



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Washington Square College of Arts and Science
WASHINGTON SQUARE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003
AREA 212 777-2000

29
25 November 1974

Department of Politics

Needed: A Representative Government for New York University

New York University needs a representative government. This means an opposition party, a free press and free assembly, the right to propose candidates for the offices of President and Board of Trustees, and, most of all, a right to vote for the 100,000 or so students, faculty, administrative employees, donors, and alumni.

It is demonstrable that the only way to bring up for decision and forced action a great many serious problems, of policy, leadership, bureaucracy, neglect, secrecy, incompetence, corruption, etc., is to have a strong opposition party working openly within the university community to achieve a majority of votes and thence the right to replace the executive branch of the university.

Furthermore, a representative government is the best answer to bread-and-butter unionism which may well, even should it succeed, reduce the chances of the university for survival. That is because the union will be forced to stick to negative issues and bargaining over pay and working conditions. Meanwhile the University suffers gravely from apathy, disorganization, lack of innovation, and imbalance of priorities.

There is nothing workable, or even meritorious, about the present university government. Reforms in the direction of representative government have been attempted, but not in really good faith or with sufficient scope. Recently the administration has inaugurated a newspaper for all university people; there is no question about an opposition paper being needed, however. This is an example that can be repeated many times: the administration, whether with ulterior motive or not, cannot act without increasing its own power and arbitrariness. Power must be shared, in a university as in all great institutions of the country. All attempts to imitate shared power end up as shams, encouraging apathy and cynicism, inhibiting academic freedom and scholarly and scientific invention and imagination, putting power into the hands of bureaucrats and serfs. It can be demonstrated beyond question that a large majority of the voices in the modern university's decision-making are controlled and kept voices. The only recourse is to an honest opposition which, if victorious in the community, can sweep the old regime clean.



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What does it take to obtain
a representative government for New York
University?

1. An activist group of about 40 professors and students and others to begin with.
2. The following task forces:
 - A. ON the legal transformation of the university.
 - B. On the organization of support.
 - C. On publicity and explanation of the proposal.
3. Money for the following purposes:
 - A. Publication of a newspaper: 2 years, total \$10,000.00
 - B. Parttime faculty, student, other secretarial, organizational, assistance at minimum cost, \$10,000.00/
 - C. Full research report with recommendations. \$2000.00

This total cost of \$22,000.00 for an epoch-making and absolutely new thrust in American higher education represents only an insignificant fraction of what the University ordinarily expends in keeping its administration in power and fighting off attempts at realistic and meaningful reform of its multitude of problems.
4. Since this money is sought for the benefit of the University, there is no logical and philosophical and financial reason why it cannot be vested in a committee of the Opposition as a grant for the improvement of higher education. The fact that it proposes the thorough reorganization of the University itself is a positive reason why the grant must be accepted by the University even if those who hold power in the University do not agree with its purposes.