

Title: It's Part of Our Past: A Look Into the History of Caltech's Black Students

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is part of a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Every year, we use the second month of the year to pay homage to Presidents Washington and Lincoln. While some may call them our Founding Fathers for their work in organizing America, others call them Nefarious Gangsters for their work in institutionalizing slavery. Regardless of either argument, we have set aside both February 21 and 22 to acknowledge their deeds.

Not many years ago, the United States declared this season Black History Month as well. In 1926, the historian Carter G. Woodson helped to create Negro History Week. Now, after Negroes have turned African-Americans, Blacks are proud to joke that "the Man" has given them the shortest month of the year during which to celebrate their history.

However, Black history is limited to neither pictures from 1963 of children and police dogs in Birmingham, Alabama, nor speeches from 1968 by militant men preaching about "blue-eyed devils." It is familiar than we choose to believe; Caltech itself has a rich history of Black students.

Dr. James Ellis Lu Valle was perhaps the first Black graduate student to enroll at Caltech. Many of us believe that since there are presently 25 African-American students out of a community of 1800, Black students have been at Caltech for only the past ten years. This is not true; Dr. Lu Valle entered the doctoral program in 1937. In fact, he entered just one year after he won an Olympic medal.

Jim Lu Valle was born in 1918 in San Antonio, Texas. He moved to California, where he attended Los Angeles Polytechnic High School. One day, the track coach needed someone to pace one of his half-mile distance runners. Reluctantly, Lu Valle agreed. All were surprised when he ran faster than his "competition."

"As of then I was officially on the team," recalled Lu Valle. "The first race I entered was two days later. They put me in the quarter mile, and I asked the coach, 'How do you run this race?' The coach was a bit of a joker, and he replied, 'Run as fast as you can as far as you can - then sprint!' Being rather gullible I did. I nearly died, but I won."

In 1932, while an undergraduate at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), he attended the Inter-Collegiate Amateur Athletic Association of America (AAA) meet in Boston. He won the quarter mile in 46.9 seconds; after that, he was established in collegiate athletics. In fact, by 1935, Lu Valle was the captain of the track team.

His academic career at UCLA was equally impressive. Besides being a straight "A" student, he was inducted into both the Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi honor societies, and had a short story published in the "Atlantic Monthly" as the result of winning a writing competition. By 1936, he would be graduated with bachelor's degrees in both chemistry and mathematics.

Lu Valle's exciting life was off to a grand start, but his career was just beginning. He qualified for the Summer Olympics to be held in Berlin, Germany, less than six months after he was graduated. That year, at least two Negroes would confront the Nazi regime; Jesse Owens was a teammate.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: A Look Into the History of Caltech's Black Students

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is part of a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

James Lu Valle's exciting life was off to a grand start, but his career was just beginning. He qualified for the Summer Olympics to be held in Berlin, Germany, less than six months after he was graduated. That year, at least two Negroes would confront the Nazi regime; Jesse Owens was a teammate.

"The Germans adored Jesse," recalled Lu Valle. "When we arrived, the public mobbed him, because just before leaving for Germany, he had set four world records in the United States. In one day."

Lu Valle himself did not compete with Owens, but in the 400 meter race. Coming out of the final turn, Lu Valle was in second place behind Archie Williams, a native of Oakland and a student at the University of California, Berkeley. With only 40 meters to go, Lu Valle appeared to be insured a silver medal. Arthur Godfrey Brown of Great Britain came even closer as the finish line appeared, and eventually passed him. The finish was very close; Brown came within seven inches of Williams, and Lu Valle finished third with a time of 46.8 seconds. This was less than 0.3 seconds of the gold medalist's time.

Lu Valle decided that even though he had competed in the Olympics and won a bronze medal, he would continue in science. Later that year, he returned to UCLA as a graduate student. He went on to earn master's degrees in both Chemistry and Physics.

In 1937, just months later, Lu Valle entered Caltech as a doctoral candidate in Chemistry and Mathematics. He worked under Linus Pauling, who would eventually win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1954. According to Lu Valle, "Linus is a great person; he took time and trouble as my research advisor. He did not take on many people, but those he did, he worked closely with."

Lu Valle's career was filled with achievements. After three years, Lu Valle was graduated with doctorate degrees in both subjects. He taught at Fisk University in Tennessee, then worked at Eastman Kodak, where he was the first Negro employed at the laboratories. Eventually, Lu Valle settled in Palo Alto, and became director of undergraduate laboratories at Stanford University. There, he advised over 900 pre-medicine students.

