Student activism at Eastern Michigan University 1961-1970

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Student Activism at Eastern Michigan University 1961-1970
by
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Thesis

Submitted to the Department of History and Philosophy
Eastern Michigan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
History

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February 17, 2020
Ypsilanti, Michigan
Dedicated to

My mother and father, for all the faith to finish this project. My wife, for her unconditional love and support. My two heroes, Ben and Emma. Dr. Richard Goff, whom I promised to return someday, now you can rest in peace. SO3 Denis Miranda, USN, for teaching me to measure people by the size of their heart and not the size of their flippers.
Acknowledgments

Returning to a college campus after a twenty-year absence to complete a project that began on the cusp of entering flight school as a young Ensign in the Navy proved to be a long and periodically trying experience. It could not have happened without the unconditional support of parents, brothers, sisters, friends, colleagues, and a wife whom I met nearly on the spot where student Paul Galia and police chief Herbert Smith negotiated the arrest of protestors Monday afternoon, May 11, 1970, in the event that commenced rioting on campus. Without the guidance of great professors like Drs. Richard Goff, JoEllen Vinyard, Ronald Delph, Richard Nation, Steven Ramold, James Egge, and Ashley Johnson Bavery, this effort would have been even more complicated. Dr. Goff made me promise to return and teach once I got “the baby-killing out of my system,” and with the completion of this work, I partially fulfilled my promise. Unfortunately, he passed away before he could see it. He would never have guessed that in-between here and there, I would have participated in nearly every conflict on the globe, and despite his pacifist nature, I know he would have been proud of every decision I made along the way.

Following the path of being a Naval Aviator who deployed nine times, I have to offer thanks to a family that was always there when I landed. They suffered the most and are some of the greatest patriots I know. Also, thanks to Josh “Spaz” Rehyer, Matt “Hazmat” Kennedy, Weylin “Smithers” Windom, Mark Springer, Yvonne Roberts, Jeff Draeger, Dan Lynch, Jim Buckley, Mike Napolitano, Rick Latour and Kenny VanFleet for mentoring me through a challenging career and teaching me to be safe while still being a weapon.
In the transition from military to the civilian sector, thanks to Jason Clippert, Tony Buttrick, MaryAnn Schummer, Paul Orlando, Suchitra Varma, the Calnen family, and Melvin Abraham for their support and guidance. Only a second career led me to create the financial support that enabled this project. The friendship and mentorship offered along the way kept me balanced.

Thanks to all fellow graduate students as well as the rest of the faculty and administration at Eastern Michigan. Finally, thanks to all the alumni who made the ending of the decade of the 1960s the most memorable in the history of Eastern Michigan University.
Abstract

On the campus of Eastern Michigan University, the turbulent decade of the 1960s passed by almost without notice. Only small groups protested the war in Vietnam or racial equality on campus. Beginning with the seizure of Pierce Hall by black students in February 1969, student activism escalated until May 1970 when campus erupted in protests and riots on a level that exceeded the most active campuses in the nation. This paper uses mostly first-hand accounts of the entire decade recorded in the student newspaper, *Eastern Echo*; archived documents; and secondary sources to document the decade of activism at Eastern that ended in the riots. This paper avoids oral histories and interviews due to avoiding scope with a project more in order with a dissertation. This paper provides a rare historical documentary dedicated to student protest and activism at Eastern and provides a mirror to other small conservative blue-collar campuses.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................................... iii

Abstract ....................................................................................................................................... v

List of Figures .............................................................................................................................. vii

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 2

Chapter One: The Roots of Student Activism 1961-1961 .......................................................... 5

Chapter Two: White Student Activism 1966-1969: The Rise and Fall of the SDS ........... 16

Chapter Three: Black Student’s Quest for Equality 1967-1970: Black Power ............... 42

Chapter Four: Alienation of Student Body 1969-1970: Arrival of the Counterculture ...... 70

Chapter Five: Ten Days in May 1970: The Riots ................................................................. 95

Chapter Six: Postscript to the Riots: The Sandalow Commission .................................. 125

Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 139

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................... 144

Appendix A: Timeline .................................................................................................................. 148

Appendix B: Key Administrators ............................................................................................ 151

Index .......................................................................................................................................... 152
List of Figures

Figure 5.1: Protest Movement May 5 ................................................................. 97
Figure 5.2: Protest Movement May 6 ................................................................. 99
Figure 5.3: Protest Movement May 11 (afternoon) ........................................ 107
Figure 5.4: Protest Movement May 11 (evening) ........................................... 111
Figure 5.5: Protest Movement May 12 ............................................................... 114
Figure 5.6: Location of Damaged Buildings .................................................. 116
Figure 5.7: Protest Movement May 14 ............................................................... 121
Figure 5.8: Location of Jarvis Street Barrier on May 15 .................................. 123
Introduction

Life at Eastern Michigan University (Eastern) was idyllic and relatively insulated from the events of the 1960s and early 1970s that occurred, literally, all around them. The University of Michigan, six miles west on Washtenaw Avenue, was the epicenter of student activism in the nation. Rarely eclipsed by events at Columbia University in New York or the University of California at Berkeley, student activism at the University of Michigan remained active and continuous. A significant reason for this lies in the genesis of the organization Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and that most of the founding members were students or faculty at the University of Michigan. Those early activists founded the SDS in Port Huron, Michigan, an hour and a half drive northeast of Eastern, through a political manifesto on student activism titled the Port Huron Statement in June 1962. Also, the United Auto Workers labor union headquartered in Detroit, twenty minutes east of Ypsilanti, whose members’ children undoubtedly attended both Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, contributed to the overall national activism and quest for civil rights. With these activities occurring within minutes of Ypsilanti, student activism at Eastern remained almost non-existent. The early "hippies" were a novelty, and as the counterculture grew on campus, bawdy fraternity members and athletes squelched it at nearly every opportunity. Those conditions all changed in May of 1970. In the days following the gunning down of students protesting the invasion of Cambodia by the United States at Kent State University in Ohio, Eastern Michigan University erupted in a way that few campuses in the nation ever achieved. A student population that never engaged authority rose in violation of curfew and stared down a
hardened and determined law enforcement presence on campus. Rioters broke windows in nearly every building, overturned and burned vehicles, blockaded streets, and challenged police and university authorities on every corner of campus. While the State Police hovered overhead in helicopters, Governor Milliken activated the National Guard to operate checkpoints and roadblocks in the streets approaching campus. Then after five days, it stopped, and campus returned to the idyllic relatively insulated campus it had always been.

Examination of protest during the 1960s on the college campuses of the United States justly focuses on the hotbeds of protest at Michigan, Columbia, Berkeley, and sometimes Wisconsin. Regardless of location, focus is on major universities. There is also an equally justified focus on the personalities of the New Left, like Tom Hayden, Abby Hoffman, and Mark Rudd. The evolution of the study then proceeds to explore the counterculture and its development from the streets of San Francisco. It is rare to find historical research solely dedicated to small campuses in the middle of the country, except for Kent State. It is even more rare to find discussion on small campuses in the past forty years. Robbie Lieberman provides *Prairie Power: Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest* and Marc Jason Gilbert provides articles in the work that he edited titled *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums* as examples. Both provide background on small campuses and conservative student involvement in campus activism in the Midwest. However, Liebermann presents a collection of oral histories, and Gilbert devotes two chapters and fewer than forty pages in his collection of essays to the topic. Neither work is dedicated to a single campus to allow for background and appreciation that student protest endured at small, mostly white, midwestern campuses.
Both Gilbert and Liebermann provide detail that Eastern Michigan did not stand alone and that the reaction of the administrations and the use of heavy-handed law enforcement were very similar following protest to the invasion of Cambodia and then the killings at Kent State. Their work, however, is limited in scope and follows only brief periods during the history of protest on small campuses.

This thesis on the activism at Eastern Michigan University examines the events that led up to the riots in May 1970 and exposes the tinder that led to the fire. It discusses a student movement dated back nearly ten years led and inspired by black student activism and then stoked by an unresponsive and oppressive university administration that failed to effectively negotiate with a student movement that evolved to come under the leadership by elements of the counterculture. Were there outside influences on campus like the Weather Underground? What was the influence of actors like Tom Hayden at the University of Michigan and Students for a Democratic Society? What was the end game for the students that ended the riots, and for the most part, student activism at Eastern Michigan University? This flash of kinetic energy on campus led to the hailing of the University president to testify before a Congressional committee specifically addressing campus protest following Kent State. Yet, his testimony and discussion of Eastern Michigan failed to warrant a mention in the final report. Although like the historical study and the congressional report, small campuses failed to crest the attention of the nation, the influence of the events, especially at Eastern, impacted generations to come.
Protest during the decade of 1960 at Eastern Michigan began on the afternoon of May 11, 1961. Two members of a local sorority spoke to students from atop a lunch table inside McKenny Union to raise awareness to a rumor that the administration was planning to remove "fraternity rock" from campus. The two students rallied campus support from other fraternities and sororities and marched on the President's house that evening with around two hundred other students. Amid chants of, "We want the rock," and, "We want democracy," President Eugene Elliot met with student representatives on the porch of his house. Elliot dispelled rumors of the rock's removal while also addressing concerns of a proposed opening of an all-male dorm in place of a planned coed dorm. Students also demanded that the destination of money the University made from students living in the dorms be in educational programs. Elliot, in turn, answered questions and put concerns to rest. The students, mollified by the answers given, concern demonstrated by Elliot, and agreements to begin regular student/administration conferences, returned to their dorms.\(^1\)

At the time of the Fraternity Rock protest on his lawn, Elliot had been President of Eastern Michigan University for twelve years. He had overseen the rapid growth of the University and the changing of it from the Michigan State Normal College to the Eastern Michigan College in 1956 and, with the creation of a graduate school, to Eastern

\(^1\) "First Demonstration in Recent Memory Voices Student Unrest," *Eastern Echo*, 18 May 1961; See Also "'Greek Rock' To Remain, Elliot Says," Ypsilanti Press, 12 May 1961. For further background on the significance of sorority rock at Eastern see, “Sororities Seek to Serve Community,” *Eastern Echo*, 16 April 1964.
Michigan University in 1959. He had been part of nearly doubling the footprint of the

campus and the rapid student expansion that followed veterans returning from the Second

World War and attending school on the GI Bill. President John F. Kennedy highlighted

Elliot’s tenure when he stopped and spoke on campus enroute to the University of

Michigan where he would make his landmark speech that established the Peace Corps in

October 1960.²

The time of growth and prosperity that Elliot oversaw was a reflection of the

national trend. Post-war growth in the United States was staggering. For a period, the

United States maintained world supremacy being untouched physically by the Second

World War and having the edge of being the only nuclear power. The advent and design

of groups like the Peace Corp helped to spread that prosperity around the world. As the

Soviet Union rapidly developed to challenge US supremacy, a nuclear arms race began,

and within the United States, cracks in the race structure, especially in the southern

United States, that had existed for centuries became better known around the nation with

the advent and proliferation of the media of television. White students, who had

remained insulated from state-sponsored racist policies in the South, mobilized to

participate in movements in the South that would bring social equality to all Americans.

This rise in social awareness trickled over to the worsening situation between the United

States and the Soviet Union. This tension climaxed in April 1961 with the failed US-

sponsored invasion of Cuba in a failed attempt to overthrow their communist leaning

² For a history of Eastern Michigan University during this period see, Dawn Malone Gaymer,

_The Evolution of Eastern Michigan University: The politics of change and persistence_ (Masters


government. The failed invasion led the Cuban government to an even closer relationship with the Soviet Union ultimately resulting in the positioning of Soviet nuclear missiles aimed at the United States from the island. The resulting Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 led the world to the closest point of global nuclear destruction ever. The generation coming of age in with social awareness and the threat of annihilation was also the largest in American history. The "baby boomer" generation that followed the Second World War led enrollment to increase more than fourfold in the decade of 1960 at Eastern. The growth of campuses put more students, with greater awareness, and a demonstrated interest in their future, closer together. At no point in history up to that point had universities experienced this combination of factors.\(^3\)

In 1962, these factors drove some graduates and undergraduates at the University of Michigan to gather at an educational retreat facility for the United Auto Workers in Port Huron, Michigan, less than an hour drive from Eastern’s campus. There they wrote a manifesto of what powers they believed the student population in the United States possessed and how they should harness those powers. The resulting Port Huron Statement began a call to arms for the student population. Author Tom Hayden starts, "We are the people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in the universities, looking uncomfortably on the word we inherit," and then continues on for seventy-five additional pages spelling out the needs of the generation and calling them to action to achieve a peaceful participatory democracy. Hayden's words never mention the growing involvement of the United States in a developing conflict in Southeast Asia, but his call to action indeed required no translation to any government-sponsored event. The resultant of the Port Huron Statement was the founding of the Students for a Democratic

\(^3\) Gaymer, 185, 191, 197
Society (SDS). The SDS became a mobilizer for most campuses across the country and essential catalyst for the growth of the black student civil rights movements on campuses throughout both the northern and southern United States.\textsuperscript{4}

The SDS took its origins from the socialism and equality that they saw in the New Deal programs formed by the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the economic depression that began in 1929. This led to calling the evolution of groups like SDS as the New Left, with reference to the "old" Left of the New Deal. The troubles with the New Left would always be a lack of centralized leadership leading to the development of splinter groups. This led to SDS being a leader in national campus activism without them being able to shape its direction. So not only did campus activities look different from campus to campus, groups that were more radical developed. The downfall of the SDS toward the end of the 1960s was going to be the eclipse of their philosophy of participatory democracy by the need for more immediate reaction that only came through violent confrontations between students, law enforcement, and campus administration. Ultimately, although SDS built the New Left, the New Left was going to be bigger than SDS and feature more brash and self-assured members than the SDS.

In November 1963, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy occurred in Dallas, Texas, creating the seminal event in the lives of both the generation that fought the Second World War and their "baby boomer" children. Kennedy represented all that was good in the country to both liberal and conservative perspectives. On the one hand, he led the nation to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union defending American values, while on the other gave the appearance of being the greatest advocate for peace by creating groups like the Peace Corps. In Southeast Asia, he committed US advisors to

\textsuperscript{4} Tom Hayden, \textit{The Port Huron Statement: The Visionary Call of the 1960s Revolution}, 45-163.
help indigenous troops fight the spread of communism while maintaining the promise of withdrawing all US support from foreign conflicts. He became one of the largest advocates for civil rights groups in the history of the White House while still never sponsoring any meaningful legislation to change civil rights in the South. He was the first President to support women’s rights but did so without any intent on realizing equality. He was everyone's President, and his loss was enormous from both liberal and conservative perspectives. His opposing actions and popularity created a downside. Tom Hayden summarized the assassination, "Having learned the assassinations could change history, our generation now began also to learn that official lies were packaged as campaign promises."  

In 1964, campus activism nationally grew with the birth of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Thousands of students reacted when campus police arrested a group of students distributing left-wing literature on campus and then failing to comply with police demands. The resultant actions and reactions between students and the administration grew protest, culminating in the first "sit-ins" and seizure of campus buildings. The seizure of campus buildings with the peaceful means of a "sit in" was the first demonstration of the tactics of peaceful resistance to authority on a university campus. After months of conflict between students and the administration at Berkeley, the administration backed down to student demands. The Berkeley Free Speech Movement empowered the student base nation-wide and demonstrated for the first time

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5 Although the presidency and assassination of President Kennedy is written about extensively, see Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s (5th ed)* pp 80-81, 96-99, for a good synopsis of the politics and death of the Kennedy administration.
6 Hayden, 21.
that student power was real and that the ideas espoused by Tom Hayden had substantial validity and support.⁷

As campus activism grew throughout the nation, under the leadership of President Elliot, Eastern remained calm and followed the status quo. Growing demonstrations in the streets of Detroit and on the campus of the University of Michigan mostly went by without notice on campus. Students focused on the events that affected them immediately, and other than a crackdown on panty raids, the rapid growth on campus was one of the issues.⁸ On September 21, 1964, three to four hundred students protested the unavailability of parking on campus. Again, Elliot personally met with the disgruntled students and ironed out their concerns. Married students sporadically protested, to no avail despite their persistence, from March 1963 through September 1964 to change parking fees attached to married housing parking lots.⁹ However, the administration of President Elliot thus proved itself compatible with student activism, albeit in relatively minor situations, throughout its tenure.

At times, the Post-Berkeley Free Speech Movement made activism at Eastern awkward. The Eastern Echo went as far as to raffle off a date with one of the first self-proclaimed student activists on campus, Larry Hayes. The winner of second place in the contest gave her reason for wanting a date with Hayes: "I'd like to go out with Larry because I'm an outcast in my 'in-group,' so I want to date an 'in-member' of an 'out-

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⁹ See Eastern Michigan Archives, Ypsilanti, Michigan, Married Student Housing folder for details on the debate surrounding the fees; See also “Married Students Protest Parking Rules,” Eastern Echo, 17 September 1964; “Married Students Continue Protest,” Eastern Echo, 7 May 1968.
group.”¹⁰ The number of these early activists never grew beyond a small handful on Eastern's campus. Despite their rarity, and occasional harassment by fraternity members, this handful of student activists was the first group of students to bring the issues related to racial equality and the anti-war movement onto campus. The spirit and characters that Jack Kerouac espoused in On the Road, and the poetry of Allen Ginsburg, filled the idea of something fantastical for most students at Eastern in through 1964. Although students may have desired for the whims of Kerouac and Ginsberg, the drive and leadership of Hayden, or to have the reason to stand up to an administration, at Eastern, they just never did. The most significant reason is that they never had to. The administration of President Elliot always worked with them, preventing them from being driven to an extreme or pulled in to the ideas of the Port Huron Statement. The administration filled the role of parents and students had no apparent objection to in loco parentis.

Following the assassination of Kennedy, the conflict in Vietnam began to escalate rapidly. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed through Congress in the summer of 1964 providing President Johnson the powers to expand American involvement in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war or further approval from Congress. The shadowy circumstances around the two incidents between the United States and North Vietnam that resulted in the resolution heralded the suspicions of Tom Hayden and his sentiment of "official lies packaged as campaign promises."¹¹ The growth of the conflict in Vietnam added to the fuel for students engaged in protest for their rights, the quest for civil rights, and nuclear disarmament.

The first student anti-war activists at Eastern, however, were far from trailblazers in the area in the area of student activism and lacked organization. Early anti-war sentiment never exceeded small picket lines and efforts to gain petition signatures on campus. Despite organizers, the commuter centric blue-collar student population who predominately lived at home worked their way through school ignored all their efforts. There were no counter-protests, but the lack of involvement or mention of the activities, more support that the events did not affect the student population at Eastern, at least not as much as housing and parking affected life on campus.

Outside of campus only two students, Arthur Mayday, and Peter VanEck joined over 30,000 other students, from fifty campuses nationwide, in a march on Washington, D.C. sponsored by the national structure of the SDS in April 1965. The march on the Capitol building was the largest gathering of students to protest against the government in the history of the United States to date. VanEck contended that his reason for marching to be just, "Counted as one who stands against the immoral... and illegal presence of U.S. forces in Vietnam." Mayday stated that, "If the United States spent $2,000,000 a day fighting poverty in America instead of the poor in Vietnam, our position domestically and internationally would be far less hypocritical."12 The statements of VanEck and Mayday are a sound bite from the catalog of SDS at the time, and while paying attention to global problems, failed to address issues on campus. The fact of the matter is that, in the spring of 1965, few Americans, let alone the students of Eastern, viewed the growing conflict in Vietnam as a significant issue.

Mayday, VanEck, and a small group of other students brought back the enthusiasm from the Washington, D.C. march to Ypsilanti and formed the first Eastern

12 “30,000 Students gather to Protest Vietnam War,” Eastern Echo, 28 November 1967.
student anti-war organization, the Eastern Michigan University Committee on Vietnam on April 24, 1965. The group fell under the supervision of Professor Theodore Hefley. The Committee on Vietnam published goal was to "transmit to the federal government the discontent of students at Eastern with the involvement of the United States in the war in Indochina." Hefley stated, "The Committee generally supported President Johnson's attempts on negotiations but deplored the Johnson administration's apparent decisions to escalate the war."\(^{13}\) Hefley extended a general invitation to all students and faculty to join the Committee, although response, not surprisingly, was minimal. As was similar on other campuses like Eastern, the anti-war movement at Eastern found its origins with more faculty leadership than student drive and participation.

The following fall term, on October 20, 1966, Hefley formed another group on campus called the End the War Committee. This group's purpose was identical to that of the Committee on Vietnam and provided another outlet for the limited campus anti-war protest at Eastern. The reason for the formation of the second group is unclear, especially considering that their stated goals were identical. Both groups were able to sponsor several speakers on campus, but never achieved noted popularity among the student body.\(^{14}\)

The United States involvement in Vietnam grew exponentially in the time between the formations of the two student groups sponsored by Professor Hefley. The placement of advisors escalated to the full-scale bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. The placement of American pilots in the skies of Vietnam resulted in the loss of aircraft and the taking of prisoners by North Vietnam, who craftily created a


\(^{14}\) "End the War Committee to Sponsor Speakers," *Eastern Echo*, 20 October 1966.
propaganda campaign against the United States using US prisoners. The seizure of, and then displaying of US prisoners on television, infuriated and polarized the American public. Conservative elements demanded a severe response that led to the commitment of US ground forces in Vietnam by the middle of 1965. The placement of ground forces in direct contact with North Vietnamese forces led to their reinforcement by an even more significant number of US troops. The success of ground forces also led to the addition of more massive bombing raids of North Vietnam with the advent of "Rolling Thunder" bombing campaigns. The liberal side of American politics felt the opposite reaction. The escalations became evidence of the futility of conflict, the further misdirection of the right of self-determination of the people of North and South Vietnam, and the overall corruptness of the South Vietnamese government and military. Liberals in the US viewed the parading of captured American pilots, and the loss of US troops on the ground was all for naught. The expansion of Selective Service, the draft, highlighted their angst. For more youth, being drafted not only meant military service but also meant the support of a structure that participated in the systemic discrimination in the southern United States and unnecessary and futile war in Vietnam.

Amid this background of growth, President Elliot retired and replaced by Harold Sponberg. In the first year of Sponberg’s tenure, enrollment grew from 10,226 to 12,850 students, the start of an annual fifteen percent growth curve through 1970. Sponberg was a Navy veteran and brought a philosophy that the purpose of education, "was to enlighten people who would be morally purposeful."15 The definition of what was "morally purposeful" by the definition of Sponberg was in flux and debatable as evidenced by actions throughout the campuses of the nation. Black Power was on the rise to the extent

15 Gaymer, 196-197.
that Martin Luther King Jr. publicly distanced himself from the idea in the spring of 1966. The inner cities were on edge, demonstrated by the Kercheval riot in Detroit in the summer of 1966. However, the school year of 1966-67 passed with little campus protest, and the first year of President Sponberg's tenure was event free. Nevertheless, there were challenges ahead.
Chapter Two:

White Student Activism 1966-1969: The Rise and Fall of the SDS

A new era of student protest began at Eastern on the evening of April 27, 1967. A week before that evening, Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. William C. Lawrence, submitted his resignation to President Harold Sponberg. Lawrence listed, “enhanced career opportunities elsewhere” as his reason for leaving. Students perceived Dr. Lawrence as not just a university vice president, but also as an essential ally who sincerely represented the needs of students. The students’ perception was correct, and it was this devotion to the student body that contributed, in part, to Lawrence’s resignation. Lawrence saw that the maturity and resourcefulness of students enrolling at Eastern as ever increasing. He also saw that the conservatism of Sponberg and the Board of Regents as deeply entrenched and not likely to budge if pushed. The position of Vice President of Student Affairs required Lawrence to mediate between the administration and students. Lawrence, not blind to the emergence of the new generation of college students, understood that the problem facing all college campuses, Eastern included, was large, looming, and not compatible with an administration like Sponberg’s.¹

Sponberg shelved Lawrence's resignation letter for a week. Lawrence felt that his resignation letter warranted an immediate response from Sponberg. Sponberg's lack of response led to Lawrence feeling snubbed. In response to this perceived slight, Lawrence distributed copies of his resignation to student body President Steve Landers,

¹ “Student Leaders Comment on Lawrence,” and “Lawrence Looks Ahead, Thinks Back,” Eastern Echo, 2 May 1967. The feelings of Lawrence at the time are also well described by him in the second edition of the underground newspaper of the Obsidian, where he granted an interview to editor Thomas Moors on March 3, 1969. See the Eastern Michigan University Archives for a copy, “Dr. Lawrence Raps,” Obsidian, March 6, 1969.
Eastern Echo Editor Shirley Cox, and Information Services Director Curt Stadtfield.

