

Closing the College: A Journal

Beverly Schnabel, '72. Typed version of handwritten notes from May 5-10, 1970

Tuesday May 5

Went to class, + 2 mtg., learned of Senate and faculty meetings, typed application for job, went to meeting and first heard of Kent State. Proposal passed condemning, canceling classes, and sent to faculty. Ate lunch, went to lab, hung around to hear faculty vote. Had passed and added amendment to send delegation to Washington. Ran to forum, Younker, [Gates dorm] room, lounge, S. Lounge and got in on delegation committee. Caught Mary [Brooner] and asked to help. Typed 3 pages of money appeal for delegation, ran off and stuffed mailboxes. Joined group at flagpole and watched them off to take over ROTC house, not agreeing. Agreed to collect money in Gates and chased down people. Volunteered parents' house in DC for delegation to stay in. Dinner. Called Prof. Horton and parents, went to meeting at 9:30. Signed up to go to Des Moines with govt. delegation and agreed to find other people who wanted to go. Covered Gates and collected \$20.64, but couldn't get Steve M. to turn it in. Passed ROTC house where everyone was having a ball, didn't seem so wrong.

Wed May 6

Took money to SGA office and went to convocation at 11:00. [Andy] Leowi's speech impressed me. His mother saw US as like Nazi Germany when she was a child. Collected money in lunch line. Talked to Ann W. and Mr. Horton about delegation, but plans undecided. Went to parking lot and found self in car to Des Moines with M[orris]. Parslow. Got to capitol and sat on steps, about 300+, looking like a class picture. Many faculty. Sat, delegation went in to Governor Ray. Other schools joined. Fathead Drake kid tried to stir up action and get crowd to go in building. Few did. Crowd completely peaceful. All V's, no fists, or VC flags. Watched kite go up. No cops, few reporters. Took pictures while everyone smiled and waved signs. Delegation came out, left. Totally useless, frustrating. Last time for a 1950's protest. Got back, called Horton. Delegation not to stay in our house. Somewhat disappointed. Called parents. Felt discouraged. Had felt needed and important. Now classes would start again and everything back to as it was. Was happy to be known by Mary B. and Greg [Vranicar], etc. Only thing left - Heavy Rap Sessions in 3 places. Went to S. Lounge where 3 groups consolidated. ROTC house group took over and announced aim to close down school til end of semester. I felt it was completely ridiculous and serve no purpose. Group acted like big picnic, fun and challenging thing to do. Never mentioned issues. Mike S. proposed meeting be postponed half hour and all go out and get people to come. I was glad, felt if everyone came group would see selves as small minority and be over-ruled. Got a few people to come. Group very large - moved to chapel. Had discussion on closing school. Arguments very persuasive. Found self beginning to agree almost against will. Felt great admiration for Leowi way of conducting tho' sick. Thought he'd die on us. Mary B conducted part and did a very good job. Crossett there making ass of self. After meeting, felt couldn't be me in favor of closing school. Talked to Sally, Martha, Kathy - all agree - and reinforced position.

Thurs May 7

Talked as many people into going to meeting as I could thinking they too would be convinced. School no longer closed – but didn't give a thought to skipping class. Over 600 there, Tom Tom [Thomas] presented proposal – stop all academic business, credit-fail grades, have workshops, continue strike work like Brandeis. Was narrowed down to 6 proposals – others making classes optional, granting extensions. First favored options, later saw Tom's proposal as best. Felt need of institutional stand and not only individual action. Past protest to nonviolent action. People passing in and out with UPI wires, telling of other strikes at 300-400 schools. Most amazing – a well-known conservative spoke in favor of closing. Saw it was time for action – national movement we must help. Ate lunch with Kay [Sopnar] who was so excited that people were finally coming around to her point of view. Thought revolution here. Went to Conference House nothing to do, went in ROTC house – people just sitting around on sleeping bags. I felt I wanted to be part and sleep there. Came back with Kay and talked to Ellen and Mary Ann. Ran back to meeting and got seat in front row with Kay. Proposals discussed – a few withdrawn. Finally vote – overwhelming for Tom's, practically all for closing school. Knew we had to make official, but referendum took 48 hours. Scheduled "opinion poll" for next lunch – faculty meeting at 3:00. Hoped faculty would accept poll as official. Voted to strike until action taken. Meeting over at 4:30 after 6 hours.

