

## THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES

**COMMUNIQUE**

CLAREMONT UNIVERSITY CENTER PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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FINAL REPORT OF THE WASHINGTON DELEGATION

Claremont's fifteen-member delegation to Washington D.C. has submitted a final report on the campus crisis which followed President Nixon's Cambodia decision and the killings at Kent State University this spring.

The delegation traveled to Washington on May 10 and spend 2½ days talking to Cabinet officers, sub-Cabinet officials, senators and representatives. Their objective was to discuss what Provost Joseph B. Platt called "the crisis of confidence between the academic community in general and government."

The delegation represented all six of the colleges and was financed by contributions from concerned faculty, students and administrators.

Its members were Provost Platt; Gordon Douglass, Pomona professor of economics; Edward Haley, CMC professor of political science; Chaplain James Joseph; Mrs. Sallie Seaver, Scripps trustee; and 10 students: Charles Natanson and John Uphold of Pomona; Sally Shotwell and Douglas Mitchell of the Graduate School; Larry Heiman and John Elliott of CMC; Amanda Mecke and Yolanda Retter of Pitzer; Lynn Ohman of Scripps; and James B. Johnson of Harvey Mudd.

Here is the report.

**CRISIS ON THE CAMPUS****Report from The Claremont Colleges****I. Nature and Sources of the Crisis**

Violence and uncertainty stalk this country. They threaten to destroy higher education and to alienate a whole generation of young people from normal political processes. These are extraordinary circumstances calling for immediate and extraordinary responses.

American college students are losing faith in the American political system for several reasons. Foremost in their minds is the war in southeast Asia. For them it is a symptom of wrong national purposes. The United States should stop its wanton violence in southeast Asia and cease acting like the world's policeman. American national honor, they believe, need not and should not be equated with the winning of military victories.

Second, growing numbers of students object to existing social values and priorities as revealed in what they perceive to be the policies of the present national administration.



13 They oppose not only the seemingly perpetual undeclared war in Vietnam, but also the administration's inability or unwillingness to deal with shocking social and economic inequalities and environmental decay at home. The continuing oppression of blacks and other minorities in this society angers them deeply.

Third, many students sense that the national administration neither heeds nor credits conflicting viewpoints. This is revealed to them by the tendency of administration spokesmen to divert attention from the substance of issues raised in student protests to the behavior of demonstrators. They learn it, too, by repeated administration allusions to the "silent majority," as if silence in a democracy was somehow patriotic.

This loss of faith in the American political system is shared broadly by students. It is not just some fringe groups of so-called radicals who are involved. Nor is it just a momentary and passing disenchantment of hot tempered people. The increasing frustration with the existing "system" may soon turn rock-throwers into snipers, marchers into rock-throwers, and the angry majority into marchers.

Present administration policies have turned the American college campuses into major arenas of political action. Caught in a devastating crossfire between those who equate support for the war with patriotic or religious duty, and those who find total resistance to the war a moral necessity, the university has watched the climate of free enquiry gradually turn into the climate of the battlefield.

ck The invasion of Cambodia, like the black revolution, came into the colleges as events on a national stage with which the members of the colleges are deeply concerned, but over which they exercise little direct control. Until quite recently, many on the campus sought to avoid the pressure to participate in a political struggle. They sought in vain, first to practice their academic pursuits without regard to political questions, then to proclaim political neutrality for college and university institutions. Not only does the society seem incapable of solving its most pressing political problems outside the university, but it also seems unsure whether or not to affirm its past pledges to provide for higher education.

Had the nation's leaders understood and anticipated the critical nature of these social dislocations, the present crisis might not have turned violent. In part the administration's failure to anticipate the violent reactions to the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State proceeds from an apparent lack of reliable information about opinion within colleges and universities. However, the rhetoric of administration officials--especially the vice president's disdainful attitude toward students and his singling out of particular colleges and their officials for attack--has compounded crisis with outrage.

The university now finds itself in a fight for the very life of higher education in America. The nation must understand that it has no choice but to defend the rights of future generations of Americans to an education freed from these present distortions. To this end, we offer the following recommendations.

## II. Towards Better Understanding

A breakdown of communications is partly to blame for the alienation of students from the political process. Reliable information about opinion on the campuses simply is not reaching Washington. To restore communication, it will be necessary to do more than simply re-establish the channels which have broken down. Many of these channels are no longer reliable because they are no longer representative. To restore communication we recommend:

1. The end of inflammatory rhetoric. In the past, state and national government officials have tended to concentrate on the methods of protest and dissent and have ignored the substantive issues raised by dissenters. This practice has fanned the flames of student anger and ignited cycle after cycle of name-calling and violence on the part of responsible public officials and the angriest dissidents. If few will defend destruction by students, fewer yet should tolerate insulting, inaccurate generalizations by administration officials. One encourages the other; both sides must call a halt.