Word of Lawrence's resignation and apparent treatment by Sponberg spread through campus. That evening, more than two thousand students responded to a petition to gather in the front of the library to hear Steve Landers and Student Body President-elect James Raphael speak on behalf of Lawrence. What started as a rally quickly turned into a protest though, as both speakers introduced the idea of students having a voice in choosing a successor to Lawrence. Landers urged students to "join forces" as the rally turned into a march through campus. Chants of "We want Lawrence" increased the intensity and popularity of the gathering. Swept up by the enthusiasm of the protest, female students, restricted to their dormitories after 10 p.m., broke curfew.²

As the march ascended from campus onto the lawn of Sponberg's house, students grew restless when they saw Sponberg's administrative assistant Dr. Raymond Loeschner on the porch of Sponberg's house, instead of Sponberg. Sponberg was out of town at the time and did not arrive home until later that evening. Loeschner, defeated in all efforts trying to deal with the protesting students who had begun a sit-in on the lawn, conceded defeat by the time Sponberg arrived. Landers and Raphael, at the urging of Sponberg, calmed the crowd and then asked the students to go back to their dorms and apartments so that they could meet with Sponberg and negotiate for all of the students. Raphael promised to renew the protest if negotiations failed, and the students dispersed.³

Less than four hours of negotiations produced favorable results between students and administrators. Sponberg promised students a one-time forty percent vote of influence in the administration recommendation to the Regents by Sponberg in a

³ Ibid. See also, “Students of Wise Protest,” Eastern Echo, 2 May 1967.
successor to Lawrence. Sponberg, like Elliot following the fraternity rock protest in 1961, also promised to meet with students regularly so that they could air grievances directly. Sponberg also promised that he would remember the "peacefulness and orderliness" of the protest march when deciding on the punishments for the females who broke curfew. "Modern" student activism reaped many benefits in its first encounter with the Sponberg administration. Most students looked forward to a profitable relationship with Sponberg as they had with Elliot.4

Victory through the Lawrence protest turned moot for the students shortly after their protest march. Students used their vote to select Dr. Robert Zumwinkle to the position of Vice President of Student Affairs. Sponberg, however, defaulted on his promise to hold regular meetings with student representatives. Although students gained a voice in one event on campus, long-term communication between the students and the administration failed. This bridge was the primary student goal of protesting in support of Lawrence in the first place. In the student's eyes, only improved communications directly between the students and the administration could replace Lawrence.

As Lawrence foresaw, different issues concerning students emerged daily. The medium of television brought not only issues affecting other campuses in the state of Michigan, but issues that affected the entire nation live every evening. Before 1967, student activists had great difficulty mobilizing Eastern’s conservative commuter-oriented campus of Eastern Michigan. The small number of students participating in the fledgling anti-war groups started by Dr. Hefley demonstrated this. However, the

Lawrence protest, the results of the negotiations that followed, and an activist student body president indicated that the tide was turning at Eastern Michigan University.\(^5\)

Prior to the protest over Lawrence, on February 23, 1967, William Gasta, Terry Auten, Wayne Patterson, and Robert Johnson attended the first meeting of the National Student Conference on Vietnam held at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Despite lengthy discourse, due to fractionalization within the organizers, the conference failed in its primary objective of producing an anti-war statement to present to President Johnson and Congress. The emotion swirling around student involvement in planned protests gridlocked the conference.\(^6\)

Despite this failure, the conference benefited the representatives of Eastern Michigan by demonstrating the need for unity and organization. Most students involved in activism had more conscience than organizational ability. The sponsorship of a larger, established organization would provide the organization required to mobilize large numbers of students. One of the attendants of the conference, Bob Johnson, a student from Jackson, Michigan, took the helm of student activism at Eastern. Johnson’s most public campus activism before returning from Cornell was sponsoring a petition to change University policy forbidding narcotics on campus. Johnson gained the sponsorship to begin a chapter of SDS.\(^7\)

The SDS envisioned by Tom Hayden with the printing of the Port Huron Statement in 1960, was not the same SDS in 1967. The war in Vietnam and the draft of college students into the military to support the war was not part of the participatory

\(^5\) For a complete detailing of how the mass media contributed to the rise of student activism see Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).


\(^7\) “SDS: Representing the New Left at EMU,” *Eastern Echo*, 20 October 1967.
democracy envisioned by Hayden. By his own account, the ideals that Hayden aspired to expired over time. The changing of a generation on college campuses and the interaction of the SDS evolved from non-violent direct action to an acceptance of self-defense or street fighting against the police and authorities. Inspired by the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and Black Power, students on campus had not even been in middle school during publication of the first version of the Port Huron Statement. Nationally the SDS was in a steep decline, replaced by less centralized and more radical groups of the New Left. Eastern was joining the anti-war movement during a state of extreme flux and decentralization of activities.  

Although any Eastern student activists were at first reluctant to follow, after several weeks of operations, Johnson claimed a membership of forty-five students. Steering committees formed and calendar of events took shape aimed at meeting the goals of the Eastern Michigan University chapter of the SDS. The SDS mission at Eastern would be to raise student awareness to their power and rights and the concept of a free university, bring student attention to Ypsilanti’s black ghetto, the Vietnam War, and the draft.

While the SDS at other universities carried out occupations of their campus buildings, even becoming associated with more radical methods like arson and demolition, the SDS at Eastern remained quietly assertive in working towards its goals. Eastern's SDS chapter stuck close to the old guidelines established by the national group in organizing students. At Eastern, unlike the campus the University of Michigan, SDS members could not capitalize on an already politically motivated student body. Eastern’s

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8 See Hayden, 24-25, for a discussion by Hayden on the decline of the SDS.
student body came from both a less privileged upbringing that still closely identified with their blue-collar parents. Although the data does not exist, it is safe to claim the majority of Eastern students in 1967 were the first generation of their families to attend college. The Eastern Michigan SDS first had to motivate a reluctant student body with much to lose to become involved in student activism. SDS organizers felt that when they accomplished this that they would have sufficient numbers to begin altering campus politics.

Despite these hurdles, under the leadership of Bob Johnson, the SDS pushed on with their programs. The first action of the SDS came in the form of a resolution to the Student Senate, sponsored by student senator and SDS member Roland Stapleton. The resolution was to allow the Senate to subsidize $250 of cost to charter buses to attend the SDS Fall Mobilization against the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C. Debate immediately erupted throughout campus over the proposed resolution.

When introduced at the Student Senate meeting on October 10, 1967, conservative senators immediately moved to block the resolution. The argument against the resolution followed that passage of the bill would set a dangerous precedent for the Senate to fund other anti-war activities. Presiding over the meeting, student body president James Raphael, blocked attempts to table discussion. To the delight of Stapleton, Johnson, and other SDS members at the meeting, the resolution narrowly

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passed on the first vote. Controversy on campus ballooned over the next week as both sides petitioned support from the student body.\textsuperscript{12}

At the October 17 meeting, attended by hundreds of students, Raphael ruled further discussion on the resolution to be out of order. Conservative senators overturned Raphael on appeal and eventually amended the Stapleton Resolution so that it encompassed only this single protest. Terry Auten, another attendant of the National Student Conference on Vietnam, then successfully sponsored a resolution that provided a protest on campus that would coincide with the one in Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{13}

To conservative and liberal students, the battle over the Stapleton Resolution was a draw of sorts. Passage of the resolution allowed the Senate the subsidization of liberal students to attend the rally in Washington, D.C. Conservatives, on the other hand, exhibited just a portion of the resistance that they could muster to any future liberal legislation from activists. For both conservative and liberal students alike, the resolution allowed each other to experience the bitter politics of student activism for the first time. Each side realized there was little middle ground in debate and future battles would be bitter.\textsuperscript{14}

The rally in Washington turned out to be the most massive demonstration against the government ever staged. Amid the controversy that surrounded the passage of the resolution, few students took notice that the newly formed SDS had done all the work to organize the trip. Even fewer students were aware of the venue that the steering committees of the SDS planned. These venues included militant student activist speakers

\textsuperscript{12} Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Senate meeting minutes, October 10, 1967.
\textsuperscript{13} Senate meeting minutes, October 17, 1968; See also, "Mobilization Resolution Amended; Senate to Conduct Demonstration," \textit{Eastern Echo}, 20 October 1967.
and the disruption of military recruiting on campus among many others. The latter agenda item began execution shortly after Johnson's return from DC.\textsuperscript{15}

The administration and student body of Eastern maintained a long and enduring friendship with military recruiters and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) unit on campus. So tight was their relationship that, outside the election for Homecoming Queen, one of the most coveted honors for a female student was to be elected "honorary cadet colonel" at the annual military ball held on campus. In addition to this friendly relationship, military recruiters viewed Eastern as a haven for their job, especially in comparison to Eastern’s neighbors and much more politically active the University of Michigan. The arrival of the SDS on campus meant that this long-standing military tradition on campus had a rival.\textsuperscript{16}

The first of several SDS/recruiter confrontations took place on the morning of December 1967. Marine Corps and Navy recruiters arrived at McKenny to prepare for their day of business. Instead of the empty room that the recruiters usually found, they instead found one occupied by members of the SDS. The recruiters relocated to another room. The SDS members followed the recruiters to their new room. The SDS members then positioned themselves in the hallway just outside the door harassing would-be entrants. Around noon, the SDS members entered the recruiter's room and began questioning the involvement of the United States in the war in Vietnam. The questions of the SDS sparked a confrontation between Marine Captain Frank Huey and Bob Johnson. Huey ordered the SDS members to leave the room. Johnson retorted to Huey's ultimatum

\textsuperscript{15} "SDS: Representing the New Left at EMU," \textit{Eastern Echo}, 20 October 1967.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
with, "When you're [recruiters] on this campus you are a service to the students. I am a student!"\(^{17}\)

Assistant to the Dean of Students Ed Linta and Head of Housing and Food Services David Stockham arrived to broker peace between the SDS and recruiters. Assorted fraternity members unsympathetic to the SDS followed the two administrators into the room. The increased number of participants added to the anxiety in what was quickly becoming an explosive situation. Stockham was finally able to arrange an agreement between the two parties in which the SDS left the room, defusing the situation.\(^ {18}\)

In nearly every observer’s opinion, the SDS emerged victorious in their first confrontation with the military recruiters. Stockham commended the SDS for not breaking one University rule and for their quick negotiation with officials. Failure to commend the recruiters, in this case, was also an indirect indictment for creating the confrontation with the SDS. Most observers, including a member of the campus ROTC unit, agreed with Stockham's conclusions. Bob Johnson later said of the first confrontation between the SDS and the administration, "...we won the first round."\(^ {19}\)

Following the success of the Stapleton Resolution and the confrontation with the recruiters, President Sponberg called for an emergency meeting between Bob Johnson and top administrators. Results from the meeting were never made public, but based on the responses of Johnson afterward, it is likely the administration recognized the SDS as having the potential of being a powerful motivator of student protest on campus. This realization likely led to concessions to demands from the SDS in order that they decrease

\(^{17}\) "Recruiters Face Protest", \textit{Eastern Echo}, 15 December 1967.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
the number of events on their agenda. What is known is that President Sponberg was receiving increasing amounts of pressure from Lansing. Lawmakers in Lansing stated that university presidents unable to control the activities of their students were subject to losing state aid. Pressure continued to mount on Sponberg because of events on other campuses across the nation, even though Eastern was relatively serene in comparison to most other state schools. Sponberg's response to the pressures from Lansing and threats of growing student unrest from the SDS was the conception of the Mass Disturbance Policy.  

Up through 1967, students lived under a short paragraph in the Student Handbook that stated.

The Eastern Michigan University student body is asked to cooperate in preventing disturbances... If a student is observed as part of the body causing the disturbance, they will be referred to the Dean of Students and the Student Court as a participant.

Logic, in part, must have dictated to the administration that modern times called for a modern statement, however, most student senators went on the record as assuming that the new legislation was an instinctive reaction to the formation of the SDS. Ironically, Bob Johnson was one of the first student leaders to offer public praise of Sponberg's initiative, citing his meetings with Sponberg, that any move by the administration spawned by the threat of student unrest was, "a victory" for students.

The reality is that the administration likely felt that the actions of black student activism necessitated the Mass Disturbance Policy. Their activism on campus outpaced white student activism and the growth of the SDS at Eastern. In the context of current events at the time, the state of Michigan still reeled from the violent race riots that shook Detroit.

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20 Ibid. See also, "Meeting Called over SDS," Eastern Echo, 1 November 1968; "President Sponberg obsessed with another Columbia?" Eastern Echo, 5 November 1968.
the in the summer of 1967 and Black Power was taking the place of non-violent protest and integration. Although the SDS was beginning to radicalize, events like the mass building occupations at Columbia University had not occurred yet. The most significant and alien threat to the administration was black student activism.

A new policy statement was first introduced to the Student Senate for consideration in November 1967. The Student Senate turned debate of the policy over to a committee. The committee in turn immediately extended debate into 1968 and issued a statement to the administration encouraging them to take "any action against the scheduled SDS sit-in [against military recruiters] on December 11 if it should violate any laws of state, nation, or community."\(^{23}\)

Debate raged over the suggested policy in the Senate over the winter semester of 1968, as amendments were added and subtracted in every weekly meeting. In a Raphael-led Student Senate inability to compromise over a policy introduced by Sponberg was not surprising due to Raphael's history of disagreement with the administration.\(^ {24}\)

Gridlock between students and administration broke with the departure of Raphael from the Senate in fall 1968, and the beginning of the tenure of Student Body President Richard Skutt and a statement that was finally accepted by the Student Senate, Faculty Council, and administration. The new policy in the student handbook stated,

All members of the EMU community are free to register their dissent on any decision on any issue and to express that dissent by an orderly means.

If a demonstration or dissent should involve interference with the rights of other members of the EMU community, violence or overt threats of violence to other persons, destruction or damage of property, or disruption of the University's established academic or administrative procedure (for example, unauthorized occupancy of offices, conference rooms or reception rooms of University staff members, blocking access to such areas, unauthorized occupancy of University buildings beyond normal closing hours and unauthorized breaking into and entering of staff

\(^{23}\) See Student Senate meeting minutes, January-May, 1968; See also, "Raphael Explains 'Mis-Management,'" \textit{Eastern Echo}, 1 December 1967; "Student Senate President Blasts Administration," \textit{Eastern Echo}, 17 November 1967.

\(^{24}\) Ibid.
or student residences) such an incident is a threat to the freedom and openness and effectiveness of our University.

If such an incident as described in the above paragraph should occur, every effort will be made to restore order on a dispassionate, reasonable and fair manner. Such an incident will be dealt with within the EMU community insofar as possible; but, when necessary, law enforcement agencies will be asked to assist. Those who lead or participate in such incidents as referred to in the above paragraph are subject to University disciplinary action, including dismissal, after consideration by the University's established judiciary system with the usual procedural protections assured EMU students in cases of alleged misconduct. Under extraordinary circumstances, the University reserves the right to suspend a student immediately from the University for a period not to exceed five days and until the time of the student's hearing before the appropriate University judicial body, whichever period is shorter; the authority for determining such suspensions will rest with the President of the University or his authorized representatives. If a state, local, or federal law is violated in such an incident; the offender is also subject to legal action through the appropriate court of law.25

Students immediately raised the question of the protection of their First Amendment right to assemble under the Mass Disturbance Policy. While the entire constitutionality of the Mass Disturbance Policy from students’ perspective is questionable, there are also questions of legality.

Clarence Weber, in his 1971 book, The Roots of Rebellion, argued that the Board of Regents had to approve a university regulation before the force of law stood behind it. Legally then, until the Regents officially adopted the policy, the University could not judge a student in violation. By Sponberg's direction, the Mass Disturbance Policy became an official regulation on September 20, 1968, but not adopted by the Regents until September 17, 1969. Sponberg thus dictated student gatherings through the authority invested to him under the power of the policy for almost an entire year, illegally, if following Weber's argument. Although seemingly relatively minor, this breach would be a significant factor in actions taken by the Black Student Association (BSA) later in the year. Chapter Three thoroughly discusses this point, but Sponberg's

actions reinforce the racial tinges of origins of the against black student activists, vice the SDS.²⁶

Although on questionable legal ground during his actions taken against the gathering of students through the rest of 1968 and the beginning of 1969, Sponberg felt protected from any questions of the constitutionality of the Mass Disturbance Policy. Sponberg did this by affirming student's rights to assemble in the opening paragraph of the Policy. According to Abe Fortas, an Associate Justice to the Supreme Court in 1968,

The state may prescribe reasonable regulations as to when and where the right to harangue the public or assemble a crowd may be exercised... But it can't use this housekeeping power for any purpose except to reduce the public inconvenience that any large assemblage involves.²⁷

In the case of Brown versus Louisiana and Cox versus Louisiana, the Supreme Court overturned convictions of civil rights protesters made by lower courts. In the Brown case, a sit-in at a segregated library resulted in the arrest and conviction of five black protestors. In the Cox case, the state filed charges of disorderly conduct against dozens of black protestors for picketing outside a courthouse. In both cases, the protesters did not interfere with any entrance or exit from the building or any foot or auto traffic on the surrounding sidewalks and streets. In both cases, the High Court clarified that since the protesters did not interfere with pedestrian or auto traffic, and that since they blocked no doors to buildings that the arrest of the marchers occurred in violation of their First Amendment rights.²⁸

In the third paragraph of the Mass Disturbance Policy, Sponberg gave his word that "any incident will be dealt with within the EMU community insofar as possible; but, when necessary, law enforcement agencies will be asked to assist." Sponberg, as head of

²⁸ Fortas, 27-40.
a state-run agency, was well within his powers to call for the help of local or state law enforcers, to either protect protesters or arrest them. Since state laws superseded all campus rules and regulations, if outside law enforcers made an arrest on campus or even participated in an action on campus, Eastern, for all intents and purpose, would lose control over the situation to the arresting office. With concern to situations dealt with within the boundaries of the university, by university officials, the student was subject to either a hearing before the Dean of Students or a trial before the Student Court. Either event could result in the expulsion of a student from Eastern, and in the case of broken civil laws, the case handed over to local law enforcement.29

Despite the Mass Disturbance Policy and Sponberg, following the 1968 meeting between the administration and Bob Johnson that cut out some of the plans from the SDS calendar, the SDS pushed on with their amended plans. The year 1968 was the defining year for activism in the United States, and considering that activity at Eastern did not start until the fall semester, Eastern lagged the national movement. In 1968, insurgencies developed in every industrialized nation across the planet, mostly led by men and women under the age of twenty-five. Early in the year, the Tet Offensive by Viet Cong guerillas in South Vietnam led even most of the ardent supporters of the war in Vietnam to realize that the war was not winnable. The continued growth of the New Left would cause the further dissolution of the SDS into more radical and violent splinter groups best evidenced when a student named Mark Rudd led a riot at Columbia University in New York City. Although the action started with bi-racial participation, the black students separated from white students so that each group occupied separate buildings. In total, students occupied five buildings for a week in April. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, ended the capable leadership of non-violent resistance for civil rights. From that point forward, the confrontational and separatist means of

29 Fortas, 91-92.
Black Power would lead the civil rights campaign. A gunman also assassinated Robert Kennedy, at the time the leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for president following the presidential primary in California. Just preceding the beginning of the fall semester, the Democratic convention in Chicago turned into a riot in the streets after groups in the New Left became agitated over the selection of candidates for president. The riot that ensued, coupled with the nightly footage from Columbia University, might have led the participants to think that their desired revolution was at hand. In truth, most ordinary white Americans still felt that they had more in common with the police making the beat down of the protestors than the protestors.30

On September 27, 1968, the first of the SDS sponsored speakers arrived on campus. An anonymous French student, and Leieg Bobbio, an Italian student, both having been involved in the recent student uprisings in their own countries, relayed their experiences to the gathered Eastern students. The foreign students stressed the importance of student movements to their countries and spoke on the importance of protest on campuses in the United States because of the worldview of Americans being "leaders." The French student movement had been so powerful that it shook the foundations of the French government, forcing concessions unheard of, up to that point, to students in any country. The message of the international students was that average students could make a difference in their governments.31

The SDS confronted the University for a second time when Governor George Romney stopped on campus the evening of October 18, 1968. The reason for Romney's visit was part of a campaign swing through southern Michigan on behalf of Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon. The governor dashed through his prepared speech

31 Foreign Viewpoints Given at SDS Meet," Eastern Echo, 1 October 1968; For an examination of the student movements that shook not only France, but also many other countries in Europe, see Gianni Statera, Death of a Utopia: The Development and Decline of Student Movements in Europe, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.}
outlining and promoting the domestic and foreign policies that Nixon would pursue if elected. The crowd in Pease auditorium warmed up to the conservative Republican, except for a group of SDS members in the back of the auditorium. The protesters repeatedly began chants to disrupt the speech of the governor. Only during a portion of the speech in which the governor spoke on Nixon's intention to disengage the United States from the war in Vietnam did the SDS remain quiet. The governor reacted to the final SDS interruption by stating, "The most misguided people want to tear down the best thing that they ever had without putting anything in its place." The audience in Pease, except for the silenced SDS, rose in a standing ovation to Romney.32

Less than two weeks later, on October 29, 1968, Mark Rudd came to campus to speak on the recent student uprising that he led at Columbia University, in New York City. Rudd, a representative of the national SDS, also came to rally support for a nationwide student strike to support the Columbia revolt and to protest lack of choice in the upcoming presidential election, which was an echo of the riots in Chicago. Three distinct factions filled the Strong auditorium lecture hall with Rudd: SDS members, political moderates interested in listening to Rudd, and anti-SDS protesters. The counter-protesters were predominately fraternity members and athletes bent on disrupting Rudd. The presence of the hostile fraternity members was not only a voice against student activism but was also a response to an earlier incident in which the SDS disrupted a campus visit by Governor George Romney. Throughout his lecture, Rudd endured Greek songs, chants of "Hippie, Commie," and other derogatory slants. Appeals by student body President Dick Skutt for quiet from fraternities went unheeded throughout the evening. Rudd and the rest of the audience endured heckling until the fraternities left to

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attend a football pep rally and, "Fight imperialism by beating Kentucky State." Only then was Rudd able to finish the rest of his presentation, undisturbed.33

The following Friday, November 1, 1968, the National Secretary of the SDS, Mike Klonsky, arrived on campus. Klonsky was in Michigan as part of a swing through the Midwest raising support for the same student strike against the presidential elections that Rudd promoted. Only about sixty students showed up at McKenny Union to hear Klonsky lambaste the "capitalist-imperialist machine" operating the United States, the election process, and the involvement of the United States in the war in Vietnam. Klonsky did all this while inviting students to participate in the overthrow of the government of the United States. The small numbers of students in attendance of the Klonsky speech indicate the intimidation Eastern students felt with the accelerated rhetoric of Klonsky. Though the number of Eastern students who counted themselves as activists was on the rise, most still had difficulty digesting the concept of anarchy, let alone participating in it. This is the reason why Mark Rudd, speaking on an action of material content and feasibility to any student of a university, received a much larger attendance than Klonsky was able to draw. In addition, Mark Rudd was a national celebrity of sorts after nightly appearances on national television during the Columbia occupations. Students related better to the ideas and actions of another student, like Rudd, better than they did to the ideological crusading of Klonsky.34

Campus SDS members likely hoped that the guest speakers would bring students’ attention to a matter they were willing to stand up and voice their opinion over. The response to and support of Romney followed by the Rudd incident the week after, proved that at least by the fall of 1968, fraternities, with the general support of the administration, were still able to muster more significant numbers in their confrontations

33 "Students Contest Rudd, SDS Policies With Revolt," and "Divided Student Body Hears Rudd," Eastern Echo, 29 October 1968.
34 "Capitalist-Imperial System Is Not Working; Claims SDS Nat'l Secretary," Eastern Echo, 1 November 1968.
with the SDS. The overwhelming numbers of politically right-leaning students willing to engage in confrontation led to the intimidation of a portion of students who were on the borderline of participating in activism. The violent protests that the SDS sponsored on other campuses also kept many students at a safe distance from publicly supporting the SDS at Eastern. Most importantly though was the fact that most Eastern students, at the time, were not concerned about being drafted yet. The anti-war motives of the SDS were as foreign to the majority of the student body as the student activists that composed the SDS itself. Still, the SDS pushed on.35

The student strike intended to protest the lack of choice in the national election, promoted by Klonsky and Rudd during their visits to campus, went off at Eastern as planned. SDS expectations of mass participation from the student body were hugely disappointed. The night before the election only around two hundred students showed up to wind their way through campus carrying a coffin signifying the "death of political choice." Even fewer joined the strike on classes during the day. However, the march encountered only one incident of counter-protest in the evening. When the SDS march passed by Munson Hall dormitory, students leaning from the windows of the dormitory responded to SDS chants of, "Join us!" with assorted obscenities. The march of the SDS proceeded from the sidewalks and streets of campus to the front yard of President Sponberg's house. On the front lawn of the house, following an animated speech by Bob Johnson, the protesters set the coffin on fire. The students gathered around the burning coffin and bombarded the President, who had observed the event through a window, with chants and jeers. The march then dispersed and ended peacefully.36

Echo columnist, and editor of the underground newspaper Obsidian, Thomas O. Moors attributed the lack of participation in the protest to the inability of the students to

relate to an issue like "lack of choice in the presidential election." Moors was also critical of the coffin cremation, passing it off as cheap theatrics designed to attract participants to the march. Said Moors of the protest, "...conviction should be the only motivating factor for a worthy demonstration. At Eastern, however, conviction is not nearly enough."³⁷

Moors summed up what Bob Johnson and the SDS started to realize. The SDS needed to transform and bend to meet the needs of the students. Since black students had already formed the BSA under the destination of Black Power, excluding white students and the SDS, the SDS would have to conceive achievable and relatable goals for white students.³⁸

On some campuses, the SDS platform was anti-war, but at Eastern, the SDS shifted their focus to the issue of student rights. The SDS honed in on issues that affected the students of Eastern, not necessarily issues that the mass media emphasized, like the draft and the war in Vietnam. The first chance the SDS had to do this was following a rush of student activism in response to a series of statements made to a national magazine and the issue of the Mass Disturbance Policy itself. Sponberg stated in a U.S. News and World Report article concerning campus unrest that, "We're [Eastern Michigan] not going to function under the threat of intimidation and guerrilla tactics. We're not going to substitute muscle for mind here." Sponberg continued by relating to an incident on Eastern's campus involving the BSA following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., claiming that Eastern had been "under a state of siege." Sponberg concluded his hard line with students by stating, "Some of the students had laid out a strike plan, a boycott of classes, but this fell through. I let these students know that, if they stopped one soul, they would be suspended on the spot and we would talk later."³⁹ Students knew all of

³⁷ Ibid.
³⁸ "Eastern Students Overlook Boycott," Eastern Echo, 8 November 1968.
³⁹ All Sponberg quotes are attributable to "New Turn in Campus Revolt," U.S. News and World Report, 9 December 1968.
Sponberg’s statements to the magazine to be an exaggeration of the facts that surrounded
the reaction of the BSA to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Sponberg’s statements cut much deeper than just an inaccurate portrayal of the
students participating in one event at Eastern in a nationally distributed magazine.
Students raised the fact that Sponberg had failed to come through on promises of
meetings with students and rejected student requests to wage demonstrations with
increasing frequency.  