In 1983, the Board of Regents of the University of California decided to erect the James E. Lu Valle Commons. This graduate student union, located on the Los Angeles (UCLA) campus, is a permanent monument to a remarkable scientist and humanitarian. While continuing his work at Stanford for many years researching the human brain and processes in memory, he passed away on January 30, 1993. at the age of 80.

Caltech graduates some of the world's premiere scientists. Sometimes we forget that not all of them are White men. Dr. Lu Valle was one of the first to remind us of this, and not the last. "Very few people are totally free of misconceptions about Negroes." Almost 26 years ago, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had a chance to say this when he discussed issues with Caltech undergraduates after dinner.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: A Look Into the History of Caltech's Black Students

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is part of a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

There was a period in Caltech's history when its students were active in social issues. Whether it was the involvement the Jet Propulsion Laboratory had with building weapons for the Vietnam conflict, or the appointment of an institute president to a government position, its students felt motivated to speak out and act. Now, it is difficult to motivate students to take a day off and celebrate a national holiday.

One program that Caltech students developed was the "Leaders of America" lecture series. The YMCA, before it became the Caltech Y, sponsored a program that brought prominent leaders to speak to and spend time with undergraduates. Policy makers such as Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Ralph Bunch of the United Nations were visitors through the program. In 1958, the first speaker was Clarence B. Randall, special consultant to President Eisenhower in the field of foreign policy. Two weeks later, a younger Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. would visit.

King had earned quite a name for himself in less than a year. In the summer of 1955, at the age of 26, he earned his doctorate from Boston University. In December, he began the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Two months later, his home was fire bombed with his wife and three month old baby inside. His hardship seemed to have paid off when bus segregation was declared unconstitutional in the fall of 1956.

The nation became aware of King's efforts when Time magazine declared him "Man of the Year" in February of 1957. During this time, he was president of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), creator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and pastor of his father's church, Dexter Avenue Baptist. King had turned 28.

Just when his career was beginning, Caltech decided to ask him to speak here in Pasadena. He was the age of most graduate students at the institute; he was barely 29 when he came to the campus for three days in February of 1958. When he arrived on Tuesday the 25th, he gave a speech in Dabney Hall. That night, the only two Negroes in the audience were Lee F. Browne and his wife.

"We must have active commitment rather than mere academic acceptance if we are to solve the racial problems that face Americans today," Dr. King stated. "There are challenges to be met if the new order is to survive. The first is to rise above the narrow confines of individual concerns to the broad concerns of humanity."

That Wednesday and Thursday, Dr. King ate dinner in the Houses and spoke to undergraduates. He had an opportunity to see how they channeled their creativity.

"There are four things that the Caltech student could do to help the racial situation," King began in an interview with the California Tech that year. "He should seek to give impetus to movements and to political leaders. He should seek to solve local problems. He should give support, both moral and financial, to freedom fighters

everywhere. And finally, he should help to educate himself and others. Very few people are totally free of misconceptions about Negroes."

These words were spoken almost 26 years ago. Many professors, students, and faculty like to conjecture on what Dr. King would have wanted if he were alive today. We need not speculate anymore, for he has told us. We should support the leaders of this campus, such as Dr. Sharyn Slavin, that strive to change this campus for the better. We should solve the problem of the barrier Caltech has with the local African-American and Latino communities here in Pasadena. We should support the offices on this campus that support cultural awareness. Let us not forget that the Caltech Y began the "Leaders of America," and it has the vision to continue to create programs that are equally important. At the very least, we should educate ourselves in fields other than science and mathematics. Even the brilliant Caltech student can stand to learn about someone who pleaded a quarter of a century ago to make a difference in others' lives. Celebrating King's birthday through a recess of classes is more than a vacation; it is a celebration of humanity everywhere.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: How Underrepresented Students Organized Themselves

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is fourth in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Many Caltech students complain about a lack of social life. For underrepresented students, this is complicated by the onset of culture shock. Often, they must experience new faces along with new cultures, traditions, and customs. This can be so overwhelming that they may not have time to recover and succeed in their academics, which causes some to transfer.

Others decide to create their own support mechanisms. They find ways to congregate with what is familiar to them, just as their White counterparts congregate within the House system. This is not a form of separation, because there are not enough students in a given underrepresented culture for one to submerge himself in. Rather, it is a natural form relaxation when one may occasionally see a face that reminds him of home.

