Similarly to the hostility that greeted their racial brethren when they migrated to majority white urban centers throughout the twentieth century, a poisonous white backlash hit African American students when they entered HWCUs in the mid-1960s. Higher education may have desegregated, but many of the new African Americans still felt excluded, removed from the academic, social, and cultural milieu of the campus with few (if any) relevant courses or social and cultural outlets, particularly at nonurban HWCUs. “A solitary man, a foreigner in a strange land” was the language used by Stan Herring, the vice president of the Association of Black Collegians (ABC) at Gannon-U (PA) in November 1968; a student at St. Andrews Presbyterian (NC) used the phrase “a rat in a maze.” At Lawrence-U (WI) “you are alone—stranded in the middle of white culture,” said an unnamed student. “This university is an oasis in the desert, surrounded by vultures who are only waiting to pick up a crumb, a smell, a taste, and a feel of black nitty-gritty substance,” wrote the Afro-American Students Association at U-Iowa in May 1968. Meanwhile, a few Michigan Tech students in an “alien white atmosphere” felt that the black student had two choices: “give up his black identity or perish.”

At many HWCUs, campus police officers continuously harassed African Americans. Some white students demeaned them by using derogatory names and sayings, making insulting phone calls, waving Confederate flags, singing “Dixie,” organizing minstrel shows, and defacing their flyers, posters, doors, and campus property. On some occasions, they poured lighter fluid under black students’ doors and set it on fire. When walking across campus, black students were hit with objects or nasty stares. Drive-by insults were rampant, along with offensive bathroom poetry. When black students reached their cars, on occasion they founded them damaged, or worse, set ablaze, which occurred at the U-North Dakota in September 1968. Some trainers and nurses seemed
surprised they could get hurt. Several white professors notoriously assumed that African Americans were unintelligent and spewed bigotry in the classrooms, such as the Cornell economist who reportedly said in the spring of 1968 that urban African Americans “play sickly and perverted games stressing cunning and survival, as in the jungle.” Campus publications proclaimed black inferiority. In the spring of 1967, Columbia’s humor magazine satirized the formation of a black fraternity as “trying to provide Negro students with a home away from home, a sort of haven for the noble savages in this world of chrome and glass.”

Then there were the endless litany of questions. Part of the black experience at Trinity-U in San Antonio, according to Reggie Butler, was “being asked questions like ‘why do Blacks want so much and do not want to work?’: a question so naïve it is only surpassed by the nerve of the person asking it.” Even more naïve were the questions that came after tragedies. “I was terribly sorry to hear about Dr. King,” said a white student to a grieving black student in the Yale cafeteria the morning after King died. “But I’m interested to know how all this affects a Negro. Would you mind telling me just how you reacted to it?” The black student just glared at the white student for a few moments. After answering the question silently, he left the dining room, leaving his half-eaten breakfast behind. The questions kept many black students in a perpetual emotive bind. Am I here to educate or gain an education? Usually, they tried to do both, while the racism leaking from the questions drowned them in fury. Charged a Yale activist, “I came here to be a student not to educate whites about blacks. I’m tired of being an unpaid, untenured professor.”

At HBCUs, the conditions were not any better in 1965. At quite a few (usually private) HBCUs, the faculty bodies were mostly white, and included many conservative African Americans. At Tougaloo in 1968, 60 percent of the professors were still white. “The whole direction of the college is set and controlled by white supremacists,” said Political Action Committee leader Howard Spencer that year. Most of the professors at Clark (Atlanta) were white, and none of the shared art and psychology instructors at the Atlanta University Center were African American in 1968.

The vast majority of HBCU boards of trustees were either all-white or majority white, and they employed African American presidents that were often conservative and paternalistic. Therefore, many HBCUs still had compulsory class, ROTC, and chapel attendance in 1965. They usually prohibited smoking, drinking, cross-gender dorm room visitation and student franchise on college matters, and mandated curfews and dress codes (usually for women). For instance, Grambling officials, as late as 1967, did not allow women to wear pants and locked the dorms at 10 p.m. Students there ate breakfast at 6 a.m. in a dining hall with large hanging signs ordering them to “take bite-size mouthfuls” and “break bread before eating.” There was not a single Africana Studies program or department in 1965, and at both HBCUs and HWCUs, courses studying Africans Americans were rare. Although weakened by the LBSM and recent civil rights measures, the moralized contraption, standardization of exclusion, normalized
mask of whiteness, and ladder altruism still dominated the racial constitution of higher education in 1965.  

* * *

Like any social movement, the BCM started slowly. The day after Bloody Sunday, on March 7, 1965, two black student protests crippled a historic HBCU and a HWCU with a storied history of enrolling a relatively large number of black students. In late February, saying it would alienate white benefactors, Hampton officials refused to allow students to conduct a sympathy demonstration for the ongoing Selma campaign in downtown Hampton. On February 25, students called for the freedom to speak, demonstrate, and determine the college’s curriculum and student code. In a passionate letter, Hampton student leader Donald Hughes pledged that his peers were no longer “cottoning to the White man” or “eating cheese for the White man’s money. Do we need funds that only serve to perpetuate the things that the Negro is trying to get rid of once and for all—non-self-reliance, subordinating due to fear and feelings of inadequacy? No!”