Student leaders also wanted to raise awareness of the issue of the underground
newspaper *Obsidian*. The *Obsidian*, under the editorial direction of Thomas Moors, had
been an underground newspaper published and distributed on campus but harassed out of
existence by the administration after only a couple of issues. The initial incident of
harassment involving the *Obsidian* followed the agreement of the staff of the paper to
allow the administration to proofread and edit the paper before printing. The
administration refused to allow the printing of the Jerry Farber article, "The Student as
Nigger," in the second issue. The staff of the *Obsidian* drew the line with that incident
and folded their operation, refusing to operate under oppressive guidelines.  

The second incident followed the administration created rules making the sale of
the paper a near impossibility on campus, then followed up their new rules and
confiscated those papers smuggled onto campus. The message from Sponberg to the
student body on the issue of the *Obsidian* and any future underground newspapers was
clear. The administration allowed the student body to read only what they permitted and
viewed as acceptable, regardless of student opinion or needs. Students now had a policy
restricting how they protested, policies restricting when and what type of newspapers

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40 "From Dick Skutt to Dr. Sponberg," *Eastern Echo*, 10 December 1968.
they could read, and a president who, they felt, belittled them in front of the entire nation.⁴²

Events led more than one thousand students to voice their discontent with these developments by attending a rally to protest against Sponberg on December 13, 1968. Student body president Dick Skutt presented Sponberg with three demands from the leaders of the protest. Skutt angrily passed that the president address all the gathered students, meet with the entire Student Senate the following week to discuss a list of nineteen grievances, and sponsor an open question and answer period the following week with the entire student body. Issues that directly faced students in their campus lives motivated them to action. The students were also beginning to have more questions about how the administration ran their University, and they wanted the answers from Sponberg.⁴³

Sponberg agreed to the demands and to meet with gathered students to explain and defend some of his actions. On the issue of the U.S. News and World Report article, Sponberg claimed to be quoted out of context and misrepresented. Despite his claim, Sponberg admitted that he refused to demand clarification or retraction of the statements from the magazine. An organized attack from the students and a list of demands from both the Student Senate and the SDS left Sponberg unprepared. The nineteen demands read by Skutt listed prime student concerns to be the need for educational reform, student involvement in the running of the University, and administration action on the issue of racism. Bob Johnson also presented a list of SDS demands that were mostly a condensation of the Senate demands down to five. By tying their demands into the demands from the Senate, the SDS made enormous progress in recognition from the student body. The mass of students gathered in the Union peppered Sponberg with

questions for only half an hour before Sponberg retreated from the stage, claiming a sore
throat. Temporarily restrained from leaving the stage by an activist group of students,
Sponberg again promised an open meeting with all students the following Thursday. 44

The Thursday meeting never took place because an epidemic of the Beijing
influenza affecting 75% of the student body forced a temporary university shut down.
The university re-opened for final exams and then recessed again for the Christmas break
without Sponberg ever addressing the unanswered questions of the students. 45

The SDS capitalized on the student anger started in the protest over Sponberg's
statements to *US News and World Report*. Following a November 21, 1968, meeting, the
SDS released their new topics of focus to match the needs of the student body. New
goals replaced anti-war protest and revolution with the fight to end racism and to promote
the awareness to the admission of the ghetto and black students. Beyond racial equality,
the SDS dipped into massive academic reform. The SDS would now campaign for
Eastern setting a maximum class size at thirty-five students and the reduction of the
current twenty-four to one student to instructor ratio. More capable academic advisors
would be made more readily available to all students and programs about how to create a
more democratic university. The SDS also vowed to fight for an end to compulsory
attendance and the replacement of the current alphabetical grading system with a pass/fail
system. The SDS quickly followed up on their goal of bringing racial equality to campus
by hosting regular racism teach-ins on campus, although the BSA carried out most of the
work towards the accomplishment of this goal. 46

A February 1969 *Echo* poll of students in Freshman Earth Science (GES 108) and
Freshman Biology (BIO 105), both lecture courses containing more than one hundred
students, revealed that as many as 50% of the students seriously disliked the small

44 "President Explains News Story," and, "Students Meet To Discuss Demands," and, "Minority
45 "They Say it's Flu, But We Know Better," *Eastern Echo*, 10 January 1969.
amount of attention that the professor was able to give individual students. Almost 40% of students polled faulted Eastern for making these classes "boring." On the other hand, an overwhelming 90% of the students polled also admitted that they did not read the assigned from material from the texts because they knew that they would not be held responsible for the information until exam time.  

Students, through the poll, voiced their perceived need for educational reform. The goals of the SDS and the needs of the students were becoming one. Student acceptance of activism to achieve their goals was growing. The SDS at Eastern proved that they were not the bottle-throwing hippies who had tried to disrupt the Democratic National Convention in Chicago the previous summer but instead re-branded themselves as concerned students. Even some fraternity members began to refer to the SDS as Sigma Delta Sigma jokingly.

The influence the SDS on campus peaked out with the execution of their 1969 spring offensive. The offensive at Eastern began April 22, 1969, when twenty SDS members attempted to intimidate Navy and Marine recruiters who had again come onto campus. As in their first encounter with the recruiters, members of the SDS remained within the framework of the Mass Disturbance Policy and other university rules. After occupying the same room as the recruiters, the SDS abandoned the room in favor of the hallway. The SDS remained in the hallway for the rest of the day littering the floor in front of the room containing the recruiters with bloodstained dolls and vomit. The absence of fraternity members indicated that the mood at Eastern had now definitely begun to swing away from supporting the administration and towards student activism.

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49 Ironically, there existed no rules or regulations prohibiting this vulgar display. The only law regulating the gathering of students was the Mass Disturbance Policy that forbade students to interfere with the free passage of people or the occupation of buildings.
The following day another group of SDS members walked into a closed meeting of the Board of Regents and demanded immediate implementation of all black student demands, including open admission to Eastern to all blacks, as well as the already stated demands of the SDS. More importantly than being able to list their demands to the Regents in-person, was the fact that, for the first time, the SDS challenged the issue of the Regents meeting behind closed doors. This issue would take on a more considerable importance in only one more year. Members of the SDS reinforced their demands and meeting with the Regents a week later with a rally on the Pierce Hall mall.\(^{51}\)

The spring offensive of 1969 was the last major event sponsored by the SDS, partly because of the decline of the national headquarters, but mainly because of the rise and growing independence of more confrontational groups, like the BSA. The struggle of the black students, highlighted by the February 1969 occupation of Pierce Hall, had captured the attention of the entire student body. Although the SDS undoubtedly had helped the BSA plan their actions, they lacked a reason, and the widespread participation, to conduct such a high-profile event. The popularity and membership of the SDS did not necessarily decline through the spring and winter of 1969, but it often became lost in the dynamics of new and exciting groups on campus. These new groups at Eastern were willing to take confrontational tactics to the higher levels that the BSA had, in much the same way more radical factions of the New Left rose in popularity as a splinter of the national SDS. These new groups on campus used students whose interest were not otherwise aroused had it not been for the SDS.\(^{52}\)

One of the final actions for the SDS came on May 21, 1969, with their request to hold the convention for the national SDS on the campus of Eastern. The administration rejected the SDS request on the grounds of the "differences and ideologies and goals of the two organizations," despite prior approval from the Student Senate. The second

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reason for rejection was that Pete Murdock, the new president of the Eastern chapter of
the SDS, made the request not on behalf of the local chapter, but for the national
organization.53

The entire notion of a national conference of the SDS hosted in Ypsilanti is a
testament to both the rise of student activism at Eastern and the decline of the SDS. The
same movement, whose members hurried by Ypsilanti on their return to Ann Arbor in the
formation of the SDS in 1962, retreated quietly and without further protest in 1969.
Eastern's chapter of the SDS thus faded from the weekly newspaper headlines as quickly
as it had risen to enjoy them for the last year and a half. Eastern's SDS chapter never lost
its reliance on the national organization for ideological and monetary support; however,
following the arrest or departure from the organization of its leadership, the political
structure of the national group rapidly fell apart.54

Even without SDS sponsorship, Eastern took part in the October Vietnam
Moratorium. Attendance of the Moratorium was large, and the teach-in panelists deemed
the discussion hugely successful. The moderator of the discussion, Dr. Charles Helppie
commented, "The attendance of the teach-in proved the reality of 'people power.'"55
Eastern students were beginning to recognize the potential in the influence that they had
in numbers.

Although the SDS maintained organizational status on campus for several more
years, new groups organizing students quickly rose in place of the SDS at Eastern. The
Coalition to End ROTC at Eastern, led by Mike Stein, claimed a membership of between
forty to fifty students. Ed Mattos assumed responsibility for forming the anti-war group,
the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) in the early spring of 1970. The SMC
assumed an active role in participating Eastern students in many anti-war activities

53 "University Rejects SDS Convention," and "Senate Supports SDS Convention," Eastern Echo,
23 May 1969.
54 Ibid.
throughout southern Michigan. The SMC sought to pull together liberal students already active on campus, but also fraternities, sororities, faculty, alumni, high school students, and members of the Ypsilanti community. Already evident though, student's interest in the anti-war movement was minimal, so substantial participation in the SMC never formulated. The rise of the most popular of all student activist groups following the SDS, the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM), came in response to the call for a general student strike in late April of 1970.

The student strike discussed thoroughly in Chapter Four of April and May 1970 was more the culmination of relations between a minority of students and the administration. SLAM was a group that gave organizational representation to those disgruntled students. The SDS was the group that showed students that they should stand up for their rights. The SDS pointed out what those rights should be and what students could do to achieve them. Students thus took the motivation left by the Bob Johnson years of the SDS and rose to do things that had been unimagnable only two years prior.

The fact that the SDS guided white students to the road of activism is an almost indisputable fact, but the SDS was not entirely alone in this mission. The rapid rise of the BSA contributed as much to the rise of student activism as the SDS did. The BSA did this through leadership by example. They were disgruntled, and they did something about it. Their actions had a price, but the payoffs were concessions to their demands like the white students only dreamed of at the time. To gain administrative attention to their demands, white students fell in and followed the black students’ lead.
Chapter Three:
Black Student’s Quest for Equality 1967-1970: Black Power

Black student movements on college campuses initially attached to white student movements, led by the SDS, through sharing the same events that spurred the beginning of the SDS. Beginning with black student led lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960, liberal-minded white students from the North flowed south to pursue an agenda of equality for black Americans. For their participation, white Southerners beat the white students from the North in the streets in an effort to both intimidate and discourage them. The beaten included the likes of Tom Hayden and most of the founding members of the SDS. The focus on southern racism led to the Freedom Summer of 1964, the murder of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, and finally, President Lyndon Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mostly left out of the narrative on the origins of the civil rights movement is the rampant racism and discrimination in northern cities. For African Americans in the north, civil rights were as necessary in the North as in the South. The lack of progress and frustration that eventually radicalized the civil rights movements to move from integration with a white population espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr. to violent separatism espoused by Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, also had a larger audience in northern cities than in the south. The residents of predominantly black neighborhoods in the northern cities lashed out in frustration over housing and wage discrimination, frustrated from years of neglect and lack of action from local white governments. The year 1964 witnessed race riots in Harlem, New Jersey, and Chicago. In 1965, the Los Angeles suburb of Watts rioted for almost a week. In 1966, Cleveland and Detroit rioted.
Less than twenty miles east of Eastern Michigan University, Detroit maintained a heritage of diversity and the racial tensions that sometimes accompanied urban development. As Detroit rapidly grew, especially in the beginning of the century with the founding of the auto industry, immigrants flowed to the city, attracted by the prospect of jobs and wealth. This immigration was highlighted by migration of black families from the agricultural south fleeing the servitude of tenant farming. White immigrants from throughout Europe quickly abandoned their ethnic ties and found unanimity in being white. This, according to historian Thomas Sugrue, led to the further polarization of race in the city and the confinement of the black population to the inner city ghetto. Detroit’s race issue was further amplified by a rampant housing discrimination issue that the city failed to address, and likely exacerbated through its policies.¹

From 1833 through the end of 1966, race was a factor in multiple riots, highlighted by a riot in 1943 that lasted three days and required the activation of federal troops to quell the violence. The 1943 riot resulted in the deaths of thirty-four people and six hundred injured, with seventy-five percent of the casualties being black residents. City and state governments failed to address the housing and employment issues that the 1943 riots revolved around, and Detroit further simmered through neighborhood discrimination enforced by a white mayor and police force. In the summer of 1966, a small riot erupted on Kercheval Street in response to a white police unit attempting to arrest seven young black residents. Following Kercheval, again, there were no initiatives

¹ The race and housing issues of Detroit are not unique but are better explained to be epidemic in the development of most large cities in the United States in the early 20th century. Unique to Detroit was the issue not being addressed by a responsive local government. For a better understanding of Detroit specifically there are multiple books that address the issue but a good summation is found online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Detroit
by the city government to address the complaints of its black residents, and the frustrations and anger of city residents grew even further.

Eastern Michigan felt the tensions of Detroit being a demographic model of the Detroit area. By 1965, more than 67% of students enrolled at Eastern came from Wayne or Washtenaw County, which Detroit and its suburbs constituted the majority of the counties. In the same year, nearly 70% of the population who identified as African-American in the state resided in Wayne County. Although Eastern did not track race during admissions or graduation during the 1960s, and reviewing yearbook class photos is not a reliable source, the assumption that around eight percent of the student population at Eastern registered as African-American is justified. The rest were white. Although Detroit maintained a population of close to thirty percent black residents, neighborhood covenants kept neighborhoods and housing strictly segregated. This forced an overcrowding of black neighborhoods in the downtown portions of Detroit and only the most affluent black families access to the growing suburbs, Ypsilanti being on the border of that area. Records were also not retained for the commuter population, but it is safe to acknowledge that both on and off campus student residents lived in de facto segregation, much like Detroit. Black students off campus likely lived in overcrowded apartments that were aside from white students. Black graduates with the same degree as a white graduate could expect limited employment opportunities and then, when finding employment, to earn up to thirty percent less than their white counter parts. The
prospects were even worse for woman of color.²

The slow speed and results of integration and non-violent resistance led many students to realize their role in the evolution of civil rights to Black Power. Many black students were no longer content reading books written by whites, attending classes lectured to by whites, and least of all to follow university rules established by white administrations. Collegiate Black Power advocates also believed that whites had held blacks down for so long that they owed blacks help in living out their own culture. This meant white people should fund black libraries, clubs, and a college education for ghetto students. If whites failed to allow for Black Power, then they would have to endure "prolonged and destructive guerrilla warfare." Advocates promised the result of living out Black Power on campuses, meant black students taking control of their destinies from whites.³

At Eastern Michigan through the time of civil rights in the South, there was an apparent indifference to integration. There is little record of complaint and no history of civil action on campus through the first seven years of the 1960s. However, the rise of Black Power pulled black students from their apathy and only a single event necessary to motivate nearly the entire black student body. The spark that moved black students at

² All available demographic information on student population at Eastern is available in the annual financial reports published by the University Board of Regents annually in June and available at the archives of Eastern Michigan University. The assumption of eight percent black student population is also supported through historical trends recorded after the initiation of tracking. Information on the overall racial demographics of the state of Michigan and the black population are available through census reporting that can be viewed through any connection to the US Census Bureau.
Eastern came in the form of an incident of blatant discrimination at the Sigma Pi Pledge Princess Concert on the night of May 4, 1967.

Sigma Pi fraternity traditionally sponsored a contest prior to Greek Week in which members of each sorority were able to choose the most popular pledge. The nominees would then compete to be crowned Pledge Princess and reign over Greek Week festivities. The event consisted of different competitions and games on the stage of Pease auditorium judged by members of the local fraternities. The members of the all-black Delta Sigma Theta sorority chose first year student Priscilla Boughton to represent.

Before the "Dating Game" portion of the contest, a representative from the white fraternity Sigma Pi approached Boughton and asked that she withdraw from that portion of the contest. The Sigma Pi representative justified his request because his fraternity could "get into a lot of trouble" if she participated. The unspoken reason was the danger of the Greek reaction if Sigma Pi established a mixed-race date on campus. When Boughton questioned the reasoning of the Sigma Pi representative, the Sigma Pi representative stated that the reason for not allowing Boughton to enter the contest was that she was black.4

Boughton continued to voice her objection, but obliged her hosts for the evening and sat out the "Dating Game." Sigma Pi did not invite Boughton to participate in the remainder of the events scheduled for the rest of the evening. Afterwards, in a meeting with Boughton and several other Delta Sigma Theta representatives, several different Sigma Pi representatives excused their fraternity brother because the incident was a, "misunderstanding in communication." The fraternity promised to make a public

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4 Letters to the Editor, “Because you are Colored,” Eastern Echo, 9 May 1967. See also, Letters to the Editor, “The ‘facts’ from Priscilla” Eastern Echo, 30 May 1967.
apology to the sorority with the names of all involved deleted to prevent any further embarrassment.\(^5\)

The agreement Sigma Pi brokered left the sisters of Delta Sigma Theta far from satisfied. The next week, representatives of the sorority submitted a letter to the editor of the *Eastern Echo* demanding not only a public apology, but also that all the names of the members of Sigma Pi involved in the incident be printed as well. The sorority further demanded a thorough investigation of the entire incident by the University and a reimbursement of all funds Delta Sigma Theta submitted to the contest.\(^6\)

Writing a letter to the editor was actually only a drop in the bucket compared to what black students were now willing to do to bring equality to campus. Members of all of Eastern's black fraternities and sororities, in addition to some white non-Greek students and faculty, formed the Racial Relations Committee (RRC). The purpose of the group was to prevent any similar incidents like the racism of the Pledge Princess Concert from ever happening again at Eastern. The RRC met and waited for administrative action on the demands that Delta Sigma Theta had made in their published letter.\(^7\)

Finding a deaf ear at the administration and at Sigma Pi, the RRC filed a complaint with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and organized a protest march. Ironically, the complaint that members of Delta Sigma Theta filed with the Civil Rights Commission made only brief mention of the Pledge Concert incident and another

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\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Harold Sponberg Collection of the Eastern Michigan University Archives, Box 4 – Civil Rights Folder.
member of Delta Sigma Theta signed for the sorority, not Boughton. The bulk of the complaint focused on charges that Eastern segregated their dormitories.\footnote{Ibid.}

The content of the civil rights complaint reveals that the animosity of black students covered a much larger spectrum, and ran deeper, than described in just one incident. The incident at the Pledge Princess Concert was the catalyst, and however minor in interpretation, it moved many black students to take action for themselves to end the racism that they perceived to permeate Eastern.

On May 18, 1967, black and white students marched together in protest of racism on campus under the sponsorship of the RRC. Speakers passed a microphone between them, each in turn attacking different campus policies and offices that they saw as racist. In defense of their offices, and to voice sympathy to the purpose of the protest, Dr. Lawrence and student body president Raphael also addressed the gathered students. The rally ended without incident early in the afternoon due to a thunderstorm, although the ideas manifested on the afternoon of May 18 continued to grow.\footnote{“200 Students Protest Discrimination,” \textit{Eastern Echo}, 23 May 1967.}

Under its new name, the Rights and Relations Committee, the RRC gained official group status with the University following a strong recommendation to that effect from Lawrence. Dr. Richard Sroges of the Psychology Department accepted responsibility as the faculty sponsor for the group. After sponsoring several speakers on campus, the Rights and Relations Committee changed their name to the Human Relations Committee (HRC), and accepted sponsorship from the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.\footnote{See Eastern Michigan University Archives, Sponberg Collection, Box 8 – Human Relations Commission Folder; See also Student Demonstrations Box – Black Student Movement Folder.}
Although the HRC met regularly, attended by a core of dedicated members, and made many recommendations to the University administration concerning ending discrimination, few administrators, other than Lawrence, considered the recommendations. University representatives from the Faculty Council, the Michigan Association of Higher Education (MAHE), the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) all turned down invitations to attend meetings of the HRC, with the exception of a lone representative of the AAUP who came to one meeting. In the spring 1967, Lawrence forwarded a letter from the HRC to President Sponberg recommending seeking the procurement of federal funds in order to form an office whose sole purpose would be to "deal with the problems of blacks." The President rejected the recommendation without explanation.11

As black students at Eastern started to deal with their own issues and come to terms with their own situation, the summer of 1967 in Detroit saw one of the most violent race riots in the history of the United States. Similar to Kercheval Street the year prior, the 1967 riot began with the heavy-handed takedown by an all-white police force of a relatively innocent activity that involved black city residents. The frustration of years of employment discrimination and housing inequality exploded in five days of uninhibited armed conflict that resulted in President Johnson sending elements of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions to restore peace. Close to fifty residents perished, only eight were white, among more than 1,200 casualties, 7,200 arrests, and the arson of more than 2,000 buildings. The United States had not seen such internal anger since the Civil War and would not see it again for thirty more years. The result of the riots was an exodus of most remaining white families from the city and an end to any hope of neighborhood

11 Ibid.
integration. The city installed and funded massive civil programs in to support black residents. In the short term, their radical response of the city and state governments to white racism yielded great benefits. Black Power worked where non-violent resistance failed.

There is no record of any student involved in the Detroit riots, but the columns of smoke rising from the embattled neighborhoods were visible from more than forty miles away from the city. The riots likely led the Sponberg administration to pursue their Mass Disturbance Policy, and indeed the tone of relations with future student activism changed. However, strangely, the return to campus in the fall of 1967 was quiet. Among mostly white students, Eastern founded their SDS chapter, but student activity and activism remained calm.