This path to organization has not been a smooth one. The Latino, Native American, and Black students have all had problems in creating groups that are beneficial social outlets.

In 1982, freshmen Kevin Hernandez and Victor Leyva, and two other friends attempted to start a chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). Inspired by the Cal State Los Angeles chapter, they hoped to hold joint events with other chapters, and create a Hispanic community at Caltech. However, by the end of their sophomore years, the two friends transferred, and the ideas seemed to pass into oblivion.

Eight years later, they resurfaced. With the help of Eduardo Grado, the former Director of Secondary School Relations, a Caltech chapter of SHPE was created. The organization is over three years old now, and has been active in the lives of Latino students by holding events to promote Hispanic History, and hosting a booth for the last two years during International Day. In fact, Victor Leyva was graduated with Bachelor and Doctorate degrees from the Institute in 1991, but was around to see the first meeting of the organization.

The past is not as bright for American Indian students. Unfortunately, there have never been enough Native Americans to create any type of organization. There have only been a few discussions about starting a chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), but Caltech has had less than twenty five Native American students enroll over the past 20 years. Five of them enrolled as undergraduates now.

The African-American students have a longer history. They created a Black Students Union (BSU) in the early 1970's that survived for more than ten years. Lee Browne, former Director of Affirmative Action programs, worked with students to start the first social outlet underrepresented ones would have. After the racial explosions on various college campuses nationwide in the late 1960's, Black students came to institutions of higher learning for the first time. This brought two cultures together, but in a very tense atmosphere.

As found in the Big T from 1975, the BSU was "organized in recognition of the fact that the intense academic atmosphere of Caltech represents an environment to which it is particularly difficult for minority students to adjust... The purpose of the BSU, therefore, is to provide activities for the Black students on campus that allow them to

become more aware of themselves as individuals. In the past year our activities have included a welcoming cookout for the returning students, an inter-collegiate party in Winnett Lounge, a reception dinner for the Black poetess Leona Welch, who gave a recitation of her poetry, and an end-of-the year picnic at Chantry Flats."

Curiously enough, the "present form" of the Black Student Union, the Caltech chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), seems to be an exact copy of the BSU of twenty years ago. It has held a welcome party for returning students, a social with Pasadena City College, and a poetry reading with Black poetess Nikki Giovanni. Moreover, the Institute's NSBE chapter serves to create a social environment for African-American students to become more aware of their culture.

All of these organizations have been run by and dedicated to the undergraduate population. However, Club Latino ventures out of this arena, and, for the first time at Caltech, deals with issues concerning graduate students.

At either level, all of these groups are important. Underrepresented students traditionally have found problems not just through culture shock, but misunderstandings in dealing with staff, faculty, and occasionally security. While these problems are solved, the students need to have an island of serenity so that they may begin to concentrate on the only issue they should: simply graduating from college.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: The Rhodes of Change

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is fifth in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Caltech has produced some very famous scientists over the years. Some may find it surprising that Caltech has produced some famous politicians as well. One in particular became a United States senator.

Joseph Rhodes, Jr. grew up in the ghettos of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and was raised by Black and Filipino parents. He entered Caltech in September of 1965. Like many freshmen in his class, he wished to major in Physics. However, by his sophomore year, signs of his unique personality began to shine through when he changed his major to history.

By his junior year, in 1968, he was elected president of the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology (ASCIT), and was very involved with the YMCA. One major project he led was a community outreach program that brought students from the local Pasadena community onto the Institute's campus. This was the continuation of an annual local community outreach program. Every year, tensions ran high between the local Negro residents and Caltech students, because race riots across the country were frequent during this period. Watts burned in 1965, and Detroit, Washington DC, and Oakland soon followed.

The 1968 Big T contained an extensive review of the events. "The major program of the YMCA this year was a study in the depth of the problems of the ghetto and the city. In Phase I, prominent speakers were brought to the campus to air their views on civil rights and the problems facing their race as Negroes. Phase II brought militant young Negro activists to campus for a week to live and interact with the students. Finally, Phase III saw Caltech students take off time for a week to spend an extended weekend in Northwest Pasadena with Negro families, spending their time with them as they worked and played.

"The program was arranged to a large extent through the Westside Study Center. It was viewed with mixed feelings by its participants, but certainly produced a greater understanding of another way of life." From this project, Rhodes established himself as a controversial, but socially conscious individual.

