

Academic Freedom and Civil Liberties
of Students in Colleges and Universities

(The following excerpts are taken from a statement prepared by the Academic Freedom Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union which was published in November, 1961.)

"Regulations governing the behavior of students should be fully and clearly formulated, published, and made available to the whole academic community. They should be reasonable and realistic. Over-elaborate rules that seek to govern student conduct in every detail tend either to be respected in the breach, or to hinder the development of mature attitudes. As a rule, specific definitions are preferable to such general criteria as 'conduct unbecoming to a student' or 'against the best interest of the institution', which allow for a wide latitude of interpretation...."

"No student should be expelled or suffer major disciplinary action for any offense, other than failure to meet the required academic standards, without having been advised explicitly of the charges against him...."

No disciplinary action should be taken by the college against a student for engaging in such off-campus activities as political campaigning, picketing or participation in public demonstrations, provided the student does not claim authorization to speak or act in the name of the college or one of its student organizations. In their off-campus life, students should not be shackled by college control...

"When students choose to participate in activities that result in police action, such as demonstrations against segregation, the civilian defense program or nuclear tests, it is an infringement of their liberty for the college to punish such activity. Students who violate a local ordinance or any law which they consider to be morally wrong risk the legal penalties prescribed by civil authorities. Since not every conviction under law is for an offense with which an educational institution must concern itself, it is incumbent on the college to refrain from administrative decisions which would violate students' academic freedom...."

(Released from the office of the President of the
Student Government Association, October 29, 1963)