

Challenger explodes seconds after liftoff

By HOWARD BENEDICT
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A catastrophic explosion blew apart the space shuttle Challenger 74 seconds after liftoff yesterday, sending schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe and six NASA astronauts to a fiery death in the sky eight miles out from Kennedy Space Center.

"We mourn seven heroes," said President Reagan.

The accident defied quick explanation, though a slow-motion replay seemed to show a flame or other abnormality on one of two peel-away rocket boosters followed by the detonation of the shuttle's huge external fuel tank.

The tank-turned-fireball destroyed Challenger high above the Atlantic while crew families and National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials watched in despair from the Cape.

Other observers noted that the boosters continued to fly crazily through the sky after the explosion, indicating that the problem might have originated in the giant tank itself.

"We will not speculate as to the specific cause of the explosion based

on that footage," said Jesse Moore, NASA's top shuttle administrator. The space agency's officials are organizing an investigating board and Moore said it will take a "careful review" of all data "before we can reach any conclusions."

It was the first in-flight disaster in 56 manned space missions. John Glenn, the former astronaut, recalled that three astronauts died in a launch-pad training accident 19 years ago and said the history of pioneers is often one "of triumph and tragedy."

The explosion followed an apparently flawless launch, delayed two hours as officials analyzed the danger from icicles that formed in the frosty Florida morning along the shuttle's new launch pad.

"There were no signs of abnormalities on the screens" as flight controllers monitored Challenger's liftoff and ascent, a source said. The source, at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, said the blast occurred "unexpectedly and with absolutely no warning."

"We have a report from the flight dynamics officer that the vehicle has exploded. Flight director confirms that," said NASA's Steve Nesbitt.

The cheers at McAuliffe's Concord (N.H.) High turned to sorrow.

NASA said its computers showed that all communications with the shuttle broke off 74 seconds after launch, marking that as the moment of the explosion.

Mission Control reported that there had been no indication of any problem with the three shuttle engines, its twin solid boosters or any other system and that the shuttle just suddenly blew apart 10 miles high and 8 miles downrange of Cape Canaveral. Ninety minutes after the accident, controllers were still at their consoles, solemnly examining flight data.

Flags at Cape Canaveral were lowered to half-staff. The countdown clock that marks the progress of the mission continued for hours.

Reagan, in an Oval Office address after he postponed his State of the Union message because of the tragedy, reaffirmed his commitment to the shuttle program and said, "The future doesn't belong to the faint-hearted, it belongs to the brave."

"We will continue our quest in space," he said. "There will be more shuttle flights and more shuttle crews and, yes, more volunteers, more civilians, more teachers in space."

He added: "Nothing stops here."

Prof says key may be in telemetry

By NAN CRYSTAL ARENS
Collegian Science Writer

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has already assembled an investigative team to unravel the cause of yesterday's explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.

The team will try to piece together circumstances surrounding the disaster NASA spokesman John Lawrence said yesterday.

Information would be released to the public as soon as it was available, he said.

Robert Melton, University assistant professor of aerospace engineering, said it was too early to determine what went wrong with the 25th mission in NASA's space shuttle program.

"Needless to say I was very upset . . . I just viewed the tape," Melton said yesterday afternoon.

"If you look at the photograph it appears that one of the solid rocket boosters exploded, but at this point it is only speculation, we don't know anything," Melton said.

Lawrence said official NASA reports gave no indication

whether the explosion occurred in the solid boosters or in the main engines.

During launch, the shuttle's main engines — fueled by 526,000 gallons of liquid hydrogen and oxygen from the main tank — fire while still on the launch pad, Melton said. Seconds later, the solid rocket boosters lashed to the side of large orange fuel tank fire, providing enough lift to propel the shuttle into the sky.

"The onboard computers monitor the launch and give the command for firing the solid boosters," Melton said.

Once the solid rocket boosters fire, the shuttle is committed to launch, Melton said. The solid boosters cannot be shut down and can only be jettisoned under certain circumstances.

"The maneuver is called 'return to launch site,'" Melton said, adding that if the boosters are jettisoned, the shuttle will glide back to Earth.

"Even if they had, say 30 seconds warning, they might not have been able to do anything. We just don't know," Melton said.

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vors until it had conducted search-and-rescue efforts. Even before Moore's statement, it seemed impossible anyone could survive such a cataclysmic explosion.

The crew included McAuliffe and six NASA astronauts: commander

Francis R. Scobee, 46, pilot Michael J. Smith, 40; Judith Resnik, 36; Ronald E. McNair, 35; Ellison S. Onizuka, 39; and Gregory B. Jarvis, 41.

"I regret that I have to report that based on very preliminary searches of the ocean where the Challenger

impacted this morning, these searches have not revealed any evidence that the crew of Challenger survived," Moore, NASA associate administrator, told a midafternoon news conference.