On February 27, 1968, fifty-five black fraternity and sorority members, calling themselves the Black Intellectuals, met in a closed meeting. Disgruntled former RRC leaders Cornelius Harris and Russell Roberts emerged from the meeting as the leaders of the group with student senator Ray Rickman acting as spokesman.¹²

Unlike the HRC, which was advised by a white faculty member and attended regularly by white students, the Black Intellectuals closed their ranks to all non-blacks. Discussion at the meeting, according to Rickman, focused on black frustration over lack of progress in bringing about the equality for black students on campus. Black students recognized that if they were to overcome bias racial attitudes from administrators and their fellow students, that they would have to overcome the, "deceitfulness of the white man and do it themselves." Black Intellectual leaders created a reading list on the "Doctrine of Self-Determination and Self-Awareness" so that black students could

familiarize themselves with the ideologies and leaders that leading black students at Eastern espoused. In the last item of business at the meeting, the group changed its name from the Black Intellectuals to the Black Student Association (BSA) and set a schedule of regular meetings. While the HRC still clung to integration, the BSA grew in numbers and influence following the principles of Black Power.\(^{13}\)

The BSA soon after became an official student organization, making it available for receiving operating funds from the Student Senate. On the petition for a new student organization submitted March 11, 1968, Cornelius stated the purpose of the BSA was to "...relate realistically to the contemporary American dilemma [racism]." The BSA was also, "to foster an enlightening atmosphere while furnishing a background of serious and sincere discussion on the campus of Eastern Michigan University." Although appearing peaceful on paper, Black Power soon made a loud announcement of its arrival at Eastern.\(^{14}\)

In harmony with the national civil rights movement, at Eastern the integrationist side of the civil rights movement moved in parallel with Black Power. In the spring of 1968, the HRC forwarded their most radical, descriptive, and far reaching set of proposals to that date to Sponberg. The HRC recommended that,

- A person be appointed with the title of Vice President for Minority Affairs. That this person be black and be directly responsible to the President of the University. That they have the power to control and regulate programs pertaining to minority students.\(^{15}\)

The HRC proposal went on to dissect every portion of the University and make specific recommendations that, they believed, would help bring about racial equality to

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Eastern Michigan University Archives, Black Students Association Folder – Student Organization Application.
\(^{15}\) See also Student Demonstrations Box – Black Student Movement Folder.
campus. In the area of admissions, the University needed to double the enrollment of black student enrollment and expand the recruiting of black students. In academics and athletics, desegregate all departments, and hire a black varsity head coach. Further, hire more black students into student employee positions on campus, then keep off campus all institutions that endorsed any policies condoning racism, and deny them the use of any facilities associated with Eastern. The administration also needed to monitor the Greek system more closely to prevent a repeat of the Pledge Princess Concert incident. Finally, the University needed to provide the funds to support these initiatives.\footnote{16}{Ibid.}

The Student Senate gave unanimous support for the HRC recommendations and Sponberg, for the first time, met with members of the HRC. Dr. Sroges, recorded that Sponberg, "rejected one of the recommendations outright... needed time to consider another... and accepted the rest of the recommendations in principle," although Sroges did not record specifically what recommendations were accepted and which were not. Sroges and other members of the HRC left the meeting extremely pleased and, according to Dr. Sroges, looked forward to future communication with the President, a recurring theme in student administration engagements. Unfortunately, again, this was one of the last episodes of communication between Sponberg and the HRC, who did nothing outside of the meeting to further the recommendations of the HRC.\footnote{17}{“Professor Tells of Protest’s Unknown History,” Eastern Echo, 25 February 1968.}

With their campus initiatives snubbed, the HRC turned to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and the Ypsilanti community to help formulate an end to discrimination on campus. Lack of progress through conventional channels led black students at Eastern to seek alternative methods to bring about equality and Black Power
strengthened as a result. The evolution of Black Power at Eastern had followed the same course it had on the national level. With black student requests and suggestions for equality snubbed by the white administration, blacks readied themselves for a less passive agenda.

On the night of May 4, 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., that afternoon, members of the BSA gathered on the steps of McKenny Union in the early evening. As more members arrived, two distinct factions took shape on the steps. The larger group, led by Ray Rickman, called for calm and peaceful protest. The other, led by Cornelius Harris, called for violence and damage towards whites and campus buildings. Although small in numbers, the enthusiasm exhibited by Harris’s group excited many more participants to join their ranks. In the same way that Stokely Carmichael and Martin Luther King, Jr., marched in Greenwood, Mississippi, together in 1966, with Carmichael taking charge of the march with chants advocating Black Power, Harris took charge and Black Power took over. Never again would Eastern Michigan witness such a sharp contrast in ideologies gathered for the same purpose.18

The Harris group that gathered at McKenny left to scour campus for more participants before re-gathering in front of the library. From the library the students marched on President Sponberg's house, taunting white observers along the way and filling the air with chants of, "Sock it to me Black Power," and, "Black Power is beautiful." Verbal threats from the black participants pushed white would be student participants to the fringes of the demonstration. Arriving at Sponberg's house the marchers demanded an immediate meeting with the President to air grievances about the campus. After a delay, where the demonstrators grew increasingly restless, Sponberg

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appeared. The President spoke briefly on his sorrow over the loss of King and his sympathies for the demands of the black students. The President, obviously not aware of the different attitude of the protest, added his desire that the demonstrators follow the ideals of King and continue to protest peacefully. The death of King was the death of passive resistance on the drive for racial equality on campus.\textsuperscript{19}

With the departure of Sponberg, the crowd dispersed to Jones/Goddard driveway. Demonstrators showered a white person in a car with rocks and bottles when they passed through the demonstration. The demonstrators also attacked a white student observing the march. Ray Rickman again tried to calm the crowd from atop a parked car in the Goddard Hall parking lot. Two black students jumped on top of the car and threw Rickman off the car and over a ledge towards Quirk, knocking him unconscious. Rickman regained consciousness in a state of near hysteria before an ambulance arrived to take him to a hospital. The injury of Rickman subdued the crowd as it re-gathered on the steps of Phelps-Sellers hall. After brief chants of "Black Power," the demonstration broke up.\textsuperscript{20}

Early the next morning, May 5, black and white student leaders met with President Sponberg and decided to cancel classes for the day in memorial to King. Administrators scheduled two services to fill that purpose in Pease auditorium that afternoon. That night, someone firebombed the exteriors of Welch and Sherzer halls, however little damage resulted due to prompt fire department response. Police made no arrests and named no suspects.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
Following the activity surrounding the King assassination, the BSA settled down and, apparently, again tried to bring about equality for black students through "white channels." This easing off was less an ideological move and more the fault that many students moved off campus for the summer months. Throughout the summer, predominately white groups, such as the SDS, sponsored sparsely attended lectures and teach-ins on the subject of racism. In May, the Student Senate approved a BSA request to join a statewide protest scheduled September 30, 1968. The purpose of the march, which never formulated, was to inform the state legislature of the high cost of tuition, housing, parking, books, and university services, especially food. Through the summer, Eastern also enrolled over 150 "ghetto" students for the fall term through special grants. While the rest of the nation reeled through the protests and riots around the Democratic National Convention over the summer of 1968, peace seemed to reign at Eastern Michigan.

The peace maintained on campus on the issue of civil rights through the summer quickly shattered with the beginning of the new school year. The SDS instituted their plan of introducing outside anti-war and New Left speakers while forcing confrontations with the administration, and the BSA assumed a much more confrontational stance. Cornelius Harris began the fall term by publicly blasting the University for "jacking the cost of tuition." Harris and the BSA quickly followed this up by sponsoring a rally on October 15. The appearance of Detroit based Black Panther Paul Boutelle as a keynote speaker increased the intensity of the rally as the theme swung away from freedom for imprisoned Black Panther Huey Newton and towards overall Black Power. Boutelle moved his audience with fiery exclamations like, "Black Power is impossible without the
destruction of White Power," and, "...we totally oppose their [white] policies. If they're no damn good, then destroy them and their system." Harris then took the podium to outline a ten-point program of what every black man should want to support Black Power. Harris's points ranged from the general, such as freedom from suppression, to the impossibly specific, such as freedom for all imprisoned blacks.22

Through its passionate rhetoric, the BSA had become one of the most easily recognized campus organizations outside of the SDS. Many white students drew connections between the BSA and the militant black organizations like the Black Panthers because of the association of Black Power. At its roots, however, the BSA was still a campus organization, run by students, and dependent on partial funding from the predominately-white Student Senate.23

On October 9, 1968, the Student Senate reminded the BSA that it was only a group of students whose over-zealousness for their cause could cause alienation. The Senate rejected a BSA request for $400 to host an event on campus. On November 12, over 20 BSA members delivered a request for $300 to the weekly Senate meeting. Senators extensively questioned the BSA members present over what exact purpose the money was to serve.24 Many Senators proposed alternative methods for the BSA to raise money. Student Senator Peggy Stevens even suggested that the BSA collect bottles as a fund-raiser rather than request money from the Senate. Adding fuel to the debate was that the Senate had quickly passed a motion giving $200 to a group of white students attending a seminar on racism at Notre Dame University. Relatively fresh in the minds of

22 “BSA Hosts ‘Free Huey Rally,’” Eastern Echo, 15 October 1968.
23 See Eastern Michigan University Student Senate meeting minutes, September through November 1968 for details on the debate surrounding the allocation of money to the BSA.
24 The exact purpose of their request was never specifically stated. It is likely that it was a symbolic re-submission following their earlier denial.
the entire student body was the passage of the controversial Stapleton Resolution a year prior that had allowed the Senate to subsidize a SDS trip to Washington, D.C. Exclusively whites attended the SDS trip, like the trip to Notre Dame. After almost an hour of debate, the Senate approved the transfer of $300 to the account of the BSA.25

To the members of the BSA, the Senate's reluctance to give $300 to a group of blacks at Eastern and their willingness to give money to groups of white students to attend functions off campus, created a point of contention. It was the final straw for the BSA trying to hurdle the racism they saw as deeply entrenched within the student body government and administration. The battle for $300 of money that they felt was available upon request to any other student organization had been won only at the cost of the pride off all the BSA members present at the Senate meeting. The BSA was remiss in the debate that surrounded the Stapleton Resolution, but greatly offended nonetheless. One week later the BSA moved to recover the lost pride of its twenty members.26

At the next Student Senate meeting on November 19, over one hundred members of the BSA filed into the Tower Room of McKenny Union and surrounded the Senate, which was already in session. Two BSA members moved to the center of the room and produced an over-sized check meant to represent the $300 the Senate had allocated to the BSA. The two BSA members then ignited the check allowing it to burn itself out on the carpet of the room. Cornelius Harris then shouted, "Bottles," in obvious reference to Peggy Stevens’ suggestion the prior meeting, at which point all BSA members placed empty soda bottles on the tables in front each senator. A BSA member hurled one the

25 Ibid.
26 “Black Students Burn Check in Protest,” Eastern Echo, 22 November 1968; See also Student Senate meeting minutes for 19 November 1968.
empty bottles across the room into a fireplace where it shattered. After this gesture to the Senate, the BSA filed out of the room leaving the entire Senate in an unnerved silence.  

For the black activists, the previous two years of efforts to bring racial equality to campus proved fruitless. Black students tried working through the administration, as was proven through the failures of the HRC, and through their fellow students, as was demonstrated through the BSA action and the Student Senate. Everywhere they turned, there was a brick wall. The time had arrived for Black Power to show that it was more than just an ideology at Eastern. To demonstrate just how serious black students were in their demands of racial equality on campus, they gathered to plan action and formulated eleven demands from the administration. Black students wanted an office for minority affairs headed by a black dean, a black studies program, course content changes to include the roles of blacks, and more black books, by and about blacks shelved in the library. Blacks also wanted changes in tuition charges, more scholarships for black students, and an exclusive black dormitory. Most of all, blacks wanted no action by either police or administrators taken against the participants on any action that they might take.  

With the formulation of their demands, black students demonstrated that they were a force that the administration needed to reckon with. Arriving on campus about 7 a.m. on February 20, 1969, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Robert Zumwinkle and acting Dean of Students Edward Linta encountered a group of about fifty black students gathered in a parking lot by Sill Hall. When the two administrators approached the group, the students began to move towards Pierce Hall. In the two weeks prior to

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27 Ibid.
28 See the official administration account of the entire BSA/Pierce Hall incident in the Eastern Michigan University archives, Student Demonstrations box – Black Students Association folder.
February 20, rumors circulated on campus that the BSA had a major plan in the works that might involve the occupation of the administrative section of Pierce Hall. Zumwinkle and Linta accompanied the students urging them not to involve themselves in any activity that might bring a conflict with civil authorities.29

It is not unreasonable to assume that it was no coincidence that Zumwinkle and Linta arrived in the parking lot at the same time as the students. Sponberg had obvious prior knowledge of the black student actions and arranged for the two administrators to try to head off the black students. The *Ypsilanti Press* reported in the following week after the incident that the SDS planned all the actions of the BSA. However, that is not likely. It is very safe to reason that the SDS had prior knowledge, made even more obvious by the fact that the administration likely knew, and even some consulting in the event, but the tenants of Black Power would have precluded too deep of an involvement of white participants.30

The two administrators obtained from the marchers the demand to meet with Sponberg personally to discuss their eleven demands as they moved into occupy the hallway outside the President's office door inside Pierce. When law enforcement informed students that they were in violation of the Mass Disturbance Policy and asked to vacate the building by Zumwinkle and Linta, members of the BSA removed chains from gym bags and chained the doors of Pierce. All protest at Eastern up to this point had been within the laws of both the University and state, but by chaining the doors of Pierce

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30 Ibid.
the BSA willfully crossed over to intentionally breaking the law.\textsuperscript{31}

Campus police and deputies from the sheriff's department, who had been positioned inside Pierce the night before, again indicating the prior knowledge of the event by Sponberg, made themselves known to the protesters and used bolt-cutters to remove the chains from the doors. The Mass Disturbance Policy, yet not approved by the Board of Regents, allowed for Sponberg to use outside police forces on campus if the situation overwhelmed campus police. Sponberg also called for the use of state, county, and local police preemptively, based on the rumor that the BSA was planning an action that morning. Campus police were far from overwhelmed, and Sponberg had obtained the motive or demands that the BSA had seized Pierce Hall under.\textsuperscript{32}

Outside Pierce, Washtenaw County District Attorney Booker T. Williams arrived to coordinate members of the state, county, city, and campus police called to the scene by administrators. Williams, through a bullhorn, demanded the immediate evacuation of Pierce by the protesters. Some protesters willingly filed out of Pierce and mixed into the large crowd of both black and white students who gathered around the Pierce mall with the purpose of supporting the BSA members inside the building.

BSA members remaining inside Pierce stated that their object in seizing Pierce was to "protest racism and try and bring change to campus, not create violence or be

\textsuperscript{31} “Tempers Flare as Marchers, Police Clash,” Eastern Echo, 21 February 1969; “Black Students Seize Campus Areas at EMU,” Ypsilanti Press, 20 February 1969; Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstrations Box – Black Student Movement Folder; “President Sponberg, Student Representatives Discuss Demonstration,” Eastern Echo, 4 March 1969.

\textsuperscript{32} “Tempers Flare as Marchers, Police Clash,” Eastern Echo, 21 February 1969; See also Chapter Two of this work for a discussion on the legal technicalities of the Mass Disturbance Policy.
arrested." After waiting several minutes Williams ordered that all protesters to be forced from the building.  

Deputies inside of Pierce used clubs and mace to clear remaining students out of Pierce and onto the Pierce mall. In the mall, police randomly arrested eleven of the students who had been forced onto the mall from inside Pierce. Police moved the arrested students from the mall to a bus serving to be used to transport the arrested to jail. Two students watching the BSA protest who rushed to the defense of a friend knocked to the ground by other police officers. A brief fight between students and police broke out around the student on the ground before police arrested the two students who tried to aid their friend. This raised the number of arrested demonstrators to thirteen. The seizure of Pierce hall only lasted forty minutes and following their foiled attempt to occupy Pierce, blacks were still eager to have their original demands addressed by the President. However, the amnesty for those arrested became the most urgent demand. A group of students, frantic about the situation outside Pierce, ran down Forest Avenue to the President's house to appeal for Sponberg's intervention. A University official informed the crowd gathering on Sponberg's lawn that representatives of the protesters were already meeting with the President through the mediation of Zumwinkle and administrative assistant to the Dean of Students, Ken Moon. Students knew Moon as

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33 “Tempers Flare as Marchers, Police Clash,” Eastern Echo, 21 February 1969; “Black Students Seize Campus Areas at EMU,” Ypsilanti Press, 20 February 1969; Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstrations Box – Black Student Movement Folder. The exact amount of time that Williams waited was debated extensively after the occupation. Williams stated that the actual time was between ten and fifteen minutes allowing students ample time to vacate. Students contended that only one warning was given and then less than two minutes elapsed before being arrested, not allowing them time to execute the orders of law enforcement. Although relatively minor when viewed alone, in the context of the amnesty debate that followed their arrests, this became a significant issue of trust between students and the administration backed by local law enforcement.
being friendly and trustworthy as well as being the highest-ranking black administrator. Through another University, official Sponberg advised the crowd outside of his house to disperse. County District Attorney Williams by this time moved from Pierce to the President's house with police reinforcements to again disperse students. The students followed the advice of Williams and disbanded only to gather again in front of the student union a few minutes later. At the student union, black students addressed the crowd and led them in chants of Black Power. After less than an hour at the Union, the crowd of mostly black students moved down Forest Avenue again to the President's house.34

This time the police were present in force, complete with an attack dog unit from the sheriff's department. The presence of attack dogs, viewed as an unnecessary escalation by students, further incensed the already agitated crowd. The crowd converging on the President's house did not attempt to break the police line but showered the officers with verbal abuse. Across Forest Avenue from Sponberg’s house, another crowd gathered around a ledge at the Catholic student chapel to listen to student speakers again espouse Black Power. The closing of the Forest and Perrin intersection by students gathering to listen to the speakers, and the increasingly confrontational tone of the speeches, induced District Attorney Williams to take action. Williams ordered Sheriff Doug Harvey to have his men move in, clear the intersection, and arrest the speakers. Police armed with clubs and mace, and led by their attack dogs, moved through the crowd towards the ledge. Most of the speakers escaped by running away, although

following a brief chase, police caught and arrested Robert Smith, charging him with conspiracy to incite a riot.\textsuperscript{35}

Conflict between protesters and police officers continued through the morning until about noon when the police withdrew following the request of Sponberg. Law enforcement allowed remaining students to mill about freely around the intersection away from the President's yard. At least three hundred students returned to Pierce to occupy the corridor outside the President's office for the rest of the day, although permitting free passage for everyone within Pierce. Campus-wide collections for bail money collected $75 towards the $383 total bail in the first day for the arrested students. Student body president Dick Skutt attempted to make up the remaining $318 with a check from the Student Council Treasury. Sponberg quickly stepped in and threatened Skutt with the criminal charges of "misappropriation of funds" if the money transfers occurred. Skutt backed down, but not before lodging protest against Sponberg's action in the Student Senate. Ironically, the bail money that Skutt had tried to provide from Senate accounts was $18 less than what the BSA had symbolically burned following heated debate with the Senate earlier in the year. February 20 at Eastern by no means marked the end of the issues that brought on the seizure of Pierce Hall. Intense, if sometimes sporadic, negotiations, between the BSA and the administration over the eleven demands continued through 1975.\textsuperscript{36}

Negotiations with the administration were never able to make it past the inability of student and administration to broker amnesty for the arrested students. Sponberg refused to remove the name of Eastern from the arrest complaint because another law

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. See also, “President Sponberg, Student Representatives Discuss Demonstration,” \textit{Eastern Echo}, 4 March 1969.
enforcement agency would pick up the responsibility. Sponberg contended that if Eastern excluded their name from the complaint, they would lose any control that they had over the case. Initial talks broke off after only forty-eight hours of negotiation following the boycott of meetings with the administration by the BSA. The Washtenaw County District Attorney’s office charged the thirteen students arrested in front of Pierce Hall with conspiracy to create a disturbance. In March 1969, six of the students pled guilty to a lesser charge of aiding and abetting a conspiracy and released after paying fines. Later, jury trials found the remaining students all not guilty. The judge fined and then released them. Robert Smith pled not guilty to the charge of conspiracy to incite a riot and not tried again after the first trial ended in a mistrial.37

The day following the occupation of Pierce a handful of black and white students began the day by picketing outside Pierce Hall. As the day wore on and word spread of continued protest, the numbers of protesters grew. Their number growing to more than 600, the picketers took their cause on a march through the campus ending in a rally on the student union plaza. Black students then met in a dance at the student union that evening to help raise more bail money for the arrested students.38

As negotiations between black students and administrators soured over amnesty, black students began a general strike against classes. The strike continued in some respects until the University addressed all eleven of the black demands, which was not

37 See Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstrations Box – Black Student Movement folder; “Protest Marchers Call for Pardon,” Eastern Echo, 25 February 1969; See also Eastern Michigan University Archives, “Smith Freed!” Second Coming, 12 February 1970.
38 Ibid.
until the winter semester of 1969. White student participation in the strike was limited to some members of the SDS.39

Late in February 1969, the Faculty Council, voted not to condemn the administration for their actions in putting down the black occupation of Pierce, but it also urged the administration to address the eleven demands of the black students. Consequently, Sponberg created two ad hoc committees to address the demands of black students. Black students formed the majority of the committees; however, the Faculty Council also placed faculty on the ad hoc committees to help address black student demands. Black students overcame their bitterness over Eastern not dismissing charges against the fourteen students and returned to negotiations with the administration.40

The first University committee, headed by Vice President of Instruction Bruce Nelson, addressed the five academic demands on the student's list. In some form or another, Nelson's committee approved all of the black demands that they addressed for implementation into the University. Nelson's committee recommended adding black studies to the curriculum and highlighting the roles and contributions of blacks to every subject taught at Eastern. Studies through separate committees would be allowed to examine the exclusion of black students in the past and how they could be further involved in the future. The University would hire a full time, high-level, black administrator immediately. A section of the library would be set aside for books about blacks, written by blacks, and another section reserved for a presentation of art by black artists. They also instituted a plan to incorporate a major and minor in Black Studies into

39 Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstrations Box – Students for a Democratic Society folder.
the curriculum. This course of study would provide a focus on the life and culture of African descent in the United States. It also focused on the success of those enrolled and equipping them with the tools to engage society on issues related to African Americans after graduation. This idea was new to academia and originated alongside black studies programs and degrees at universities across the nation. The committee took less than a month from the time that it began to meet to formulate their response.41

The second committee convened to consider seven black student demands administrative in nature, was headed by Vice President of Student Affairs Robert Zumwinkle, in one of his first actions after being hired. Zumwinkle’s committee was equally expedient in considering the issues before it. Zumwinkle’s committee found agreement with Nelson’s committee on the need for an office of minority affairs and affirmed that a black should be hired into a position with the authority of an executive director or vice president. The function of the newly formed office would be to address all minority affairs. Students would have a direct voice in the hiring process for the position. On other issues though, Zumwinkle’s committee was less accommodating than Nelson’s. The administration relegated a demand to base tuition on family income to a special sub-commission for further examination. Eventually the sub-commission rejected the demand and the maintained system of universal application of equal tuition. A demand pertaining to bypassing the admittance of black youth from Ypsilanti with the statement that the committee "was unable to ascertain... the basis for this proposal."

Nevertheless, the administration agreed to increase the promotion and advertising of

Eastern at Ypsilanti High School. Zumwinkle's committee allowed for the immediate creation of a Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X scholarship and the stipulation that a board of black faculty and students determine criteria for selection. The committee decided that the demand to revoke athletic scholarships from injured athletes was not applicable to the scope and charter of the committee. Zumwinkle’s committee also turned down the establishment of a black coed dorm on the grounds of whether it was “educationally desirable to segregate large blocs of students on the basis of race.”

Ironically, the demand that black students be dormed together contradicted the complaint filed with the Civil Rights Commission by Delta Sigma Theta following the Pledge Princess Concert in 1967. In the 1967 complaint, blacks had contended that they were being dormed together based on race and did not want to be. In only two years, black students now wanted to be dormed together, separately from whites.42

Black students had dared to raise the stakes of student activism higher than any other student organization before them. Through their actions, the administration rewarded the BSA and the black student population at Eastern with massive concessions. As long as the administration continued to pacify the black student population there was no need for any further action. Increasingly, following the occupation of Pierce, the administration bent over backwards to satisfy black students. This was probably not so much out of fear of another black protest, but a strategic move on the part of the administration to keep the black students out of the rising tide of white student protest.

The BSA rose in prominence on campus quickly for several reasons. First, its members were highly dedicated. Secondly, the cause of bringing about racial equality

42 Ibid. See also Eastern Michigan University Archives, Harold Sponberg Collection, Box 2 – Blacks Folder.
had preset ideologies from figures like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. Thirty-five years of execution tempered the theories behind Black Power when Cornelius Harris and other black student leaders founded the Black Intellectuals. Thirdly, was that all a student had to be, to be a member, was be black. White students were unable to gather because they were white; history had not provided the lessons learned by always being a minority in the country of their birth to bind them together. In addition, no other groups rose in competition or opposition to the BSA.

Similarly, black fraternities and sororities formed the core of the BSA. White activism contended with multiple contenders from both inside and outside the SDS. Black students united from the outset. Finally, the BSA proliferated because of the administration's inability to deal with the new demands of black students made through the HRC. The failure to meet simple demands caused black students to quickly become disheartened with the administration and increasingly turn to more radical poles than they probably originally had been unwilling to explore. White students would react similarly to the administration's lack of attention through the end of 1969 and the beginning of 1970 as well.

