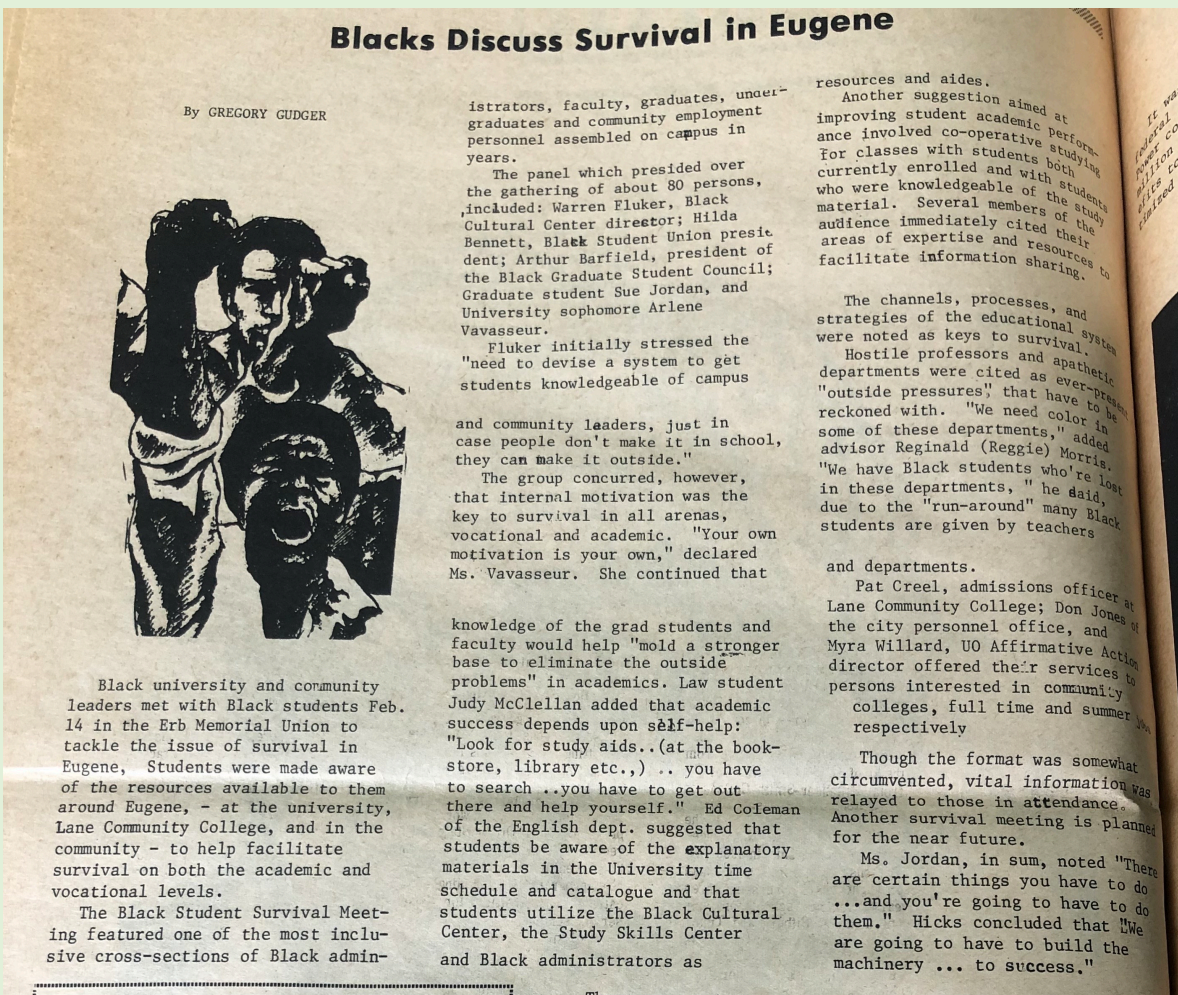
1. More Black dormitory counselors. At least three Black students assigned to a dorm...*
2. ...the factor of “need” should be the most relevant criterion for the evaluation of an application for aid.*
3. [the necessity of] the hiring of Black coaches... That scholarships for Black athletes should be extended to cover their educational career.*
4. ...that Afro-American history, and Black culture be instituted in the regular academic curriculum...
 - That Swahili and/or other African languages should be taught in the regular curriculum in the language department.
 - ...programs in African Studies and Afro-American Studies, be established on the undergraduate and gradate levels.
 - That Black professors must be hired.*
5. ...that the student government be reorganized so that it will be representative of the entire student body.
 - That office space and adequate facilities be provided to the Black Student Union in order to conduct a study skill and tutoring center.
- [Fall 1968]...that seventy-five Black students be enrolled as unqualified admissions with full financial assistance.*

Conclusions after 1968:

- UO President Flemming established “Committee on Racism”
- 77 Black students enrolled in Fall 1968
- Educational Opportunity Service programs began in 1973
- In 1973, the “Black Center” opened in Fenton Hall
- First Black-female ASUO Vice-President appointed in 1973
- 7 Black Resident Assistants in 1973
- There is evidence that the institution attempted to make changes, however they were not longstanding

UO Black Student Task Force Demands 2015

1. Change the names of all KKK related buildings on campus.*
2. Create an African-American Opportunities program.*
3. Commit to creating a Funding Resource and Scholarship initiative to support and meet the unique needs of students that identify as Black/African-American.*
4. Commit to having Ethnic Studies 101 as a graduation requirement.
5. Commit to creating an Academic Residential Community (ARC) that will feature African-American history/Oregon Black Diaspora.
6. Commit to hiring an African-American advisor/retention specialist as well as Black faculty across all academic disciplines.*
7. Create a substantial endowment fund and support system to FUND AND OPEN a Black Cultural Center.
8. Commit to creating a Black Student Leadership Task Force.
9. Commit to conducting seminars and workshops by bringing in black faculty who specializes in Black history and contemporary black issues.*
10. Commit to creating a Student Advisory Board for The Office of Equity & Inclusion and Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE).
11. Commitment to changing Fraternity and Sorority Life Baseline Standards*
12. Commit to keeping and publishing data on Black student acceptance, retention, and safety.



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* Indicates changes to Demands for conciseness.

Conclusions after 2015:

- 3.5 of the Demands have been met as of 2020.
- To change the narrative, the UO must actively commit to engaging the needs of Black students.
- Actively support its Black students and faculty and work to engage them in the larger campus community.
- If the University of Oregon fails to support its Black community now, they may expect a third wave of protest