"Caltech was a difficult challenge," recalled Rhodes. "As a leader of the student body, I had to worry about the welfare of the entire student body, not just Blacks, or myself. For the first year at the Institute, I was the only Black person at the Institute, period. My problems were not so much on campus as off. After all, I arrived only a few weeks after Watts exploded.

"I did what I could to improve the overall climate of the Institute during my terms as ASCIT president. We failed and we succeeded, but we tried. There were many people who participated in this. I am only the one who led the effort. As the years go by, I think back to my Caltech experience as something priceless. I even played in the one football game we won in four years!"

After Rhodes was graduated in 1969, he went on to Harvard University as a graduate student, and, at age 22, was placed on President Nixon's Presidential Commission to Study Campus Unrest. He was the subject of many

newspaper articles, nationwide debates, and a few cartoons. He later went on to become senator of Pennsylvania, and is now Public Utility Commissioner in Harrisburg.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: The Morehouse Men

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is sixth in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Caltech has generated figures that will always be celebrated for their support of traditionally underrepresented students. Alumni such as James Lu Valle and Joe Rhodes are remembered and revered by those whose lives they touched. However, there are alumni that have made equally remarkable advancements, and continue to do so, but receive little recognition as pathfinders to the roads of change.

Dr. James King, Jr., the current Assistant Laboratory Director at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was a graduate student at Caltech during the 1950's. As one of the first Black students to enroll at the Institute and follow in Lu Valle's footsteps, he encountered considerable hardship and prejudice. Through perseverance and determination, he was graduated with a doctorate in chemical physics in 1958. As the first graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia (the only Historically Black College in the United States for Black men) to be graduated from Caltech, he inspired others to follow in his footsteps. William D. Hutchinson, a colleague from Morehouse that was graduated the same year King earned his master's degree, decided to enroll at Caltech.

At the time Hutchinson was graduated, in 1955, there was a great deal of discussion about integration in schools. There were those at Morehouse that wanted him to apply to the University of Alabama. No Black student had ever attended the school, because if he attempted to, he would receive a draft notice immediately. Hutchinson decided to not get involved in these politics, and did not even apply there. The only two colleges he considered attending were the University of Chicago and Caltech. One of his college professors earned a doctorate at the Chicago campus, but an article in TIME magazine that described Caltech caught Hutchinson's eye. Although it emphasized the competitive nature of the Institute, Hutchinson's friend King seemed to be surviving. Hutchinson finally decided on Caltech.

He was fortunate to receive a full scholarship to the Institute. The case Plessy v. Ferguson ordered equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of race, so Hutchinson petitioned the state of Alabama to fund his education. The state must have believed he would attend school within the state, because it agreed; it cost close to nothing to attend school in Alabama. The state funded all of his education while at the Institute. After a few years at Caltech, he bought a car with the extra money. However, he paid only \$345.50 for it.

From the moment he set foot on the campus in August of 1955, Hutchinson learned that Caltech had a very informal atmosphere. He had never flown in an airplane before, and did not realize that he needed transportation to get from the airport to the Institute. He had to use public transportation to get from the airport to Pasadena. After a long plane flight, and arriving on the street in the middle of night, Hutchinson was a little disoriented. A young man saw the weary traveler, and offered help. Hutchinson, thinking he was a fellow graduate student, took the offer. He did not know what his housing assignment would be, but needed a place to stay for the moment. Even though it was very late, the young man spent his time helping Hutchinson get a room in the Athenaeum. He was surprised about

the courtesy he received, but even more surprised to find out that the young man was a professor: Jim Bonner in Biology.

When he received his permanent housing assignment, Hutchinson was paired with a Black roommate, Richard McGriff. It is questionable whether this happened by chance; there were few Black students at the Institute, and Hutchinson never stated any preferences beforehand. The two got along well nonetheless. McGriff was also from a Historically Black College; he was from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (Florida A & M).

The two young Black men would soon encounter situations that were not as questionable. They would soon face obvious forms of racism and prejudice.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: The Morehouse Men

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is seventh in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

When William D. Hutchinson received his permanent housing assignment, he was paired with a Black roommate, Richard McGriff. It is questionable whether this happened by chance; there were few Black students at the Institute, and Hutchinson never stated any preferences beforehand. The two got along nonetheless. McGriff was also from a Historically Black College; he was from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (Florida A & M).

Hutchinson and his roommate often went out into the local Black community. One time, they went to a bar in Old Pasadena. The two were thrown out immediately, because they were Black.