Still reeling over administrators’ intransigence and outraged by the carnage on the Selma bridge, about two hundred students rallied outside Hampton’s administration building on March 8, 1965, with signs that read, “We want freedom” and “Hampton a Reformation or College.” Three days later they staged a sit-in, blocking the entrance to administrators’ offices. President Jerome Holland met none of the demands and eventually expelled the student leaders. Nevertheless, the Hampton affair became one of the pioneering first calls of the movement for their Negro University, controlled by white benefactors, to be refashioned into a Black University dictated by and for African Americans. Gwen Patton and her comrades at Tuskegee would be making a similar call in a few weeks, after their Montgomery “march that won’t turn around,” as narrated in the previous chapter. Although neither group initially used the term Black University, the two HBCUs that formed the model for all four elements of the racial constitution over the last hundred years at HBCUs were among the first to experience the thralls of campus activism. It signaled the prospect of a new day for black higher education, brought about by a fresh social movement. If the historically ultraconservative Hampton and Tuskegee could be radicalized, anything seemed possible.

The day after Bloody Sunday, students also disrupted U-Kansas, which had annually amassed one of the largest HWCU black student populations for more than a half-century. Hundreds of campus activists demonstrated inside and outside of the president’s office, demanding the abolishment of segregation in Greek organizations and housing. About 110 students were arrested, including soon-to-be NFL running back “The Kansas Comet,” Gayle Sayers. During the early years of the BCM at HWCU’s, the removal of the standardization of exclusion in student enrollments, clubs, and housing galvanized activists. In contrast, HBCU activists, during the initial years, sought to complete the removal of the moralized contraption. Actually, that March 1965, campus activists pressed to drive out the contraption, upgrade their facilities and services, and increase student
power at Winston-Salem State and present day NC Central where picket signs shouted, “Human Rights! Civil Rights! What about Student Rights?”

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“You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘you are free to compete with all of the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.” Thus declared President Lyndon B. Johnson to Howard’s graduating class on June 4, 1965, sounding like a proponent of affirmative action. Yet, on many campuses, black students were still hobbled by chains. The racial constitution of higher education stymied academic freedom. Even at Howard, two months before Johnson’s commencement address, students protested administrative fetters.

When black students returned in the fall of 1965, animated by the scorching Watts Rebellion, “symbols of slavery” still adorned newly desegregated southern campuses, including festivals with racial caricatures, Confederate flags, and the singing of “Dixie” at school events, prompting protests at schools such as U-Texas at Arlington. In November 1965, Herman Carter grieved that “Southern University perpetuates academic slavery, not freedom” before leading hundreds of his peers in rallies and marches. At Tuskegee that month, Gwen Patton and fellow activists marched on the president’s home, boycotted the vespers service, walked out of a required chapel meeting, and organized a “turn-over-your-plate” protest in the cafeteria—all for more student rights, freedom, and power. Meanwhile, the Ivies made the concept of “diverse campuses” a fad that fall. “We don’t want the well-rounded boy so much as the well-rounded student body,” a Columbia admissions officer announced. Soon, black students would be requesting a racially well-rounded body of scholarship, a well-rounded faculty, a well-rounded curriculum, and a well-rounded scheme of services and facilities.

* * *

Those well-rounded requests were voiced at quite a few campuses in the spring of 1966, as the movement intensified after a gas station clerk murdered Tuskegee freshman Sammy Younge Jr. BSUs were established or took on a new political posture. Marianna Waddy assumed the presidency of the nation’s first organization that used the term Black Student Union at SF State. After asserting that the college had tried to “white-wash them,” Waddy declared, “We will now strive to incorporate the eminent and profound concept of blackness into a new and positive image of black students on this campus.” SOUL at NC A&T complained about cafeteria food, and the first of several campaigns during the BCM to oust a HBCU president reached its zenith at Alcorn State. NAACP state field director Charles Evers, the former student activist, aided the protests for the ouster of President John D. Boyd, whom he described as “only concerned with pleasing white folks.”

After the summer debut of the catchphrase “black power,” black student activism started focusing primarily on campus issues, as in 1965 students (particularly
at HBCUs) engaged in dual, campus and off-campus, activism. Marquette faced its first protest that fall of 1966, and senior women demonstrated for more rights at Tougaloo-C. BSU members introduced the Black Studies idea at SF State. The idea of a Black Studies department, studying the lives of African people from their perspective and for their benefit, emerged logically out of the minds of BSU members brewed with black power ideas of self-determination, black pride, and criticism of white thought and institutions. They had carefully uncovered the mask of scholarly whiteness and saw White Studies taught from the perspective of white people primarily for their advancement. Additionally, the concept of a Black Studies department surfaced when BSU members realized that students should be receiving credit for courses in their Black Arts and Culture Series, which they ran in the fall 1966 in the Experimental College, since they were absent in the curriculum. The idea at SF State quickly metamorphosed into a crusade for a new discipline.  

Additional BSUs materialized that fall, such as at NYU, where the organizers pledged to find “ways of making white middle-class NYU more meaningful to the black student.” At Wesleyan, collegians founded a study group that read, among other things, Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington. By the spring of 1967, James Baldwin and Richard Wright had become their literary saints, and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* had become required reading for anyone who claimed on campus the new, hip, progressive, and sometimes exclusive identity—black.  

The SF State BSU had established and was controlling the first Black Studies program in American history by the spring of 1967, taking courses out of the Experimental College and convincing departments to sponsor them for credit. But this was not enough for the BSU. They wanted complete control over their courses, organized in a department so students could receive a degree from their Black Studies. On March 1, 1967, BSU president Jimmy Garrett officially presented “A Proposal to Initiate an Institute of Black Studies at San Francisco State College” to the Instructional Policy Committee of the Academic Senate. “There is no such thing as an integrated institution when the educational process is geared towards one group of students,” he wrote. For the rest of the spring and summer, ideologically unnerved SF State faculty played academic football with the proposal, nitpicking on minor issues, and frustrations mounted among BSU members regarding traditional channels, a sign of the prospects for those demanding Black Studies departments.  