2. The beginning of open communication. Establishing conditions of trust is essential to open and effective communication. This means that the Administration and the colleges must be willing to stay with the effort to communicate over a long period of time. In addition, traditional channels must be augmented by new modes and styles of contact.

a. Intern and out-term programs of the Federal Government should be greatly expanded, bringing governmental experience to a larger number of students, and bringing many more public officials onto university and college campuses. Programs should be built flexibly to accommodate varied academic programs and calendars and to assure continuity in government. We have extended stays especially in mind, however, to permit a fuller range of experiences and contacts.

b. Frequent visits by higher ranking government officials to college and university campuses should be encouraged, despite recent disruptions of such visits. Such officials undoubtedly would be subjected to probing questions from dissentors, but they should welcome a chance to give reasoned explanations of government policies. Universities are fully aware of the need to assure the safety of such officials, and many members of the academic community would welcome further opportunities to promote free inquiry by such visits. Moreover, by refusing to visit campuses, members of the government allow disrupters to dictate who will and will not be granted a hearing.

c. A network of regional campus consultations should be established, to provide yet another means for the national administration and higher education to understand each other. These might evolve out of the network of informal contacts already made this spring between campus delegations to Washington and particular administration officials.

d. Close liaison with the American Council on Education, the American Association of University Professors, and other representative groups of higher education should be reestablished for the purpose not only of hearing education's needs but also of soliciting their assistance in monitoring and assessing the sources of campus unrest. They should be quickly and directly involved in policy discussions.

e. Closer liaison with a wide variety of student groups, including those which have come into existence during the last two years, should be sought. We know of no truly representative student groups at the national level. We, therefore, recommend the Administration regularly bring to Washington for consultation small numbers of students representing a full spectrum of views and campus situations.

f. We commend to the attention of the Administration the National Association of College and University Chaplains, and the National Campus Ministry Association as groups with more authentic contact with varied student opinion than most other concerned professional groups.

3. A new constituency. Students now feel they are viewed only as a problem and have no place in the government to turn, no friend in court, no person, agency, or section of the government which shares the intensity of their concerns about poverty, racism, or the war in Vietnam. It is important that the Administration actually hear the students; it is equally important that the Administration convince the students that they hear them, not just hear about them. It is wrong to make promises that cannot be kept. But a reluctance to make such promises should not foreclose presidential leadership in areas vitally important to students. The president can lead the country toward a common vision, without raising false expectations, by making known his hopes and dreams and letting the nation see he is working toward them.

4. Free and open debate. Dissent in a democracy should be respected and even encouraged. The national administration should promote this view, both by giving greater visibility to the dissent which goes on within the administration as policy revisions are



being made, and by openly announcing its willingness to consider all protests of existing policies whatever their source. However the Administration responds, it must stop giving young people the impression that their feelings of dissent from present policy are treasonous. They are starting to believe it, with frightening results.

5. A national dialogue on violence. So far as we know little action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Nor has the nation been made aware of the purposes of the Commission's report. We believe that a national dialogue on violence, headed by Dr. Eisenhower, should be started. The purposes of such a dialogue should be to develop understanding about when violence occurs and when it can be justified. There is a growing tendency toward romantic violence by the young and excessive violence by governmental authorities. Perhaps a television series could be developed to dramatize the report, followed by a series of national, regional, and local conferences sponsored by community groups.

6. Research on new political forms. Fundamentally new dimensions to the political process have emerged recently. Mistakes in understanding the novelties can create serious difficulties for the colleges and for the government. A series of background studies should be commissioned by the government to detect the nature and intensity of student feelings about American political institutions and how they function. We especially recommend study of how students best influence public decisions. We also encourage study of the means of developing leadership among conflict oriented groups.

### III. Towards Peace in Colleges and Universities

Higher education's survival is threatened by violence, disruption, and reprisal--from within and without. The Administration can help save the universities by finding ways to diminish or remove the pressures which have caused students (and others) to treat colleges and universities as central political arenas. To this end, we recommend:

1. Prompt granting of the eighteen-year-old vote. The President long ago gave his support to the vote for 18-year-olds, and now the Congress has enacted legislation supporting it. We urge the administration to give vigorous leadership to this just and important cause by whatever means--additional legislation or constitutional amendment--required.

2. Encouraging political involvement. The Democratic and Republican Parties must expand their efforts to involve young people in politics. This means letting them into campaigns, giving them responsible work, and proving that partisan politics can solve problems important to them. Specifically, this means opening up the party structures, making them representative and democratic. It may mean dissolving the Young Republicans and Young Democrats as irrelevant social clubs and incorporating young people into the working machinery of the parties.

3. Giving political advice. A corps of "political assistance advisors" should be formed to work with youth, the poor, and minority groups in much the same way that legal assistance is now available in some states. The complexity of governmental procedures has now outrun what can be reasonably expected of those groups which are limited in experience, funds, and organizational capacity. As a result, the political system unduly responds to pressures from certain groups. While such political assistants would not solve all problems, they at least would help the politically interested and politically frustrated to know they were being heard by the government.