There was not much of a social life at Caltech. There was an Inter-Nation Association that catered primarily to international students. There were no Black women students - either undergraduate or graduate - at the Institution, and very few Black men. There were no undergraduates, and only a handful of graduates. Hutchinson found going to church to be the most helpful social event. Even so, he could not do much until he bought a car.

Hutchinson was at Caltech when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Caltech in February of 1958. He did not have an opportunity to see him speak, but remembers the informal discussions he had with students. One had held on the tennis courts near the Athenaeum.

Later that year, Hutchinson decided that he wanted to live off campus in the Black community. Over his years at Caltech, he made a friend that happened to be a lawyer from his alma mater, Morehouse College. The two would often discuss racial issues. At the time in Pasadena, there were restrictive covenants that kept Blacks from living in certain areas. Because Hutchinson had an "ambiguous" background (he says that he does not obvious Black features), he decided to attempt to rent an apartment. When he had evidence of racism, he would have grounds for a lawsuit.

By 1960, Hutchinson had his evidence. He rented his apartment for several weeks, but when the landlord found out he was Black, he was evicted. He and his friend went to court and won. Under the Fourteenth Amendment, the landlord could not evict anyone on the basis of race. Hutchinson helped to make great advances for the Black community in Pasadena.

Even with his social adventures, Hutchinson made great advances in science. For his doctoral thesis in 1959, he solved a fundamental problem in sickle cell anemia. He worked under Jerry Venegrad, who also worked under Linus Pauling (Pauling won the Nobel Prize in 1954, just five years before). Hutchinson showed that sickle cell anemia was caused by an aberration in the base chain of DNA. Today, this result is used as a fundamental fact in sickle cell research, and Hutchinson feels proud that he was the first to discover it.

Hutchinson was graduated with a master's degree in 1957 in Chemistry, as well as a doctorate degree in 1960. He is presently manager of laboratory operations at Rockwell International in Canoga Park, and lives here in Altadena.

Dr. Hutchinson continues to make great advances for Blacks here in Pasadena. He is part of Special Friends, an organization that mentors Black school children in Altadena, and has worked closely with the National Society of Black Engineers here at Caltech.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: Whose Fault is It?

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is eighth in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Caltech is not known for its diverse campus. By a decree from the revered Robert Millikan, women were not allowed to enroll at Caltech as undergraduates for over half a century. It took the Institute until 1971 to change these policies. However, the Institute has never had a rule that excluded underrepresented minorities by race. In fact, Millikan decided that Caltech's first Black student in the 1920's could enroll and even live with his other white colleagues.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that Caltech has a small minority community. Out of an undergraduate population of 900, less than 60 are Latino, than 30 are African-American, and 10 are Native American. There seems to be no hope in sight for this community to grow; last year, only 10 Latino students enrolled, 2 African American, and 2 Native American. However, do our rocket scientists even know why the numbers are so small?

In the 1970's, the scenario at Caltech was quite different. From 1972 until 1975, about 10 Blacks and 10 Hispanics entered each year. This changed drastically when about 20 Hispanic students entered with 10 Blacks in 1977. However, this did not create a large minority community as one may believe. Many of these students dropped out during their freshman year; it is reported that the retention rate may have been as low as 50%. You may recall that a Black Students Union was created during this period, but a Latino Student Union never crystallized. Many of the Black students were from inner city high schools in Los Angeles, such as Washington, Jordan, and Locke, as many of the Hispanic students were from Puerto Rico. Almost no Native American students enrolled during this decade.

Something changed drastically in 1978: no minority students enrolled. Some suggest that it was because A Better Chance (ABC) programs began at other schools, and had more appealing financial aid packages and campus activities for minority students. Others suggest that the number of applications from minority students were low. If any of these statements were valid, it would mean something was wrong. Caltech received 1500 applications; it was the most the Institute ever had up to that year. So the question arises: whose fault is it that no minorities enrolled?

The Caltech community may have had part of the blame. The minority community looked somewhat appealing to applying minority students. There was a Black Students Union, and of the 30 Black, Hispanic, and Native American students at the time, 10 were women. However, the retention rate was very dismal. Students dropped out and flunked out during their freshman year, while others had severe culture shock. Considering the radical feelings of the 1960's and the growth of militant organizations such as the Black Panther Party, many underrepresented students did not get along with their white colleagues. The Student Support Program (SSP), now known as the Bridge program, was an attempt to remedy this problem, but it was only a band-aid on a larger wound. Lee Browne, the Director of Affirmative Action programs, did not have enough support from the Institute to recruit,

retain, and graduate underrepresented minority students by himself. With a staff of one secretary and opposition from many in the "Old-Boy" network, Browne was against the odds.

