

Peninsula portrait

Lyman's major goal: Peace at Stanford

By JAY THORWALDSON

Stanford University's new acting president, Richard W. Lyman, just left for a month's vacation in the East after first vowing to strengthen the university's peace keeping machinery when he returns.

Lyman said he had "no specific remedies" in mind right now, but that steps need to be taken to improve the university's ability to respond effectively to violent demonstrations and vandalism.

Lyman and his wife, Jing, left for their annual vacation retreat on an island off the coast of Maine, where there are no telephones and telegraph service is dubious.

Lyman, 46, will take over acting leadership of Stanford on Sept. 1, replacing Pres. Kenneth S. Pitzer, 56, a noted chemist who resigned last week after 18 months in a crossfire of leftist student militants and conservative and off-campus reaction to them.

Lyman is eyed as a likely successor to Pitzer, although the screening process in the search for a new president is still in highly preliminary stages, according to university trustees.

Lyman said he sees the need to seek ways to make the existing judicial processes and policing abilities more effective in dealing with open violence, which has left its mark on campus windows and nerves.

He said an examination of the problem will be made "from all points of view" and that action will come from the study.

BACKGROUND

Lyman, who has an academic background in history, has been university provost and vice president since 1967, when he was selected for that spot by former university president J.E. Wallace Sterling.

He has served as acting president on numerous occasions when Sterling and Pitzer were away from campus, and has been the principal officer for academic budgets.



RICHARD W. LYMAN

During campus disruptions this spring, Lyman took on a front line role, initiating appearances with the campus press on the campus FM radio station, KZSU, and meeting with groups of protesters in his office. He has had question and answer sessions with the Student Senate and has made himself highly visible on campus.

But Lyman has expressed some deep concerns for the future of universities that go beyond the question how to deal with violence-prone student militants.

In a series of scantily publicized talks to alumni groups last spring, he listed four "tightrope walking acts" university leaders must perform:

—Distinguished between the role of the university and the (small) college in terms of student-faculty ratios; the university commitment to "a broad range of subjects, some of which will never attract large numbers of students, but must be studied and taught if civilization is to be maintained," and advanced gradu-

A university cannot exist just for the undergraduate, with small and intimate sized

ate student instruction.

classes. "A student who elects to attend a major university ought to begin by recognizing that if he wants intimacy he has made the wrong choice. He will be compensated for the lack of intimacy by a greater variety of options, and greater diversity of traveling companions on his educational journey," Lyman said.

RELEVANCE

—Distinguishing between "removing the undesirable features of the old ivory tower, and reducing the structure to a pointless rubble of ephemeral 'relevance,'" "In their desire to prove their usefulness (and thereby to justify the great expense of running them) the universities have pretended that they (or their faculties) could solve any problem, work any miracle, produce any good that was asked of them." Universities must admit their limitations or continue to face demands that "outpace our capabilities," resulting in "the now familiar devastating results" of a loss of confidence from all sides.

—Making distinctions between democracy and university government. "The university is not a democratically organized institution, and cannot become one without destroying itself as an institution.

Giving students a full "colleagues-in-learning" status in setting the full range of university policies, without specific limits and forms, attributes to all students qualities "possessed by only some."

—Coming to terms with the wave of demands for "more relevant education." "That we need to do some things I believe to be beyond much argument," Lyman said, citing the need to get departments to "talk with, not just talk to" each other while preserving the separateness needed to pursue a particular academic discipline. Without cross-communication, "a deadly intellectual petrification will set in," he said.

INTERNAL ORDER

Success in the tightrope department depends largely on the university's ability to solve the problems of internal order, he said.

"The anger that has swept the country on this subject of campus disruption is often wrongheaded and over-simplifies the problem; alumni and the general public are loathe to admit that the assertion of authority in such situations is a more complex matter than mere summoning of backbone.

"But the anger is nonetheless real, and it is largely justified. Universities cannot lurch forward from one confrontation to another as we have been doing in the last half-decade, first because the direction will cease to be forward, and second because society will find alternative institutions to do its highest level of thinking for if universities cannot maintain enough peace for that kind of thinking to proceed."

Lyman has been an active coordinator of inter-racial affairs on the campus, working with the Black Students' Union (BSU) and other groups. Mrs. Lyman has also on her own been active in the Midpeninsula Citizens for Fair Housing (MCFH) group and in April was named chairman of a fair housing task force of the Stanford-Midpeninsula Urban Coalition.

Lyman appeared jointly with Pitzer before the federal McClellan Committee studying riots last summer.

He was the first major university official nationwide to condemn anti-riot riders on a number of legislative bills in March of this year.