4. Colleges and universities very much need to know what constraints limit their political and social involvement. As one example of many, the Internal Revenue Service and the American Council on Education, or some other representative body, might work together to clarify the full impact of recent tax legislation on the involvement of independent colleges in socially sensitive areas.



#### IV. Towards Renewal of Colleges and Universities

Uncertainty and violence plague America's institutions of higher learning not only because external events have brought them into a deadly social cross-fire, but because the academic community is now engaged in a searching and painful self-evaluation. Not since the creation of the first American universities have higher education's goals, methods of governance, and relationships to the rest of society been so in doubt. The Claremont Colleges are no exception. We think it only proper, therefore, to conclude this set of recommendations by addressing the collegiate community.

1. Clearing channels of communication. Because lack of communication is a major facet of the current crisis, colleges and universities must help to create new opportunities for understanding between the government and the collegiate community. They should cooperate with the government in setting up expanded intern and out-tern programs, public affairs forums, and campus consultations. All members of the community have an interest in making these efforts succeed, and students, faculty, administrators, trustees and alumni should participate.

2. Encouraging student involvement in politics. Colleges and universities need not take official positions in partisan political contests in order to permit their members greater freedom to participate in the political process. A variety of methods could be utilized to make possible individual political activity without compromising the academic institution. Rescheduling vacation periods, establishing "work-study" programs, and granting more flexible leaves of absence come immediately to mind.

3. Strengthening higher education's constituency. American colleges and universities have grown dangerously out of touch with large and influential segments of the society. Ways must be found to enlist the understanding and support of those who have the power to help or to hurt the academic institutions. Any sort of new relationship must include the possibility of changing minds and practices on both sides, but the colleges and universities very much need to demonstrate to large numbers of people the benefits and advantages of collegiate activities and styles of life. Colleges and universities could begin by inviting members of unions, chambers of commerce, women's organizations, and other community groups to their campuses for forums and seminars on important problems.

4. Clarifying higher education's goals and governance. Until recently there existed an extraordinary consensus within the academic community about the goals of liberal education and the means of organizing to attain them. That consensus has been shattered. New agreement about the ends and means of academic life must be reached before some sense of the worthwhileness of colleges and universities will be restored. To this end we recommend first, that each institution redouble its efforts to gain college-wide understanding of the obligations and privileges of academic freedom. By raising the issue formally, as in periodic "goals conferences," the college might ensure a continuing educational dialogue on what is and is not desirable and what is and is not permissible within an academic sanctuary. Further, we recommend that each institution spell out frequently and in detail how important decisions are made. Periodic "constitutional conventions" could provide all members of an academic community with a means of learning how schools are run and a device for initiating changes in governance. Colleges and universities must move toward processes recognized as fair to reach decisions seen as properly binding on the whole community. If the process is fair and the decision binding, they are worth defending even to the point of excluding those who respond by disruption.

5. Developing new relationships to social change and experimentation. In addition to their educational and scholarly functions, higher education's institutions provide society with varied forms of expertise. Indeed, many colleges and universities today are major business enterprises, preempting resources of increasing magnitude and competing with other sectors of the community for them. Moreover, through their service functions, whether carried out institutionally or by individuals, they play a much greater role in the affairs of society than many of their members are willing to admit. But this service role has too often been passive rather than creative, too inspired by society as it is rather than by what it might be. American institutions of higher education would be on sounder ground if they make their role in social affairs explicit and creative by exploring the problems of society in the spirit of free, critical experimentation. In fact, such an approach to society's problems is clearly appropriate to the university's mission of intellectual stewardship.



PLATT VISITS FINCH

On June 25 Provost Platt spent about three-quarters of an hour with Robert H. Finch at the White House. Dr. Platt presented Finch a copy of the Crisis on the Campus report and discussed it with him. He also gave Finch a copy of the report for Patrick Daniel Moynihan. Both advisers to President Nixon had met with the Washington delegation from Claremont.

Here are excerpts from Dr. Platt's memo to the delegates:

- Mr. Finch agrees the reduction of inflammatory rhetoric is something that needs saying and saying again.
- He observed there will be a considerably expanded intern program extending to a number of government agencies that have not previously used interns, and he believes this will help to educate college students on the workings of the federal government.
- He was interested in exploring the possibility that the American Council on Education, together with representatives of the Internal Revenue Service, might formulate some guidelines to encourage student participation in political affairs without overstepping the boundaries of what is academically creditable or of the proper conduct of a tax-exempt institution.
- Mr. Finch said he was quite convinced that both the Democratic and Republican parties would welcome young people into their political activities. . .but it would be utterly naive of young people to think they could get in on a two-weeks-in-October, single-issue basis. . . .I told him I believed the students I know could be told the facts of life about how one gets things done in a political party and, indeed, this would be a very helpful step in the process of mutual education.
- We had quite a discussion of the concept of "political assistance advisors." The idea clearly appealed to him very much and the question was how it might be possible to legitimize such "honest brokers" (to use his phrase).
- He said that the commission headed by Gov. Scranton will, he hopes, have some strong recommendations to make and expects them to have a hearing.