Most of the other BSUs and SGAs around the nation advocated, through traditional channels, a few black courses. In addition, there were protests in the spring of 1967 to undo the standardization of exclusion and racism in student clubs, athletics, and academics at schools such as Illinois Wesleyan, Vanderbilt, and Wichita State. The April affair at Wichita State led to the organizing of a black student group, the activity of most black campus activists at HWCUs that spring.  

Propelled by SNCC organizers who had returned to organize black colleges, students at quite a few HBCUs, including Texas Southern, Fisk, Lincoln (MO),
SC State, and Howard, waged protests and violent rebellions to demonstrate their displeasure with their “Negro” universities (with the first demands for a “Black” university), student powerlessness, police brutalizers, poor food, racist professors, and administrators who fired popular professors in the spring of 1967. Shouts of “We are in slavery” echoed during the Howard protests. To sociologist Nathan Hare, who was fired from Howard for his activism, black students were seeking to overthrow the “plantation milieu” and the “missionary mores” under the “supervision of an outmoded generation of Negro overseers. They are no longer willing to cry ‘Uncle’ to Uncle Sam or Uncle Tom.” Hare urged college administrators to keep pace with and channel “this new student vigor” so that black colleges could become a “vanguard of a brave new spirit of social change. If they “fail to meet this challenge,” then “it is going to be a long, hot fall.”

They did fail, and consequently students scorched black and white colleges. A rapidly growing minority of the black student population were becoming more organized, more vocal, more active, more committed, and more determined to modify higher education. Black journalists took notice. “The Black student is demanding…a shaking, from-the-roots-up overhaul of their colleges,” stated a December 1967 report in the Chicago Defender. Look senior editor Ernest Dunbar reported on the “birth of ‘Afro’ or all-black clubs and societies” in his magazine, a piece republished in several student newspapers that fall. “Time was when the occasional Negro accepted at an Ivy League school…worked fanatically to become what he imagined was a proper college gentleman,” Dunbar wrote. “Today a new breed of black cat is tearing up white campuses.” In the fall of 1967, Black students tore up many institutions, including San Jose State, Berea-C (KY), Grambling State (LA), Central State (OH), and SF State—forcing campus closures at the latter two colleges.

In the spring of 1968, BSUs had either heard about the development of Black Studies at SF State or had conceived of a similar need on their own campuses. After the death of three black students in the Orangeburg Massacre at SC State in February 1968, during a campaign to desegregate a nearby bowling alley, the number of protests dramatically increased. Black power icon H. Rap Brown demanded revenge. “If it takes twenty to thirty million Blacks to tear up the country, we’ll do it,” he declared. Most of the campus activists did not tear up the country. However, the Orangeburg Massacre did tear up some passive minds, and activist ones formed in their stead. It was the first of two events that spring that hurled legions of students to the left. The major protest in reaction to the massacre occurred at the main incubator of the movement at HBCUs—Howard. Students issued the Orangeburg Ultimatum, which demanded, among others things, the creation of a radical Black University, and took over the administration building for 102 hours in a nationally renowned protest in March 1968 that inspired demonstrations at other HBCUs.

In the first three months of 1968, black campus activists also met with campus officials and submitted grievances, usually through BSUs recently established at a number of institutions, such as Northeastern-U, Occidental-C, U-Mary Washington (VA), UCLA, and New Mexico State. If the BCM received a nudge from the Orangeburg Massacre, then it received a shove from the murder of
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968. Once hesitant moderate students volunteered for the conflict for diversity and relevancy, and radical campus activism started to reign supreme. Central State student Jaribu Hill “got as serious as the time we were living in,” he said. “I never looked back on the meaningless life I had lived before. I lived a life of conviction, resistance and protest on my college campus.”

As cities burned after King’s death, some black students at Florida A&M, Tennessee State, Lincoln (MO), and Jackson State joined in the riots, but most black students attended and spoke at memorial services held at practically every college in America. Some boycotted services in protest, such as the eighty at Harvard who stood on the church’s steps having their own commemoration. “If they come out of there with tears in their eyes,” said Jeff Howard, the president of Afro, pointing to the church, “we want it to be plain that we don’t want their tears. We want black people to have a place here at Harvard.” A few days after King’s murder, Vassar’s black women issued a thunderous statement. “White America…has plainly demonstrated that the only tactics that can move its violent heart is violence. Force only responds to force and power to power. Pretty soon this nation will be shuddering in a paroxysm of black power.”

Higher education shuddered in a paroxysm of what Stefan Bradley termed “black student power” for the rest of the spring 1968 semester. Campus activists usually formed BSUs (or took over SGAs) at schools where black students were unorganized or marginal before King’s death. Infant BSUs forcefully and often publicly submitted their first formal sets of demands—seemingly the most prevalent occurrence in April and May 1968. Protests were more likely to disrupt the minority of institutions with older BSUs that had demanded racial restructuring for years. Requests for Black Studies courses had been elevated to demands for programs and departments. Entreaties to reduce white prejudice had expanded to demands for BCCs. Pleas for a few more black students and professors were now demands for dozens of faculty and student quotas. The paroxysm shuddered colleges and universities in almost every state—Iowa, California, Michigan, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Alabama, New York—just to name a few.

While black students crafted their demands, some were mystified as they watched the deluge of diversity flood into the academy. Through his death, King dramatically appealed to the moral conscience of white America, particularly those in the academy, as dozens, probably hundreds of institutions succumbed to students’ requests, or often on their own accord established scholarships, recruiting initiatives, race committees, and other memorials in King’s honor. Colorado State, for example, started a memorial fund “to produce a thousand Martin Luther Kings for the one we lost.”

