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Memorandum to the Madison Campus Faculty.

Young, Edwin

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1970-03-06

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Memorandum to the Madison Campus Faculty from Chancellor Edwin Young

On February 27, I sent you a statement outlining some of the issues in the impending strike by the teaching assistants. It now seems appropriate that I should communicate more specifically with you about what we might expect and what is expected of us in the event that a strike takes place.

As a faculty we have a clear moral and legal obligation to continue to instruct those students who have come to us with the expectation that classes will meet and be taught. We all have this obligation regardless of whether particular individuals agree or disagree with the bargaining position taken by the University administration in the negotiations with the Teaching Assistants Association.

The Teaching Assistants Association has announced that it intends to conduct a peaceful (though admittedly illegal) strike and not to incite disruption. If a strike occurs, we will take whatever legal steps are necessary to insure continued instruction. Nevertheless, you may encounter picketing or other activity which interferes with your access to or use of class rooms. Such incidents should be reported promptly. Faculty members should, however, make every effort to avoid the use of force and should not initiate confrontation.

In preparing for a strike it seems appropriate for the faculty to put students on notice that we intend to continue to perform our own functions and that students likewise will have an obligation to continue their studies. It would be well, for instance, for lecturers in large lecture-discussion courses, to assign reading for perhaps a month in advance and to include requirements of submission of written work where this is appropriate, whether or not discussion sections are being held. Where circumstances make it appear to be appropriate, students might also be advised that regularly scheduled examinations will be held and that students will be held responsible for completing all required work, that in the event students do not complete the requirements, and where it is appropriate under the then existing circumstances, they will receive incompletes or failures for not performing the required work. Because circumstances differ in different courses and departments, we do not intend that such requirements should be imposed generally. The particular course of action on the continuation of assigned work must be tailored to individual circumstances. But it should be reiterated that the faculty has an obligation to continue to teach and students do not escape their own responsibility for performing the work. In cases where classes are taught entirely by teaching assistants, we will have to await further developments. If these students can be taken care of by other kinds of instruction, then we will pursue that route.

We have not been informed when the proposed strike may start. In the meantime I suggest that regular faculty members would do well to remind their students of their continued obligations in the event of a strike.

March 6, 1970