

# Racial tensions cited in OU protest

By JAY GROSSMAN  
STAFF WRITER

A group of about 80 black Oakland University students, upset about financial aid cuts and what they say are increased racial tensions, held an outdoor protest rally on the school's Rochester Hills campus Wednesday.

"Chanting, 'No justice, no peace,' the students charged the OU administration with acting slowly on a longstanding request for a minority affairs office. The students also accused administrators of ignoring increased racism on campus.

One black student said that he was called a "nigger" on campus by some white students last week. He said he reported the incident, but that no action was taken. "Next time I might not bother reporting it," he said at the rally. "Next time I might take matters into my own hands."

The rally, which began about 1 p.m. and

lasted for two hours, ended at the office of OU President Sandra Packard, who held a private meeting with some of the group's leaders.

Packard, one of several administrators to watch the rally, said she supports the idea of establishing a minority affairs office.

"A center like the students are proposing could be a very helpful place for everyone," she said. Establishing such an office would require the University Senate's support and approval by the OU board of trustees, she said.

Packard said she had not been approached earlier about creating a minority affairs office, but first learned of the request while reading the campus newspaper three months ago.

After reading the article, Packard said, she asked University Senate's Human Relations Committee to research the possibility of creating a new office.

She said Wednesday that she was waiting

to hear back from the committee.

There are roughly 12,600 students attending OU this semester. About 6 percent are black.

"Things are only getting worse around here and I don't see anyone doing anything about it," said OU senior Chaund Wyeche, president of the Association of Black Students. "We had problems last year and nothing was done. Now these problems are back and we're still doing nothing."

Anonymous hate letters were sent last year to black students, telling them to transfer to another school. No students or student groups were found responsible for sending the letters.

Wilma Bledsoe, vice president for student affairs, said she isn't surprised about the reported increase in racism. "We are, after all, living in the third-most racially segregated metropolitan area in the United States," she said.

## Labor takes potshots at privatization efforts

By TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

Big labor is training its big guns on Gov. John Engler's efforts to "privatize" state services.

"Privatization is not a quick-fix wonder drug. It's driven by a political agenda that is hostile to government," said Krista Schneider, graduate of Milford High School and the University of Michigan, and now a policy analyst for the AFL-CIO in Washington.

"Conservatives were opposed to many of the programs in the first place, but now they want to pose as reformers. Privacy advocates want us to think of government as irredeemably incompetent," Schneider told the House Labor Committee in Lansing Tuesday.

She and Sheila Strunk of UAW Local 6000 painted pictures of private contractors as paying "substandard" (non-union) wages, cutting corners to make a profit, offering kickbacks, bidding in collusion and being improperly monitored by governmental staff.

### LANSING

#### Jobs at stake

Local 6000 represents some 22,000 state employees, about 40 percent of the total, and its members' jobs are at stake.

Other governmental workers are represented by the AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which boasts it's "the fastest growing union in the AFL-CIO" and had the biggest bloc of delegates (400) at the Democratic National Convention.

Union officials not only support Democratic candidates and assault Republicans like Engler, but they're an official bloc of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Quietly, Democratic Gov. James Blanchard (1983-90) started the movement to trim state payrolls and give work to private contractors, for which labor assailed him.

Engler has made it up-front, official policy, asking every department to suggest at least one func-

tion that can be privatized. An enthusiastic supporter is Patrick Nowak, former Oakland County politician who heads the state Department of Transportation.

Said the UAW's Strunk: "The cost of state contracts last year was more than double the total two years ago: \$1.4 billion in fiscal 1991 compared to \$637.5 million in fiscal 1989." Blanchard was governor in 1989, and Engler took over part-way through fiscal '90.

"While contracts amounted to 26 percent of the state payroll in 1989," Strunk added, "they swelled to 46.5 percent in 1991."

#### Blind are hurt

Listening to their testimony were three Democratic state representatives and a member of the House Democratic staff.

Said chair Raymond Murphy of Detroit: "John Engler wants to take jobs away from people, many of them blind, who are valuable assets to the school and give those jobs to inexperienced people at a minimum wage."

In the audience were many people with white canes. Their writ-

ten testimony, distributed by AFSCME, said state School for the Blind aides in Lansing and School for the Deaf workers in Flint have been replaced by contractual workers who are inexperienced, untrained and even sexually abusive to handicapped children.

Urging Michigan to slow down privatization, Schneider of the AFL-CIO told of New Jersey private contractors demanded exemptions from the state public records and open meetings laws.

"Government is traditionally a model employer and breaks barriers for minorities and women," she added.

Strunk of the UAW said she waded through 149 state auditor general reports on private contracts and found these patterns of flaws:

- Violations of the audit act which can endanger receipt of federal aid.
- "A real deficiency" in monitoring contractor compliance.
- Unwritten contracts.
- Improper approval of contracts.
- Unfulfilled contracts.

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