



"The misuse of language is not only distasteful in itself, it is even injurious to the soul." — Plato

The Minority Speaks Out

On Tuesday, May 5th, 1970, at a special faculty meeting, a majority of the faculty passed a resolution condemning what it termed "official repression" in the disaster at Kent State and linking this with the military action in Cambodia and the policies of the present national administration.

Despite these figures, the resolution claimed to represent "the majority of the faculty and students." Furthermore, the faculty extended this claim to represent "Grinnell College as an institution."

The joint faculty-student resolution, then, claims to be representative in two ways, and both ways are, in the judgment of the undersigned, ill founded. But it is the second claim — to being representative of "Grinnell College as an institution" — that merits censure, and we are appealing to you, the trustees, to make that censure. We argue as follows:

1. Although the meeting was well attended by faculty and

administration, there were no representatives of the trustees, the parents, or the alumni.

2. The claim by one part of the institution to represent the whole institution necessarily involves those who dissent; and such a claim is especially unfair when many members of the institution had no voice at all in the proceedings.

3. The majority resolution is highly political in nature — an unprecedented and, in our view, an improper kind of resolution for a college to make.

4. By suspending classes as a part of the resolution, the faculty placed those who wished to dissent in an impossible position morally and, perhaps, legally.

5. By linking together diverse issues, and by failing to revise the extreme language of the resolution, the majority prevented a rational conclusion from being reached.

We would further point out that the temper of the meeting was highly emotional, so much so that the majority openly violated a long-standing tradition of the College; to respect the rights of the individual conscience.

We therefore wish to dissociate ourselves from the resolution, and we request that the trustees make a similar statement available to public notice.

Letter From Faculty Head On Closing

To the President:

To summon, to order, to elucidate the events, the factors, the elements which led, over a period of five days, to the decision of Grinnell College on 8 May to terminate its academic year on 13 May, sixteen days before its scheduled Commencement, would be a lengthy and demanding task. Many and varied and complex were the events, the factors, the motives, the states of mind which fed, or conditioned, or informed the act.

But in my own case, the concern which rose, so to speak, to the top as I approached the meeting of the Faculty on 8 May was that which I there articulated:

"... The College cannot permit itself as a college to be so politicized, nor indeed appear in the public eye to be so politicized, that its abiding purposes are nullified and its effective functioning as a locus of free inquiry is precluded or impaired. The College cannot today convert itself into a political ground, be it a real political battleground or a mere political playground, and expect tomorrow to resume its stance of disinterested search, of measured deliberation, of hospitality to the widest range of ideas and opinions and to their written and spoken expression.

"I have come, over the last two days, slowly and reluctantly to the conclusion that circumstances without and within the College, the events of the last few days here, and the present temper and temperature of the student body, as I assess them, so seriously limit our freedom of maneuver and action that the College must close its doors to protect the very existence of its educational house. True, in so doing it cannot continue to fulfill completely its contract with students for instruction and inquiry under conditions congenial to instruction and learning (and this... I deplore and profoundly regret), but in not so doing, I fear that the College forecloses, or may foreclose, the possibility of writing any future contracts it can perform with honor and effectiveness.

"I support the recommendation of the President and the Trustees and I urge upon the Faculty its acceptance."

Today, 7 days later, I remain convinced that the action of 8 May was the proper one. As I see it, the move may well have saved the College; in any event, it saved the chance to save the College.

John R. Kleinschmidt
Chairman of the Faculty
15 May 1970

President's Statement 1

To Parents

As you have probably heard, either directly from your son or daughter or indirectly through news reports, we are closing the College officially at 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday, May 13. This is two days before the formal ending of classes, as previously scheduled, so that only the period of final examinations and commencement activities could have remained. The copy of my formal statement to faculty and students on this matter is enclosed. The faculty voted 91-4 to support it in a separate meeting. At a general faculty and student assembly held Friday afternoon, the student vote to support the statement was virtually unanimous.

The reasoning behind my statement is essentially as follows: No matter how one may regard the attitude of students both here and throughout this nation, toward the Cambodian affair and the Kent State incident, it is a fact that almost all students, from doctrinaire radicals to conservatives, have suddenly become so politically involved that they are no longer able to give proper concentration to their academic studies. On this campus, as on many others, their attention over the past two weeks has been almost completely diverted into discussions and activities about the political crisis. In some educational institutions, as you know, this activity has taken violent forms. Though there have been some threats of such violent activity here, it has not yet happened; demonstrations here have been disruptive in only a minor way. But the important fact, as I say in the statement I enclose, is that the existing atmosphere and temper make it impossible to continue the normal and traditional functions of the educational institution. Accordingly, I believe it is best to close the school and permit students to carry on their political activity elsewhere than on this campus, not under what might be interpreted as the authority, formal or informal, of the College itself.