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AP Laserphoto

Horror . . . and mourning

Family members of Christa McAuliffe (above) — sister Betsy and Grace and Ed Corrigan — console each other as the horror of the tragedy unfolds. Below, Kathryn Hok (left) and Carina Dolcino mourn the death of McAuliffe in a memorial service at St. Peter's Church in McAuliffe's hometown of Concord, N.H.



AP Laserphoto

Reaction to coalition's resolution mixed

Jordan, PSU officials object

By DAMON CHAPPIE
Collegian Staff Writer

University President Bryce Jordan called attempts to obstruct the University's minority recruitment efforts "misguided" and said it would hurt minority students who would otherwise attend Penn State.

A new coalition of black student groups intends to block efforts by the administration to reach a court-ordered black enrollment goal by 1987.

The Black Student Coalition Against Racism formed in response to the University's recent decision not to divest holdings in South African-related companies.

Jordan said when he made his statement that he hadn't seen BSCAR's resolution, which calls for the black community to oppose minority recruitment efforts by discouraging black students from attending Penn State.

BSCAR Chairman Carlton Waterhouse said a copy of the resolution was left in Jordan's office yesterday at about 3:30 p.m.

Waterhouse said he attempted to make an appointment with Jordan but that Jordan couldn't meet with him for at least two weeks.

"Based on the reports I have read in the press," Jordan said, "I can only say that I believe the pronounced intention of those students to obstruct Penn State's minority recruitment efforts is, in my mind, misguided."

"If successful, they will hurt the minority students who otherwise would attend Penn State," he added.

Jordan said the administration will continue to recruit minorities because "we believe it is in the direct interest of the Commonwealth and of society at large."

But the University has relied heavily on enrolled black students to recruit potential black high school students.

"Students are some of the best recruiters that you can possibly get," said Victoria Staples, University director of minority admissions.

"In terms of presenting what we're doing to the public, minority students look toward role models, to the people who are already here as a source of information," she said.

Since 1983, when Blacks made up 2.5 percent of the student population,

the University has spent millions of dollars in an attempt to double that figure by 1987. That deadline was imposed as part of 16-year-old legal dispute between the federal government and Pennsylvania that required the state's higher education system to desegregate.

The University submitted its plan to recruit and retain black students in 1983. The latest figures show that minority enrollment has increased to 3.7 percent.

The goal is 5 percent by 1987. At stake is the possible loss of millions in federal funding if the goal is not met. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has pursued the case in court.

In 1970, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund sued the then Department of Health, Education and Welfare to enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act against 10 states, including Pennsylvania, because the state's higher education systems were segregated. The court ruled in favor of the NAACP and ordered the states to come up with desegregation plans in 1974.

The U.S. Office of Civil Rights, however, found Pennsylvania's plans inadequate because they did not cover the four state-related universities — including Penn State.

A federal district judge ruled in 1983 that plans to desegregate, which include Penn State, had to be submitted. Since then, the University has concentrated on recruiting black high school students from urban areas as well as out of state.

The University has relied on phone-a-thons, brochures and black University students to visit high schools to encourage students to attend Penn State.

The University also has provided scholarships to attract black students.

"The University's commitment to minority students is strongly reflected in the programs and considerable financial support that we already have in place," Jordan said.

Staples said she wouldn't comment on BSCAR's threat because she hasn't seen the written resolution. She said she would meet with members of the group to discuss the issue.

Black students to oppose recruit.

By NANCY FUNK
Collegian Staff Writer

The University administration will be forced to reconsider its decision not to divest business holdings in South Africa, said members of the newly established coalition of black University students who are taking an aggressive course of action against the University's efforts to recruit black students.

"We believe our organization will have a very definite effect on the decision," said Carlton Waterhouse, chairman of the Black Student Coalition Against Racism.

In hopes of pressuring the University administration into reversing its decision not to divest, BSCAR has united 13 black campus organizations for the cause.

BSCAR announced Monday their intentions to actively oppose minority recruitment efforts because of the recent decision by the University Board of Trustees not to divest.

In addition, BSCAR member and Black Caucus President Larry Patrick said the organization will boycott University activities — including freshman and transfer student orientations, which in the past have included programs sponsored by black student organizations welcoming Blacks to the University.

BSCAR also plans to meet with lawyers from the University and State College to discuss the possibility of resorting to civil disobedience, said Katrina Scott, BSCAR member and president of the Committee for Justice in South Africa.

These measures demonstrate the anger felt by black students — who believe the University administration's actions do not reflect a genuine concern for Blacks, said James B. Stewart, adviser to the Committee for Justice in South Africa.

Now, with an alliance of as many as 400 students, BSCAR will voice their dissatisfaction with the University's "actions and attitudes toward the Black community," Patrick said.

