5-10-1972

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Vol. 76, No. 28

Thursday, May 10, 1973

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Abenaki scalped
YAF rift
Administration refuses to support Abenaki College
by Phil Mace

The financial hatchet scalped Abenaki Experimental College Tuesday.

"You can pretty much assume we are closing," Abenaki Chief Roy Krantz said after learning that UMO will not assume funding for the two-year-old "free university."

Krantz proposed to bring Abenaki under the auspices of the university by attaching it to the Office of Student Affairs. His proposal was rejected Tuesday at a meeting of Vice Presidents James Clark, Academic Affairs; Arthur M. Kaplan, Student Affairs; Bruce R. Poulton, Research and Public Services, and Ronald Banks, assistant to President Libby.

If Abenaki is to continue, Krantz said, funds from the Student Government or the student-affairs office will have to be reallocated to the program. He is pessimistic about receiving funds from either organization.

"They won't want to give up the money they have now," he said.

In the results of a feasibility study circulated to the vice presidents, Banks rejected incorporating Abenaki into the university administration because, he said, it would lead to problems for both units.

He said UMO should not assume financial responsibility for the program because "fundamentally, the vitality and justification for Abenaki depends on student support."

Krantz said he was extremely unhappy about the university's position on Abenaki funding. He said $4,000 was spent on the music room in the library, and, coupled with the amount spent to recarpet and partition the Bumps Room in the Union, the money would cover his salary and a budget for Abenaki.

"If this is what they want to spend their money on there is nothing I can do about it," he said.

As one indication of declining student support for Abenaki, the Banks report cited the decrease in enrollment from 1,000 at its inception to 400 now.

Krantz said enrollment was high during Abenaki's first semester because the college offered 78 programs. "We were swamped; we got many more applications than expected. But after that a lot of people learned they didn't want to or couldn't teach, and enrollment has stayed fairly stable at 450 or so," he said.

Krantz said about 50 per cent of the persons attending Abenaki classes have been students.

"Institutional policy and regulations applied to other departments should be applied to Abenaki as well," Bank's report said, implying that such standards preclude adding some of Abenaki's courses.

Some courses, he said, are not appropriate to the university, citing three categories he said are "of questionable propriety:"

"Practical Politics," a course in which students last November joined the campaign of political-science Prof. Kenneth P. Hayes, who ran for a State-Senate seat. Banks said the course "advanced the interests of the instructor of a special group rather than treating the subject in a balanced manner."

"Gay Support and Action," a class providing counseling and social activities for homosexuals. "A course with such an explicit bias is inappropriate as an offering of an educational agency," he said. "It fails to meet the test of a reasonable balance in an area where a considerable body of medical opinion exists of the opposite persuasion."

A second category Banks cited as objectionable if Abenaki were to operate under auspices of the university includes courses "which profess to offer instruction of methods of circumventing society's laws."

"Draft—How to resist the draft." Using the university's name and possibly its facilities to counsel persons to break the law is most inappropriate, Banks said.

The third category of courses, Banks said, included "subject matter which, if not competently, indeed professionally taught, could lead to serious consequences for students who take seriously the message of instruction."

Banks cited "How to Teach Sex Education," "Preparation for Child Birth" and "Changing Concepts of Mental Health and Therapy."

Last year, the Student Senate donated $2,250 to Abenaki, but no substantial increase is expected this year, according to Senate President Tim Keating.

"If no one else were able to give money, we might be able to arrange a paid director...but that would be hard to say," he said.

"We're in a situation where the university can't afford to pay for it. Student Government can't afford to pay for it, and if the foundations don't pick it up, then it will go by the boards. The whole thing will lapse if they don't get funding."

The main difficulty, Krantz said is that foundations prefer to arrange grants to formal institutions. He is exploring the possibility of acquiring a grant to the Student Senate to be used for Abenaki.

"But the chances," he said, "don't look good."