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Should ROTC go? Full faculty will discuss it

The entire faculty will review action by their representatives calling for an end to academic credit for ROTC courses, starting in 1970.

In a petition filed Feb. 26, 53 professors called for a reconsideration of the 23-8 Academic Senate vote by the entire 900-member Academic Council. The Council's next regularly scheduled meeting is April 4.

Two days before the petition was filed, results of a student referendum showed that a 3-2 majority of students (2106 to 1397) "believe ROTC has a legitimate place on campus and deserves support and credit from the University for all those parts of the program that are of genuine academic interest."

The action to end ROTC academic credit followed similar faculty votes at Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Pennsylvania, and Pomona. The Stanford decision, reached after a five-month faculty-student committee study, will not affect the 360 students now enrolled in ROTC.

The Academic Senate called for a faculty-student-administration-ROTC committee to work out transition details, and to consider whether University facilities should be used for a non-credit program.

The five-week study ended Feb. 12 when a 6-3 majority of the committee found that ROTC departments are, by their nature, incompatible with the University's primary commitment to unrestricted creation and dissemination of knowledge.

Worthy Pursuits

The minority said that military subjects were worthy academic pursuits and maintained that ROTC "cannot survive as an extra-curricular activity, separated from the academic structure of the University."

(Excerpts from both the majority and minority reports are on p. 5.)

In a statement delivered to faculty representatives before their vote, Prof. Robert Thomas, chairman of the Naval Science Department, noted that "This country has a long heritage of a military force composed essentially of civilians—of military leaders with civilian concerns and outlooks.

"These civilian concerns and outlooks cannot be wholly developed in the cloistered environment of our service academies. They are inculcated through the graduates of our civilian universities and colleges," who comprise between 40 and 65 percent of all those officers in service (40 percent now, 65 percent in peacetime).

"I believe most of us familiar with the history of purely professional officer corps in Europe and South America do not want a similar solution for our officer needs here."

Not Passing Judgment

In a statement for the study committee majority, Prof. Lyman P. Van Slyke, history, said: "We are not passing judgment on the armed forces, nor it is our purpose to obstruct the recruitment of officers for the armed services. Whatever our feelings as individuals, we are not passing judgment on the Vietnam War.

"We do not seek to prevent any Stanford student from serving as an officer in the armed forces. Our sole concern is for the process through which this is accomplished at Stanford.

"The majority sees as acceptable the continuation of (ROTC) scholarships, of voluntary on-campus activities, and of off-campus and summer training."

The faculty vote called for the three ROTC departments to be replaced by a single armed forces officers program no later than 1973 "for the purposes of administration, counseling, and recruiting for reserve officer training and education."

It also called for individual contracts between Stanford students and the armed forces to be revised to reflect actual practice, which permits students to drop ROTC scholarships without penalty during their first two years.

During the transition period, senior officers in each service would

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carry the academic title of "lecturer with rank of professor." After the start of the 1973–74 academic year, armed forces representatives would carry no academic rank.

Those signing the majority report include Prof. Thomas J. Connolly, mechanical engineering, committee chairman; George B. Cattermole, graduate student in philosophy; Mark U. Edwards, graduate student in history; Thomas L. Grissom, graduate student in education; Prof. Anne T. Kostelanetz, English; and Prof. Lyman P. Van Slyke, history. Those in the minority are: Prof. Robert Thomas, naval science; Vice Provost E. Howard Brooks; and Joseph T. Carrato, senior in statistics.

The Army ROTC program was established at Stanford in 1919, with Air Force and Navy programs starting in 1946. All three are voluntary.

In 1958–59, the three departments had a combined enrollment of 732 students and commissioned 186 officers. By 1963–64, there were 586 enrolled and 86 commissioned, while last year there 383 enrolled and 98 commissioned. Among those enrolled, 125 had full tuition ROTC scholarships, worth a combined total of about $250,000.

Excerpts from ROTC majority and minority reports

Following are excerpts from the ROTC committee majority report (see p. 1 for main story.)

"The ROTC faculty . . . owe primarly loyalty to the branch of the service they represent, to the armed forces and to the U.S. government. This means that, however high their integrity and quality of mind, they cannot at the same time have a primary commitment either to Stanford or to the academic enterprise. . . . (This argument) applies by extension to the ROTC programs themselves. . . .

"The ROTC programs represent the corporate, institutional presence on campus of an external organization, which engages in specific training of candidates for temporary or permanent employ. . . . such training should not be part of the academic structure of the university. . . .

"(ROTC) contracts . . . provide for prior approval and right of dismissal by Stanford of all military officers assigned to the departments, assignment of the rank of professor to senior commissioned officer. . . . and the right of the Secretary of the military service involved to relieve from duty any officer or enlisted man assigned . . . to Stanford. These terms represent a partial abdication of University control over the governance of its own affairs.

"Stanford is obliged to provide facilities, services, and financial support to the ROTC programs on a cost-free basis. . . .

"All three services require certain specified courses of study. By contract, the student must follow this prescribed course of study . . . Stanford undergraduates should not be bound by law to take and complete a course of study prescribed by some agent or agency external to the University, when that agency also determines, directly or indirectly, the mode and content of instruction. . . .

"Although in recent year the Department of Defense . . . (has) allowed professors of military science increasing flexibility in the choice of text materials and course substitution, the ultimate goals of these programs still are fixed by the Department of Defense . . . (and) are clearly non-academic in nature. . . .

"Much of the current military science course content . . . is of such a narrowly pragmatic, professional nature as to be incompatible with an undergraduate academic program.

"The substitution of courses in regular academic departments for courses presently taught by the ROTC faculty . . . will increase both the direct and indirect subsidy of Stanford to the ROTC . . .

Following are excerpts from the ROTC committee minority report:

"In the proceedings of the . . . committee . . . there has been no evidence presented to show that ROTC programs are inimical to the fundamental interests of Stanford or its students. On balance, it has been shown that the availability of ROTC programs is beneficial to the University, particularly in its financial aid programs for students . . .

"The military science . . . courses which meet university standards should not be excluded arbitrarily from the curriculum or credit. The evidence before this committee has indicated that most of the courses offered in the military sciences are equivalent in quality to those of other departments.

"A few, such as naval orientation, have been generally acknowledged to be of a narrow training nature and credit will not be sought for these and similar courses.

"The extent of the nation's gross national product that is allocated for defense and the fact that warfare unhappily continues adds relevancy to this field of academic study.

"A fear that a militaristic view will prevail is unfounded from the evidence this committee has received and, in any event, the military point of view can be leavened by a standing committee which is pluralistic in perspective and reflects the values of the University. . . .

"We have found no evidence that military instruction inhibits the development of the freely inquiring minds of those enrolled in ROTC. Indeed, there is no evidence that the present system, . . . is the least harmful to the academic community or anyone in it.

"We have found the military services to be not unmindful of trends in educational thought and have undertaken serious steps to improve the quality and acceptability of ROTC programs . . .

"We consider it essential that (ROTC) be integrated as closely as possible into the regular academic structure . . . it should be an academic program subject to normal university controls and supervisions. . . .

"We do not believe ROTC could survive with vitality and challenge, be useful to the services and worthy of the University's support, as a non-credit, voluntary activity program outside the academic structure. We doubt that it would be attractive to any significant number of high quality students. . . .

"Separation from the academic structure would, in our judgment render ROTC ineffective and unmanageable, and eventually unacceptable to the military service."