Influential protests hit Tuskegee, where students took trustees and the president hostage in early April, and Northwestern, where in early May activists led by James Turner and Kathryn Ogletree cleverly gained a department and black dorm, among other things, by means of a building takeover. Initially demonstrating in opposition to the building of a gymnasium in a nearby Harlem park against the wishes of residents, black and white students seized five buildings in
late April at Columbia. Black students occupied Hamilton Hall, placing a cardboard sign on its door proclaiming “Malcolm X University, Founded 1968 A.D.” Students welcomed into the occupied buildings famous journalists, who received lectures on American imperialism and racism before leaving and making this the most publicized campus demonstration of the 1960s student movement.23

On April 30, after seven days of negotiations between the students and the administration, with the faculty trying to mediate, the administration dispatched the NYPD to end the demonstration, probably confident that Harlem would not destroy the campus in vengeance. With no resistance, the black students quietly walked out of Hamilton and into the police vans. NAACP executive director Roy Wilkins, the movement’s major antagonist, even praised these black students. While the NYPD cleared the four buildings with white students on the South side of campus, about a thousand mostly white students watched, some of them jeering, taunting, and ridiculing the police. When the police finished, they walked back into formation, broke from their line and flailed away at the students. The clouds of police nightsticks unleashed a rain of student blood. All told, 148 were injured, and 707 were arrested (charges were later dropped) in the crowd and from the buildings. Enraged, more than five thousand Columbia students spent the rest of the semester protesting for the right to “restructure the university.”24

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After the politically tumultuous summer of 1968, the largest and most radical incoming class of black students in history walked into the academy in the fall of 1968, many from the sweltering urban African America. Eight hundred members of Howard’s freshmen class identified themselves as militants. At white colleges, dozens of critical masses formed BSUs, including at Catholic-U and Wake Forest. Black students hardly felt like aliens, needing to recede to islands within as their contemporaries had done. As an unnamed Yale student said, “When there were just a handful of us here we felt isolated and defenseless in a white world, so we just went along, I guess. But with more black kids coming in each year we’ve started getting together and we have a lot more confidence.”25

Enrollees were able to find comfort in BCCs, take the nation’s first Black Studies courses, or seek advice from the growing assemblage of black administrators and professors. An English professor taught a new black literature course at Northeastern-U (MA). “I wanted to see the fruits of our labor,” said enrollee Jim Alexander. “I’ve read all the books, long ago. Most black students have.” However, black students were far from satisfied. Several officials forecast an upsurge of black campus activism. Before classes began in the fall, some administrators took precautions, while others simply ignored the warnings.26

Throughout the BCM, the early fall had the lowest levels of activism, since the influxes of students compelled BSUs and SGAs to reorganize, while leaders and their political ideologies jockeyed for control. Usually after BSUs and SGAs modified, their new managers began asserting themselves. After controversy bristled through California concerning Black Panther Party member Eldridge Cleaver’s teaching a course that fall at the UC Berkeley, and after a prominent protest
at U-Illinois, the protest activity was raised when two San Jose State students, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, raised their fists in protest at the Olympics in October 1968. “Black America will understand what we did tonight,” said Smith at a press conference after the event.27

Black America understood, and possibly no segment of it more than their peers. Black students started clenching their fists and lowering their heads during the playing of the national anthem at collegiate events. At SF State, the BSU started the longest student strike in American history on November 6, 1968, for a series of demands, including an autonomous Black Studies department. With most of the school’s 18,000 white students behind its cause in a broad multiracial coalition, the strike lasted almost five months, inspiring black campus activists around the nation.28

Dozens of white colleges were consequently disturbed by blacks demanding a more relevant education in November and December of 1968—schools such as UMASS-Amherst, West Virginia’s Bluefield State (where students firebombed a building), Fordham-U (NY), Brown/Pembroke (RI), and UW Oshkosh, where about ninety black campus activists were arrested and expelled on “Black Thursday.” Even more groups of students, at Case Western Reserve and U-San Francisco for instance, issued demands and usually engaged in marathon negotiating sessions with administrators. Before 50,000 people at the Astrodome on November 23, 1968, Lynn Eusan, sporting an Afro, put on the crown of homecoming queen at U-Houston, becoming a source of pride for activists on campus and in the city until her tragic murder in 1971. (A campus park is now named after Eusan.)29

In December 1968, Robert Smith, the recently fired president of SF State, told The Chronicle of Higher Education that higher education “is at a serious and crucial turning-point.” The academy still largely refused to racially reconstitute higher education. The bonanza of demands issued after King’s death had only been partially addressed on some campuses and hardly addressed at others. Consequently, even though the SF State strike waned in January 1969, the movement as a whole surged, beginning its climax semester with a rash of protests, usually to force home those post-King-assassination demands. Brandeis-U, Queens-C, U-Pittsburgh, Wilberforce-U (OH), Shaw (NC), Wittenberg-U (OH), and UC Berkeley were all sites of protests that month. On King’s soon-to-be birthday holiday, twenty-five black campus activists at Swarthmore-C outside of Philadelphia were engaged in the seventh day of their siege of the admissions office, demanding active recruitment of black students, faculty, and administrators. Like his peers throughout the nation, Swarthmore president Courtney Smith had been severely strained those seven days. On the eighth day of the siege, shortly before he was to meet with a faculty committee studying the demands, Smith suffered a fatal heart attack. Shock and sadness unsettled the campus, and in sympathy, the twenty-five students ended their protest. Death continued to reign the next day. Two UCLA students, John Huggins and Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter, leaders of the Los Angeles Black Panther Party, were gunned down by members of Karenga’s US Organization at the end of a BSU meeting of 150 students. The students had deliberated over the selection of a director for the recently
created Afro-American Studies Center, a selection the two groups had quarreled about since the fall. They also battled ideologically, a clash doggedly intensified by the divisive work of the FBI.\textsuperscript{30}

