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More white than black

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More white than black

The University of Maine's fall foliage may be beautiful but with 51 black students out of 12,282, three black administrators and two black faculty, its community isn't so colorful.

This university, like many schools across the country has too few black students and even fewer black role models.

This can only partially be attributed to a national trend.

Since 1976 enrollment of 18 to 24 year-old blacks in higher education institutions has been on the decrease, with few exceptions.

According to 1988 statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics, in 1985, 19.8 percent of blacks and 28.7 percent of whites were enrolled in higher education.

In addition, black faculty members in the fall of 1983 made up 4.1 percent of the total while white faculty members were 90 percent. Six years later here at the University of Maine there are only two black faculty out of a total of 700.

But there is more to the story of few blacks on campus than just being a part of the national trend.

Samory Rashid, who was hired last August as Associate Director of Admissions and is the minority recruitment officer raises a good point when he asks why low black population states such as Utah have been able to recruit and maintain larger numbers of black students while this state university has not.

Rashid predicts that if black oriented programs such as one proposed for next fall to provide 20 scholarships fall through "we could be in major, major trouble."

At a speech Monday night C. Delores Tucker, who had marched with Martin Luther King Jr from Selma Alabama, said "American engineers have perfected satellite communication and trans-Atlantic flight but have failed to eradicate illiteracy and provide education for its children."

Doug Kesseli