There were no laws that prevented white fraternities from discouraging other whites from joining activist organizations. Only peer pressure and mob rules dictated what white students did among themselves. If white students united, they needed to find a force that affected the lives of every one of them. This force came to be the administration. Increasingly, following the beginning of 1969, the administration took actions that pushed all white students together. In the end, these administrative actions bound white students together in the same way that racism bound black students together.
With a motive, white students put aside other concerns for the sake of unity and achievement.
Chapter Four:

Alienation of Student Body 1969-1970: Arrival of the Counterculture

Just as the black student movement moved from the integration goals of the civil rights movement to the separatist ideas of Black Power, the white student movement at Eastern, and across the entire country, evolved as well. The anarchy promised by the counterculture movement overtook the intelligent socialist ideals of the SDS. Guest speakers invited by the SDS to Eastern had already hinted the idea, although their ideas gained no traction on campus at the time they spoke. The counterculture movement began in San Francisco in the mid-1960s with the popularizing of the hallucinogenic drug LSD and the rise of more vitriol music that supported the use of drugs championed by groups like Jefferson Airplane and the Beatles. The counterculture began as more of a "drop out" of a social movement that supported freedom of nearly everything, but as the war in Vietnam escalated, groups like the SDS began to fold into the counterculture, and as Black Power succeeded, the counterculture began to politicize. Unlike the SDS, the followers of the counterculture had no desire to replace government and structure with any other form. They just wanted to deconstruct what existed; to become "anti-establishment." The inherent tensions created from a movement that desired to drop out of everything and live communally with trying to change society by bringing about racial equality and peace in the world was never going to succeed. Only time would demonstrate that the movements' energy, although explosively kinetic and attractive, was not sustainable.

Through the winter term of 1969, it seemed as if the issues that had stirred the students before the holiday break seemingly hibernated for the winter and into spring.
However, when students returned for the fall of 1969, white student activism returned with a vigor. The issue that excited students to action concerned a new infringement by the administration on their first amendment rights. Once again, as in the issue of the *Obsidian*, the administration maneuvered to suppress an underground newspaper, this time the *Second Coming*. Frank Michels, its student editor, announced its intended publication on September 23, 1969. His paper promised a new and unabashed look at the administration and the student population written in the language of the students with a tinge of the counterculture. Again, Sponberg employed the administrative tactics that had harassed the *Obsidian* out of existence. This time, the student body did not as quickly dismiss the debate over the *Second Coming* as they had the *Obsidian*.

University regulations, instituted in response to the *Obsidian*, stated that published material being sold on campus first had to register and be approved by the Coordinator of Student Activities, Donald Kleinsmith, and then could only be sold at pre-approved tables on campus. Kleinsmith in dealing with the issue of the *Second Coming* continuously stymied Michels' attempts to register a table. Kleinsmith refused to allow the sale of the *Second Coming* because it threatened slander against Eastern faculty and staff. Those attacked in the paper would have no chance to respond to their attackers in an equal medium. According to Michels, Kleinsmith also dwelled on the possibility of *Second Coming* writers frequently using four-letter obscenities in their articles.

Following lengthy debate, reluctantly, Kleinsmith approved the reservation of a table for Michels, under SDS sponsorship. The approval came only after an apparent agreement, between himself and the University that allowed the administration the right to proofread and edit all issues before distribution. Unbeknownst to Michels, after he had already
signed the agreement, the administration added the clause. Michels, in protest over administration requests to edit his paper but more so the method went about securing that right, withdrew his application for the table. *Second Coming* staff abandoned all efforts to distribute their paper through University approved channels. This tactic employed by Kleinsmith had amounted to be the deathblow to Tom Moor's attempts to publish the *Obsidian*. Administrators more than likely hoped that the *Second Coming* would follow the lead of the *Obsidian* and fold without further debate.¹

Unlike the *Obsidian* however, the *Second Coming* maintained a strong enough backing through the Ypsilanti Intermedia Corporation and private donations to continue with the publication process without administrative support or approval. Despite threats from Sponberg of disciplining action against any persons who sold the paper, on October 6, 1969, sidewalk student and faculty vendors around campus sold the first issue of the paper for a quarter. The feature article of the first *Second Coming* was Michels' story of how the administration dealt with his request to sell his paper on campus. All students at Eastern were thus able to read about the administration's harassment of student activists first hand. Administrators, furious over such a blatant challenge to their authority, recorded the names of all students selling the paper and referred their names to the Student Court for prosecution. Included in the list of names were Michels, student body president Tom Moors, student body president, and prominent BSA member Chris Booker.²

In the next two weeks, both sides jockeyed for legal position in what promised to be court battle over the sale on campus of the next issue of the paper. At the time, the issue of administrative jurisdiction over the first amendment right to freedom of the press for university students was in murky waters. There were two test cases before the United States Supreme Court dealing with the suppression of underground newspapers on two university campuses in Tennessee. Courts, lawyers, and administrators most probably would have rather waited to hear the test case results from the Supreme Court before further pressing the issue of suppressing the Second Coming, but Michels had different ideas and refused to back down or delay. The distribution of the second issue of the Second Coming thus further escalated the confrontation.³

The second issue hit campus on October 20, 1969. Much of the paper further detailed continuing negotiations between the administration and the Second Coming, but Michels raised the stakes of his battle with the administration in two ways. First, Michels printed the Jerry Farber article, "The Student as Nigger," which the administration had refused to allow to be printed in the Obsidian several months before. Michels then further pressed the administration by printing a fictitious completion article on the back page entitled, "Meat: The Game for Men." The article challenged the reader to match a picture of the face of each Homecoming candidate with a picture of each candidate from behind during the swimsuit portion of the Homecoming Queen competition. Michels promised the competition winner the opportunity to "screw the Homecoming Queen on the floor of McKenny ballroom on national television." Michels later stated that he had intended the article to be a protest of the degradation of women through beauty pageants. Although this reason seemed entirely progressive, the fact that it was out of character

with Michel’s behavior up to this point and aligned with the insulting nature that the administration claimed he characterized.  

Administrators moved fast to remove what they viewed as the "pornography" of the second issue from campus before Homecoming weekend and suspended four students, including Michels by Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. Campus police confiscated all issues of the paper they could locate. Before the week ended, the University notified nine more students of their suspension. Roving bands of fraternity members harassed sellers of the paper, implementing muscle in place of the mind. Despite these attempts to suppress the Second Coming, some news did leak off campus. The paper resulted in several parents of Homecoming contestants threatening to sue the University for allowing the distribution of the Second Coming in the first place.

In the last days of October, the Dean of Students, Thomas D. Aceto, acted to provide an administrative hearing for four of the students, including Michels. Aceto's quick offer obscured the choice that University regulations offered students an administrative hearing or a trial before the Student Court. Michels arrived at his hearing in the office of Dean Aceto, followed by over one hundred other students protesting the suspected railroading of the students into an administrative hearing and attempts by the administration to suppress the Second Coming. Following discussion between Aceto and the protesters, Aceto conceded and allowed Michels and the three other students facing a suspension to appear before the next meeting of the Student Court.

6 “Aceto: Student Court only recommends,” Eastern Echo, 7 November 1969.
At the trial of the suspended students on November 1, the Student Court requested the presence of Sponberg and several other administrators to testify on behalf of the administration. All except Aceto refused, citing that in no way, "[was] the administration subservient to the requests of an organization sponsored by students." The Student Court, without the opinion of the administration, recommended dismissal of charges against the four students because the First Amendment of the Constitution governed students before University regulations. Aceto commended the Court on their verdict, but three days later overruled the Court, leaving the suspensions of all the "Ypsi Thirteen" pending.\(^7\)

The case of Michels then moved to a Disciplinary Review Board on November 12. The Board not only recommended the immediate end of the suspensions hanging over the heads of the "Ypsi Thirteen," but also reinforced the original Student Court verdict, then further recommended the continued publication of the *Second Coming* regardless of University endorsement or support. The student body had finally won a victory in their battle for rights from the University. The day after the findings of the Board, Michels moved to protect the rights gained by the students through the Review Board hearing by filing suit in United States District Court seeking a restraining order against the University from interfering in the further publication and distribution of the *Second Coming*.\(^8\)

In the week before their hearing in federal court, the administration, following hours of legal counsel, weakened the position of Michels by lifting the suspension of a *Second Coming* sales representative caught selling the paper while on administrative warning. The administration also allowed selling the *Second Coming* at the McKenny


Union desk. The administration actions took the wind out of the sails of Michels' lawsuit, and the court found no reason to issue a restraining order on the administration. However, students considered it a victory that the court refused the initial University requests to dismiss the case.\(^9\)

Following this intense struggle, the students involved in the distribution of the *Second Coming* and the administration let each other co-exist. The *Second Coming* continued in publication for less than a year, folding in the fall term of 1970. In the end, student interest and sales failed to support further production. By the end of March, the thorn in the side of the administration, Michels, did to himself what the administration had spent countless hours trying to do and departed campus after flunking out of classes. Judging on the relatively quick failure of the *Second Coming* following the controversy over its initial distribution, there is some resolution that the issue of the *Second Coming* raised by the administration was more important to the student body than anything printed in the paper.\(^{10}\)

Through the *Second Coming*, student activism gained traction at Eastern and continued to grow during the controversy that followed it in publication. Within weeks of the furor caused by the *Second Coming*, there emerged another rallying point for student activists. The issue of the Peoples’ Lounge in McKenny Union started in the summer of 1969. Union management removed comfortable, cushioned, cloth-covered chairs and sofas that had been the furniture for a common area in the Union for some


\(^{10}\) “Rally for *Second Coming* planned; pro and con speakers expected,” *Eastern Echo*, 4 November 1969; Students support paper, demand speech freedom,” and, “Faculty report opposes administration,” *Eastern Echo*, 11 November 1969.
time, and replaced them with fiberglass benches. Elements of student activists on
campus now referred to as "freaks" by other students and themselves, due to their
growing association with the counterculture, regularly congregated in the area to discuss
their ideas and changes that should come to campus. Students viewed the removal of the
furniture as a deliberate attempt by the University to harass the "freak" element on
campus and discourage them from gathering in the Union. Union managers and
administrators contended that students using the furniture vandalized and wore it beyond
repair, causing it to be not only an eyesore but a fire hazard as well. Replacement of the
soft furniture with fiberglass benches would prevent any students from destroying
University property and fulfill all fire codes. The "freaks" however, moved to take back
their area in the name of all students, thus the name, "Peoples’ Lounge."\footnote{11}

Periodically over the course of the fall term, students switched the plastic benches
with soft furniture from other rooms around the Union. Union employees would then
have to return the furniture at the end of the day. No incidents of confrontation occurred
as a result of this "game" until December 2, 1969, when a Union manager approached
Michels, Barry Simon, and John Enlund and requested that the three students return the
padded furniture that they were sitting on to its original location. The students refused
because they had not been the ones who had moved it there in the first place. The
manager then asked the three to leave the premises. All refused, and the manager
contacted campus security. Chief of campus police John Garland arrived and requested
that the three students vacate the Union. After an objection, the students left the Union
unescorted. Later in the day, University officials obtained warrants for the arrest of
Michels, Simon, and Enlund on the charges of disorderly conduct and obscene and

\footnote{11 "Arrests," \textit{Second Coming}, 9 December 1969.}
indecent behavior. All three turned themselves in. Local courts eventually found all three not guilty on any counts.  

The court dismissal of Michels, Simon, and Enlund did not end the controversy surrounding the Peoples’ Lounge. Despite some administration recommendations to replace the plastic benches with more comfortable furniture, the Union did nothing. The game of furniture switching continued and intensified in many respects. Further, the publicity over the first incident drew more people to the area both as spectators and as participants. Similar to the Second Coming, the Peoples’ Lounge was not an issue with the student body until the administration made it one.

In the afternoon of February 11, "freaks" again transplanted furniture out of other rooms of the Union and, led by Michels, began discussions on how to gain admittance to the upcoming Board of Regents meeting. As the discussion began to break up, several members of Theta Chi fraternity moved in on the "freaks" to replace the furniture again. In the process of moving furniture, a fraternity member knocked a female student associated with the "freaks" to the ground. A male student accompanying her rushed to the aid of his companion by trying to tackle the fraternity member. A fight ensued involving the "freaks," fraternity members, and some observers. Assistant Dean of Students, Ken Moon, in one of his first actions in his new office, moved to break up the fight. The administration threatened to prosecute both groups, though took no action against either. Michels proclaimed following the incident that, "This is a teachers school and people with long hair aren't teachers [according to the administration]." Barry Simon added, "When there's Student Power and student action, the administration cannot

enforce their repressive rules." The implication of Simon that the administration, after failing to convict himself and the two other students in a court of law, now resorted to other tactics, through the use of "puppet" fraternities to harass the "freaks" does not have a known foundation, but was widely believed by the "freaks" at the time.  

By 1970, student activists' frustrations from dealing with the administration, demonstrated by administrative responses to issues like the Second Coming and the Peoples’ Lounge, further discouraged student expectations of changing Eastern through official channels. As the black students had before their seizure of Pierce Hall, white students now formed a list of demands from the administration and set about to gain them. Student Body President Thomas Moors, Student Court Justice Jan Kaulins, Student Body Vice President Robert Sattler, and leading student activist and "freak" Barry Simon obtained permission from the University to present forty-eight demands to the February 1970 meeting of the Board of Regents. A majority of the demands focused on allowing students to become involved in almost every aspect of the running of the University, from a seat on the Regents to student managers at the Union bookstore. Also included in the student demands were demands from black students that the administration had not yet addressed from the previous year. Black students now demanded even further increased black enrollment and further additions to black support services and the black studies department. Campus police kept about one hundred students staged outside the locked doors of the Regents. Refusing admission to the Regents' meeting raised the issue of the legality of closing off meetings to the public for the first time since the SDS had done it during their October 1969 Mobilization.  

Moors failed to attack as expected, but instead apologized for taking up the Regent's time when provided the opportunity to present student demands. The other three representatives then followed Moor's tepid beginning by stating why the Regents should address their demands and their disgust with trying to go through the administration to achieve their needs. The Regents listened to the hour-long presentation of the students then dismissed the students. Moors said of the meeting later, "... the significance of the meeting [lay] in the fact that this was the first time that we [had] the courage to stand up and say what is wrong with the University. Perhaps Dr. Sponberg [would] realize that he is not the only source of authority in the University." Through his statement, Moors held the Regents in high regard, although this was not a sentiment shared by a majority of the student body for long.  

Some student leaders may have been enthusiastic about their prospects for bringing about change following their presentation to the Regents meeting; also, they were not prepared for a brick wall more substantial than the one they encountered with president Sponberg. Following a brief discussion, the Regents did not even consider the possibility of opening their meetings to the public and, judging by the fact that the proposals of the students did not even make the official minutes of the meeting, did not seriously consider any of the other forty-eight demands either.  

Anxieties caused by the Regents' inaction in meeting any of the demands grew among student leaders over the month before the next Regents meeting. Students and faculty began to apply more pressure on the Regents to at least obey the state constitution and open their meetings to the public. Conceding and frustrated, students reduced their

16 Ibid.  
forty-eight demands to six. In addition to the ever-present remaining black student demands, the new list focused on allowing student participation in every aspect of running the University. Students demanded formulation of policy explicitly concerning the distribution of student underground newspapers, like *Obsidian* and *Second Coming*, and return the Peoples’ Lounge to the control of the students using it.\(^\text{18}\)

At the March 18 Regents meeting, over two hundred students showed up to demand participation. At first, the Regents turned all students away, but the students loudly protested and threatened a forceful entry if not admitted. The Regents compromised with Dean Aceto, who mediated with the students and allowed a delegation of seventeen students, led by student body Vice President Robert Sattler, in to present their new demands. While the delegation of students again petitioned to the Regents for change, the locked out students continued to protest their inability to view the proceedings. At one point, the students even barricaded the doors, stating that if they, "couldn't go in, then the Regents wouldn't be allowed to come out."\(^\text{19}\)

Inside the meeting room, the Regents agreed to consider the six demands presented by Sattler. They rejected a demand to give a student delegate a voting chair on the Regents outright because the governor appointed the Regents, and only the governor could grant that demand. They also rejected demands to better finance student organizations and to provide legal aid to students. The Regents debated student involvement in deciding curriculum at length before turning responsibility for making that decision over to the president's office. They dismissed a return of the Peoples’ Lounge because it was also not under their jurisdiction. In the end, the Regents acted on

\(^\text{18}\) “Students confront Board of Regents,” and, “Regents reject demands; other requests considered,” *Eastern Echo*, 20 March 1970.

\(^\text{19}\) Ibid.
only one of the six demands, formulating a policy on all publications distributed on campus and acted against the students. The new policy forbade the sale of products that were "defamatory to the character of students, faculty, staff, or administration." It also gave the Vice President of Business and Finance authorization to monitor the outlets of sale of any underground publication. Although the Regent's setting policy was a reaction to their demands, it is doubtful that students expected to be restricted further. Thus, both students who had been admitted and forced to wait outside left the meeting bitterly disappointed over the dead-end they found in the Regents.20

Student disappointments for March were not over yet. On March 10, 1970, Vice President of Student Affairs Robert Zumwinkle, one of the only remaining administrators with a history of successful negotiations with other administrators on behalf of the students, announced his intention of leaving Eastern during the upcoming summer for a similar position at the University of Kentucky. Zumwinkle's stated reason for leaving was the opportunity for him to advance in his field, but students already knew that their admiration of Zumwinkle was not popular with Sponberg. Because of this, portions of the student body speculated that Sponberg forced out Zumwinkle. 21

Sponberg probably could have taken the rejection of student demands by the Regents and bent it to his advantage by making concessions of his own. With a token of peace, students may have been able to forgive the President for his past opposition to their demands and regained some respect from the students. Sponberg though pushed


21 “Dr. Z the liaison leaves,” and “Questions raised by resignation,” *Eastern Echo*, 13 March 1970.
already tense relations with the student body by not objecting, and in one case directly involving himself, in the firing of six prominent liberal faculty members.

In December 1969, the Department of English issued dismissal notices from Professors Eric Eaton and Leigh Travis. The English department dismissed them on the grounds that their PhDs they were about to earn from the University of Michigan were in a specialty not needed by the department, and also, in part that professors in the department possessed a preponderance PhDs from the University of Michigan and they sought diversity in alma mater. The two dismissals also followed heated confrontations between the two professors and their department head over curriculum issues. Eaton had refused to allow a departmental inspection of his files to ensure that his students in Basic Composition were writing the required number of papers for the class and refused to take regular attendance in any of his classes or issue the departmental-approved "Student Guide" to composition. Eaton claimed the guide to be, "a means of the University to control students rather than help them learn." Travis also publicly disagreed with the distribution of the Student Guide on similar grounds. In 1967, Travis had also opposed a proposed departmental exam while also openly supporting the rights of students to criticize faculty in public forums. The classroom policies and politics of both fired professors caused them to be very popular among students and their dismissal viewed as a grave injustice by the student body. The disclosure that one of the professor hired to replace them earned his PhD from the University of Michigan, furthered the resentment toward the administration. 22

22 “Instructors publicly accuse administration, Eastern Echo, 7 April 1970; Eastern Michigan University archives, Student Demonstration Box – Miscellaneous Folder.
In February 1970, the physics department denied tenure to associate professor Lawrence Hochman following his fourth year as an instructor at Eastern. Departmental reasons for Hochman's dismissal focused on perceived "deficiencies in behavior" without providing example or evidence. Students correctly believed that Hochman had been fired because of his involvement, along with more than half a dozen other faculty members, with the distribution of the Second Coming. Hochman had also been an open supporter of student rights surrounding the issue of the Obsidian. Hochman filed a grievance against the University and the physics department and spent the rest of the year fighting for his job back.23

David Cahill, a first-year professor in the Department of Political Science, followed Hochman in the growing list of fired faculty. Cahill used the background from his involvement in an underground newspaper as an undergraduate at Indiana University to help Frank Michels start the Second Coming. Cahill also handled most of the bookkeeping and typing for the underground newspaper in its early days. Unlike the other fired faculty, Cahill's department head recommended re-appointment to his position the following school year. Sponberg, however, stepped in and recommended to the Regents the dismissal Cahill regardless of departmental recommendation. Both in his written statement to the Regents and in a confrontation with Cahill, Sponberg implied that Cahill's firing was the result of his association with the Second Coming. Appealing

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23 See Eastern Michigan University archives for complete transcripts of the hearings surrounding the appeals of Hochman; See also, “Two Professors contracts cancelled,” Eastern Echo, 6 March 1970.
Sponberg's decision, Cahill won the right to a much more thorough examination from a board consisting of other administrators and faculty.24

Two more professors rounded out the list of fired faculty by the middle of March 1970, when their respective departments issued summons of dismissal to Assistant Professor Glenn Hutchinson of the Sociology Department and Roger Staples of the English Department. The same Student Guide that Travis and Eaton opposed and, in part, fired over, Staples also vigorously opposed. Staples also encouraged his students to use the background in writing that they would get in his composition classes to work on the underground newspaper Obsidian. Staples' department head informed him that he had been "too slow in getting his PhD" from the University of Michigan. Further, that like Travis and Eaton, Eastern did not need another professor with a Michigan PhD. The University released Hutchinson for reasons never made public, and because the details of the appeal by Hutchinson, not discussed by either party at the time. Hutchinson’s reputation among students was of being a strong supporter of the rights of students and actively encouraged their campaigning for involvement in university affairs. Hutchinson also publicly advocated the rights of students to strike in order to achieve their goals and more classroom independence for faculty members.25

Student activists believed that the firing of six faculty in the space of four months to be a conspiracy by the Regents and administration to break the back of student activism by removing faculty supporters. For their part, the administration only alienated and angered students further by their moves. In an April 19, 1970, letter to the student

body, Sponberg claimed, "There was no faculty purge at Eastern and... all decisions were made on the departmental level." The fact that proof existed, at least in the case of Cahill, to prove different, made Sponberg appear deceitful to the students.  

Even students previously non-disposed to activism or involvement felt threatened by the purge Sponberg initiated. Not all of the professors were advocates of student rights, but their policies in the classroom helped draw students together. Protesters to the firings distributed literature stating that because of the loss of faculty in such a short period, Eastern was in danger of losing its accreditation. "Freaks" and "straights" alike gathered in condemnation of the administration. Much as the protest to Sponberg's statements in *U.S. News and World Report* and student polls had revealed links between the needs of the student body and the motives of the SDS, the purge of faculty revealed links between "freaks" and "straights."

Following their March meeting with the Regents, students continued to petition for and eventually received, the concession that opened the Regent's meeting to the public. This concession though only came following a mass outpouring of sentiment towards the students by most faculty and even some administrators in the week before the April 15 meeting. As it turned out, the frustration of the student body, by this time, had passed well beyond the point of simple negotiating and minor concessions.

