

Interview Questions

Elizabeth Carleton

1. The BSU policy statement is very detailed. How long did it take to create, and what was that process like?
2. In his article “‘Better’ Remains ‘Bad’,” John Payton discusses white students’ reaction to the BSU demands, including the impression that “things aren’t that bad here” and that the BSU was asking too much. What can you tell me about white students’ reactions to the BSU and its activities? Were some groups hostile?
3. You mentioned that you were one of two students of color in your graduating class. Was that an isolating experience? Before the Black Studies Center, was the consortium taking any action to address this issue?
4. What relationship did the BSU have with civil rights and/or Black power movements? Were there any groups or individuals that were particularly influential?
5. The anti-war movement was very active at the Claremont Colleges around the same time. How did the BSU interact with other student movements? Was there a sense of tension, or solidarity?
6. What was the relationship between MECHA and the BSU?
7. What was the campus atmosphere like after the February bombings? How did it affect the ongoing negotiations with administration over the BSC?
8. You’ve had an illustrious career as a professor, an administrator, college president, and now trustee. Have your views on student activism changed over the course of your career? In your 1969 interview, you discussed your frustrations “the ineffectiveness, the

slowness, [and] the real unresponsiveness” of higher education. Do you feel differently now?

9. An important aspect of Black identity movements in the 1960s and 1970s was building solidarity with Africa. After graduation, you lived and worked in Africa, including the University of Ife. How did this experience shape your views on race in America? How was working at an African university different than working at white-oriented colleges in The United States?
10. For the first time, Pomona’s incoming freshman class has a majority of students of color. How do you feel about the progress made since you were a student? Are you optimistic about the future?
11. In your 1969 interview, you said: “It is very difficult to view working in the black movement in terms of success.” Looking back, do you feel differently now?

*When was “How It Began” published?