

UCLA Holds Open Hearing for Five Accused in Melee

CHARLES HILLINGER

Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File); Jan 14, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 1985)
pg. EB



UCLA HEARING--Four of five student defendants and their defense attorney await start of hearing for taking part in UCLA protest against

Dow Chemical Co. They are, from left, Joan Anderson, face turned; Sandy Hebert; Jerome Palmer, Gary Coutin, and counsel Leon Letwin.

Times photo

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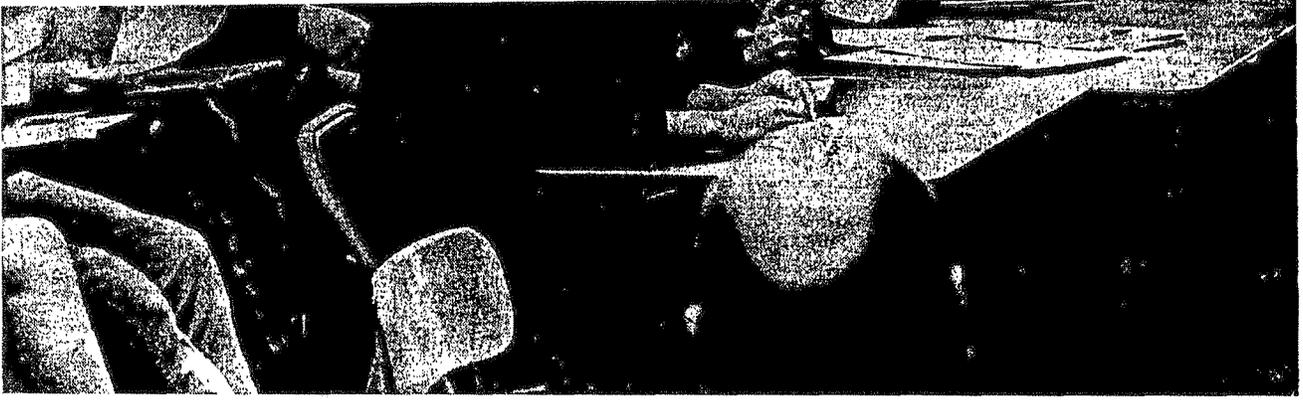
The daylong hearing, complete with "defense" and "prosecution" attorneys, was a departure from the customary college and university behind-closed-doors disciplinary procedures. No verdict is expected before Monday.

It is generally accepted that the open hearing procedure will signal a major change in handling disciplinary action, not only on the UCLA campus but at other colleges and universities.

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Dean of Students Byron H. Atkinson considered the charges against the two young women and three young men serious enough to possibly warrant suspension or dismissal from UCLA.

The five students were generally charged with taking part in what Atkinson's office called a "disruptive sit-in" against Dow recruiters at the Student Placement Center and having to be forcibly removed from the center by campus police.

Palmer, a key figure in the demonstrations, is additionally charged with exhorting others to take part in disruptive activities at the center, with leading a demonstration, with participating in the burning of an effigy, and with unauthorized use of a loudspeaker system outside the center.

In his opening comments at the session attended by about 80 spectators, Asst. Prof. Lawrence G. Sager, one of three members of UCLA's law faculty serving as legal counsel for the five students, declared:

"The important thing is not what

Please Turn to Page 17, Col. 1

HEARING

Continued from Page B

the five students before you today and several hundred students on the campus did, but why they did these things.

"These students were acting in protest of the presence on this campus of Dow recruiters. We believe it is most important you understand why they did so."

He said the "behavior of the students can only be understood in the context of the deep and abiding moral convictions which prompted it and with an appreciation of what they hoped to accomplish by that behavior."

Sager insisted that the students "through their acts have not impaired this university. They have not disrupted the functions of the university.

Prof. Richard A. Wasserstrom and Acting Associate Prof. Leon Letwin were the other two defense attorneys.

Donald Reidhaar, associate counsel for the UC regents assigned to UCLA matters, in handling the case for the prosecution, contended the students staged a disruptive sit-in after being asked to leave the Student Placement center.

William Warren, professor of law and chairman of the eight-member Student Conduct Committee, said members of the committee, composed of six faculty members and two students, would take the matter under advisement and report their decision to Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy and to the students.