

Blacks express support for fired administrator

By PAUL FOUTCH
News Editor

Calling last week's firing of Minority Affairs Director John L. White unjustified, black students interviewed this week said the University will be "hard-pressed" to find an effective replacement.

"I though he was very effective as an administrator," Bryan Johnson, president of the Student Association for Black Unity, said Tuesday. "It takes somebody that's going to be a go-getter."

SABU member Wesley Payne agreed that White's job required him to "stand up for what he believed in."

"He is not one to just sit around and ride the cart just because someone said so," Payne said.

White said University President John D. Wilson told him last week that he was being fired at the end of the school year for, among other things, being an ineffective recruiter of minority students.

"If he wasn't a good recruiter, I wouldn't be here," Payne said. He said he doesn't know of any black students who don't support White.

White would not confirm that he is planning a lawsuit to retain his job, saying his lawyer has hold him "not to make comments that have a bearing on a pending case."

White said that there has been a drop in black enrollment from seven last year to three this year, but that the numbers don't tell the whole

story.

"In my estimation last year was a tough year," he said. "No school in the state got anywhere near their projections" for minority enrollment.

Washington and Lee's minority recruitment strategy has been based on a mailing campaign, which can cause fluctuations from year to year, White said.

"If you're going to run an institution, you've got to know that because the numbers don't add up one year, you don't go out and fire someone."

White, who graduated from W&L in 1974 and was hired for his present position in 1979, acknowledged that his studies as a law student have cut into his administrative work, particularly with regard to recruiting.

"Every activity — save recruiting — that I did before enrolling in law school I did after," White said. "But in my heart of hearts, I can't see attributing last year's numbers solely to me."

As for improving minority recruitment in the future, White said it takes more than just a black recruiter.

"It's a lack of overall continuity," he said. "You have to have a program that goes to certain places and works certain areas on a repetitive basis."

That happens for white students, but not for blacks, White said.

"We've failed to establish any kind of rapport with the black community that would provide us with a feeder institution," he said.