



(CUP) — Events leading to the present crisis at Sir George Williams University: 1968

February

Prof. Perry Anderson is informed by a lab demonstrator that some black students in Zoology 431 believe him to be prejudiced against them.

April 28

A group of black students approach Magnus Flynn, dean of students, with racial and academic complaints against Anderson. Flynn terms the charges "very serious."

April 30

The complaints are presented to dean of science Samuel Madras. Afterwards Madras calls in Frank McLeod, biology department chairman. (Madras writes the charges down.) A meeting to investigate the charges is set up between Flynn, Madras, McLeod, Anderson and the students.

May 4

The meeting convenes for four hours. Anderson remains silent while he is defended by Madras and McLeod. Minutes of the meeting were later lost in the university mail system. Madras promises to communicate decision to students, never did.

June 14

Madras sends a memo to Flynn, McLeod, Anderson, acting principal D.B. Clarke. Memo says Madras is convinced "there is no substance to the charges of discrimination and racism." Memo does not go to students.

September, October, November

Prof. Chet Davis of the faculty of education informs Flynn that the black students are still dissatisfied. Flynn transmits this information to "various members of the university community."

Nov. 20 - Dec. 3

Dean Flynn and Davis meet and agree that an enlarged meeting of all concerned people should be convened to discuss the situation. The meeting was never organized.

Dec. 5

Students occupy McLeod's office, demanding that Anderson be fired. They are willing to accept a hearing committee to investigate the matter, but only if the composition of the committee is acceptable to them. The committee is to be composed of five faculty members. Clarke proposes five names which Davis brings to the students. The students accept the formation of the committee but ask to substitute Parambath Menon for one of the faculty members on the original list.

Clarke, the blacks and Anderson accept the revised membership of the committee to consist of professors Alan Adamson (chairman), C. W. Bayne, Davis, Michael Marsden and Menon.

Adamson and Marsden are white, Bayne and Davis black. Menon is an Indian.

Clarke accepts Anderson's request to be temporarily relieved of his teaching duties.

Dec. 9

Members of the hearing committee write a letter to Clarke requesting his assurance that the committee has authority and the confidence of the administration.

Dec. 10

Vice-principal Clarke replies by later assuring the committee of his backing and confidence.

Dec. 12

An emergency meeting of the science faculty is called with only white students invited. Madras reads a two-page summary of the lost minutes of the May inquiry. The meeting is adjourned abruptly because of disruption from blacks who are incensed over its process.

Dec. 12

Principal R.C. Rae resigns, vice-principal Clarke becomes acting principal.

Jan. 6

Vice-principal John O'Brien learns that Anderson proposes to resume teaching in evening classes unless he is formally relieved of his teaching duties.

O'Brien sends him following letter:

"This will confirm that you are a member of the teaching staff. . . in full standing and as such you are entitled to teach your classes. . . However, you are aware of the potential difficulties that may arise, including the risk of violence, and which latter situation we all wish to avoid. We would suggest that you consider very seriously, in view of this possibility, that your lectures are temporarily suspended. Be it clearly understood that this decision is entirely up to you and, should you decide to suspend your lectures, this decision will in no way affect your academic position."

Anderson decides not to teach.

Jan. 10

Prof. Marsden, a member of the hearing committee, resigns, calling for a replacement to be made along the agreed principles acceptable to both sides. He resigns because he is head of the school's faculty association and feels he would like to remain free to review the whole affair.

Six black students present Clarke with a formal written charge.

Jan. 16

The black students present the following conditions to Adamson, chairman of the hearing committee:

1) The hearing is to be held Jan. 26 and completed that day.

2) Len Bertley (a black) is to replace Marsden.

3) The hearings must be open.

Adamson agrees with the students to arrange a meeting with Clarke, the committee and the blacks to discuss the conditions.

Adamson writes Clarke that the committee has agreed to replace Marsden with Prof. Fred Knelman and asks Clarke to contact both parties and obtain their consent.

Hearing committee meets and a) rejects black demands as "non-negotiable", b) advises Clarke and O'Brien to assume ultimate authority in the case particularly with reference to replacing Marsden, c) decides to arrange a meeting between all parties.

Jan. 20

Adamson calls a meeting for all parties, blacks refuse to attend. Blacks charge Adamson, Bayne and Davis are all incapable of judging the issues impartially. They suggest replacements. Marsden is relieved of his faculty association duties and is reinstated to the committee despite student protest.

Jan. 22

Davis and Bayne resign, saying the committee is ineffective. Adamson stays on as committee head. O'Brien announces resignations, says Clarke will appoint new members to ensure due process.

Black students are concerned about O'Brien's letter to Anderson Jan. 6. They say the letter is a distortion and threat to them. They go to O'Brien's office. O'Brien at first denies the phrase "risk of violence" but, when forced to produce the letter, finds it contains the phrase. O'Brien signs a public apology to the students. (The following week, he initiates civil proceedings against Erroll Thomas and accuses him of "pressuring and attempting to exhort a signed statement, forcibly obtaining a signed document, and forcible detention". His original statement had said he did not sign under duress, but he recanted the next

day.)

Jan. 23

Black students refuse to recognize the committee's authority because they were not consulted on filling the vacancies.

Jan. 24

Clarke writes Adamson saying "in the event of an appeal from the decision of the hearing committee, the acting principal is willing to establish an appeal committee composed of well-known persons from outside the university, and of proven integrity."

Jan. 25

A letter from Clarke to Adamson formally appoints Knelman and John Macdonald to the hearing committee.

Jan. 26

The hearing begins. The blacks withdraw.

Jan. 27

The university closes for the day to allow students and faculty to discuss the issues and make presentations to the university community.

Jan. 28

The Georgian, student paper at the university, is prepared and circulated by black students.

Jan. 29

200 students begin occupation of Sir George Computer Centre. UGEQ comes out in support of the occupying black students, demanding that the charges against them be dropped and the committee be reformed. The Student Council at Sir George refused to condemn or support the occupation.

Jan. 31

Blacks issue statement on occupation. 800 Sir George students call on administration to disband investigation committee at open meeting.

Feb. 3

A rally is held at noon and blacks call for support from whites. Rocky Jones addresses meeting along with Rosie Douglas and 200 whites took over the faculty lounge on the seventh floor of the same building.

Feb. 4

Statement issued by the joint executive committee running the occupations. It questioned the "integrity and authority of the university administration" and declared that they would not negotiate until their demands are met.

Feb. 6

Lab demonstrator who originally informed Professor Anderson of black discontent gave testimony in an in camera session before the investigative committee.

Feb. 11

The administration called in the police to end the occupation and black students set fire to the computer centre to prevent the police from gaining access. The plan backfired, with the flames forcing the occupiers out of the building and into the arms of police. Before it was all over close to a million dollars damage was done, and the occupiers were arrested.