

Shannon Bars Cancellation Of October 15 Classes

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In a letter to Student Council President Bud Ogle, President Shannon has announced that the University will not cancel classes in support of the moratorium for the Vietnam War on October 15.

President Shannon was asked by Mr. Ogle at the request of the Council to consider the possibility of official action by the University to cancel classes for the moratorium.

Provost, Deans Advise

Mr. Shannon's letter explained that: "I have requested the advice of the Provost and of the Deans; and I have taken into account the views and thoughts of a number of the members of the University - students, administrative officers, and faculty - which have been expressed to me."

In supporting his decision, the President said: "The University has an obligation to maintain an atmosphere in which all views can be expressed, in which individuals can oppose the war or defend it, or advocate various means of ending it, as a matter of academic and intellectual freedom."

Obligation

"For the University to suspend classes or to encourage its faculty to suspend classes in support of a position on these issues would be inconsistent with this obligation."

"The University will therefore adhere to its established academic calendar on October 15," the President decided.

"The issues of the war in Vietnam, which are proposed to be discussed on October 15, are of grave concern to every one of us," the letter admitted. "This seems to be the feeling of Student Council, and I share it."

"While individuals as citizens are free, and even have an obligation in a republic, to express their views and to participate in lawful means of making their views known to their elected

representatives in the national government, a university is not a political institution, and the personal views of the President, or of the faculty members, or of the students on national issues should not determine university policies.

"The educational objectives of the University of Virginia, I believe, are seriously endangered to the extent that it allows its policies and official actions to be shaped in accordance with political aims of the sort that are sought to be mobilized for that day."

Sustain Ideals

"If the University is to remain a community in which the ideals of freedom of inquiry and expression are sustained, then it cannot as an institution respond to political pressures for specific political causes, however worthy."

Mr. Shannon stressed that students are still able to participate in the moratorium on their own.

"Individual students are, of course, free as they always are - to make their own decisions in the light of their academic duties and ethical responsibilities. It would be as wrong for me to attempt to interfere with this freedom as it would be for me to announce a University position on the morality of the war."

Reaction to the President's decision was varied.

Speaking for himself, John Israel of the History Department and a strong advocate of the moratorium said that the President's decision "doesn't bother me."

Sufficiently Concerned

"The students and faculty are sufficiently concerned that we will observe the moratorium, whether a class suspension is decreed by the President or not," he explained.

Mr. Israel disagreed with the President's claim that if the University took a stand on the moratorium issue, it would be violating its political neutrality.

Mr. Israel said that the University had already "surrendered its neutrality by sponsoring a ROTC program. The University has as much right to prepare for freedom as for war,"

he said.

Councilman Charles Murdock felt that the President's move was "for the better." He explained that "the goal was not to convince Mr. Shannon to support the moratorium; the goal is convince all the students and the University community to work with the rest of the community to support it."

President 'Removed'

Council Vice-President Paul Hurdle reacted differently. "I can't believe that President Shannon is so far removed from the activity at this and other colleges," he said.

Another Councilman questioned whether the President was actually insuring the right to discuss the issues involved in the war. He compared the President's decision not to cancel classes to the decisions made in Germany by Adolph Hitler to disallow discussion of politics in the German universities.