

A Declaration of Purpose (CSR)

We, the students of Michigan State University, have formed the Committee for Student Rights (CSR), to defend and promote our legitimate interests as students. We unite to affirm an educational philosophy that is fundamental to the needs of students and consistent with the rights of man.

We state our firm belief in "the doctrine that man is meant to live, not to prepare for life;" Democratic participation, not 'training for democracy'; the understanding that there is no conflict in being a man and being a student; an atmosphere in which there is no True Value, but one in which there is an unencumbered Search for Values; a society in which the Administration serves the vital and changing needs of students and faculty, not one in which the scholars are subordinate to "The University".

Inherent in this doctrine is the conception of the student as a human being fully capable of assuming responsibilities in the here-and-now, quite prepared to suffer the consequences of making mistakes; not as a child to be pampered, and spanked when he is naughty; not as an incidental and troublesome element injected into an otherwise smooth-flowing process; not as an apprentice training to take his place in a strictly defined society.

The University is not a "nice setup" as administration personnel have quaintly put it; it is exploration, it is tension, it is conflict; it is the peaceful, but intense, resolution of common problems by those who are most immediately concerned with the given society.

Our beliefs imply the need for the University to facilitate -- but not control -- the development of each individual student. Facilitation involves devoting primary attention to the individual student's academic needs, to the material and intellectual resources at his disposal; not to the winning of government contracts; not to projecting a favorable public image; not toward the creation of a Multiversity.

When we distinguish between facilitation and control, we relentlessly object to the policy that students can realize their potentialities when they suffer special deprivations because they are students. In essence, what we resolutely oppose is the doctrine of in loco parentis, which asserts that "the college stands in the same position to its students as that of a parent .. and it can therefore direct and control their conduct to the same extent that a parent can."

The University Administration will quickly point out -- and correctly so -- that the doctrine of in loco parentis has remained substantially intact when legally challenged. But we deny that this is the paramount issue. Rather, we ask: Does this doctrine serve a beneficial educational purpose? Does it express the most desirable relationship between the students and the Administration of the University? Our reply is an emphatic NO! This doctrine permits an Administration to formulate a True Value and impose it upon a diverse group of students -- forcing them to conform or to forego a University education. Arbitrary rules and regulations which enforce conformity in the personal and social aspects of life inevitably dull individual creativity and an inquisitive spirit in the intellectual sphere.

Thus, CSR arises not only to change the most offensive paternalistic regulations, but also to challenge the University's claim to be paternalistic, and to initiate a fresh dialogue regarding the student, the University, and society.

COMMITTEE FOR STUDENT RIGHTS
P.O. Box 651
East Lansing, Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Committee for Student Rights (CSR), a newly-formed group at Michigan State University, has adopted a platform of 10 recommendations for changes in University regulations which if adopted would lay the groundwork for a complete modernization of the "in loco parentis" policy at MSU.

In a meeting held Feb. 7 in the St. John's Student Center, about 75 members of CSR voted to adopt 10 of the 13 recommendations proposed by the 15-member steering committee.

The 10 recommendations deal with specific problems arising from the University's current stands on such matters as student housing, off-campus enforcement of University regulations and procedures for punishment of violators on- and off-campus.

An additional recommendation, to which the Greater Lansing branch of the American Civil Liberties Union has indicated it will give support, would remove University restrictions on distribution of written or printed material on campus, subject to federal, state and local laws.

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Current regulations require that any student or students wishing to distribute such materials must first be granted permission to do so by an official of a residence hall or the University housing office.

Most of the 5,000 copies of the first issue of CSR's pamphlet, "Logos: The Voice of CSR," were distributed in residence halls Feb. 3, without permission of housing authorities. No disciplinary action was taken by the administration.

About 7,500 copies of the second issue were scheduled for distribution Feb. 11.

Logos, which in the first issue concentrated on satirizing the University's "in loco parentis" policies, turned, in the second issue, to reprinting the recommendations adopted Feb. 7 and to publicizing CSR's speakers bureau and other information services.

The committee has as yet made no attempt to earn official recognition from the University. It has not applied for a charter from the Student Organizations Bureau of the All University Student Government, and has been called by John A. Fuzak, University vice president for student affairs, a "junior high effort" attempting to gain attention and recognition without going through the proper channels.

CSR cites the case of an earlier group whose goals were similar to its own as a defense for not seeking a charter.

The "Federation for Student Rights" failed last fall to win a charter from the Organizations Bureau. Its petition was never reported out of committee, on the grounds that its proposed charter would overlap with those of AISC itself and of the now-defunct Basic Action Party.

CSR was organized during January from the remains of this "federation," with the help of a number of other students interested in seeing some more concrete representation of student opinion than the existing student government provides.

Despite the fact that an AISC reevaluation committee is currently studying a possible revision of student government, the members of CSR feel that only a completely new organization can accurately represent student thought to the administration.

A "declaration of purpose" was adopted by CSR members at an early organizational meeting, and was published as a guest column Jan. 26 in the Michigan State News.

The statement reads in part:

"We state our firm belief in 'the doctrine that man is meant to live, not to prepare for life': democratic participation, not 'training for democracy'; the understanding that there is no conflict in being a man and being a student; an atmosphere in which there is no True Value, but one in which there is an unencumbered search for values; a society in which the Administration serves the vital and changing needs of students and faculty, not one in which the scholars are subordinate to 'The University.'

"Inherent in this doctrine is the conception of the student as a human being fully capable of assuming responsibilities in the here-and-now, quite prepared to suffer the consequences of making mistakes; not as a child to be pampered, and spanked when he is naughty; not as an incidental and troublesome element injected into an otherwise smooth-flowing process; not as an apprentice training to take his place in a strictly defined society."

Michael Hooten, Tuskegee Institute, Ala., junior and chairman of CSR, has said, "Anyone is a member of CSR, anyone who is interested in students' rights."

At the moment, CSR's recognized membership is growing rapidly, and local organizations are forming in living units to help support CSR's goals. Student groups have asked CSR speakers to present programs and have otherwise indicated support of the committee's policy of opposing "in loco parentis."

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Enclosures.