

change could be discussed, rather than have "students line up in lines 10 miles long" to criticize past administration mistakes.

In an interview, graduate dean Weisinger said that many of Stony Brook's students had come from sheltered and regimented homes where parents were always hustling them off to classes in music, dancing, or Hebrew and stressing the importance of high grades. "Students want to break open from these parental constraints," Weisinger commented.

In watching the discussions at Stony Brook and talking to the students, it seemed that the generational battle between children and their parents is being fought out in the universities. Disillusioned by what they consider their parents' insensitivity to an evil world, students come to universities hoping to find people and ideas in which they can believe. Instead, they find the same bland accommodation which their parents have made. They cannot change their parents, but many are resolved to change the "evil" university system which is close at hand. They are determined to change what they regard as the cavalier decisions being made about the course of their lives. And, with each new show of student unity at any particular university, their conviction that change is possible grows.

Weisinger and Sidney Gelber, the new Provost for Arts and Humanities, are regarded as advocates for change in the university. Gelber is given credit for originating the idea of having the university suspend classes for 3 days to discuss its future. In an interview, Gelber said he believes that undergraduates are telling university officials, "Don't make us professional too soon; these are the only four years we have in life to develop serious intellectual concerns." These students, the children of a prosperous society, want to take more risks and make more of their own choices, Gelber believes. "Students want to express their own individuality," he says; "The hunger of the individual for a sense of power over his own life is now so strong that all structures are suspect."

Stony Brook, with only 6000 students, is hardly one of the nation's largest institutions, but the students' demand to be treated as an individual with individual needs was strong throughout the discussions. Students and faculty members alike objected to viewing students as if they were at the university merely to provide sanction

for the university's research activities, or as if they were integers to fill New York's needs for doctors, teachers, scientists, and engineers. "We want to be involved in building a great university," Donald H. Rubin, former president of the student body, explained; "we don't want to be considered the waste products of the university."

The 3-day session was held in the middle of the week so as to encourage maximum participation by the university community. As might have been expected, however, many of the students regarded it as a good excuse for

a holiday. The maximum estimate of the number of participants was 2000. The attenders included most of the activist students on campus. The conveners of the conference were pleased that a large proportion of faculty members participated.

On the first day of the discussions, two all-university meetings were held, featuring panels of faculty members, students, and administrators. The first discussion was entitled "The Contemporary University: Its Goals and Purposes"; the afternoon session was called "Stony Brook: Its Mandate."

Budget Cuts: Talk of Legal Remedies

An irate mathematics department at the University of California's Berkeley campus is attempting to forestall deep spending cuts imposed on research grants by threatening to support legal action against the university.

John W. Addison, department chairman, told *Science* the university, in allocating federal budget reductions, had imposed a 55 percent cut on projected expenditures from National Science Foundation grants in his department for fiscal year 1969. He said the size of the cut would make it impossible for his department to honor numerous "firm" commitments to faculty and students which had been made on the assumption that these people would be wholly or partially supported by NSF funds.

The commitments include such things as telling graduate students they would be hired as research assistants, telling foreign academics they would be taken on as visiting professors, and assuring faculty members they could take sabbaticals or spend full time on research. Addison said some of the commitments are in writing and some were made verbally, but the department in all cases regards the commitments as "firm," and legally and morally binding. In a wire to NSF, Addison said that because of the size of the expenditure cut "we could not come within \$160,000 of meeting firm commitments of department to faculty and students, even if we fired all six secretaries, took zero travel, and zero everything else."

On 17 October, by a 47-to-1 vote, the mathematics faculty passed a resolution declaring it to be "the policy of the department to offer all possible assistance to the injured people in the legal suits that will arise from any attempt by the university to renege on any of these commitments." The precise merits of the Berkeley case could only be decided in the courts. But government attorneys say, in general, that any individual who has received an explicit verbal or written job contract would have grounds for suit if the university reneged. The legal argument would probably hinge on whether there was or was not a firm contract, and the lackadaisical approach of some academic departments to personnel matters might make the issue difficult to determine.

Thus far there is no indication that anyone actually intends to file suit, and Berkeley is already taking steps to ease the budget problem in mathematics. Loy L. Sammet, vice chancellor for research, told *Science* the mathematicians were "trigger-happy" in their response to budget cuts and that the "situation will work out." But the mere threat of a suit has raised the specter that harassed university administrators may soon find their budgetary problems are compounded by a flurry of legal actions.—PHILIP M. BOFFEY