The minority community at large may have had part of the blame as well. Although we do not know the number of applications the Institute received from underrepresented minorities, it may not have been many. If we look at the applications from the last few years, we may make a guess as to what the applicant pool was like twenty years ago. In 1988, the year Caltech first kept track of the ethnicity of the applicants, the admissions office received just over 1500 applications. Almost 30 were from Latinos, 20 from African-Americans, and 1 Native American. That is, 3% of the applications received were from minorities. If we assume that this number is comparable to those in the 1970's, we see that minorities were not applying to the Institute. The same year, of the 500 that were admitted (30% of the applicants), as many as 20 (40%) were minorities. If a larger percentage of minorities were admitted, it would seem that Caltech was doing its best to enroll minority students.

Next week, we will see what the true answer is.

Title: It's Part of Our Past: Whose Fault is It?

Author: Edray Goins

Note: This is ninth in a series of vignettes that will last through the term. They are excerpts of research performed over the past 12 months on "The History of Caltech's Underrepresented Students."

Both communities were at fault in 1978. While Caltech did not offer much support to Lee Browne, the Director of Secondary School Relations, as well as advisor and friend of the Institute's minority students, many Black, Hispanic, and Native American high school students did not apply. Although there was an office on campus to deal with minority issues, there were many problems with cultural acceptance and harassment by security. Although there is a lot of evidence by which to conclude that admissions policies at Caltech were a little backwards (such as not allowing Browne to sit on the admissions committee), clearly 20% of the population, the percentage of minorities in the country, did not apply. There seemed to be a lack of concern about these problems in both communities.

Ever since 1978, the minority community has never been the same. The number of Native American undergraduate applicants may have grown steadily, because it is now at 15 a year. However, the number of Black applicants may have decreased, because the number of students in freshman class has decreased on average from 10 in 1972 to 2 in 1992. Hispanic freshmen, on the other hand, have increased on average from 6 in 1972 to 12 in 1992. Even Lee Browne's title changed when "Director of Special Student Programs" was added to his previous title "Director of Secondary School Relations."

We now seem to have the same scenario as we did in 1978. Our minority community looks somewhat appealing to applying minority students. We have societies of Black and Latino engineers, as well as a graduate social organization to celebrate Latin cultures. Of the 60 Black, Hispanic, and Native American undergraduates, 10 are women. However, these students still face the same problems as before. Even though the retention rate is better than what it was, underrepresented students continue to drop out and have culture shock. The admissions office still faces the same problems as well. Last year, the Institute received nearly 2000 applications, where almost 130 were from Latinos, 30 from African-Americans, and 20 Native Americans. That is, 9% were received from minorities. Even now, minorities are not applying to the Institute in the proportions they should.

The scenario now is much more similar than we may believe. From 1989 to 1992, about 6 Blacks and 14 Hispanics entered each year. However, in 1993, only 2 Blacks, and 8 Hispanics enrolled.

There are ways to prevent the same problems we experienced before. Caltech can increase its recruitment for underrepresented minorities. For the last ten years, there has been almost no active recruitment for Black, Hispanic, and Native American students here in California, and none in the predominantly Black and Chicano sections of Los Angeles and Pasadena. Caltech can increase its retention efforts. The minority students that are failing their classes, since they are so few in number, should receive more attention than a letter in the mail asking them to talk to the deans. Often, the problems range beyond academic shock, and into culture shock. Social gatherings of minority students alleviate the alienation of being the only minority in a sea of foreign faces. Caltech can increase its consciousness of diversity issues. Some organizations have made progress in this area; the Caltech

Y, for instance, holds events that deal with not only African-American, Latino, and Native American issues, but women's issues as well. Even if we realize that some find it degrading to read a security bulletin that states only the ethnicity of a suspect, we help create a hospitable atmosphere for minorities.

The true test of whether we will repeat 1978 is still on the way. Pre-Frosh weekend is the best indicator of how many minority students will enroll as freshmen for next year. Many underrepresented high school students take one look Caltech's students, and are discouraged by the lack of familiar faces. Over the last two years, others have felt comfortable at events sponsored by the Office of Minority Student Affairs, but also felt that they were not enough. If these students decide not to attend, we may not have any students attend next year. Considering how low our numbers have been over the last two years, we will be worse off now than in 1978. If we repeat the mistakes of the past, then we have learned nothing, and achieved even less.