

May 28, 1969

To the Stanford Community:

Several individuals have raised questions concerning the subpoena issued by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the U.S. Senate Committee on Government Operations.

The actions taken by the University to date should make clear our commitment to observe due process in abiding both by the law and by our own internal rules.

The standards that have guided us this year are, first, adherence to democratic procedures in the adoption of campus rules and, second, due process in their administration. I have argued repeatedly that those standards will enable us to govern ourselves and that only the demonstrable ability to govern ourselves can protect us against unwise and unreasonable forces imposing their will from outside the University.

For the University to disobey a lawful order of a governmental body would be to turn our backs on the very standards by which we are attempting to govern ourselves. Our obligation to abide by the law would be identical if we did not receive a penny from the government.

Equally heavy would be our obligation to challenge, within the means provided by law, any action by the government involving the University which might be invalid. This is why, as announced yesterday, I have asked legal counsel to examine the subpoena served by the Subcommittee.

Through our own internal procedures, established in 1967, the University also recognizes that legal rights and obligations are involved in the disclosure of information from individual student records to any outside agency.

Letters informing named individuals of the fact that certain information about them has been subpoenaed are being processed and mailed today. The letters note that, if the subpoena is found valid, the University intends to comply with the June 3 due date unless the individuals concerned obtain an injunction restraining the University from doing so.

We cannot guide ourselves by the rule of law and deny that rule when it suits us in our relations with others. The University will not do that, and I am confident that the University community will not ask it to.

Kenneth S. Pitzer  
President