

Module 09: The 1960s: Who Won? Student Protest and the Politics of Campus Dissent

Evidence 23: "Students employ new tactics," November 1971

A

Introduction

This final editorial from *The Collegiate Times* highlights how, by 1971, students had clearly prioritized culture and lifestyle concerns over directly political issues.

Questions to Consider

- Compare the actions described in the document below to those described in Evidence Nos. 21 and 22. What does the editorial here suggest about how students chose to wield their political power?
- Did students still gravitate towards the old style of demonstrations, or were they trying something new?
- Where would you place the new tactics along the spectrum of political revolt? Were they conservative? moderate? radical?

Document

Students employ new tactics

The students at Virginia Tech have openly confronted the administration on the subject of Student Life Policies. In the past week, newspapers throughout the state of Virginia have carried releases concerning the students' discontent with the present policies.

A clear majority of dormitory residents have supported a move toward dormitory autonomy. They have voiced their disapproval in a manner which cannot be disregarded by the administration.

For too long, the average Virginia Tech student has said we must proceed through the 'proper channels' before taking matters into our hands. They contended if nothing came out of this approach, then try a different way.

We have finally realized that nothing will come out of the University system

of channels to benefit the students in the area of Student Life Policies. The policies now in existence will remain so unless changes are made outside of the channels.

The tactics employed by the students this year differ drastically than those of past years. Rather than resorting to demonstrations, protests, and much meaningless rhetoric, the students are substituting action in order to effect change.

The newly formed Virginia Tech Coalition, comprised of those dormitories which have voted in favor of going autonomous, has taken the matter of Student Life Policies into their own hands. The state newspapers have carried the students' plight across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Women's Interdormitory Council is initiating a program to determine the status of Student Life Policies at Virginia Tech in comparison with those of other state institutions of higher education in Virginia. They plan to submit a report in an effort to change the present Student Life Policies.

These actions are coming from the students themselves. The administration is being forced to listen and to recognize the existence of their concern.

No longer can the University continue to camouflage student dissent at Virginia Tech. The issue of the Student Life Policies controversy has brought the voices of dissent and protest into the open.

The revision of Student Life Policies will come up before the University Council again next quarter. We are determined to face the administration and faculty on this issue and present our arguments.

The students have overwhelmingly supported the autonomous dormitory issue. When it is brought before the administration, our number will be larger and our impact greater. The University Council will undoubtedly receive the student input they claim to desire.

Source:

"Students employ new tactics," *The Collegiate Times* (17 Nov 1971), 2.