If I were talking here about something less than the great majority of Grinnell students, I would have recommended to the faculty and students that alternative ways be initiated of approaching the problem of completing the school year, so that those students who wished to complete their school year in a regular fashion could do so. But I think that the present environment does not allow for such an option, rational and proper as the case for it may appear to those who believe the College ought to be able to manage it.

President's Statement 2

To Faculty and Students

Recognizing the grave political and educational crisis which this nation and this college presently face, I believe that the college cannot continue to carry on its normal and traditional functions in the next two weeks. I recognize the desire and the need of individual members of the community to participate in non-violent and informational political activities, and by suspending normal activity for the remainder of the current academic year we allow individual members of the community to engage in such activities.

After consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and other members of the Board, I am therefore recommending to the Faculty that classes be suspended for the remainder of the academic year and that the campus be officially closed at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13.

This means that: 1) there will be no final examination period this year 2) there will be no Commencement activities this year 3) that by the period between now and May 13th students will have the opportunity to meet with their instructors to work out arrangements for the conclusion of their academic responsibilities under conditions which Dean Wall will discuss 4) that individual Grinnell students will have the opportunity to engage in educational and informational activities of their own choosing until the date of closing.

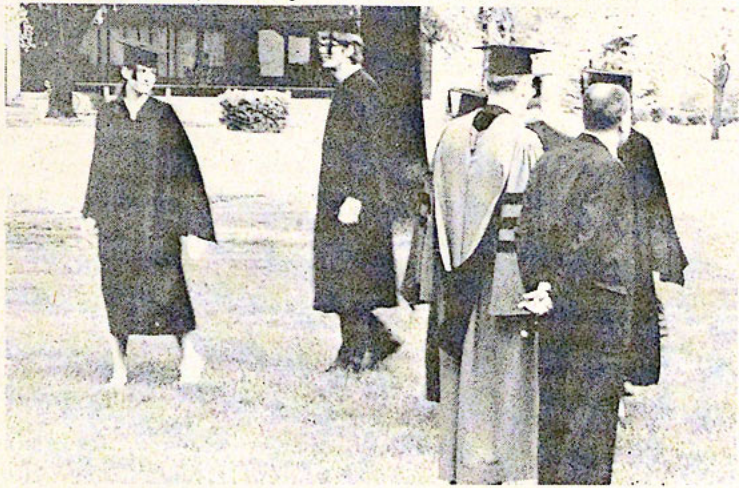
Regrettably, the College cannot manage it without using a means of pressure or enforcement that it neither can use nor countenance using.

In the five days between the suspension of classes (that is, from Friday, May 8, through Wednesday, May 13), our major efforts are being directed toward interviews with faculty and students about academic decisions involving individual students. As the enclosed statement indicates, we intend to do everything possible to see that equitable arrangements involving all aspects of student welfare, academic and otherwise, are completed.

I ask for your understanding in this time of great distress for the College and its constituencies.

Sincerely,
Glenn Leggett
President

Three out of four people killed in highway accidents in 1969 were on dry roads in clear weather, according to annual figures compiled by The Travelers Insurance Companies.



A symbolic Commencement was held on Central Campus May 13. Five students — Susan Fowler, Jonathan Jenkins, Helen Lindblom, Arthur Searle, and Sharon Vander Jagt — and four faculty members — H. G. Apostle, John Crossett, Edwin Kulawiec, and Ralph Luebben — attended. Several other students and faculty asked to participate in spirit.

SGA President's Statement

Because of my role as chairman in the various meetings that have taken place recently I have not been in a position to state my views on the issues before us. However, in my role as S.G.A. President I feel it my responsibility to state those views.

We have reached a critical point in our history. Decisions are being made and will continue to be made in the near future which will determine what path our nation will follow — self-determination or intervention abroad, liberty or authority at home, indeed, freedom or repression in all our actions. These are the choices.

In light of these events it is necessary now that Grinnell College leave the ivory tower of academia and engage itself in the struggle at hand. This departure from formal academic endeavor will necessitate sacrifice by all members of this institution. But these sacrifices pale when compared with the sacrifices exacted by our nation of the young, the dissident, and people of color all over the world.

For these reasons I wholeheartedly support the Thomas proposal.

Andy Loewi
President, Grinnell College
Student Gov't Ass'n.