

**This Is A Statement
From Hector
Prud'homme, Acting
Chancellor of the
University of Hartford.**

To The Editor of the LIBERATED PRESS:

One good thing about this University is that we all have the right to express our personal opinions. We do this on our own personal responsibility. I am doing that here.

At Monday night's meeting in the gym I think it was Ben Holden who advised students not to run scared. I agreed, with one qualification which is if you're getting ready to run, you run faster scared. However, consider the fact that, contrary to the situation in other parts of the world, nobody in the University needs to be scared except possibly of himself. Indeed, one of the University's positions on academic freedom is that the University will respect even the most passionate individual involvements in all aspects of our moral, social and political lives. In other words, stand up and be counted. The University will defend our personal right to do so.

I agree that the war in Vietnam has become an obscenity. I don't think we know what we are doing there; I mean really know the cultural cost to ourselves, let alone to others, of the destruction, the ravished and the dead. I know some of the University don't agree with me. I think they need to study cultural anthropology.

President Nixon may get "hung" on the Southeast Asian war. I did not vote for him. But on policy issues I have never gone along with the popular custom of aiming all our fire at the presidential office. Constitutionally, the President is powerless to pursue for very long a single damn policy that the Congress doesn't support. The Congress legislates, it approves the plans, it has to provide the funds; the President executes. What have you and I and our parents and neighbors and the majority of citizens up and down the land been saying to our senators and congressmen about providing the funds? The representative system may be sluggish but it will respond. This is still a democracy.

I can think of a lot better ways to influence government action than by "striking" the universities. You want the universities to go political? Have a look at what happened to German, Italian, and Latin American universities in comparable times of stress, when their constituents subordinated academics to politics. When as an institution a university takes one political stand and proselytes against another stand, it subverts the university's special role as an arena where all points of view can be freely explored and first amendment freedoms can be practiced to the ultimate degree. It is the individual's freedom that is swallowed in the maw of institutional action. Don't let it happen.

There are some more mundane considerations. There is preparation for examinations, advancement, graduation, transfer to other institutions and getting into graduate school. I don't need to enlarge on this; those of you who depend on grades to achieve those moves know what is at risk. I am not an academician but also I don't see how in good faith a professor, except perhaps in the social sciences (Dr. Breit may kill me for this), can graduate his student in those disciplines where his work has to be precisely complete or requires final examination - as in engineering or accounting or the natural sciences. There are music students who have one period a week with a distinguished instructor who comes from out of town; that student often puts great value on this, and has paid a considerable amount of money for it. Finally, there is the question of planning discussion groups or seminars on the war and other issues as substitute courses during a "moratorium" period. You know it is difficult for faculty and students to get to relate to each other and into a subject without prior preparation. In sum, if the University is "struck," some students are going to be hurt or shortchanged academically; many will be students who are in the academic home stretch, who want to get to the finish line. It may be fair to inquire whether students in favor of striking include some who expect to graduate this time or otherwise to do well in their subjects upon examination.

While the logic of all the above may be sound, let it never be said that I allowed logic to stand in the way of something else that is strongly enough believed in. I do not object to students wanting really to do something about this issue, to learn more about it, to express themselves, and to make an impact on public attitudes and hence on U.S. policy. I would be disappointed if they didn't. I hope our students will long have verve and passion to express their convictions.

Now, if faculty, administration, and students were to make common cause on this, what would ensue? One thing is that immediately (today?) students and faculty seminars or discussions to take place for the rest of the semester, at stated periods every afternoon after most regular classes are through. I can for instance imagine a political science panel of faculty and students free-wheeling on the stage of Millard with four hundred students in attendance, or with invited members of the public, and out of it coming press articles or petitions to Congress and the White House. This is one of various possibilities. To return to logic for a moment, regular classes and examinations would continue to be conducted, for the most part according to schedule, protecting the rights of all our students to complete their academic work.

If, notwithstanding all my logic, students (and some faculty) insisted on a program in conflict with the academic schedule, then (and here I resume the role of acting-chancellor) I would propose to the academic deans, to faculty, and to the student government that, while all University facilities remain open and all University services continue to be provided, provisions like the following would govern for such period of time as desired:

"Students, who, for reason of conscience or belief, wished to absent themselves from classes, would be free to do so and would suffer no sanctions or penalties for demonstrating their political convictions, subject to makeup provisions which the faculty may require in those classes missed.

Faculty, who, for reason of conscience or belief, wished to absent themselves from classes, would be free to do so, but they would announce their intentions in advance, and make prior arrangements for a substitute teacher, or design an alternative learning experience, so that those students desiring to attend class would not be disadvantaged by the faculty member's absence."

In conclusion, each member of the University of Hartford community, and every citizen in the land, must decide for himself, as a matter of concern or conviction, the agonizing question of the Nation's further involvement in Southeast Asia and related questions. This paper of mine is an expression of the University's desire to permit and encourage individual expressions of concern while at the same time providing for the continuing integrity of the University and those who wish its functions to continue.

Hector Prud'homme
Acting Chancellor of the University

The faculty of the School of Education resolved to send the following telegram to the President of the U.S. and the representatives of our State:

1. The faculty of the School of Education of the University of Hartford deplores the Executive decision to commit troops into Cambodia.
We find this decision a contradiction to previously stated objectives to deescalation to the war in Southeast Asia.
As members of the academic world who believe in and greatly respect the ideals of the youth of America, we join the protesting of this action.

They also resolved:

1. We also deplore the uses of the armed forces on campuses to quell student demonstrations.
2. We strongly recommend that classes continue, but that any student whose conscience dictates that he absent himself from class, may do so without penalty, sanction, or discrimination.