In early February 1969, academics attended the American Association of Colleges conference, where almost every speech, panel, and discussion started or ended in a debate concerning the BCM and its implications. Meanwhile, the BCM quickened its activities—wreaking havoc at UVA, NC A&T, U-Dayton, and Huston-Tillotson (TX), reaching its pinnacle on February 13, 1969. On February 21, 1969, thousands of students memorialized their fallen leader, Malcolm X, slain four years earlier on that day. During the next month, headlines from black student protests became an everyday occurrence, with the most notorious demonstrations ravaging U-Texas at Austin, Mills-C in Oakland, Rutgers, Pepperdine-U in southern California (after a white security guard killed Larry Donnell Kimmons, a black high school student, during a confrontation over Kimmons’s desire to play basketball on campus), and students took Morehouse trustees (including Martin Luther King Sr.) hostage to press for their demands for a “Black University.” In the midst of this turmoil, the \textit{Wall Street Journal} reported that “Black power is the force causing the greatest schizophrenia on the campus at the moment.”\textsuperscript{31}

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Even though there had been several violent protests, specifically the mildly publicized affairs at small rural HBCUs, the academy did not link the movement with violence nor did it give the students’ more radical demands legitimacy until students strutted out of an occupied Cornell building with guns and Harvard established a Black Studies department, respectively, within days of each other in late April 1969. Ironically, as their demands were legitimized, the academy grew more insensitive to them, with the hovering specter of violence. Still, the activism did not ebb. In late April and May of 1969, among other protests, black students took over an entire City College campus for fourteen days, which contributed to the installation of a widely touted (and censured) open admissions policy at the City University of NY, twelve hundred seized a Hampton administration building, students gained control over a Voorhees building with arms, barricaded themselves inside six buildings at Howard, forced the closure of Alabama State for two weeks, and shot it out with police at NC A&T for three days, an exchange that killed a student. This apex academic year of the movement led to massive repression and substantial reforms.\textsuperscript{32}

Gwen Patton, who had joined the staff of the National Students Association since leaving Tuskegee, led about one hundred of her peers out of its convention in El Paso, Texas, in late August 1969. “We no longer can be part of a racist” group, as the leaders use “black problems for their own purposes to gain financial grants from foundations,” Patton explained to the media. Urged by Nathan Hare and under Patton’s leadership, black collegians formed their own group—the National Association of Black Students (NABS)—which became the major national network for campus activists during the final years of the movement.\textsuperscript{33}

As Patton devised the NABS, black students and HWCU officials launched the greatest recruitment of black students, faculty, and staff in American history.
Nevertheless, the staffing boom had its downside. HWCUs amplified their raiding of HBCUs for professors, leading to massive turnover. Miles in Birmingham, for instance, with a faculty of sixty-one in 1969, had to replace forty-five teachers the previous three years. “Every black Ph.D. who has his name mentioned twice, or has published in the slightest review, is besieged by Northern as well as Southern white institutions—most often in response to militant, urgent and often threatening demands by their black students,” Spelman history chairman Vincent Harding explained to the *New York Times* in 1969.34

Aside from the new reforms and policing tactics, when higher education opened its doors in the fall of 1969, everything seemed out of whack. Black students, professors, administrators, and government leaders were still at odds over some of the core demands of the movement. There were fierce tug-of-wars for power over newly established Black Studies programs among African Americans themselves and between them and campus officials. Students and their allies were divided over ideology, tactics, and goals, marking the beginning of the end of the BCM. Black campus revolutionaries who wanted to escalate the movement to another level were combating activists who wanted to protest for reforms colleges had not yet instituted, and both of those groups were confronting students who wanted to nurture the gains won in the spring of 1969 (or off-campus matters). They all scurried around campuses picking the unparalleled crop of students that enrolled in higher education institutions in the fall of 1969.35

As hundreds of new initiatives, such as Black Studies programs, diversity offices, and black cultural centers, were unveiled in the fall of 1969 and black leaders such as the NAACP’s Roy Wilkins questioned their efficacy, many of the progenitors of the reforms faced serious judicial repression, slowing the movement. Yet California’s
Nairobi-C, North Carolina’s Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), and a few other colleges that students built to provide a relevant and socially responsible education opened their doors. Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, spoke at MXLU’s opening ceremonies. Painted in black on a peach-colored wall just inside the door of its building was a Malcolm quotation, proclaiming that this was a school for members of “a new generation of black people who have become disenchanted with the entire system and who are ready now and willing to do something about it.” Upon its founding, Director Howard Fuller said, “This university will provide a framework within which black education can become relevant to the needs of the black community and the struggle for black liberation.”

The revolt of the black athlete picked up at schools that fall, most prominently in the series of protests and refusals to play in contests against Mormon-controlled and what the activists deemed theologically racist BYU. Although much of the national attention focused on the revolt of the black student-athlete and on the UC regents’ second crusade in successive years to oust a radical professor (this time Angela Davis of UCLA), black campus activists made demands and protested at colleges, such as Central Connecticut State, Marshall-U (WV), St. Ambrose-U (IA), Fairfield-U (CT), and Vassar-C (NY), where critical masses had just been reached. Protests still occurred at institutions where critical masses had long dotted the landscape, including at Fisk in December 1969, where students called for a Black University “controlled and administered by black people,” devoted to their cultural needs, identified “completely with blacks,” teaching “skills necessary for black existence,” and void of white employees.

