

Editor,

Racism is apparently alive and kicking in a place where one might not expect to find it – at historically black Lincoln University. The sole white student in the Principles of Management class was singled out and taunted by black students after three visitors were brought into the classroom to register voters for the upcoming Presidential election. Instead, they began to talk about racism, and incited the members of the class to an agitated state. This happened on 30 September 2008.

Although no physical contact was made, the white student felt enough threatened by the pointed accusations that he was afraid that his physical safety was in jeopardy. He has since withdrawn from the University.

That something like this should happen in a classroom at an academic institution of higher learning, much less at a university attended by those who should appreciate the damaging effects of racism, is an outrage. Why did the class instructor allow these visitors into her class? Once there, why did she allow the chaos to get out of hand? Why did she not restore order and reassure the victim of this abuse?

This was not an isolated incident. There are but a handful of white students at Lincoln University, but some of these have been singled out in other classes as representing the evil of racism in the US. Granted that black students, who have personally felt the bite of racism, should harbor resentment against those who have mistreated them, but at an institution of higher learning students should be able to transcend their prior ordeals through education. That is the noble ideal promise of higher education.

Lincoln University's President's office assures that there is a procedure to follow to report racial incidents; they should be reported to security personnel. But these incidents went well beyond security; they involved the classroom, the heart of the educational process. In well over thirty years of classroom teaching at the University of Maryland, I have never known of anything even remotely similar in our classes.

Racism in any form should not be tolerated in our society. Racism should especially be expunged from an institution of higher learning. The fact that these incidents are presently occurring at a respected historically black university is reprehensible. Some institutions still have a long way to go.

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