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Summary

Title: Queens College Campus Unrest Collection

Dates: 1969-1970

Extent: .5 linear feet

Creator(s): Peterson, Jon

Language: English

Abstract: The Queens College Campus Unrest Collection contains papers, correspondence, and flyers regarding the Spring 1969 sit-in protest of the social science building by the Ad Hoc Committee to End Political Suppression. The protest was in defense of the three members of the Students for a Democratic Society who were arrested and charged for leading a protest for the removal of General Electric recruiters from QC campus. The sit-in lasted four days resulting in the arrests of thirty-eight students and one faculty member, who were all charged with trespassing, despite the continued demands for amnesty to the administration from the SDS and the AHCEPS.

Source: Queens College

Access: Collection is open for research. Staff may restrict access at its discretion on the basis of physical condition.

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Preferred Citation: Item, date (if known), box, folder, Queens College Campus Unrest Collection, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Queens College, City University of New York.

Related Collections: Student Publications Collection

Controlled Access Terms

Subjects: Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.); Student protesters; General Electric Company; Dow Chemical Company.

Historical Note

From the afternoon of Thursday March 27th, 1969 until the early morning of Monday April 1st, over two hundred students successfully occupied the offices and hallways of the Social Science building on Queens College campus, resulting in the arrest of thirty-eight students and one faculty member. The protest had been in response to earlier events regarding three SDS members who were arrested and charged with inciting a protest where recruiters from General Electric and Dow Chemicals were escorted off campus. The Queens College administration had notified the police which led to the arrests. By the end of March the tension on campus between students and the administration had reached a tipping point. On the morning of March 27th, 1969, a group of two-hundred people, including members of the Ad Hoc Committee to End Political Suppression and concerned faculty members and students, visited the Science Building to express their concerns with Dean George Pierson about having the charges against the three students dropped. Other points of concern for the committee were the re-appointment of English Professor Sheila Delany, who many claimed hadn’t been re-instated due to personal reasons and not for professional reasons. A related concern was the issue of the Max-Kahn Report, which gave the Personnel and Budget Committee the right to withhold the information that resulted in Professor Delany’s dismissal.

After receiving no cooperation from Dean Pierson, the students turned their stay into a peaceful sit-in protest until their demands were addressed. By this point six-hundred people had joined in. The protest lasted for four days, where in the early morning of Monday April 1st the police were called by McMurray for the removal and arrest of any protesters refusing to leave the premises. According to various accounts somewhere between five to six hundred police had arrived on the scene. As a result thirty-eight students and one faculty member were arrested and charged with trespassing. A rally was held the following day with an attendance of over six hundred students and faculty members all requesting a dialogue with the Dean and President over these actions.

Throughout the duration of the semester President McMurray and Dean of Students Pierson satiated the student body with promises to reach a democratic solution to the list of demands, however these were never met. The week of commencement found fifteen of the thirty-eight students and the faculty member sentenced to fifteen days imprisonment at Riker’s Island; the rest were charged and paid fines of $250 each. McMurray and Pierson met one demand, where the charges against the three SDS members were dropped. The rest of the demands were never met.
Scope & Content Note

The Queens College Campus Unrest Collection consists of materials ranging from 1969-1970. The bulk of the collections relates to the four-day sit-in protest of the science building on QC campus by members of the Ad Hoc Committee to End Political Suppression which resulted in the arrests of thirty-eight students and one faculty member. The collection contains correspondence, administrative papers, flyers, and newspaper articles.

Arrangement Note

The Queens College Campus Unrest Collection consists of three series:

- **Series I**: Protest at the Social Science Building by the Ad Hoc Committee to End Political Suppression
- **Series II**: Correspondence, Circulars, & Minutes
- **Series III**: Buttons
Series Description & Container List

Series I: Sit-in Protest at the Social Science Building by the Ad Hoc Committee to End Political Suppression, March 27-April 1, 1969
This series contains administrative correspondence from before and after the protest, student flyers for rallies and meetings, and various protest buttons. Newspaper clippings are from *The Phoenix*, *Knightbeat*, and *The Activist*.

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