After dinner had hall discussions. Couple girls against strike. Went to meeting in chapel. Not so large as before. Barry read telegram from senators asking support – [Harold] Hughes, [George] McGovern, etc. Set up people in each hall to collect money for telegrams back. Learned Grinnell was strike center for 5 states. Those 5 only states with no action. Barry [Zigas] asked for help. Sue O. and I found him after and offered. Felt pleased he knew my name. Went to Conference House – filled with people. Heard profs would check attendance in classes to decide how to vote. Each went back to hall to ask everyone to support strike. Sue and I found number who were going to class. Back to Conference House, made piles of signs "Don't Go To Class" and announcing workshops. Had meeting – heard delegation (was) back and Leggett and Wall wanted to talk at workshop. Barry asked not to. Were afraid would act optimistic and ruin plans. Phil [Sasich] and Kathy [Heinze] came to meeting to report on trip. Said Washington was really fucked-up city. Talked to Sen Hughes – about ready to explode, expressed great frustration and emotion. Would join revolution tomorrow. Others – Secy of State Rodgers, Astron. Collins, Moynihan, White House aide Price, Sen Miller and Congressmen just could not see point. Kathy and Phil concluded – no hope in Wash. and supported Tom's proposal. Agreed to write statement to convince students. Came back with Sue. Felt we wanted revolution. Felt I was running down one-way tunnel not knowing what was at end. Felt our action would have serious consequences, but no turning back. Knew whatever happened, it was only thing to do and decided I'd totally changed in day or two and would never be same.

Friday May 8

Got up and went to workshop. Hoped no one would go to class. Prof [Alan] Nasser spoke on imperialism, divided into discussion groups. Then Kathy and Phil gave report. Divided into groups to discuss canvassing techniques. Went to lunch and voted, over to Conference house for meeting. Voted on organizing committee for strike. Five people –

1 CBS [Concerned Black Students], 1 Women's Lib, Mike S., Barry, and Dave Lewis. Then a small group got all upset and said radicals were not represented. I was surprised – had considered us all a unified radical group. Thought it unfair they should try to create a split and consider selves different because they'd been in it longer. Nasser asked why we were arguing about that and not [President Glenn] Leggett's proposal. No one knew what it was. He proposed to shut down the school entirely. Everyone unhappy. Felt we needed school for organizing and workshops. Went to Science building and sat outside. Announcements, UPI's, black students workshop. "Radicals" went off to choose rep, but didn't get one in. After 2 hrs. profs came out. All went to Darby. Wall read speech. Faculty overwhelmingly agreed to Leggett's proposal. School to be closed Wed., could choose credit-fail, or get extension to work for grade. As a formality students voted to support decision. After meeting most people stunned. It really happened and we were free to go home. Prof [James] Hottois invited me to come over that evening for beer. Left with Sue and got boxes downtown. Didn't know if we would stay or go home. Decided back and forth. That evening – meeting for action. So many committees – none seemed right for me. Had been in all action – now none. All watched Nixon's speech. Went to Hottois'. Felt uncomfortable. None of them in favor of shutdown. Felt I couldn't defend ideas before poli. sci. prof. Left and was sorry I hadn't done any work for conf. house.

Saturday May 9

Called parents. Went to workshop on background info, campus organization. Went to SGA office to put in name for place to stay after Wed. in case I decided to. Ended up watching office, typing up notices and stuffing mailboxes. Went to find profs to decide which option to take, but couldn't find any. Grinnell engaged in campus organization and to go to all Iowa colleges. Decided to go to Drake and signed up for region 5. Went to community organization class by Barry. Really admired his org. knowledge. Didn't do anything during evening.

Sunday, May 10

Was accepted for summer job here and took it. Called Ingrams about house – rent free. Went to meeting for coordinating committee report. Summary of all activities – churches, colleges, leafleting, media, draft, Women's Lib, etc. Found Howard H. about going to Drake. Didn't settle anything. Went door to door for paper, stamps. Letter writing campaign in Music office. Fantastic # of letters. After dinner went to TomTom's class on street tactics – parade permits, marshals, etc. Kathy called and asked me to go to Drake tomorrow.