In late March, a group known as the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) formed under the leadership of alumnus Tim Osborne and student Paul Mazmanian. SLAM fully embodied the counterculture movement, and though Osborne and Mazmanian led on paper, due to the communal structure of the organization, many

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other leaders rose and fell before the organization dissipated. For students frustrated by the administration and Regents for the last time, SLAM appeared to meet all their needs. Although SLAM claimed to represent the needs of the student body, they did not intend to stop a confrontation with the administration or anything else as soon as it began. Satisfaction did not come through the achievement of goals, but the uprooting the structure of Eastern Michigan, without having a replacement.27

The first act of SLAM was to reduce the six student demands from the March Regent's meeting down to four with a plan to present at the first Regent's meeting in April. Topping the list was the re-hiring of all "purged" faculty members, followed by student involvement of running the University on every level, opening Regents meetings to a student voting member, and repeating the demands of the BSA that had yet to be addressed by the University. Instead of just walking out of the meeting disgruntled, if their demands went unheeded, SLAM planned to shut down Eastern with a massive student strike.28

At the April 15, 1970, Regents meeting, over six hundred students filed into the McKenny Union Ballroom to observe the proceedings of their governing Board. Throughout the morning session, the Regents carried on with their regular business, including approving the resignation of Dean Thomas Aceto, ignoring the calls from students to hear their demands. Aceto, like the students, had reached the end of his string in dealing with the leadership style of Sponberg. Aceto claimed he could tolerate

working under Sponberg, as long as Dr. Zumwinkle remained on the administration, but since Zumwinkle was leaving, so would he. Students thus lost their last perceived ally in the administration.²⁹

Students responded to the Regent's approval of Aceto's resignation by intensifying their calls to be heard and conducting generally disruptive behavior, including periodically shutting off the lights. As lunch approached, the Regents voted to adjourn to go off campus. Students demanded their time to speak before the lunch break, even ordering sandwiches for the Regents to eat in the McKenny ballroom. The Regents adjourned without regard to student action much to the disdain of the students, who felt pushed closer to their planned action.³⁰

Following the lunch break, rumors circulated the ballroom that the administration planned to run the students out of the Regent's meeting in the same fashion that police and administrators ran BSA out of Pierce Hall. This rumor and other rumors served only to heighten tensions when the Regents resumed their meeting. Before Paul Mazmanian listed his demands calls for a strike began to ring out from the audience. These calls intensified through the afternoon as the Regents responded to the interruptions of the students by delaying their being able to read their demands. The decisions made by the Regents, although brought on by student behavior, made a terrible situation much worse.³¹

Ultimately, though, it did not matter that the Regents delayed acting on Mazmanian's four demands. The demands were not that important by this point. The

²⁹ Ibid; “Aceto, Dean of Students, resigns,” and, Aceto finds role impossible,” Eastern Echo, 17 April 1970.
³¹ Ibid.
demands had become a symbolic representation of months of student frustrations with the administration, and the hallmark behaviors of the counterculture took over. By the time Mazmanian was recognized and allowed to list the four demands, smaller groups, representing SLAM, were already on their way to Pray-Harrold to announce the start of the strike. These groups combed the campus to recruit participants to protest in front of Sponberg's house while spreading a torrent of half-truths about their meeting with the Regents. That night over eight hundred students gathered on the lawn of Sponberg's house, without incident, to voice their displeasure with the administration.\footnote{32 Ibid.}

The next morning, April 16, about two hundred picket-carrying students arrived at Pray-Harrold and took up position outside the four main entrances. Members of the BSA met in emergency session later in the morning and decided, with reluctance, because few white students supported their Pierce Hall occupation, to join the SLAM strike. Sponberg's arrival on the scene brought some student hope that maybe the President had reconsidered his hard line. This hope shattered when Sponberg launched a scathing attack on one group of students picketing, threatening to suspend anyone blocked entrance to Pray-Harrold. Sponberg's words drew jeers from the students.\footnote{33 Ibid.}

Over Thursday and Friday, the numbers of students participating in the strike doubled, and then doubled again, although many of the participants possessed half-hearted at best. Large numbers of students carried pickets endorsing the strike in one hand and books for their next class in the other, thus keeping both the picket lines and classrooms full of students. Local labor unions and University employees, including faculty, unanimously approved the motives of the students but refused to send any
pickets or join the strike for students who ultimately ended up in class. The failure of SLAM to obtain the participation of University employees from the power plant and dining services meant that their ultimate goal of shutting down the University peacefully was unobtainable. The strike continued without significant incident and intervention from campus, city, or county police.34

Nightly demonstrations on the lawn of Sponberg's house became a regular end to a day of striking for the students. As the number of students in the strike grew, so did the intensity and tone. Students realized that the strike, unlike every other student demonstration, was not going to die out by the next day, so more became willing to participate. The intensity of the strike reached a climax the afternoon of April 22. More than 1500 students left the picket lines surrounding Pray-Harrold and converged on Pierce Hall to force its closure. Unlike the BSA occupation, which chained the doors to prevent entry or exit, so many students filled the halls that the building shut down without locking one door.35

This new confrontational approach of the students forced Sponberg to act on two fronts, as he saw it, to save his University. First, the administration filed for a restraining order in U.S. District Court against the students to prevent them from entering any University building or protesting outside the President's house. Secondly, Sponberg agreed to begin meeting with representatives from SLAM to negotiate the demands of the

students. The court did not issue an injunction against the students; instead, it encouraged both sides to meet and negotiate.\(^{36}\)

Sponberg may never have had called for negotiations had he been informed of divisions rising within the student body over strike tactics following the seizure of Pierce Hall. Students who agreed with raising the stakes of the strike by occupying campus buildings followed SLAM leaders Osborne and Mazmanian, while students who favored passive resistance and peaceful picketing followed student body president Tom Moors. With the splitting of white student groups, the BSA started to command that their demands take precedence over white demands. If Sponberg and his administration had been observant of the student body or still had an insider like Lawrence, Zumwinkle, or Aceto, he may have been able to hold out as the strike fell apart. As it was though, despite their emerging divisions, students entered into negotiation with the administration with the upper hand.

As negotiation began on April 23, 1970, the administration procured SLAM's agreement to put a moratorium on the strike in good faith towards the negotiation process. SLAM called for a four-day cessation of striking, however, it is undoubtedly likely that the administration intended Osborne to call for an indefinite moratorium. Both negotiating teams slated a target date for resolution of all the demands for May 11, then, regardless of the position of negotiations, a separate team of black student negotiators would replace the white students to address black student issues.\(^{37}\)

Negotiations over the next days yielded fantastic results for the student body mostly buoyed through the involvement of Tom Moors. The administration rejected the

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\(^{36}\) Ibid.

notion of the students having a voting seat on the Regents but allowed students to form an advisory council, as part of student government, to improve student communications with the Regents. Regents agreed to open their meetings through a petition signed by the students who wished to attend and submitted to the Regents ten days in advance of the meeting. A student advisory council to the Student Affairs division of the administration formed and students allowed voicing their opinion in departmental curriculum policy making. Students continued to gain administrative concessions allowing them input in almost every administrative office, all the way from the Alumni Association down to the physical plant. One of the primary student demands, the re-hiring of all fired faculty, was the only demand that Sponberg refused. This became the sore spot of the negotiations and on April 28, despite administrative appeals to the contrary, students returned to the picket lines.  

Despite inflexibility on the issue of the purged faculty, Sponberg and other Administrators proved to be generous in nearly every other area of negotiation, especially considering SLAM supporters made the process of negotiating very difficult. SLAM supporters allowed into negotiations regularly interrupted the proceedings with squirt guns, balloon popping, and outbursts of profanity. Those kept outside the room pounded on doors and windows and tried to sneak into negotiations. On more than one occasion, an administrative representative left the room in disgust. On May 4, Moors and SLAM leaders conceded the negotiating floor to representatives from the BSA a week earlier than scheduled.  

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38 Ibid.  
39 Ibid.
Black students had already achieved most of their demands because of negotiations with the administration following their seizure of Pierce Hall. The only issue not addressed by the ad hoc committees established by the administration was amnesty for those involved in the seizure of Pierce Hall, but since justice had already taken its course, that issue was moot. Black students now further demanded to raise black student enrollment to a minimum of 18% by 1975 and the establishment of support services to help black students stay in school. They further demanded the addition of a black community center to the Black Studies program. Negotiations with the BSA had not proceeded past the opening formalities yet when events on the campus of Kent State gripped campus. All negotiations took on a secondary role as the confrontation between the students and administration took on a new role with new importance.\footnote{Ibid.}

Hostile relations between the student body and the administration built up through the winter of 1969 and 1970 then climaxed in peaceful and fruitful negotiations in the spring of 1970. Unfortunately, the administration had pushed the student body too far and now had to pay by dealing with representatives from SLAM. Although SLAM represented the needs of the students, being a product of the counterculture their goals more aligned with bringing down the entire structure of the University, instead of just meeting the needs of the students. At nightly rallies that followed negotiations, SLAM representatives flooded campus with torrents of half-truths and lies about the negotiations. The fact that SLAM disgusted some administrators with their activities inside the negotiating room that administrators left negotiations, SLAM exaggerated and embellished one side of the story to the student body. After the firing, or accepting the
departure, of the faculty and administration, administrative efforts to counter these lies never made it back to the student body.
Chapter Five:

Ten Days in May 1970: The Riots

When U.S. troops invaded Cambodia on May 1, 1969, the student strike at Eastern, following the four-day moratorium, had been back in full swing again for a little over a week. Across the nation, people saw the invasion as an escalation of the conflict in Southeast Asia despite promises from the Nixon administration of an imminent American withdrawal from Vietnam. Anti-war protests erupted with a renewed vigor and unprecedented participation in both cities and on college campuses. The majority of students at Eastern, however, continued to exhibit apparent nonchalance towards the war in Vietnam and waged their campaign to gain personal rights from the University administration.¹

One of the many campuses thrown into turmoil was Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. The make-up of Kent was strikingly similar to that of the conservative, blue-collar, middle-class Eastern. Students at Kent, like Eastern, never outwardly expressed large-scale interest in activism against the war in Vietnam, but rather, also, like Eastern, concerned themselves with improving their conditions on campus. However, many students at Kent had been greatly irritated by their administration's handling of a protest by some campus radicals, their own "freaks," to the invasion of Cambodia. Instead of punishing the small group of protesters who had rained rocks on the police the night of May 1, administrators at Kent applied blanket curfews that cut short the weekend plans of those students who had remained around campus to enjoy the first warm weekend of

spring. Students who had previously planned long nights in the bars of Kent, now found themselves restricted to campus at sunset. Most students replaced their previous plans by joining the radicals protesting the war. A carnival atmosphere created by the light-hearted students mixed with the tension between the anti-war protesters and the National Guard unit enforcing the curfew on Kent through the weekend. On the afternoon of Monday, May 4, tensions climaxed, and events quickly snowballed. In the end, the Ohio National Guard opened fire on a crowd of protesters and observing students, killing four students.2

At Eastern on May 4, news of the incident at Kent State arrived as SLAM and BSA leaders emerged from their strike negotiation meeting with administrators. Most students at Eastern, for the remainder of Monday and most of the day Tuesday, brooded over the concept of a National Guard unit coming onto campus and killing students. Eastern Echo Columnist Margo Doble guided students unable to relate the events at Kent to their own lives through a front-page article in the Echo that traced both the physical comparisons of the student body and campuses as well as the history of protest between Eastern and Kent. Doble made all students aware that the tragedy could have just as easily have happened in Ypsilanti.3

Eastern students’ shock over the incident at Kent turned to anger beginning late in the afternoon of May 5. As was regular during the evening following a strike day, SLAM sponsored a rally in the early evening on the Pierce Hall mall to discuss the advancement of discussions with the administration. At this rally, a student rose and announced his intention of sitting in on the street in front of the President's house. The student vowed to

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3 “Kent - sister to EMU?” Eastern Echo, May 12, 1970.
stay there until the Sponberg addressed the question of Eastern's response to the Kent State incident. About 100 other students joined the impromptu sit-in while approximately 400 other students followed to support. As the students began their sit-in, Mrs. Sponberg emerged from the house to inform the students that her husband was not at home, so he could not answer any questions. In response, the students vowed to continue their demonstration until Sponberg returned and addressed them. With Forest Avenue completely blocked to traffic, the Ypsilanti police arrived, threatening to arrest any student in the street.4

Tensions between the protesters and police mounted as the minutes passed. Newly resigned Dean Thomas Aceto arrived at the President's house to broker a settlement but was unsuccessful. Conflict between the students and police seemed inevitable when Father Roger Stanley intervened and allowed students to wait in the Newman Center, across the street from the President's house, instead of the street. The students agreed and followed Stanley to Newman with the expectation of meeting with Sponberg later. Two fires erupted on campus between the times that the students began their sit-in on Forest and moved to Newman. Two females set a fire in the trashcan in one of the women's restrooms in Roosevelt Hall. The other was a firebomb thrown through a window into Welch Hall. Campus resources inside both of the buildings extinguished the fires before they caused significant damage.5

When Sponberg arrived home and his staff informed of the events on campus, he decided against meeting with the students gathered at the Newman Center. Sponberg's decision seems logical in light of his recent strike experiences negotiating with SLAM.

5 Ibid.
Still attempting to broker peace, Father Stanley led 200 students from the Newman Center to the ROTC offices in Welch Hall as depicted in Figure 5.1. At Welch, the students agreed to say a prayer in the memory of the students at Kent State, and then return to their dorms or apartments. Arriving at Welch Hall with Father Stanley, a small group of students separated from the larger group and entered the building through a broken window. The students who had entered the building opened the front doors of Welch, inviting all students to occupy the building. Some of the group who had arrived from the Newman Center entered Welch Hall. Others, including Father Stanley, moved to block the entrance into the building and maintain peace.\footnote{“War, Slayings Spur Protest,” \textit{Ann Arbor News}, 6 May 1970; “Demonstrations spur class cancellation, \textit{Eastern Echo}, 8 May 1970.}

Figure 5.1: Protest Movement May 5

On the brink of being overwhelmed, campus security called on the Ypsilanti police for help in subduing the crowd in front of Welch. The police responded by sending forty officers to the scene. The arrival of a large number of off-campus police...
further aggravated the students gathered in and around Welch. Dean Aceto and Father Stanley stood between the police and students trying to broker some peace. Between the insults and occasional stones that the students threw at the police, Aceto and Stanley persuaded small numbers of both police and students to leave until the situation somewhat defused. Some students lingered around Welch Hall to harass passing motorists by occasionally blocking Cross Street, but they too soon left the scene. The action was over for the night with the only casualties being some first-floor windows of Welch Hall and some minor fire and smoke damage in Roosevelt and Welch Halls.7

Depicted in Figure 5.2, the following day, May 6, at noon, the protest that had begun the night before, resumed. Students gathered at the flagpole on the Pierce Hall mall to hold a memorial service for the slain students of Kent State. Following the service, a group of about one hundred students, led by SLAM leaders, split from the leading group and marched on Welch Hall. The group stoned the building, breaking many second floor windows and injuring two people inside a classroom. Chanting, the group then entered the building to disrupt classes while also vandalizing hallways and fire equipment.8

7 Ibid.
From Welch, protesters marched through campus to gather support for a proposed two-day cancellation of classes that the Faculty Senate was voting on in McKenny Union. Protesting students swarmed through the halls of McKenny and then flowed up to Cross Street, in front of the Union, to begin a sit-in. The students announced they would leave the street only after an affirmative vote on the resolution.⁹

Arthur Ellis and Ed Linta, administrative assistant to the Dean of Students, arrived at the request of the President to take down the names of any students whom they recognized who participated in vandalism. Ellis and Linta recorded the names of six students they recognized and handed the list over to Sponberg who immediately suspended all six under the authority provided him by the Mass Disturbance Policy. Sponberg, later that day obtained restraining orders from Washtenaw County Circuit Court against the six suspended students and nine others, one of whom was Frank Michels, who had flunked out of Eastern in March. In addition to the fifteen named in

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⁹ Ibid.
the restraining orders, Sponberg was able to obtain 200 "John or Jane Doe" named orders from the same court, to be distributed at his discretion.  

Inside the crammed Faculty Senate meeting room, Tim Osborne and out-going Student Body President, Tom Moors, presented proposals from the student body calling for a two-day cancellation of classes and a University-sponsored memorial service to the slain students of Kent State. Chuck Waller presented the unanimously passed Student Senate proposal to the Faculty Senate. The resolution called for a cancellation of classes on May 7 and 8 to allow for emotions on campus to subside as well as to serve as a memorial to the Kent State students and protest to the invasion of Cambodia. Student representatives were probably aware of parallel proposals from the Faculty Senate but still took the opportunity to voice their opinion.

Following the students' proposals to the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senator George Perkins introduced a five-item resolution that he drafted the day before the meeting. The Perkins Resolution would:

1. Deplore the invasion of Cambodia.
2. Deplore the use of the National Guard and the shooting of the students at Kent State University.
3. Deplore the setting of a national tone by the President of the United States and his chief executive agents that encourages violations of constitutional guarantees and makes for consequent unrest and violence.
4. Express a lack of confidence in the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of Defense.
5. Call for a one-day cessation of classes on Friday, May 8, 1970, as a token gesture expressing our sense of the seriousness of the current national and international situation.

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10 Ibid.
11 Eastern Michigan University Faculty Senate meeting minutes, May 6, 1970.
12 Ibid.
Faculty senators debated the Perkins Resolution vigorously; focusing on a disagreement over items one through four among department heads. The department heads unanimously endorsed item five, before Professor Stuart Karabenick introduced an amendment that would lengthen the cancellation of classes from one to two days. Item five was then further amended to include a memorial service and teach-in, in place of regularly scheduled classes. Item five passed, separate from the other four items, by a 42-7-1 margin following a heated debate over whether to vote separately on each of the items or the resolution as a whole. In the end, senators tabled items one through four and adjourned the meeting.\textsuperscript{13}

Tensions on campus subsided, for the time being, with the passage of the resolution by the Faculty Senate. Students ended their occupation of Cross Street in favor of the surrounding lawns and sidewalks. Ypsilanti police had been working patiently over the two-hour student occupation of Cross Street to re-route traffic around the students avoiding confrontation with students. Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Charles Helppie, personally presented Sponberg with the endorsed fifth item of the Perkins resolution. Sponberg immediately signed and authorized the distribution of the news. That night, some students began a march through campus, causing some minor damage to buildings, but for the most part, campus stayed quiet.\textsuperscript{14}

Campus emptied for the long weekend. Most students took the two-day cancellation of classes as an opportunity to go home and enjoy an extended weekend. The planned teach-ins and memorial service, although very poorly attended due to the student exodus from campus, still occurred as planned. Over one thousand students had

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
protested in Cross Street and McKenny Union for class cancellation and memorial services, yet only three hundred attended either scheduled memorial service.\textsuperscript{15}

Although most of the rest of the students left campus for the week after the services, some did stay. One of the intentions in giving students a four-day weekend was to allow them to relax and let some of their emotions over Kent State to calm down. Most students relaxed, although some groups used the time off to plan more confrontations with the administration at the resumption of classes. SLAM members met at the flagpole on the Pierce Hall mall Sunday evening and planned a rally for the following morning.\textsuperscript{16}

Monday morning, SLAM members were present at the entrances of nearly every building on campus distributing leaflets announcing a rally on the Pierce mall. At 11 a.m., about 100 students gathered at the Pierce mall to listen to several of their fellow students condemn every authority figure from President Nixon to President Sponberg. As the rally broke up, about half of the crowd began a march around campus and through campus buildings. Adding about twenty-five other students to their number from classes that they disrupted, the marchers made their way to the intersection of Ford and Burton streets, and at 1 p.m., the seventy-five students began a sit-in.\textsuperscript{17}

At this point, both the protesters and the administration made several extremely crucial decisions. Unlike every other protesting group at Eastern, the students in the

\textsuperscript{15} "Suitcase EMU true to form," \textit{Eastern Echo}, 12 May 1970.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid; Eastern Michigan University Department of History (ref., Dr. Richard Abbot), \textit{The Report of the Sandalow Committee on Unrest at Eastern Michigan University}; Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstration Box - Miscellaneous folder.

street did not voice any demands from authorities or administrators. This development introduced an idea never dealt with at Eastern. Anarchy was here, and the administration was slow in formulating its reaction. The administration could either wait out the protest, continuing to re-route traffic or employ the Mass Disturbance Policy and take action. The administration elected the former and patiently allowed the students to remain in the street.\^18

The students in the intersection soon realized that they were not receiving the attention that they were seeking from either the administration or the student body and mutually decided to escalate their action. The sit-in participants rose and marched through campus to the intersection of Forest and Putnam and resumed their sit-in on that intersection as depicted in Figure 5.3. Forest Avenue, unlike Putnam, Ford, or Burton Streets was not a campus street, even though it ran through the center of campus, but fell under the authority of the city. No longer was the Mass Disturbance Policy even applicable to the students. By occupying the intersection of Forest and Putnam, the students were breaking city ordinances on city property. University police once again moved in and re-routed traffic.\^19

The protesters erected a public address system in the street campaigning for more participants, yet still presented no demands. Unlike the occupation of the Ford and Burton intersection, this occupation gained a crowd of around 400 observers in under three hours, which remained oblivious to the purpose of the sit-in. Opinions circulating through the crowd of the purpose ranged from a protest of the invasion of Cambodia to

\^18 Ibid.
\^19 Ibid.
support of all "purged" faculty, and students kept off the campus by restraining orders. A female participant in the sit-in later testified that she had chosen to join the sit-in because, after the demands of the Student Government were not met students had to stand as one, like a union... Maybe if Sponberg saw half the students sitting in the street, maybe he would think, and realize something had to be done.20

Intermittent demands of a meeting with Sponberg made by the protesters as the day wore on while administrators increasingly urged the end of the occupation of the intersection. Students made no indication that even if Sponberg would meet with them that they would end the sit-in.

Off-campus events escalated as quickly as they had on campus. Although campus and Ypsilanti police re-routed traffic, some citizens of Ypsilanti, became annoyed with the small detour around campus and complained to Mayor Boatwright, who turned the job of clearing the students off the street over to his chief of police, Herbert Smith. Smith, in turn, rallied support from other police agencies in the area, including Washtenaw County Sheriff Douglas Harvey.21

Following three hours of peaceful occupation of the Forest and Putnam intersection, city police arrived on the scene in squad cars at 5:00 p.m. Accompanying the city police were members of the Washtenaw Tactical Mobile Unit (TMU) and a small contingent of riot-equipped state troopers, bringing the total number of police on the scene to around two hundred. The state troopers arrived on the scene in riot gear in an Eastern bus outfitted to serve as a police van. The use of a University bus to transport

20 Sandalow Report.
police officers and sheriffs indicated to the students that the University was responsible for the increased police presence and at least a certain degree of cooperation between the University and the off-campus law enforcers. However, there exists no substantial evidence to support that conclusion. Nevertheless, tensions around the intersection were peaking and Ypsilanti police surveying the scene requested further reinforcement from state and county law enforcement offices.22

The leader of the sit-in, SLAM member Paul Galia, approached Chief Smith and announced that it was the intention of the protesters to be arrested and that they intended to cooperate in the arrest process peacefully. Smith and Galia negotiated the best way to arrest the students. As negotiated, police arrested Galia along with several other of the protesters closest to the police. Following the arrest of the group with Galia, the remaining protestors broke the agreement and locked arms and legs. Police used their batons to separate the protesters. Some of the protesters continued to resist by going limp or even fighting back. The extent of the effort that police used to break up the students was of really no importance. What was influential in the context of the situation was the fact that students viewed the force as excessive, further inflaming the situation.23

The now almost five hundred spectators of the occupation of Forest watched at first in stunned silence as police dragged their fellow students from the scene. Students then overcame their silence as police began to use increasingly violent means to subdue the protesters. Taunts, curses, and stones flung from the crowd of spectators. A wall of

TMU and state police moved between the spectators and the seated protesters. The officers that separated the two groups decked out in riot gear with some carrying shotguns and others accompanied by attack dogs. The thirty-nine students unlocked from each other with police batons were not strangers on television, but the classmates and roommates of many of the observers. Militaristic scenes like the one unfolding in front of them happened on other campuses, but not Eastern. The sight of their fellow students bruised and handcuffed turned irritation into rage.\(^{24}\)

The intent of the police action, to clear students out of Forest Avenue, was a success for less than five minutes. Word of the action in the street had spread so quickly through both words of mouth and media, that by the time the police left the scene, the crowd of spectators had nearly doubled to one thousand. Most of the spectators milled about, blocking the street where the first sit-in had left off. Students relating the story of the arrests of the thirty-nine original protesters to latecomers embellished the methods the police had used. The stories quickly circulated and contributed to the growing number of spectators and the anger of the crowd. Members of other colleges, radicals from Ann Arbor, interested citizens of Ypsilanti, and some high school students joined the crowd, which soared to over five thousand by 8 p.m.\(^{25}\)

The heightened threat of violence from the increasing number of protesters on Forest brought campus, Ypsilanti and state police with the TMU back to the scene at 8:30 p.m. Depicted in Figure 5.3, the police formed a line at the intersection of Perrin and Forest, just off campus, and began to move slowly, followed by squad cars, onto campus and towards the mass of students. The crowd flung continuous taunts and occasional

\(^{24}\) Ibid.
rocks at the passing police, but willingly parted and as soon as the police passed, filed
back in behind them to continue their occupation of the street.26

Despite the apparent disdain for the presence of police on campus, the majority of
the crowd was peaceful. Most of the five thousand people gathered treated occupation of
Forest as a carnival, wrapped in the opportunity to show their discontent with the
University, the war, or any other cause. For some, the gathering of more people on
Forest, than lived on campus, was a chance to capitalize on the situation by roaming the
crowd inciting violence, while others countered the promoters of violence with efforts to
calm the crowd.27

Figure 5.3 Protest Movement May 11 (afternoon)

The main body of the occupants of Forest Avenue did very little damage to
University property, but small groups on the fringes vandalized and incited further
confrontation. Around 8:30 p.m. and shortly after protestors rolled a University van into

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
the street from a loading bay at the Union and turned it into a barricade on the street, Sherzer Hall was firebombed. The same protesters who rolled the van, used garbage cans and street signs to form another barricade at the end of the campus section of Forest Avenue. At 10:00 p.m., Mayor Boatwright ordered an immediate curfew set in the area around campus. As news of the curfew spread through the crowd, in response, much of the crowd began to leave and go home. A contributing factor to the crowd breaking up may also have that the police had not been back in force to Forest Street since 8:30 p.m. By 11:30 p.m. crowd estimates down to approximately one thousand people and, as midnight was drawing near, it seemed as if the remaining groups were also going to go home. Forest Avenue had remained closed to automobile traffic, except for the brief time of the police sweeps down the street, since around 2:30 p.m.

Then, shortly before midnight, the Ypsilanti police returned to the scene for the third time that day. The exact reasoning behind the actions of the police is unclear though it is likely law enforcement had become impatient with the remaining protestors in the street. The curfew issued by Mayor Boatwright had been in effect for two hours, and the presence of the last protestors coupled with actions away from Forest Avenue was a challenge to law enforcement and the authority of Mayor Boatwright.

