Wahid Ahmed, attendee at the 16th Annual Black solidarity conference:

There were ten students that attended the Black Solidarity conference at Yale during February. The attendees from Middlebury represented three student groups, African American Alliance (AAA), Women of Color (WOC), Distinguished Men of Color (DMC). Along with assistance from student organizations, fees for the conference were allocated from the Alliance for Civic Engagement (ACE).

The conference was a completely organized by Yale students, and consisted of panel discussions, workshops, and lectures that focused on the presence of Blacks in higher education. The attendees were made up of 40 schools, predominately from the Northeast. Panels were predominantly made up of faculty members from other universities. Professor Cornell West, from Princeton University, issued the keynote address.

An important aspect of the conference, and something that was a favorite for Middlebury students was the chance to connect to Black students from other schools. I believe that a key reason for the attendance from Middlebury students was the chance to have a sense of comfort that Middlebury cannot offer due to its lack of ethnic diversity. The majority of students at the conference were from predominantly white schools, and the students that I had the pleasure to interact with expressed a sense of relief because they were then in a setting where they were no longer a minority. I believe that there was a strong sense of comfort between all of the students at the conference because there was a shared experience of being a minority that everyone attending the conference was familiar with.