

Students Occupy U. of Windsor

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

WINDSOR, Ont.—For the first time in its history, the University of Windsor has felt the effects of increasing student demands for a voice in those decisions which affect their lives.

On Feb. 11, 55 students took over the Theology and Classics departments in the South Wing of the Administration Building.

The occupation was sparked by the firing of Dr. William Kelly, a popular theology teacher. In late December, Kelly was advised by Fr. E.R. Malley, head of the department that his contract would not be renewed.

During January, students in Kelly's two undergrad classes submitted two petitions and several delegations through the proper channels within the university. Even though they were supported by 75% of the students, they were ignored or rejected.

The university has continually ignored student wishes in their hiring and firing practices. Kelly is the fourth professor to be released for non-academic reasons in the last two years.

The occupants have given four demands which they say must be satisfied before the occupation will end:

- 1) Equal representation on all departmental committees.
- 2) Openness of all decision making bodies and non-personal records.
- 3) Reinstatement of Dr. Kelly if he desires it.
- 4) Amnesty for the occupants.

The occupation has sparked the greatest controversy in the university's history. The day following the take-over, almost 2,000 students jammed a general meeting to hear and debate the reasons for the occupation.

The number of students actually occupying the departments has increased at the rate of over 50 per day. As of Feb. 15, their numbers were approaching the 300 mark.

Opposition to the occupation appears to be following the standard procedure laid down at the fall meeting of the Canadian Association of Universities and Community Colleges. Their directive suggested that any President should first organize the responsible (right wing) students against the protestors, second, attempt to out-bureaucratize the dissidents and finally call in the cops.

For the first three days of the occupation, the threat of a bust by the right wingers was high. This was openly being encouraged by administration personnel. It was only through the intervention of sympathetic faculty and graduate students that this was avoided.

In the opening meeting of negotiations, administration president J.F. Leddy advanced into the second phase by suggesting that the four demands be given over to four different administration committees for discussion.

Although Leddy has indicated that he does not plan to call out the local police to eject the occupants, this is still a very strong possibility.

February 19, the general student body voted on the demands as "reasonable negotiating areas" and whether they would participate in a general student strike if negotiations did not proceed satisfactorily.

The results of this referendum were not available at press time.

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