To clear the last protestors from Forest Avenue, the Ypsilanti police came with reinforcements from the TMU and State police. Unlike the first time though, all the law officers arrived on the scene decked out in riot gear, carrying tear gas grenades, shotguns, some long rifles, and led by a line of attack dogs. A helicopter that had been circling the scene since 10 p.m. swooped low and deputies using a bullhorn ordered the remaining

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
protesters to abandon the street or risk arrest for violating curfew. Some of the remaining protesters left the area but many more responded to the request of the police with chants and epithets. As in their prior sweeps up Forest, the police organized into a line on the corner of Perrin and Forest then began their march up the street. Instead of obliging the passage of the police, this time the protesters stood their ground behind makeshift barricades of garbage cans and street signs.\textsuperscript{31}

As the police approached the first barricade, rocks and bottles joined the insults launched at the approaching police by the protestors. The police broke into a run and routed the protesters from their positions. Wreckers moved in immediately behind the police and cleared the barricades from the street. Police broke formation and rushed groups of protesters where the bombardments originated. The protesters retreated in front of the police only to return to their ground when the attention of the group of police that attacked them diverted to another area. Depicted in Figure 5.4, this "cat and mouse" game went on for a little under an hour in the area around Forest Avenue before students broke into smaller groups and spread out around campus. Police likewise broke into smaller groups and pursued the students around campus with the help of the helicopter.\textsuperscript{32}

Some groups assumed an even more confrontational stance after leaving Forest Avenue. One of the larger groups of protesters retreated to the intersection of Ford and Putnam Streets. At the intersection, the students built another barricade from street signs, garbage cans, and pieces of concrete left over from the newly constructed library. The students completed their barricade by overturning another University van in the middle of the street. In the process of flipping the van over the protesters punctured the fuel tank

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
and gas flowed down the hill onto Ford Street. Protestors chased a group of students, with no apparent group representation, who had been circulating through the crowd for the entire evening appealing for calm, after they approached the barricade and tried to turn the van upright. They also chased police away with a barrage of rocks before setting the van on fire. A stream of fire flowed from the edge of the library to the bottom of Ford Street.33

Protestors also chased arriving firefighting units as they arrived on the scene with a torrent of rocks and bottles. The fire department retreated, only to return several minutes later with a complement of police officers. A barrage of tear gas and warning shots scattered the protesters who continued to rain projectiles on the firefighters. Unsubstantiated rumors and allegations from students on the scene that police fired into the crowds permeated campus in the following days. Firefighters extinguished the barricade and police further scattered protesters around campus.34

After protesters dispersed around the campus in small independent groups and firefighters extinguished the barricade on the intersection of Ford and Putnam streets, there were no other notable incidents the remainder of Monday night. Police reported campus to be quiet around 2:30 a.m. Protestors throwing rocks and other debris broke Windows in Pray-Harrold, Welch, Sherzer, Roosevelt, and Boone Halls, as well as the library. Protestors also tore down street signs, tipped over garbage cans tipped and

33 Ibid.
destroyed two University vans. In total, police arrested twenty-five protesters in addition to the initial thirty-nine from Forest Avenue.  

Figure 5.4 Protest Movement May 11 (evening)

Worse than any damage done to any University building was the student resentment stirred up against both the administration and the police. Otherwise apathetic students were in a sense, "radicalized" by the student confrontations with the police on Monday night. Some students had been shocked and terrified witnessing the arrest of the original thirty-nine students who occupied Forest Avenue, while many others had all seen the events of later that evening unfold. Law enforcement personnel, in their opinion, needlessly moved to clear Forest protesters following midnight. Police with attack dogs, tear gas, and shotguns confronted students harmlessly milling about. The lingering smell of tear gas that greeted students on campus on

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35 Ibid.
Tuesday morning proved that the actions of the previous night had not been the nightmare some students had wished it were. 36

Despite the heated action on the campus only six hours prior, all classes on Tuesday morning began on time with the inconvenience of broken windows in some classrooms. Activists distributed flyers throughout campus around 9:00 a.m. announcing a rally on the Pierce mall that evening. Considering that the student strike, begun in the middle of April, had not been resolved, announcements of rallies and the presence of handouts outside classroom doors were nothing out of the norm for students. 37

The Eastern Michigan University Executive Council, composed of most department heads and administrators, met in a regularly scheduled meeting that morning. The incident of the previous night was undoubtedly a subject of discussion but did not dominate the agenda of the meeting. Neither the Regents nor the administration made plans to prevent a repeat of the previous night. The only administrative action came from Vice President Zumwinkle who issued a memorandum urging students not to participate in vandalism and reminding all students that a 10 p.m. curfew was still in effect for that night. Director of Housing and Food Services, David Stockham, also made plans for movies, with ice cream, pretzels, and sodas served in all of the dorms to encourage students to stay in the dorms. 38

The onset of the evening brought with it promises of more student rage and continued violence. As planned, students gathered on the Pierce Hall mall around 6:00 p.m. to listen to a series of speakers condemn both the administration and the police for

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36 Ibid.
their actions Monday night. Most speakers focused on a demand that would lift the
suspensions of six students and drop all charges against anyone arrested Monday night.
Although only around 200 students participated in the half-hour rally, instead of breaking
up following the rally, the group marched through campus gathering support for their
protest activities that night. Estimates of the crowd grew to over 2,500 as students left
their dorm rooms to join the march.39

Depicted in Figure 5.5, students again occupied the streets, and when the march
stopped at Forest Avenue between Putnam and College Place, students built barricades
and closed the street to automobile traffic. Ypsilanti police re-routed traffic around the
protesters and confrontation averted. As 10 p.m. approached, the crowds nearly doubled
in size again as more students came out to either challenge the curfew or to see how
police intended to enforce the curfew. Administrators and student leaders circulated
through the crowd persuading people not to challenge the police and peacefully disburse.
The efforts of the peacemakers were not in vain, as they had been the previous night, and
the crowd quickly dwindled to between two hundred and three hundred people in a matter
of minutes.40

Those who remained at the protest beyond curfew moved from their occupation of
Forest to the intersection of Washtenaw and Summit, depicted in Figure 5.5. Just off
campus, students were no longer under the curfew imposed by Mayor Boatwright. The
"festival" atmosphere that had dominated the mood through much of the previous
evening returned to the corner of Summit and Washtenaw. Some students even sold
refreshments to the protesters. The number of participants again swelled, this time to

over 600 people as police allowed students to chant and block traffic until just before midnight. 41

Some elements of the protest became increasingly rambunctious as time wore on. Protesters threw rocks across the street at Welch and McKenny. With locations noted by the number three on Figure 5.5, nearly all the windows were broken on ABC Cleaners, National Bank of Ypsilanti, and Tower Barber Shop. Protestors also inflicted damage on Tower Inn Apartments, although this is curious because students rented most of the apartments. A group of students crossed back over to campus and tried to force the doors off Welch Hall, though ROTC students and security officers positioned inside the building repulsed them.42

With the return of vandalism, police again moved in on the protesters. Police movements Tuesday night moved in better coordination than Monday night. Students were liberally tear gassed before the police moving within a distance that they might have to engage the protesters. Police then moved in quickly, forcing protesters to retreat to campus. Police, in return, were bombed with bricks, rocks, and bottles.43

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
The protest on the corner of Summit and Washtenaw scattered in much the same fashion that the protesters had been scattered on Forest Avenue the previous night. The results were similar as well. When police shifted the attention of their charge, protesters re-occupied the ground that they had just forfeited. It was not until 1:30 a.m. that police scattered the last protesters from the intersection of Washtenaw and Summit. Smaller groups of protesters had left the main body at the water tower and conducted independent protests on campus.\textsuperscript{44}

Police around 2 a.m. again declared campus and the surrounding area quiet. The damage was much more extensive than Monday night despite the smaller number of participants. In addition to the damage on Cross Street, protestors destroyed parking meters, street signs, and traffic signs on and off campus and burned them as part of a barricade they constructed. On campus, with locations depicted in figure 5.6, almost all

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
of the windows not yet broken in Welch Hall were, as were many windows in Pray-Harrold, Roosevelt, McKenny, Boone, Sherzer, Pierce, Quirk, and Bowen Field House.\footnote{Ibid.}

Figure 5.6: Location of Damaged Buildings

Because of the involvement of State Police in the activities of Monday night, Governor Milliken directed his staff to keep him informed of actions on Eastern's campus on Tuesday night. Aware of the steady escalation of violence, the rising numbers of participants in the protest, and the increasing amount of damage to buildings both on and off campus, Governor Milliken ordered the city of Ypsilanti placed under a state of emergency at 1:35 a.m. The entire city of Ypsilanti, including Eastern's campus, now fell under an 8 p.m. curfew. National Guard troops prohibited the sale of gasoline and alcohol near campus and established vehicle checkpoints.\footnote{Ibid.}

Earlier in the evening, the FBI informed Ypsilanti police of the intention of a group to blow up a power sub-station that provided electricity to campus and portions of
Ypsilanti. Police stationed near the sub-station and around 8:00 p.m. arrested two freshman students preparing to light the wick of a firebomb within throwing distance of the sub-station.  

Wednesday morning on campus very closely resembled Tuesday morning. Once again, despite the campus unrest only six hours before, classes began on time. The only interruption came from the hammers of University employees boarding the hundreds of broken windows in nearly every building on campus. Student activists tried to gather support for continued rallies and circulated a petition to close the campus with the constant calls for an immediate and wide-ranging strike mixed with occasional petitions for spontaneous rallies and marches. None of these marches or rallies amounted into anything.

At noon, President Sponberg made his first appearance in over a week in front of a gathering of two hundred students. He appealed for an end to the unrest on campus and then assured the students that, despite the wishes of student radicals, Eastern would not shut down in response to them or the violence of the previous two nights. Student radicals followed Sponberg on the podium inciting the students to defy the curfew and to continue to try to shut the University down. Student radicals also made with the announcement of another rally at the Pierce mall that evening at 6:00 p.m.

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47 Ibid. The foreknowledge of the FBI raises the subject of the possibility of Eastern being part of larger initiative by a national group that the FBI had penetrated with informants. Although to even suggest the possibility of a conspiracy lays the invitation to prove it, and then to try to prove its motives; an undertaking that is beyond the scope of this project. For reference, the substation targeted is likely the same one currently located just across the Huron River from present day Rynearson Stadium and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital.


49 Ibid.
The same afternoon, at 3:00 p.m., the Faculty Senate met in their regularly scheduled weekly meeting. The dominating discussion was, of course, the events of the past two nights. Dr. Richard Goff and Dr. Ira Wheatley introduced a resolution aimed at condemning most of the student's actions over the past two nights but still defending students’ right to voice their dissent. They recognized that a minority of the student body, and possibly some outside influences, were doing a majority of the vandalism to buildings. Unfortunately, regardless of blame or guilt, state and local police applied their policies to the entire student body. Because only a fraction of the student population campaigned for the shutdown of the University, the Goff-Wheatley Resolution called for the University to remain open. Professor Bert Greene introduced an amendment to the ten-item resolution calling for the formation of a committee to "investigate the reasons and causes of unrest on our campus." A 38-1-5 margin passed a vote in favor of the amended resolution. Governor Milliken approved the resolution immediately upon delivery.50

The last item introduced at the Senate meeting was a request from a student that faculty members marshal on campus in the evening on campus to help quell unrest. Many of the faculty agreed to the student's request, although they only moved forward after receiving state police permission. The meeting adjourned with an agreement to seek police cooperation. A conference between faculty, administrators, and police did not take place because by the time the meeting adjourned the campus was heating up for a third consecutive night.51

50 Eastern Michigan Faculty Senate meeting minutes, May 14, 1970.
51 Ibid.
The 6 p.m. rally went off as planned by student activists. Following the rally students again occupied Forest Avenue between College Place and Putnam. The crowd estimates swelled to over two thousand by 6:30 p.m. In that time, some students stoned the few remaining windows in Welch. Despite police diverting traffic away from the protesters, a motorist tried to drive his car through the demonstration. Surrounded by a student mob, the motorist reversed the car, inadvertently causing minor injury to several students. Enraged students stoned the car then destroyed it after the motorist fled on foot. Very shortly following that incident, protesters gathered in front of Sponberg's house and demolished his car with bricks and stones.52

As the 8 p.m. curfew approached, hundreds of police from the state, county, and city swarmed campus. Accompanying the arrival of the police was a steady downpour of rain. The combination of these two factors left only about 100 die-hard activists protesting on campus. Police in squad cars and on foot scattered those who remained with little effort and a lot of tear gas. Police pursued students through campus and the surrounding area for much of the night. Police followed similar tactics as the night before, avoiding confrontation and relying on the liberal use of tear gas. Students, like the police, followed similar tactics as the night before too; avoiding confrontation, throwing bricks, rocks, and bottles.53

Students in dorms and off-campus apartments tried to hinder the mobility of police by littering the streets in front of their residencies with nails and broken glass. Protesters living in Eastern Highland apartments even barricaded the LeForge Street

53 Ibid.
Bridge, identified by the number four in Figure 5.7. Many students, who observed the city curfew, by staying off the streets, supported those who refused by bombarding passing police cars with assorted missiles from their windows and balconies. Police added to the volatile situation by taunting students with invitations to come out and directly challenge them instead of just throwing debris at them.\textsuperscript{54}

The barrage upon passing police cars took a particularly heavy concentration around Buell Hall dormitory, identified by the number five in Figure 5.7. While most residents of Buell were on the first floor partaking in refreshments Food Services afforded them; small groups stood in windows and the balcony over the main entrance and pelted passing police officers with rocks and bricks. In retaliation to the brick-throwing students in Buell, the police threw tear gas canisters into areas surrounding the building. There were allegations that police even threw several canisters up side stairwells to rout out their tormentors. Tear gas fumes drifted through all the hallways and into the ventilation system and every room of the hall, including several handicapped rooms. Choking gas forced the evacuation of all students. Those students who were unable to find immediate shelter in surrounding buildings found themselves pursued by police for violating curfew. The absurdity and abuse of the Buell Hall incident served only further to widen the gulf between students and law enforcement.\textsuperscript{55}

Protesters who had been scattered off Forest early in the evening roamed the campus for the rest of the night committing random acts of vandalism and avoiding arrest on curfew violation. The massive police presence, the small numbers of non-students on campus kept out by National Guard checkpoints, and a constant downpour of rain, caused

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
campus to be relatively quiet away from the dormitories and apartments. Police made forty-eight more arrests throughout the evening, primarily for curfew violations and malicious destruction of property.\textsuperscript{56}

![Diagram of Eastern Michigan University with annotations]

Figure 5.7: Protest Movement May 14

The reduced number of participants, threats from Ypsilanti citizens to take matters into their own hands, and the Buell Hall incident caused student and faculty leaders to push for a solution to the problems plaguing the campus. On Thursday morning, student senate leaders and faculty met in a closed meeting and emerged in concert with a proposal that would remove all outside police involvement from campus that evening. It was a common belief that the taunting of the students by the police incited what might have an otherwise quiet Wednesday night. On the advice of students and faculty, administrators accepted the proposal and requested that all outside police agencies leave

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
campus. State, county, and local police obliged administrator's requests and drew back from campus, leaving campus law enforcement in the hands of the campus police department.  

The group also again approved the suggestion that faculty be marshaled to patrol campus and stay in student's dormitories. There was dominant opinion that the presence of faculty in dorms would help quell the fears of students and make them less confrontational. The first-hand presence of faculty also allowed faculty to witness alleged abuses of student rights by police.  

Actions taken during the day Thursday by students and faculty found their rewards Thursday night with the help of a steady downpour. No rallies took place, and no students gathered in the occupation of any campus streets. Students remained in their dorms and allowed campus police to enforce the curfew.  

The situation off campus was not as peaceful, although it was very different from the previous three nights of activity. Off campus, students still littered the streets in front of their apartments with nails and glass and continued to harass passing police cruisers. Depicted by the number one in Figure 5.8, some students built a barricade a block off campus on Jarvis Street, then set it on fire. Police, in turn, irritated the situation by taunting students confined to their apartments and shined searchlights into what were otherwise quiet apartments. Students usually responded with bricks and bottles. In

58 Ibid.  
return, police tear-gassed balconies and kicked in apartment doors. Arrests for violating curfew and malicious destruction of property continued.\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{jarvis_street_barrier_location.png}
\caption{Location of Jarvis Street Barrier on May 15}
\end{figure}

Friday morning, the rain continued to fall, and the apparent seething anger of students with everyone and everything that had dominated the mood on campus for the last week was almost entirely missing. Students began to prepare for final examinations and summer vacation. With the weekend, most of the students packed their suitcases and went home. That night there were only isolated incidents of patrolling police cars shelled from the balconies of apartments.\textsuperscript{61}

In less than three hours, Saturday, May 16, over 1500 students and residents of Ypsilanti signed an anti-violence petition. For four days, students had spoken in the loudest voice they have ever mustered at Eastern Michigan University. Protesters and rioters decided to become students again. The riots were over.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Chapter Six:

Postscript to the Riots: The Sandalow Commission

The mood following the rioting that engulfed Eastern Michigan University created somewhat of an awkward feeling among the student body. Most of the student population had at least observed aspects of the riots and the anxiety of taking final exams replaced the daily anxiety, during the week prior, of what was going to happen in the evening. Students arrested for violating the curfew made bail and attended final exams amid debris still littering some of the sidewalks and, most visibly, boarded classroom windows. President Sponberg emerged from protective seclusion in the campus police headquarters, where he spent most of the riots, and again took hold of the reigns of his university. Following exams and the end of the winter semester, students who remained around campus for the summer settled into a state of acceptance of the administration, and there were no disturbances.¹

For whatever reason, administrators and physical plant employees allowed the most visible example of the riots, the hundreds of broken windows on-campus buildings, to remain unrepaired through the summer and into fall. The damage to campus windows alone exceeded $100,000, and as a result, the insurance of the University increased by 88%, to $55,000 a year. In addition, the insurance company boosted the deductible claim of Eastern for acts of vandalism from $500 per incident to $100,000 per incident. University policy to defray part of the cost of repairing damage pushed responsibility on the student population and their parents. They did this by trying to collect thousands of

¹ “Communication is the key to ending chaos," Eastern Echo, 15 May 1970;
dollars in security deposits that students paid to live in the dorms during the 1969-1970 school year. Depending on the extent of damage to the respective dormitory, the administration confiscated up to 90% of the $50 deposit. At first, this practice went unchallenged, but soon the office of Governor Milliken flooded with letters from angry parents and students. A majority of students believed they received punishment for something that only a minority participated in at the time. Residents of Buell Hall not only had to endure tear-gassing by police the evening of May 13, but also now had to pay to have the smell of the gas removed from rugs, walls, and ventilation system. Hoyt, Hill, and Pittman dormitories, whose isolated location kept them out of the riots, were most upset for being included in the balance.²

The financial punishment coupled with boarded classroom windows in an unseasonably hot spring caused those students who faced permanent expulsion from the University, because of their participation in the riots, to find few allies at their trials. Students also learned that SLAM leaders had achieved most student demands through negotiations with the administration a week before the riots, yet SLAM had still promoted violence against University in the name of student rights. Students felt betrayed for sympathizing with SLAM. SLAM had duped students into working for the goals of a counterculture, by flooding the University with lies, both through nightly speeches and regularly distributed literature. Unlike the negotiations that followed the BSA seizure of Pierce Hall, students did not cling to any demands calling for amnesty for their arrested comrades. For the most part, students walked away from those students

arrested or suspended because of the riots and left them to the mercy of the administration.³

Local, county, or state police charged the majority of students arrested with curfew violations. Most students were nominally fined, and released after pleading guilty. Students charged with other crimes, ranging from possession of marijuana to weapons possession also spent short times in jail as well as paying fines. The University canceled the suspension of most students, starting with the thirty-nine initially arrested from Forest Avenue, per the maximum five-day suspension allowed by the Mass Disturbance Policy. The administration turned all disciplinary action over to the Student Court. Ironically, Jan Kaulins, whom himself was defending himself against University action for his role as a leader in the riots, was chief justice of the court. The Student Court, not surprisingly, lifted most of the suspensions held on students. The administration, however, stepped in to enforce an extended suspension on ninety-one students and two faculty.⁴

In early September 1970, Sponberg convened an administrative hearing board, consisting of Assistant Dean of Students Ken Moon, Associate Dean of Records and Teacher Certification George Linn, and Director of Placement Richard Nesbit. The board's purpose decided the fate of fifteen SLAM leaders who actively campaigned for vandalism and violence during the riots. The discipline decided followed lengthy debate within the board. The board dismissed Sue Lock, Tim Osborne, Paul Mazmanian, Paul Galia, Patricia Fry, and head of the Student Court Jan Kaulins from school for their roles. The board also gave Ed Mattos an administrative warning, and placed Henry Scharg on

³ “Progress evident for strike deliberations,” Eastern Echo, 22 May 1970.
administrative probation for the rest of the 1970 fall semester. The names of the
disciplined students were not at all strange to the administration. All had been actively
involved in SLAM, the April student strike, student government, and in some regards,
negotiations over student demands through April.⁵

The dismissed students immediately sued the University in civil court,
Mazmanian and Galia pursuing their suit against the University most vigorously. First
denied a waiver of amnesty so that they could enroll in another school, Mazmanian and
Galia eventually lost all other suits in court and disappeared from regular newspaper
headlines, as did the other dismissed students. The students who met punishment less
than dismissal accepted their punishment and, essentially, melted back into the student
body. The Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) that Mattos organized continued to
sponsor anti-war activity on campus in some respect throughout the remainder of 1970
and 1971 though under different leadership. Students generally remained apathetic to
United States' foreign policy, and President Nixon followed through on his promise to
withdraw the United States from Vietnam, helping the decline of the SMC.⁶

On May 18, Sponberg directed the formation of a commission to not only
investigate the causes of the riots from May 11-16, but also to investigate student charges
of police misconduct. The Sandalow Commission, chaired by Terrance Sandalow, a
professor of law from the University of Michigan, consisted of three Eastern professors,
selected by the Faculty Senate, three Eastern students, selected by the president of the
student body, two academic deans from Eastern, and the director of Human Resources.
Following formation, the committee spent much of the summer unsuccessfully

⁵ "Special Board dismisses students," *Eastern Echo*, 16 September 1970.
⁶ "Ex-students seek amnesty through suit," *Eastern Echo*, 21 September 1970; "Dismissed
petitioning riot and protest participants to testify. Due, in large part to the lack of
testimony from students, the committee delayed publishing their report until late fall
1970. In near parallel with the Sandalow Commission, President Richard Nixon
chartered the Scranton Commission that formed on June 13, 1970. Chaired by former
Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton, he led the investigation into the background of
the national campus reaction by students to the invasion of Cambodia by the United
States. The Commission focused on the loss of life at Kent State in early May and then a
subsequent police shooting of students at Jackson State College in Mississippi. The
Sandalow Commission liberally cited the findings of the Scranton Commission in their
conclusions.\(^7\)

The student strike begun following the April Regents meeting had never been
officially resolved through negotiations with SLAM before the beginning of the riots.
Student leaders, now devoid of SLAM, continued through the summer of 1970 to
negotiate further student involvement in the running of the University. Black students
gained promises of attempted action on their goal of 18% black admission by 1975, black
studies program, and increased tutorial program for blacks. White students added details
to previously met demands but achieved no further concessions from the administration.\(^8\)

In July, the campus entered into its second month without protest, no small feat in
light of almost an entire year of agitation, and President Sponberg visited Washington,
D.C. to testify before the Scranton Commission. Sponberg, without delving into details
of specific events at Eastern, testified that, at least at his university, an end to the war in
Vietnam would not end student protest. Sponberg further testified that universities

\(^8\) Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstration Box - student strike negotiation
minutes.
should increase their commitment to minorities, increase their communication with the federal government, in order to improve placement of their graduates, and place the focus of education on those students who wished to be educated, not protest. The Commission selected Sponberg to testify to "provide a cross-section of opinion regarding campus unrest." Although providing testimony, events at Eastern did not garner a mention in the final edition of the report.  

Black students had effectively organized and presented demands from the administration long before white students gathered in any usable form. Also, unlike the prime organizational bodies of the white students, like the SDS and SLAM, the prime organizing body of black students, the BSA, continued to thrive in the 1970-1971 school year. Despite both their endurance and persistence, the gains black students made during the year continued with mixed results.