Some administrative reactions to protests became more militant that semester. They met threats of demonstrations with counterthreats of prison time, and stood up to the force of protests by swiftly using the force of the newfangled enormous campus police state. It was now up to the students to change tactics. Black campus activists largely did not, and the growing ineffectiveness of proven tactics propagated disillusionment. The mounting number of retaliatory demonstrations to decry attacks on their communities also contributed to the decline.

Black students at UNC at Chapel Hill, Tufts-U (MA), and Harvard fought for the rights of black campus nonacademic workers that fall. For once, the New York Times affirmed their efforts. “Racial discrimination in the building trades must not be allowed to benefit from the vast expansion of construction programs on college campuses all over the country.” During the Harvard protest campaign in December 1969, “Masai” Hewitt of the BPP, NAACP’s Roy Wilkins, SCLC’s Ralph Abernathy, and CORE’s Roy Innis shared the stage for the first time that decade at Boston-C. Wilkins in particular, the major antagonist of the BCM, had grown more sympathetic to black power and sought to create some “common ground” with the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1969, as Yohuru Williams documents. Like black students across America, the speakers were enraged about the recent police onslaught against the Panthers headquarters in Los Angeles and the vicious police murder of Chicago Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. “The Panthers today, next week CORE or the SCLC, the week after it may be the NAACP,” Innis roared. The murders and Panther repression added to a year of political assassinations, harassment, raids, and unjust imprisonments of black
power activists, which increasingly attracted the attention of students—another phenomenon that slowed the campus movement.38

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“As Lafayette heads into the 1970’s, there is a new awareness of the ‘black problem’ on the campus,” wrote Lafayette Alumnus editor Ronald R. Parent, to begin the winter 1970 special issue on the movement at the Lehigh Valley college. It contained an interview with Roland Brown, Lafayette’s first black graduate, who had graduated in 1949. “When I was young we took the view that the white man has that which you want, so you pacify him until you get what you want from him and then you do not have to pacify him any longer. The black student today says, the dickens with pacifying the white man, we’re going to get what we want now.”39

In the spring of 1970, the waning of the BCM continued, but there was still a rash of activism against the “white man.” New campaigns at suburban and rural usually white LACs with recently enrolled multitudes of blacks were the new sites of activism that spring. Institutions such as Bowdoin-C and Colby-C in Maine, where students occupied a chapel for a week, Mount Holyoke (MA), Southern Oregon, Heidelberg-U and U-Mount Union in Ohio, and Cedar Crest-C, Kutztown-U, Elizabethtown-C, and Rosemont-C in Pennsylvania faced the BCM. Students thumped some universities, including U-Michigan, U-Toledo, Florida State, Creighton-U, and U-Northern Iowa. HBCUs were not exempt—Bishop-C (Dallas) and Mississippi Valley State were disrupted.40

That spring, black students saw some of their hard-fought gains dismantled, as the defensive struggle to maintain diversity strengthened, which would eventually supersede the BCM to gain diversity. SF State president S. I. Hayakawa fired six Black Studies professors on March 2, 1970. It was one of the largest political firings of black professors at an HWCU in history, until eight of the twelve Black Studies instructors at CSU Fresno received similar notices that spring. Four hundred students discussed the fact that their advances were being rolled back when they attended a “Black Unity Conference” at Stanford in early May 1970. 41

Days before, on April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced the escalation of the Vietnam War, ordering troops into Cambodia. His announcement escalated a vanishing antiwar movement. On May 4, during an antiwar protest at Kent State in Ohio, National Guardsmen killed four white students. Black students did not enthusiastically join the outbreak of strikes following the Kent State murders, angering some white students. African Americans did protest against the war and racism at a few institutions.42

Not even two weeks after the Kent State tragedy, another tragedy struck Jackson State. After a night of violent disorders, in part stemming from the discovery of a bell in the campus warehouse that used to summon students to class and chapel like slaves, President John Peoples met with student leaders about the causes of the riot, and for nearly two hours on May 14, 1970, they complained about the bell, the lack of a bridge-walk over the dangerous Lynch Street, the women’s curfew, poor cafeteria food, and the irrelevant, bourgeois “Negro” university. That night, a small group started tossing rocks at automobiles driven by
whites on Lynch Street, a major Jackson thoroughfare that ran through campus. The disruption intensified. Just as on the night before, the Jackson police and state patrolmen, many of whom were known Klansmen, stormed onto the campus with the order to “go in there and scatter them damn—those Negroes.” In addition, a Jackson lieutenant assembled a group of officers to disperse more than one hundred students in front of a women’s dormitory, Alexander Hall, on Lynch Street. It was about midnight, and some of the female students had just entered the dorms before curfew, after being escorted by their male friends, who were still milling around. The lawmen stopped in front of the dorm. “You white pigs!” “White sons-of-bitches!” The students were irate at the police presence. A bottle smashed loudly into the Lynch Street pavement in front of the frightened officers. “They’re gonna shoot!” a student screamed.

