

TO ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF:

Attached is a copy of a motion passed last night by a General Meeting of the Union, at which around 230 students were present. All parts except 2(b) received a 2/3 majority, 2(b) was passed by 40 votes.

The aim of this motion was to elucidate opinion on disciplinary procedures, both with regard to our complaints about the present charges against students who demonstrated against Enoch Powell and in addition the sort of disciplinary procedure which we would like to see replace the present one.

We hope this will clarify for you exactly what students are concerned about and what they intend to press for in the future. We would, of course, be glad of an indication of your support for what we are trying to do and we would sincerely welcome members of staff to all the meetings which we hold on the matter of discipline. This is clearly a matter which should concern every member of the University community.

We would also draw your attention to the decision of an open meeting at lunch-time this Thursday. In reply to Senate's threat to expel from the University any person who obstructed the disciplinary procedure, with no right of appeal, 150 students decided that they would stand by their declared principles and still, if necessary, obstruct disciplinary action against the seven people charged.

A large body of students have consistently made demands of the University in the past ten days. We have now consolidated opinion into a concrete document in the form of this motion. Please give this whole matter considerable thought - it is of great importance to all of us that we avoid damage to the reputation of the University and to the academic progress of a large number of students, who, through their concern, have committed themselves to active involvement in the struggle to replace an unacceptable system of discipline through the only means of action which remain.

We, the Students' Union of the University of Essex, express our grave lack of confidence in the disciplinary procedures of the University. This Union states its case against the current disciplinary proceedings as follows :

1. The University should not have held itself responsible for conducting inquiries into political actions on campus;
2. Those who claim to have been obstructed or to have had their property damaged were not members of the University and have adequate recourse under civil law;
3. The preliminary enquiries into the incidents were carried out under a defective procedure - this has been acknowledged by the Dean of Students;
4. This case has brought to the notice of a large number of students the defects in the disciplinary procedure which has up to now been accepted and since it has now become apparent that the procedures can be used in a way which we would never have agreed to, they should be deleted immediately.

We therefore make the following demands:

1. That the University should drop at once the enquiry into the incidents after the Powell meeting on the grounds that the enquiries have been carried out unfairly, and moreover that the University should never have made itself responsible for such enquiries; we therefore instruct members of Students' Council not to participate in disciplinary cases under the present procedure.
2. That after the enquiry has been stopped, negotiations should be opened between the Senate and student representatives to be elected by, responsible to and recallable by a General Meeting on the following basis:
  - a. that the present disciplinary procedures no longer have student support;
  - b. that students should not be subject to any procedure in the University which deals with any matter which could be dealt with under Civil Law;
  - c. that like any urban community the University should have Bye-laws to facilitate the running of the community; these Bye-laws, relating to such things as library fines and so on, will be drawn up by a committee with a student majority and subject to the approval of a Union General Meeting;
  - d. that there should be a stated maximum penalty for infringement of each Bye-law and that the University's only action before going to a Court of Law should be to ask anyone who breaks a Bye-law to meet the penalty;
  - e. that both staff and students should be subject to such Bye-laws equally;
  - f. that it will be the responsibility of the University administration or an individual to initiate action in a Court of Law or through the police;
  - g. that the University may consider before it initiates such action advice from a student's adviser, doctor or other representatives.

When such negotiations have been completed, which shall be no later than 30th Sept. 1968, a report from the group will be subject to the approval of a Union General Meeting.

Any cases which arise in the interim period should be held over until the new proposals have been accepted or should be proceeded against in a Court of Law at the discretion of the University.