

TO THE STANFORD COMMUNITY:

April 17, 1969

The sit-in at the Applied Electronics Laboratory is entering its eighth day. My resolution has been to manage this situation by appeal to the moral commitment, to a free community of learning. That commitment continues, as it will continue no matter what actions are taken, in the name of morality, which actually threaten the very existence of the university.

After twice notifying those occupying the AEL that their acts violated the Campus Disruption Policy--a policy ratified by representative Faculty and Student bodies--an earnest effort was made to allow those committing what seemed to be an act of conscientious civil disobedience to identify themselves. Authorized faculty and staff persons asked a large number of demonstrators to give their names as violating campus policies in the interest of a higher cause.

Instead of complying with established procedures and obligations, almost all the persons confronted defied the interviewers. One interviewer, a respected member of the faculty, was told that if he returned to the scene of the demonstration he would be bodily attacked. Identification of violators continues, and every effort will be made to enable the judicial process accepted by this university to function. Let nobody think that his own moral principles exempt him from the accepted moral principles upon which higher learning in this and all other universities is founded.

Before the occupation of the Applied Electronics Laboratory began, students voted overwhelmingly not to cause property damage and not to tamper with classified files there. The importance of these commitments cannot be minimized.

The classified document files in the AEL constitute a very special and serious problem. The University has a contractual obligation to safeguard these files and, up to the present, we have been able to persuade Federal authorities that these documents are protected. At the same time, we are obligated to maintain continuing consultation with the responsible Federal security officer in this area. Should the federal government find it necessary to actively take over this responsibility, clearly the community will have lost, at least in part, control over our own affairs.

Unfortunately there exists in certain segments of the Stanford community an impression that the demonstrators at AEL are harmlessly focusing attention on an otherwise neglected issue of principle. In fact, the demonstration is inherently an ugly, sometimes fierce threat to and infringement upon on the rights of researchers to research, students to study, and teachers to teach.

The guidelines governing research, both within the University and at SRI, are under serious and active study, and appropriate changes are in progress.

For my own part, I have left no question that I believe the national priorities must be adjusted to the general welfare, and research on means of destruction must yield to research on the instruments of peace. These issues are not under debate. The issue at hand is whether Stanford shall live by procedures of judicial due process upon which all constituencies have agreed. My staff and I are committed to the principle that it shall.

Kenneth S. Pitzer