Officers let off round after round at the crowd of students, who quickly fell, tried to take cover, and raced into the dormitory. They even shot at the dormitory. Female students scurried about in the dorm to other rooms and under their beds, dodging bullets. Chips of brick, concrete, and glass fell like an avalanche on students taking cover below. Thirty seconds later, the patrolmen stopped shooting, sent for all of the city’s ambulances, and approached the dormitories,
checking the student bodies that lay sprawled in front of them. Near a small magnolia tree in front of the hall, they found two young men, dead. One was 21-year-old Phillip L. Gibbs, a junior at Jackson State and father of a young son, and the other was James Earl Green, 17, a senior track star at a local Jackson high school. Scattered about, they also found at least eight students and one community member injured. The next day officials closed the campus for the rest of the semester. Klansmen donning badges instead of sheets had killed African Americans.

An outcry of sadness and fury came from black America when it woke up to the news that morning of May 15, 1970. Investigations and punishments were demanded of these officers, who claimed they were defending themselves against sniper fire. No group was more upset than black students, in Jackson and across the nation. As white colleges had erupted after Kent State, so too did black colleges after Jackson State. According to Howard president James E. Cheek, the resentment of his students neared the “breaking point.” Rallies and demonstrations occurred at HWCUs too. When several black students at Ohio State tried to lower the American flag to mourn the deceased, they fought off a group of white students who tried to stop them.

Fifteen HBCU presidents met with President Nixon and urged him to recommend that police officers not carry guns on campuses and to make a national televised address to affirm the “government’s resolve to protect the lives of black citizens.” President Nixon demurred, but as a palliative he did offer more money to HBCUs. Charles Evers, the venerable Mississippi leader, started to reconsider nonviolence. “I’ve preached nonviolence because I don’t think blacks can win the other way, but there comes a time when a man doesn’t care anymore about winning. The day of killing niggers is gone to hell.” Shunning white suasion, CORE’s Floyd McKissick observed “the conscience of America was not even pricked” when the two black students and six Augusta (Georgia) men were killed (in an urban rebellion days before the Jackson massacre), unlike the Kent State murders. “We must all learn from this. For it is further evidence that there is no way for Black men to reach the conscience of white America.” Despite the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest’s finding that bigotry, not self-defense, led to the slaying of the students, in the fall of 1970, a Mississippi grand jury found the police “were justified in discharging their weapons,” and in April 1972, an all-white Mississippi jury ruled that neither state officials nor police were liable for civil damages. The New York Amsterdam News editorialized, “This decision is simply another nail in the coffin of America’s system of justice and equal treatment in the courts.”

Usually repression either slows or accelerates a social movement. It often depends on whether it is decelerating or quickening before the repression. The Orangeburg Massacre and King’s assassination in the spring of 1968 caught the movement when it was accelerating, compelling militants to slam the pedal of the movement. On the other hand, the Jackson State tragedy occurred when the movement was slowing, and thus it proved to be yet another cause of the demise of the BCM.

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The level of activism noticeably dipped in the fall of 1970. The calm on “most of the country’s campuses” that fall had “been so pervasive as to have been almost
unsettling,” according to the *New York Times*. Ideological divisions had widened, particularly due to the growing sway of Pan-Africanism, feminism, black capitalism, and Marxism. Black Studies courses had been introduced in colleges across America, which blunted the thorniest issue of their activism. Scores of student leaders had been removed from the campus before the fall of 1970, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and the achievements of the movement were regularly assaulted. “We have to constantly fortify our position,” said an Oberlin student.46

During the 1970–1971 academic year, protests to keep movement reforms became more prominent and the students grew more interested in off-campus issues, specifically political repression, including the Free Angela (Davis) campaign. Yet, black students, who were more likely to attend college outside of the South for the first time, still waged offensive protests to demand novel measures—sometimes athletic—that academic year at numerous institutions, including Syracuse, Fontbonne-U (St. Louis), Western Connecticut State, U-South Alabama, Norfolk State, St. Mary’s (TX), Prairie View A&M, Bluffton-U (OH), TCU, Colorado State-Pueblo, Providence-C, U-Georgia, and U-Florida (“Black Thursday”)—keeping the BCM alive.47

As the movement decelerated in 1971, black students did not have the living voices that galvanized their activism, as most of them had been killed, jailed, or exiled. The pendulum continued to shift among black students during the 1971–1972 academic year from offensive to defensive protests and from on-campus to off-campus concerns, such as the Attica Prison massacre in New York in September 1971. Officers killed and injured unarmed prisoners when they took back the upstate New York penitentiary from prisoners who seized it to demand better conditions. But offensive protests for new reforms still prevailed, manifesting once again at HBCUs and institutions with new critical masses, such as IUPUI, Tougaloo-C, Wartburg-C in Iowa, Eckerd-C (formerly Florida Presbyterian), Wilberforce-U, U-Hartford, U-Nevada, and Murray State (KY).48

Benjamin E. Mays, the former Morehouse president, noticed in his travels in the spring of 1972 that the “campuses—on of the whole—are much calmer.” The assessment was not because higher education had responded to the needs of black students. The racial constitution had almost completely changed on the surface, in the public academic rhetoric, but that does not mean the new creeds—moral freedom, standardization of inclusion, a multicultural curriculum, and grassroots altruism—were totally implemented. “Much is said” about aiding black students, but “little is being done,” found an Indiana researcher who surveyed more than one thousand colleges. The *Chronicle of Higher Education*’s report in the spring of 1972 on “Higher Education and the Black America” further assessed that “the black studies programs…now fill a standard, if insecure, niche in the curriculum.” But the struggle still had one more semester.49

