

Students vote indefinite strike

Faculty suspends classes

by Will Buck

Normal activity ground to a halt at Williams College early this morning as students voted overwhelmingly at an all-college meeting to support an indefinite strike in response to President Nixon's recent military actions in Southeast Asia.

The meeting dragged until 1:45 a.m. as innumerable delays resulted from the difficulties of organizing the standing-room-only crowd of 1300 people, in Chapin Hall, into a decision-making body.

College Council President Greg Van Schaack '71 read President John E. Sawyer's statement, which was met with considerable applause and a final standing ovation. The statement reads:

"Any responsible person close to an American campus today must say to Mr. Nixon and Mr. Agnew that present policies cannot be continued without tearing this country apart. (wild applause) The leadership of this nation must stop and listen to these young people, most of whom care intensely about the best in America and are desperately worried about where their country is heading.

"Speaking as an individual I have seen no evidence that this war can achieve any useful purpose commensurate with its costs. It is daily destroying lives

and institutions in Indo-China and devouring resources urgently needed for problems at home. Perhaps most fundamental of all, it is undercutting the basic faith of increasing numbers of young people in the processes of government and even in the traditional goals for our society." (standing ovation).

In a move related to the student vote for an indefinite strike, the faculty voted at a special meeting yesterday afternoon to suspend classes for two days in support of student sentiment. Political Science Prof. Vincent Barnett read the faculty resolution to the overflow Chapin audience:

"The faculty shares the concern of Williams students with respect to the escalation of the Vietnam War, and their commitment to some kind of effective response in the days ahead. Moreover, the faculty wishes to express its support of students' efforts to bring about a change of policy through organized effort at public persuasion.

"Recognizing that these steps will involve unusual demands on the time and energy of many students, the faculty authorizes a two-day suspension of classes in order to work jointly with students to make a constructive response possible.

"The situation will be reviewed at the regular faculty meeting on Wednesday, May 6."

The Wednesday meeting of the faculty will be faced with the student decision for an indefinite strike, and consequently alternative plans for the completion of the academic year.

Other than the decision for an indefinite strike, the Chapin meeting resulted in no other conclusive plan for action. At 1:30 a.m. after half the audience had trickled out, it was decided to hold a meeting in Chapin, at 9 a.m. to



Photo by Roy Zarcos '73

An overflow crowd packed Chapin Hall late last night and early this morning while voting to strike indefinitely to protest U. S. policy in Southeast Asia. Organizers of meeting sit on the stage as College Council Greg Van Schaack moderates.



President Richard M. Nixon, the focus of much of the protest in the strike at Williams and across the nation.

discuss a variety of strike programs.

Approximately 750 people appeared at 9 and made plans for action, including the initiation of work in the community and with local colleges, an effort to establish communications with other striking centers and the organization of a strike center possibly conducting political workshops, among other things.

At the 9 a.m. meeting, the 750 present, mostly students, voted to meet at 8 p.m. Wednesday in Chapin to discuss the strike, possible issues are the faculty action at their 5 p.m. meeting Wednesday and the desirability of continuing the strike in light of national events up to that time.

Information on various committees and workshops was distributed. Committees and workshops are being formed for: local college organization; five-college organization; Williamstown organization; Washington (emphasis on congressional influence); alumni communication; civil disobedience; march on Washington.

Also this morning, deploring

the particular form of the Williams strike, Professor Charles Samuels said he will hold English classes tomorrow. Attendance will be voluntary.

Before the decision for an indefinite strike was made early this morning, the Chapin audience was asked to consider three separate issues as reasons for calling a strike.

Introduced first was the strike demand, "that the United States must cease its invasion of Cambodia and renewed bombing of North Vietnam, and must withdraw its forces from Southeast Asia immediately." The demand was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 1,054 to 141.

A second demand dealing with political dissent met with a great deal of argument and disagreement. After a talk by James Thornton '72 of the Afro-American Society, there was pressure for generalization of the demand to include the subject of racism. The demand as finally approved by voice vote read: "We demand the end to both the attempt by the present administration to

stifle political dissent as exemplified by the trial of the Chicago 8 and of the racism exemplified by the oppression of the Black Panthers."

The third demand asked for the end to defense contracts with universities, and an end for ROTC programs. This demand met much opposition, and was finally voted down in two stages. The audience first voted to eliminate the ROTC portion of the demand by a vote 531 to 477. A voice vote was then taken on the remaining clause concerning defense contracts with negative results.

