



An Open Letter To The Regents:

Chairman Meinke

"The Constitution of the Student Association of the University of Hartford," which was provisionally passed by the Board of Regents on June 6, 1969 and which is now in effect, is revolutionary. It is revolutionary in that it gives the student body its due power and responsibility. It opens the door for constructive change and insures justice for all students while promoting the responsibilities of all students.

The most important aspect of this constitution is that it allows us to define and live our culture. It doesn't leave the important issues to be decided by the regent or the chancellor, both removed from our life style by age and position. Our constitution allows us to construct and enforce our own values. We no longer have to accept a curriculum which some Aetna executive on the Board of Regents thinks is important, or a professor to whom some archaic dean feels we can relate. Our constitution allows us a voice in these decisions—we must raise this voice when necessary.

Last Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1969, a student of the University of Hartford College of Basic Studies attempted to lift five record albums from the University bookstore. He was caught by the manager of the store who then called Mr. Shea, head of Campus Security. Mr. Shea then proceeded in direct violation of the student's legal and constitutional rights, to extract a written confession from him.

Shea then escorted the student to Dean Meinke, the omnipotent ruler of the College of Basic Studies. In approximately ten minutes, the time it took to drive from the campus center to Niles Street, Dean Meinke had fulfilled his role as disciplinarian and promptly informed his former student that the College "doesn't need your kind." So, as a result of stealing five record albums, our decadent music lover was out of an education.

As absurd as it sounds, the administration of this University is allowing the College of Basic Studies to be run by a neo-facist dictator. Dean Meinke handled this case of robbery from the bookstore in complete violation of the Student Association constitution and mis-used the power of his position to the extent that THE UNIVERSITY CAN BE SUED. It clearly states, in ARTICLE II of the S.A. constitution, that the College of Basic Studies is included under that constitution, and that all full-time under-graduate students registered in the University are members of that association. It also is clearly stated in ARTICLE X — STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS — Sec. 2, that,

"All students have the right to a fair trial and due process by the Judicial Commission BEFORE being subject to dismissal or any form of punishment except in academic matters."

In direct contradiction to this, Dean Meinke told the accused student and his father, who had driven up from New York, that he was expelled from school and that there was no chance of re-acceptance. I interviewed Meinke that afternoon and specifically asked him whether or not there was a board to review this decision, to which he replied, "No, there is no reviewing board and as far as I'm concerned my decision is final." With the assurance of some University administrators that Dean Meinke had acted beyond his authority and had indeed been disseminating mis-information, I called the dismissed student's home in New York where he and his father were headed with all his worldly possessions.

The most disturbing development in this case so far has been the Chancellors' failure to correct the mistake made by Dean Meinke. Instead of reversing Meinke's unauthorized suspensions, the Chancellor compounded the Dean's error by sanctioning it with his own authoritative suspension. He in effect has told the accused student not to go back to classes until AFTER tomorrow's Judicial Commission trial. This has set a rather questionable precedent for suspensions. No matter what the judicial board decides, the administration has already punished the student by making him miss a week of classes. If this is to be the case in the future, we are guilty until proven innocent, and even then have been unjustly punished.

Meinke deliberately keeps the College of Basic Studies off campus and removed from the University atmosphere. He keeps his students away from "the temptations on campus" at the expense of keeping them away from a library, university professors, and other students. It seems as though Meinke has a principal hang-up; he has bells ring between classes and suggestions for school dress. It is an insult to college-age students to be treated in this manner, and most of the students of the Basic Studies resent it. A new dean with new ideas could do wonders for inspiring the students of Basic Studies to get into the work they have to do.

Students of Basic Studies—we urge you to come to campus to meet your fellow students and professors. You pay MORE than other undergraduates and deserve to use ALL the University's facilities. A splendid time is guaranteed for all—we love you.

Jeff Roth



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