In the fall of 1972, the declining specter of black campus activism affected higher education, including negotiations at Franklin-C in Indiana, Angelo State in Texas, and U-North Alabama, and an almost total boycott at U-Arkansas at Pine Bluff. The movement tragically left the academy at the school with the largest collection of black students in the nation—Southern-U in Louisiana. In the fall of 1972, President G. Leon Netterville ran the university like a feudal lord,
one of remaining ultraconservatives still manning an HBCU. Nothing of significance went down without his approval, which was why psychology chair Charles M. Waddell resigned in mid-October 1972 when the president did not allow him to fire a professor who sexually harassed women. Disturbed, students formed a coalition of groups, Students United, and drew up a list of demands for more student and faculty power. In a gathering with more than five thousand students, on October 24, President Netterville rejected the students’ proposal for power. Shock quickly transformed into fury. The five thousand students rushed out of the gymnasium like a pack of bulls and trudged five miles to the state board of education’s office to see State Superintendent Louis Michot. But Michot was away in Atlanta, and when one of his subordinates came out to speak with the students, they called for the resignations of President Netterville and two other administrators. They were not finished marching that day. Numbering a reported seven thousand, they walked over to the state capitol in one of the largest black student marches in American history to meet with Governor Edwin Edwards, who told the students he would be willing to help. Activists returned to campus and compelled 80 percent of roughly 8,000 students to boycott classes. On October 31, President Netterville closed the Baton Rouge campus, while activists at the New Orleans campus had initiated their own boycott and eight-day building takeover the day before. On November 6, the Baton Rouge campus reopened with more than three hundred heavily armed sheriff’s deputies and city police ready to stamp out the class strike. But it persisted. On the morning of November 16, in an attempt to curtail the strike, the Baton Rouge police arrested four Students United leaders and charged them with “disrupting the normal educational process.” Retaliating later in the day, students stormed into the administration building—three hundred strong—and up to Netterville’s office. Hearing the leaders out, Netterville made a phone call and allegedly instructed the police to come and clear out the campus. He bolted out of his office and left for a meeting with the state board of education. Not long after, on November 16, 1972, the assembly of students, now numbering three thousand, started to leave, when they saw a wave of sheriff’s deputies, state troopers, and city police splash hard onto campus. They gave the students five minutes to disperse. It was a standoff—the students were not going anywhere. When the five minutes passed, a state trooper tossed a tear gas canister into the crowd. It did not explode. A student picked it up and tossed it back over the line of state troopers and near the sheriff deputies. The canister exploded and sent the deputies scurrying wildly for their masks. When they got them on, they turned towards the crowd of students and opened fire with more tear gas canisters. One officer reportedly emptied a single shotgun blast that killed 20-year-old Leonard D. Brown Jr. of Gilbert, Louisiana, and Denver A. Smith, a 20-year-old computer science major from New Roads, Louisiana.

The campus immediately closed, and soon after the disliked President Netterville, whom Students United blamed for the tragedy, resigned. In a statement released to the press, the group said the murders were “premeditated, plotted, and implemented.” Louisiana governor Edwards tried to deflect blame from landing on his administration and the Southern officials he allowed to stay
in power. He said over and over again, “It was the students who initiated the confrontation” by throwing the tear gas canisters first. Southern reopened on January 3, 1973, with campus guard forces tripled, loyalty oaths signed, and student leaders barred, harassed, or disciplined.\textsuperscript{51}

This tragedy was too much for the national student community to endure. They still had not recovered from Jackson State. In contrast to the previous killing of black campus activists, sadness eclipsed fury when students around the nation heard about the shootings. The reaction was “scattered and subdued,” according to one report. Only at nearby Grambling did students aggressively reply to the killings. Memorial services were more popular than protests. The BCM was clearly history.\textsuperscript{52}

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“We, the students of Langston University, have fallen into an abyss of apathy, where our only resolution is the condemnation of the institution.” Condemnation had not been producing activism as in years past, irritating Leanear Randall, as he watched the BCM recede into history at his lone Oklahoma HBCU in May 1972. The cry of apathy had been heard since 1970, but it had not been this loud. In two issues of \textit{The Afro-Times Newsletter} in the fall of 1972, students at Mississippi State added to the chorus. “Perhaps our biggest enemy is apathy,” Edward R. Robinson wrote in September. In the November-December newsletter, Coleman Wicks alleged that MSU was “rapidly earning the unheralded distinction of being one of the nation’s most apathetic.” Up north at Lehigh-U in Pennsylvania, Nathan Harris, a black administrator, attested in December that the “belligerently angry black student” who pressured the “University through overt actions has faded.” To the west, CSU Long Beach professor and former black campus activist J. K. Obatala asked in \textit{The Nation}, in 1972, “What happened to the black campus revolution? Whatever happened to the gun-toting nationalist, the uncombed hair, the demonstrations, the handbills, the placards, the protests, the black leather jackets and Malcolm X sweat shirts that came to be symbols of black student militancy in the 1960s.”\textsuperscript{53}

With reports of apathy emerging from every region, the age had passed, even as black students detested higher education with new contradictions—substance not matching the new ideals. Derisively, on January 19, 1973, the white editors of \textit{The Collegio} at Pittsburg State in Kansas awarded black students “first place in the age-old category of apathy. This infamous honor is presented to those with the most anger and the least action.” The BCM had indeed faded, but not necessarily black student anger or action. Beginning in 1973, defensive, disconnected black student activism to maintain the gains of the BCM eclipsed the offensive, connected activism that instituted a slew of new racial reforms and rewrote the racial constitution of higher education during the previous eight years. Said differently, African American students no longer held the academy in the creative clutches of a social movement in 1973. In that sense, they were apathetic. However, they were far from apathetic in the rearguard, defending their humanity, defending their gains—a defense that continues to this day.\textsuperscript{54}