

STUDENT VIEW STUDENT VIEW STUDENT VIEW



is the campus really quiet?

Two years ago, tragic student deaths at Kent and Jackson State Universities and a subsequent wave of college protests rocked the nation. Yet, students returned to school that fall with only their textbooks and a sullen sense of tranquility.

There were "hidden issues" in those protests, however, which remain even today and will not go away so easily. Although the campuses are relatively quiet, student frustration with internal University affairs and their accompanying search for reform, present the institution with battles that are far from over.

But the campuses are no longer in turmoil. Why?

I submit that a "new breed" of student leadership has emerged on our Campus and around the country. It is not like the co-opted generation of years past, but it is also not like the spontaneous and temporary protest leadership of the late 60's and early 70's.

This new breed is composed of hard-core student activists who might better be termed "quasi-revolutionaries." They do not favor complete upheaval and destruction of all that we now have in the University or society; yet, they are dedicated to change, and will pursue it

The immediate past president of the Missouri Students Association, Chip Casteel graduated this spring with a degree in public administration, plans to study law.

vigorously, over a period of years, if necessary.

These new student leaders are professional, often working 40 to 60 hours per week while still carrying regular course loads, and often receiving salaries. They are trained in the ways of student government and the ways of the University before they even begin serving in office, and they will train their successors in kind.

Besides being professional, this new leadership stands ready to use demonstrations, as well as more sophisticated political and economic pressures when forces within the University are so resistant to change that opening such new channels of communications becomes necessary.

And this new leadership has at last discovered a new ally that has been there all along: the law. Student attorneys have sprung up around the country.

One use of the law at which the UMC student government excels is the establishment of corporations. The student government is itself a corporation; it owns a subsidiary student services corporation, the Missouri Students Store; it helped form an incorporated student lobby in Jefferson City; and, it plans more and more corporate expansion in the coming years.

Students use the law to prosecute unfair business practices, including consumer protection cases and disputes with landlords. And, most recently, students have used the law to achieve voter registration rights.

The new student leaders know that to be effective, they must have "done their homework" regarding any particular issue. Even then, the going may be slow if many groups are involved in the proposed changes (i.e. faculty, administrators, curators, alumni) or if the changes deviate greatly from the status quo.

These new and dedicated student leaders, therefore, are making demands upon the University which it must meet. It must meet them not only because they are well-researched, realistic, and widely supported by students, but also because of two broad socio-political factors.

First, the University is perceived as a model leader and problem-solver in our democratic society. It must, therefore, "take care of its own backyard" if it is to maintain credibility with the alumni and Missourians who support it.

Secondly, the University must better prepare its students not only to function in the society around them, but to improve it. Therefore, it must allow its students increased ability to grow not only academically, but socially as well.

Putting all of these various factors together, then, leads to a constructive student power which should not, and cannot, be denied. — Chip Casteel.