Administrators attempted to meet black student demands for a larger minority enrollment through more comprehensive recruiting, but percentage-wise, due to a more significant increase in the enrollment of white students, percentage-wise, minority enrollment remained the same. Ken Moon promoted to Assistant Dean of Students, then in the summer of 1970, further promoted to Associate Dean of Students. The administration doubled the number of black faculty, in part, to fill positions within a new Black Studies Department. Gains of black university staff were significant, but the gains started to dissolve after the completion of one school year as Ken Moon and several other new black administrators, and almost half of the black faculty resigned their positions and left Eastern. No document, even the official University study on the attrition rate, lists

10 Eastern Michigan University Archives, Sponberg Collection, Box 3 - Blacks folder.
the exact reasons why the members of the black staff left Eastern. However, the absence of any Civil Rights Commission grievances or protest from the BSA indicates that black staff members left on their own accord and in not as a form of protest. Since almost every university in the nation sought black faculty and administrators during this time, other universities likely outbid Eastern for the services of their black staff. 11

At the March 1970 Regents’ meeting, students had demanded a definitive ruling on the future of the Peoples’ Lounge in McKenny Union. During the summer of 1970, the management of McKenny Union issued a clear policy concerning the rights of students who used the Union. The new six-page set of rules made no mention specifically to the Peoples’ Lounge, other than officials would not disturb groups behaving in an orderly fashion. Students who did cause a disturbance would now be subject to one warning, then possible arrest and disorderly conduct now included removal of the hard fiberglass furniture.

Sponberg returned from Washington to Eastern in time for the entering of the new freshman class; however, for the first time in years, the President of Eastern did not address the entering class. The only group Sponberg did address before the beginning of the school year was the Faculty Conference where he credited the faculty with being the catalyst that led to the cessation of rioting. Little did he plan on the faculty becoming an even bigger thorn in his side than the students did when they voted to unionize in the middle of the school year.

The fall term of 1970 started without even a hint of the protest activity that had dominated campus the year prior. Students arrived to find all the broken windows

11 Ibid.
replaced with a clear, unbreakable, substitute called Lexan. All of the concessions that students gained from the administration during negotiations resulting from the April student strike were in place, though rarely utilized by the majority of students. A sense of apathy returned to the student body.

Although Sponberg had stood ready to negotiate with any protesting students, it was probably his intention to avoid confrontation with the student body. A confrontation would only lead to further confrontations, as had been learned through administration dealings with student protest at Columbia and Berkeley Universities. Had he recognized different categories of students on campus and catered to them individually, Sponberg could have avoided any confrontation. F. Champion Ward best defined these categories in 1969 in his book and essays on education. Ward also saw all bodies of students as factionalized and liable to different treatments from university administrators. The first group, Ward called "dissident students." These students were "bent on social revolution and opposed to all sanctuaries and local repairs to existing institutions." Ward concluded that administrations had no practical way of dealing with these students because they thrived off the actions of the United States government, not necessarily the university. The second group that Ward identified, he also labeled as "dissident students," but this group, however, sought to, "improve the universities, not demolish them..." adding that, "many members of this group are so impatient for perfection... they are too ardent to accept Spinoza's dictum that 'All things are excellent are as difficult as they are rare.'" A university that was responsive to the needs of the students, according to Ward, could reduce this group down to nearly zero members. The third group that Ward identified he attached to almost three-quarters of the student body that lived on or near a university
campus in 1969. Ward said that these students were "critical of the university though not too visionary to be met halfway." Simple acts of concession to the demands of the students by the University would satisfy the needs of these students. Students in this group idealized their expected educational experiences and became disenchanted with universities catering to the needs of the state before the needs of the students. This group also lost faith in many faculty members whom they viewed as pursuing their own goals through research instead of aiding in the education of their students. Large classes and lessons that seemed to be irrelevant to real-world application further irritated them.

These students made the backbone of student activism. The solution for an administration to satisfy the needs of this vast body of students was evident to Ward. Sponberg was unable to distinguish between these different groups of students and thus unable to work at satisfying the needs of the majority with simple policy adjustments.12

Late in the fall of 1970, the Sandalow Commission finalized their report and published their findings. The first third of their report gave a brief overview of the national social and political situation around student activism, starting with the Berkeley Free Speech Movement on through to the shootings at Kent State. Around the situation at Eastern, the Commission discussed the rapid growth of the University and then picked up details on activism at Eastern with the takeover of Pierce Hall by the BSA and then into the student strikes sponsored by SLAM. Highlights in between the two events included the controversies around the Second Coming and the Peoples’ Lounge. The middle third of the report detailed events that followed May 4 and the activism that devolved into riots in the following week. The final third covered details behind the

accusations of police misconduct and an analysis of the cause of the riots. The commission left the analysis of police misconduct without conclusions. The commission found student testimony riddled with hearsay and second-hand stories with little evidence to support accusations. Law enforcement testimony failed to substantiate any student claims, and all cases and accusations became mired. For example, in the case of students near the burning van on the corner near the library on Ford Street dusted with birdshot from police shotguns, police testimony stated that they were not in a position to shoot from the angle students claimed and that they did not carry the type of ammunition that students claimed. Police testimony to the committee alluded that other students fired on their fellow students. Ultimately, nothing was definite in the cat and mouse games that the rioting evolved into during the evenings.  

Concerning the riot causes, the commission discussed the background of the invasion of Cambodia by the United States at the beginning of May and the public reaction. They deemed testimony from some students that radical groups like the Weather Underground were on campus to be not credible. Although there were multiple players from other groups on campus, the commission decided that they did not play a significant role in the rioting leadership. Of the 154 persons arrested, 66 were not students, and six were students at other universities. The potential influence from off-campus lingered though. Most of the speculation revolved around the planned bombing of the power station on the Tuesday evening of the riots. The fact that the FBI provided the tip to local law enforcement provided evidence to conspiracy theorists that an informant from a national level group provided the tip on the planned bombing. Belief

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13 Eastern Michigan University Department of History (ref., Dr. Richard Abbot), The Report of the Sandalow Commission on Unrest at Eastern Michigan University; Eastern Michigan University Archives, Student Demonstration Box - Miscellaneous folder.
that no student at Eastern, let alone a freshman, possessed the angst against society to commit this act helped to fuel the conspiracy theory. Neither officials nor student ever substantiated a conspiracy from a national group. Ultimately, spontaneous reactions caused the riots. The reaction to the arrest of students on the first day from the sit-in on Forest Avenue substantially supports this belief. The discussions of F. Champion Ward corroborate the findings of the Sandalow Commission and then reinforced again by nearly exact findings of the Scranton commission concerning events at Kent State.¹⁴

The Sandalow Commission did attribute anti-war sentiment in their macro findings of the riots. This finding has no support when looking at the totality of the anti-war movement at Eastern Michigan University. Only small groups ever embraced the anti-war movement at Eastern, being smaller than even the national estimate that five percent of students participated in anti-war protests on national campuses. Although the leadership of the SDS, especially Bob Johnson, tried to invigorate campus, they never succeeded in creating a broad movement. The best estimate of participation would not approach one percent. Were students at Eastern just apathetic towards the war in Vietnam or were there other causes? Historical evidence suggests that the demographics of the student population led to a general trend of not participating in campus activism against the war. Although no evidence in the collections of Eastern Michigan University administration exists, it is impossible not to state that students from Eastern generally came from families that earned less than their peers who attended universities like Michigan, Columbia, or Berkeley. It is also crucial that Eastern was and still is, considered a "suitcase" campus with the majority of the student population commuting from the surrounding three counties and residing at the home of their parents to preserve

¹⁴ Ibid.
some cost savings. That fact alone is going to leave a few students on campus during the evenings to participate and is going to contribute to students adopting the more conservative mindset of their parents. The chants during the rioting at Eastern of "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war!" are more attributable to both an adherence to pop culture and followership of a minority within the crowd who genuinely resisted the draft and the war in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{15}

In another macro finding, the Sandalow Commission found that a large number of participants in the riots were genuinely not satisfied with the quality of their education. It is difficult to assign a percentage of the student population who participated in the demonstration considering that there is an unknown number of outside participants. It is safe to estimate that likely around ten percent of the campus population, who lived in either dormitory or the immediate vicinity of campus, participated in the first three nights of riots. That number would likely have been significantly less had the response of Chief Boatwright been tempered on the first night. Given those numbers, it is difficult to statistically state that the population of Eastern Michigan University was dissatisfied with their education. Modern-day polling would attribute that ten percent of a sample population is never going to be satisfied and will reply negatively to a survey.

Further, there must be some of the negative sentiments on the quality of Eastern Michigan attributed to dissatisfaction found due to the riot itself. That is, the actions of the university and the local police both during and after the riots caused satisfied students before the riots to become dissatisfied. Administration delays fixing windows and then attempts at keeping security deposits of students who did not actively participate in the demonstrations contributed to negative opinions in the students polled.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
The final macro committee finding was that students participated in the demonstrations because of the carnival-like atmosphere that surrounded the activities. It is undeniable that a minority participated in the vandalism of campus and the direct conflict with law enforcement. Within the group was a majority that moved with the flow, like a big mobile party on a warm spring evening. The addition of law enforcement from outside agencies that mistreated their fellow students only served to heighten the tension and subsequently increase the party atmosphere. Law enforcement did not look through the violence and threats to see that the majority of the students were having fun and gladly following each other. The demonstrations stopping when the weather turned to rain in the evenings at the end of the week enormously support this idea. The committed few carried on, but those were always only a few. After all the windows were broken, and there were no crowds of revelers to hide in, the committed few also faded back into the campus, or went home.\footnote{Ibid.}

Sponberg also alienated students by inviting outside law enforcement onto campus to deal with the first inkling of student activism. Students more than likely viewed this tactic of Sponberg as a significant weakness of the administration. Since Sponberg gave control of the University over to Mayor Boatwright through use of the Ypsilanti police, Sheriff Harvey with Washtenaw County deputies, and Governor Milliken using State Police, then why could not Sponberg give some control of the University over to students. After all, they were the primary contributors of income to the University. The introduction of outside law enforcement allowed the introduction of attack dogs, long rifles, and tear gas. The threat of the use of this force pushed students to higher levels of involvement. When they got there, they found that they fit in with the...
crowd and enjoyed participating. This fact is critical when recalling the relative peacefulness of the sit-in on Forest Avenue on May 11, 1970, and then the eruption of violence and confrontation with the arrival of outside law enforcement on the scene. Lost in the details is that some of the streets running through campus did not belong to the university, so Sponberg never really had control of those.

It is painful to look at the most calamitous period in the history of an academic institution and believe that the majority of participants did not hold the convictions of ardent activists. However, evidence of the time wholly supports this conclusion. Harold Sponberg himself, in his statements to the Scranton Commission reinforces that point.

Student activism at Eastern Michigan started slow and rested in apathy to issues like the war in Vietnam that caused other campuses to erupt in protest. As the SDS pointed out to students, they should be able to have a voice in their futures. Simple demands of meetings and explanations of issues on campus went unheeded by an unresponsive administration, pushing students to demand more and more from the administration. When the administration finally bent, it was too late. The counterculture was leading students. The final event pushing students was the perceived brutality in the arrests of their thirty-nine fellow students off Forest Avenue on May 11, 1970. Students, black and white, male and female, put all other issues aside and united in momentary anger that turned to fun for four nights of protest. Then they were finished, spent. Students all returned to their apathy and life at the predominately middle and lower class, conservative blue-collar, Eastern Michigan University went on.
Conclusion

At Eastern Michigan University, the student activism of the decade of the 1960s that began with "fraternity rock" did not even come close to resembling the activism that launched rocks through windows on every building on campus in May 1970. There were several factors between the students and administration that brought Eastern Michigan to that point.

The student body grew at an exponential rate through the decade, and overcrowding was an issue on campus. Protests over parking issues in the area of married student housing and the growth rate of construction and development of campus real estate through the decade evidence this fact. With a growing student population, the commitment by the University to the students remained constant without an actual acknowledgment of the growth and changing diversity of the student body. Funding for student activities remained at a constant of eight percent from the overall budget, even when the total budget grew by more than 200% over the decade.

The lack of a vibrant anti-war movement on campus does not discount the popular culture within their generation and the influence of groups like the SDS. Even at its height, best estimates are that the anti-war movement only grabbed the participation of up to five percent of the student population on the most active campuses in the nation. Based on data from Eastern, student participation in the anti-war movement never approached one percent. The nation-wide campus anti-war movement was a small, very vocal, and publicized group but never reached a practical level, and this is even more so on the campus of Eastern. Even though the anti-war movement at Eastern never gained traction, the ideas behind the movement did. The gradual increase in student participation
in activism following the *Second Coming* controversy easily evidences this point. The spike that followed the rise of activism following the BSA seizure of Pierce Hall is also evidence, although that is more indicative of radical elements from the counterculture and Black Power overcoming groups like the SDS. Pierce Hall also provided evidence of what it took to move students to action. Students were content to seethe about overcrowding and discontent on campus without taking action. However, when off-campus entities, like law enforcement, encroached, students unified and acted.

The influence of the actions of the BSA on campus is the catalyst that roused the entire school. It is difficult to judge the significance of events like the Detroit riots played in the minds of students in 1968. It is also doubtful that a majority of white students on campus supported the goals of the BSA. What is apparent is that the BSA led campus activism to where it ended in May 1970. Their actions and ability to organize and exhibit purpose motivated the student body to engage University authorities like President Sponberg and the Regents with their ideas. With an engaged student body, a fading influence of the SDS, coupled with the departure of Bob Johnson, elements more influenced by the counterculture stepped into the leadership void. Even though only a small portion of the student body connected with the counterculture, their influence through their willingness to challenge authority let them take the lead. They led the distribution of the *Second Coming*, the Peoples’ Lounge controversy, challenging the Regents that led to the student strike, and the sit-ins that led to the riots in May 1970. Remove the counterculture and BSA from the equation, and student activism on Eastern’s campus never rises from the nearly insignificant levels created by the SDS.
President Sponberg did not help his cause of trying to keep peace on campus. His failure to provide regular communication with the student body further complicated by lack of effective communication and leadership of his staff, evidenced by the departure of his deans in closest contact with the student body, created an image of himself being an authoritarian over the students within the student body. What they sought was a partnership, and what he provided was in *loco parentis*. He failed to preemptively negotiate with the BSA and recognize their move toward Black Power. Had he been able to work with the BSA, it is likely that the Pierce Hall seizure never happen. If the BSA never occupies Pierce Hall, a controversial, and likely racially motivated, document like the Mass Disturbance Policy would not have come into play, and outside law enforcement agencies would not have been on campus. Had the seizure never happened, there would not have been nearly instantaneous concessions to their demands and the example that a civil challenge will work to the rest of the campus. He furthered his situation through embellishing statements to the national press through his interview with *US News and World Report*. He then moved to stifle student communication by creating the *Second Coming* controversy. The quick rate that the newspaper faded from campus following the agreement to continue publishing lays some significant doubt as to its standalone popularity. BSA's success with their seizure of Pierce Hall alienated a majority of students and provided people like Frank Michels an opportunity to rise.

The leadership of the counterculture was going to fight the University, and the shootings at Kent State just gave them a reason and greater followership. The sit-ins on both the streets of campus and the city streets that ran through school were of no significant impact. In the last weeks of April, there was a much more substantial student
movement and occupation of property on the campus of the University of Michigan by their black students. Even though large and well participated in, it barely drew mention in the pages of the Sandalow Commission report. However, law enforcement from the county and state likely remembered, and were looking to make a point to prevent a similar situation developing at Eastern. They arrived well-equipped and resourced to deal with a situation at the first sit-in. It has never been discussed what the exact reason was that students stopped cooperating with law enforcement and locked arms in the streets. An educated guess is that they saw or heard something from the police that triggered fear. The police reaction to the sit in locking arms was a brutal escalation. This escalation drew more spectators, and that brought more law enforcement. The rest was a spiral of growth where police did not separate spectators out looking for a good time with the bonus of participating in something challenging and dangerous from participants genuinely bent on destruction. There was no end game for a majority of the participants in the riot. They just wanted to be out and participate. There was also no end game for the counterculture leadership in the riots. They just wanted conflict, and then more people to join in the conflict. The issues of overcrowding, parking, course content, and student to teacher ratios that were genuine issues were not in the chants they started. Instead, cliché anti-war chants that never had a place on campus replaced goals. Tom Hayden would have been impressed that so many students were on the streets, but profoundly disappointed in their reasons.

Student activism at Eastern Michigan University did not mirror the popular perception of the root cause of student activism during the decade of the 1960s. President Sponberg captured the sentiment in his testimony to the Scranton Commission when he
lamented that an end to the war would have no effect on student activism on his campus. Although there was an antiwar movement on campus, it did little to guide activism. The root cause of activism stems from the extremes of activism in Black Power and the counterculture. Even with the radical left guiding activist movements on campus, most of the participation was for the sake of observation and participating for not missing the atmosphere of being part of history, or even more basically, a good party. The rush of that possibility and outcome contributed to the participation in the riots during May on campus. Although the root cause somewhat minimizes the participants, their impact on the culture of Eastern cannot be minimized. Through their actions, the students who participated at all levels laid the groundwork for women's rights in the 1970s, the LGBTQ movement that began in the 1970s and continues to campaign for rights through the current day, and the continuing fight for civil rights and recognition for black students exemplified through Black Lives Matter. Although Tom Hayden did not acknowledge Eastern on his trips from Port Huron to Ann Arbor, and would have been disappointed in the reasons for Eastern students participating in activism at Eastern Michigan, he would not have been disappointed in the result.
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Miscellaneous Student Demonstrations and Other Activities, Documents, and Handouts. Eastern Michigan University Archives. Ypsilanti, Michigan.


Secondary Sources


Committee Reports


Appendix A: Timeline

Events in bold face on the timeline occurred at Eastern Michigan University. The intent of the timeline is to allow the reader to understand the context of events around the rest of the nation in relation to events on campus about student and national activism.

**1960**

Feb 1  First lunch counter sit-in by black students in Greensboro, N.C.

**1961**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>Failed Bay of Pigs Invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Greek Rock protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>United States agrees to increase arms sales to Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Freedom Rides begin throughout the southern United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Voter registration drives begin in the southern United States</td>
</tr>
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**1962**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>President Kennedy calls the positioning of US troops in Vietnam a “diplomatic solution”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 15</td>
<td>Tom Hayden and Students for a Democratic Society release the first version of the Port Huron Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 24</td>
<td>James Meredith admitted to the University of Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Cuban Missile Crisis</td>
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</table>

**1963**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Martin Luther King starts campaign of non-violent resistance to racism in the southern United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Malcom X rises in popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Birmingham race riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>200,000 civil rights protestors march on Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>President John F. Kennedy</td>
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**1964**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>Harlem race riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>5000 more advisers sent to Vietnam; discussion on reinstating the draft begins in Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 10</td>
<td>Gulf of Tonkin Resolution enacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>New Jersey race riots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 21</td>
<td>Parking and fees protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson elected President</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Berkeley Free Speech Movement begins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1965

Feb 21  Malcom X assassinated
Mar 2  “Rolling Thunder” bombing campaign of North Vietnam begins
9    Selma race riots
28   Alabama Freedom Walk
Apr 17 30,000 students protest the war in Vietnam in Washington, D.C.
24   Arthur Mayday and Peter VanEck march in Washington, D.C.
Jun 8    Committee on Vietnam formed
Jun 17   United States officially commits to ground campaign in Vietnam
         17,000 attend anti-war rally in New York City
Jul 28   50,000 more troops sent to Vietnam
Aug 15   Watts race riot
Nov 27   50,000 march for peace in Washington, D.C.

1966

Apr 25   Mississippi race riots
May 27   Martin Luther King Jr. disassociates himself from Black Power
Oct 20   End the War Committee formed
Racial tensions continue to escalate in the South
US involvement in Vietnam and Indochina grows daily

1967

Feb 23   Four students attend national conference on Vietnam
Apr 27   Protest for student voice in choice of successor to Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. William C. Lawrence
May 4    Pledge princess concert protest
Jun 26   Buffalo race riots
Jul 16   Newark race riots
         24   Detroit race riots
Aug 1    Stokely Carmichael calls for black revolution in the United States
Sep     Eastern Michigan University chapter of SDS founded
         Mass Disturbance Policy introduced by administration
Oct 17   Stapleton resolution controversy concluded
Oct 22   Nation-wide anti-war protests in the United States
Dec 11   First confrontation between SDS and military recruiters on campus

1968

Jan 31   Tet Offensive begins
Feb 13   10,500 additional troops sent to Vietnam
         16   Draft deferments for graduate students ended
         27   Black Intellectuals (aka. Black Student Association) formed
Mar 16   Announcement made that 35-50,000 additional troops planned for Vietnam
Apr 4    Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated
         Black Student Association (BSA) turns peaceful remembrance march into violent protest
         5    Riots sweep most major US cities
         23   Colombia university revolt led by Mark Rudd begins
         24   Black students occupy administration buildings at Boston University
May     Riots and strikes by students paralyze France
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Appendix B: Key Administrative Offices

The following are the occupants of key administrative positions at Eastern Michigan from 1961-1971.

President
1948-1965 Eugene B. Elliot
1965-1974 Harold E. Sponberg

Vice President for Instruction
1954-1981 Bruce K. Nelson

Vice President for Student Affairs
1957-1968 William C. Lawrence
1968-1970 Robert Zumwinkle
1970-1975 James C. Campbell

Dean of Students (office created in 1964)
1964-1968 Susan B. Hill
1969(acting) Edward M. Linta
1969-1970 Thomas D. Aceto
1970-1981 L. Sandy MacLean
Index

A

Aceto, Thomas ................................................................. 74, 75, 81, 87, 88, 91, 97, 99, 151
Auten, Terry ........................................................................ 19, 22

B

Berkeley Free Speech ................................................................ 9, 10, 20, 133, 148
Black Intellectuals ................................................................... 50, 51, 68, 149
Black Power .............................................................. 14, 20, 26, 30, 34, 45, 50-59, 62, 68, 70, 140-143, 149, 150
Booker, Chris ........................................................................ 72
Boone, Hall .............................................................................. 111, 117
Boughton, Priscilla ................................................................. 46, 48
BSA (Black Student Association) ............................................. 27, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 51-61, 63, 64, 67, 68, 72, 87-93, 96, 126, 130, 131, 133, 140, 141, 149, 150
Buell Hall .................................................................................. 121-122, 126

D

Delta Sigma Theta .................................................................... 46-48, 67
Detroit riots ............................................................................. 43, 50, 140, 149

E

Elliot, Eugene .......................................................................... 5, 6, 10, 11, 14, 18, 151
Elund, John ............................................................................. 77, 78

G

Gala, Paul .................................................................................. iii, 106, 127, 128
Gasta, William ......................................................................... 19
Goff-Wheatley Resolution ......................................................... 119

H

Harris, Cornelius ................................................................. 50, 53, 55-57, 68
Harvey, Doug .......................................................................... 62, 105, 137
Hayden, Tom .......................................................................... 3, 4, 7-11, 19, 20, 42, 142, 143, 148
Hefley, Theodore ................................................................... 13, 18
Helppie, Charles ....................................................................... 40, 102
HRC (Human Relations Committee) .......................................... 48-52, 58, 68

J

Johnson, Robert ...................................................................... 19-25, 29, 33, 34, 36, 41, 42, 49, 135, 140

K

Kaulins, Jan ............................................................................. 79, 127
Kent State .............................................................................. 2-4, 93, 95-99, 101, 103, 129, 133, 135, 141, 150
Kleinsmith, Donald ................................................................... 71, 72
Rudd, Paul .................................................................................. 3, 29, 31-33, 149, 150

S

Sandalow Commission .............................................................. 128, 129, 133, 135, 136, 142
Scranton Commission .............................................................. 129, 135, 138, 142
SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) .................................. 2, 8, 12, 19-42, 50, 55-59, 65, 68-71, 79, 86, 130, 135, 138-140, 149, 150
Second Coming ........................................................................... 71-81, 84, 133, 140, 141, 150
Senate, Faculty or Student ...................................................... 21, 22, 26, 36, 39, 51, 52, 55-58, 63, 100-102, 119, 122, 128
Sherzer, Faculty or Student......................................................... 54, 109, 111, 112, 117
Sigma Pi ...................................................................................... 46, 47
Simon, Barry ................................................................................ 77-79
Skutt, Richard ............................................................................ 26, 31, 36, 63
SLAM (Student Liberation Action Movement).......................... 41, 86-93, 96-99, 103, 106, 126-130, 133, 1150
SMC (Student Mobilization Committee) .................................... 40, 41, 128
Smith, Robert ............................................................................. 63, 64
Sponberg, Harold ....................................................................... 14-18, 24-29, 33-37, 49-54, 59-65, 71, 72, 75, 80, 82, 84-92, 97, 98, 100-105, 118, 120, 122, 125, 127-133, 137-142, 150, 151
Sroges, Richard .......................................................................... 48, 52
Stapleton Resolution ................................................................. 21, 22, 24, 57, 149
Stockham, David ........................................................................ 24, 113
Student Strike ........................................................................... 31-34, 41, 64, 65, 85, 87-91, 95-97, 113, 118, 128, 129, 132, 133, 140, 150
US News and World Report ...................................................... 37, 141

V

VanEck, Peter ............................................................................. 12, 149

W

Weather Underground .................................................................. 4, 134
Welch Hall ................................................................................. 54, 97-100, 111, 115, 117, 120

Z

Zumwinkle, Robert ................................................................. 18, 58-61, 66, 67, 82, 88, 91, 113, 151