

Academic Freedom and Studentship

By EDWIN MIL

AB-I

THE ESSENCE of a sound studentship is not just the sheer compliance with university procedures; it is not a simple process of rule and obedience; nor is it the serving of the best interest of the administration in which students get credit for what they ought to learn instead of what they have actually learned. The said impressions reflect an orderly studentship but lack or if not are devoid of color (criticism) and movement (freedom).

Necessity requires the use of the free and exposed mind in any university. If a university is to enhance a well-rounded liberal education, then it should exist as a free market of ideas not of spoon-fed "ought-to-do-these" things. Limited academic freedom in a university would mean the protection of a common prejudice. This should not be so. Inasmuch as any university's existence can be justified only through its commitment to the task of serving the best principles of truth and service, then it should welcome any dissenting opinion, oral or written otherwise it cannot justify its existence.

Much is observed regarding the limited academic freedom or limited exercise of the open mind in this university. I think it is of common knowledge that there has not been a single student rally in this university, not a single dissenting voice in the school paper, not a single organization yet formed strong enough to stand on its commitments, favorable or unfavorable to the administration. This, of course, does not mean that I am expressing disregard to the university's accepted manual of ethics. To think as such would be committing a big mistake. These views do not in any manner advocate rebellion of any kind, the writer being fully aware that such a move would be detrimental to the interests, good image and over-all welfare of

this highly-esteemed university. Such attitude simply ask for a little respect for the free voice from any sector of the student body, in any aspect of university life.

I think every USC student can sense the deep sense of mutual respect among fellow students in this university, each one having a regard of the esteem and high moral values of USC. But as I said the emphasis is not on disrespect but the giving of credit where credit is due and proper, leaving no compromise between truth and error. If issues raised by some students, their opinions should be well-considered as long as their ideas are based on fairness and tempered with a sense of social responsibility.

A university's role is the integration of the human mind and the development of a student's personality. Its power is not dominion over students but as a guideline for every student in his search for "greener pastures". His desire to acquire the best from a college or a university like the USC should not further the interests of only the favored few, or it would be protecting a common prejudice.

The respect for the free voice would then include the lenient censorship in Carolinian contributions to ensure a free student press; an "it-takes-all-kinds" form of elections with emphasis on the open discussion of programs and platforms by the contending parties and a student-sponsored pre-election forum where every student gets the opportunity to hear the merits and demerits of the candidates; a student government purely

for students and by students or the total independence of the student government, meaning the non-interference of the university in student governmental affairs; a creation of a special panel to conduct a series of group discussions or inter-departmental debates touching on any topic from politics to religion; respect for criticism and freedom of in the formation of student organizations as long as these organizations can define its motives, justify its commitments and categorically state its stand. All these things when considered would keep the wheels of sound studentship turning. We the students would like to enjoy fervently these "luxuries" of university life.

There is an asserted combination of minds in this university. There are good students, brilliant students, pseudo-intellectuals and students who have the delusion that they are intellectuals, and the intellectual snobs. But good, brilliant, pseudo-intellectual, or intellectual snobs as they are, their minds have been "dormant", their ideas publicly unexpressed, their views unheard of and their drive and determination restrained. So, I believe it needs more or less another drive to trigger off these sleeping minds and still another drive to keep them going.

Once again I would like to reaffirm my faith in the university and my belief in its sincerity in carrying out its role of integrating the mind and molding the students' personalities. I look forward to that day when the proper offices of this university would welcome the mentioned "fundamentals of a sound studentship."