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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF RESIDENCE HALLS
MADISON 6

April 11, 1949

President E. B. Fred
Bascom Hall

Dear President Fred:


In accordance with your request, I am enclosing a sample application card which we use for assigning rooms in our residence halls. This question of race and religion has been one that has been discussed at length each year, for we realize that such information might be used as a criticism of discrimination. However, you will note that the statement preceding this question is as follows: "Because of the high percentage of double rooms and our desire to provide pleasant arrangements for all, the following information will be helpful." We are presently having some additional application cards printed, and I am attaching the revised copy which will be used on the back side of the application blank. You will note that we have changed around some of the information requested and that questions referring to race and religion are definitely marked optional.

To my knowledge there never has been any discrimination in assigning rooms to students at the university residence halls because of race or religion, and I am sure that there never will be. We are proud of the Wisconsin record and we have had a number of negroes in our halls without any serious misunderstandings.

I have talked with several members of the student anti-discrimination board and have also talked this matter over with our House Fellows. The only difference of opinion which some members of the board have with me seems to be that they feel there is discrimination used because we do not assign a colored person and a white person together without first making sure the arrangement is satisfactory. We have no objection whatever to having a colored person and a white person live together, but we have felt it wiser to make the arrangements beforehand, for otherwise there is a good chance of embarrassment and misunderstanding when the students arrive in the fall. I personally believe that we get a great deal farther by having colored people living in our halls, being members of our house organizations and being active in our social and athletic programs than we would by having a colored person and a white person assigned to a room together without first ascertaining that the arrangement is mutually satisfactory. That is the only reason why we need this information, and that is the only way in which we use it, except occasionally when a request is made for a roommate of a certain religion. This is rather a rare request, however, and I believe the only question involved is that of race.

I feel confident that the University of Wisconsin has had a good record as far as the halls are concerned in reference to the race question. If you have any further questions or suggestions I will be glad to supply you with whatever information you would like.

Yours very truly,


Ned Burns
Director

LB/e
encl