As the meeting finally broke up enthusiastically after the roar of approval for an indefinite strike, one student stepped to the microphone and said, "Nothing like this has happened here before. It's incredible!"

An all-college meeting will be held Wednesday at 8 p.m. to discuss the strike.

History of strike

By Will Buck

The beginning of the strike movement on the Williams campus originated last Saturday night as students returned one by one after participating in the weekend activities in New Haven.

Late Friday afternoon Tom Hayden spoke in New Haven urging a national student strike for Tuesday based on the following three demands:

1. That the United States end its "systematic oppression" of all political dissidents such as Bobby Seale and all other Black Panthers.

2. That the United States end its "aggression" in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and unilaterally and immediately withdraw its troops.

3. That universities must end "complicity" in war by ending war related research and eliminating ROTC activities.

As they returned from New Haven, Williams students began talking about the possibility of a Williams strike. On Saturday night several freshmen went from entry to entry in the freshman quad in an attempt to gauge student interest. At the same time the issue was being raised in residential houses.

Sunday afternoon, a significant portion of the freshmen had been mobilized in favor of a strike. While they lacked any specific no-

tion as to the mechanics of a strike effort, they displayed banners demanding "STRIKE NOW!" all over the freshman quad.

A petition against President Nixon's recent military moves into Cambodia was circulated on the campus by a group of four students and faculty members. Signatures will be collected through Wednesday, when the petition will be sent to the President and prominent members of Congress. Circulating the petition are Assoc. Dean Frost, Asst. History Prof. Christopher Breiseth, Sam Beer and Joe Sensenbrenner '70.

Informal discussions were held all over campus, and a number of students who had been involved in the Moratorium effort last year met to offer ideas and suggestions. The prevailing feeling was that looseness and fluidity were appropriate means of organization, rather than the formation of a structured committee leadership.

It was also emphasized that this is in no way a movement toward a strike against the college, but is a means of demonstrating dissatisfaction with President Nixon's recent policies in Southeast Asia.

Soon before dinner Sunday evening it was announced that there would be a meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Rathskeller for a further exchange of ideas and the initial formulation of plans.

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ACEC cancels second show

LATE BULLETIN — Since the announcement that the lawn party set for Saturday, May 9 has been cancelled was released at today's 9 a.m. meeting, Ron Ross '71 and Steve Demorest '71 have been trying to stage Friday's Pentangle concert as a rally and benefit. If the funds from the lawn party are made available, the concert would then be free to the Williams community, with the possibility of adding speakers to the program. Any contributions collected at the door would be used for a strike cause, which would be determined in an open meeting next week, they said. To avoid legal complications and the loss of previously committed money, this seems to be the only feasible solution, since cancellation is impossible, Ross said. House Presidents are urged to contact either Ross, Demorest or the Strike Center to commit the available funds. The concert will be discussed at tomorrow's 1 p.m. meeting in Chapin.

Underwhelming ticket sales have forced the All College Entertainment Committee to can-

cel the 10 p.m. show of the Pentangle-Van Morrison concert set for May 8. All tickets sold for that show will be honored at the 7:30 p.m. show, which will, as a result of the cancellation, be somewhat longer than originally planned.

The current sales problem is a new variation on an old theme, with the important difference that this year many mistakes of the past were corrected. Unlike the ill-fated Sam and Dave concert of last spring, this year's concert was planned to coincide with the first all-College lawn party. More money was spent in obtaining the acts than in the past to assure a program of currently popular entertainers. Finally to compensate those who were closed out of the standing-room-only Byrds concert, two shows were planned and the \$2.50 ticket price, the lowest ever, was maintained.

Perhaps the failure shows a poor use of psychology on the part of the ACEC. "When we put this concert together," ACEC co-chairman Ron Ross commented, "we didn't think of things like the

'herd' instinct or how hip it might be to have a ticket to a show that one's friends were unable to get to see. Our only consideration was getting two first-rate acts that would complement the mood of Spring Weekend.

"A College Council Committee is not equipped to re-create the magic of Woodstock; we feel that we accomplished our only objective: to provide a lot of music for as little money as possible."

ACEC concerts are subsidized by the student tax collected with the tuition bill, so that any given ticket price does not reflect the total cost of the concert. "Some people seem to think that they can ignore this concert," Ross complained, "as though we were running a business like any other promoter. The difference is that because of our low ticket prices we start out in the red and no one can conceivably make any money, even for the school. All of our figures are based on sell-outs and the hope that any show we do will appeal to enough people to allow us to break even."