In reference to University President Bryce Jordan's comment that the BSCAR's efforts to oppose minority recruitment are "misguided," Patrick said, "We are being misguided by the president and the Board of Trustees who believe that investment

is prudent on a business, moral and educational level."

Scott added, "Sure, the entire black population is misguided — all of the black people in South Africa are misguided and Bishop Tutu is misguided."

On Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, several leaders of black student organizations decided that the University administration would not seriously consider divestment unless united Blacks took more drastic measures, Waterhouse said.

With that thought in mind, 13 black campus organizations were contacted to meet and confer about what action should be taken to protest the decision.

"They all came out wholeheartedly and gave their support," Waterhouse said.

BSCAR leaders said yesterday they believe they can make a difference through the strong actions of the organization, which will also include appealing to the National Organization for the Advancement of Colored People and the Rainbow Coalition for financial support of educational drives against apartheid.

"If nothing else, this will say that students are in disagreement with the trustees and the University does have a responsibility to its consumers," Patrick said.

Others agreed — including Scott, who said the actions of the BSCAR will force the University administration to study the issue of divestment sooner than was planned.

Lawrence Young, director of the Paul Robeson Cultural Center, said although he was not involved in organizing BSCAR, he supports its efforts.

"I believe this is a valid and positive step — this is a large group of people who want their feelings known," he said.

Harold Cheatham, president of the Forum on Black Affairs, also endorses the efforts of BSCAR, saying it is important for the students to stand up for what they believe in.

"This institution is unchanged and unchanging — we all ought to be prepared to endure frustration," he said.

Members of the minority community and socially conscious Whites, Cheatham said, should support BSCAR.

USG senator calls for unity with black student coalition

By STEVE WILSON
Collegian Staff Writer

An Undergraduate Student Government Senator said last night the USG should join a black student coalition in obstructing the University's minority recruitment efforts as a protest to the Board of Trustees' decision not to divest from corporations doing business in South Africa.

At the senate meeting, Town Senator John Clisham spoke of the Black Student Coalition Against Racism — made up of 13 black student organizations — which announced plans Monday to limit its participation in University activities.

No action was taken and a verbal reaction was not made to the statement, but the senate gave Clisham a round of applause.

The University is mandated by a federal court order to increase mi-

nority enrollment from its current 3.7 percent to 5 percent by 1987.

Director of Admissions and assistant vice president Scott F. Healy said he hoped the senate would not take action against recruitment, "a priority in the admissions department," because of a decision made by the trustees and added that there may be other ways to protest divestment.

"We can't do it without them," Healy said. "If we don't get their support it may put us back a step instead of forward as it should be."

Healy said he would not say the trustees' decision was either right or wrong but did not feel it should reflect on the University's minority recruitment effort.

Clisham's statement began with a clip from the Monty Python movie "Life of Brian," a parody on the biblical story of the life of Jesus. Senate President David Rishel had

shown the clip to the senate earlier to illustrate an observation about the nature of organizations.

The clip showed a fictitious group meeting when someone ran in screaming that the Romans were about to nail Brian to a cross: "It's happening, Reg! It's happening right now!"

Towards the end of the meeting Clisham asked Rishel to rerun that quote and added: "It's happening now. Every two minutes in South Africa a black person is arrested for violating the pass laws."

Clisham said American corporations supply the South African government with the computers that allow them to enforce this law.

"If (BSCAR) is willing to make a courageous commitment towards divestment," Clisham said, "I think other organizations should align themselves with it."

He also cited the senate's policy of

'I think other organizations should align themselves with (BSCAR's decision).'

—John Clisham

supporting divestment, adding divestment could be more than a black issue if other organizations joined with BSCAR.

James B. Stewart, adviser to the Committee for Justice in South Africa, said last night that USG backing of the coalition would "send a message to the community at large."

"The impact would suggest to the community that (divestment) is not just a concern of (BSCAR) but one shared among the student body."

He also said non-participation was a first step and that obstruction was a last resort.

Katrina Scott, president of the Committee for Justice in South Africa said of Clisham's supporters: "Wonderful. I'm very glad."

She said the coalition was trying to get other organizations, including the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council, to join them and "if USG takes a first step, that's wonderful."

The trustees voted earlier this month not to divest the University's \$5.5 million invested in corporations that have operations in South Africa but to maintain a policy of investing only in Sullivan Principle signatory corporations.

The board also appointed a committee to devise criteria for monitoring corporations' improvement in minority treatment in the work place and left the possibility of selective divestment open.

wednesday

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weather

This afternoon, increasing clouds and some snow flurries with a high of 24. Tonight, flurries ending and clear by morning, low of 15. Tomorrow, a bit warmer with early morning sunshine accompanied by a few afternoon clouds. It will be pleasant with a high of 29.

Heldi Sonen