

At ATL Rally

Gary Groat, ATL instructor, and Jim Graham, chairman of AS-MSU, talk during Tuesday's rally in front of Bessey Hall. Graham has asked for specific reasons for the ATL department's decision not to rehire Groat and two other instructors.

State News photos of rally by Mike Schonhofen

Rally of the Orange Horse turns to sit-in, all-night vigil at Bessey

By ANDREW MOLLISON

State News Executive Reporter

When the Rally of the Orange Horse -- a large outdoor gathering devoted to poetry reading and speeches about higher education -- adjourned shortly after 3 p.m. Tuesday, more than 200 participants tramped up the Bessey Hall stairs to the office of Edward A. Carlin, dean of the

University College, and tried to get in.

About 40 of them made it. While the other 160 or so sat down in the corridors and discussed the largest MSU rally ever to be named after a faculty member's controversial poem, the lucky 40 conducted a student-faculty dialogue.

Carlin, representing the faculty, stood 100 per cent behind previous administrative decisions; the recommendation that the three instructors not be re-hired, and

Larrowe, professor of economics.

--That the firings were based not on academic competence, but rather on personality conflicts with colleagues--Bertram Garskof, assistant professor of Psychology.

--That if one agrees with procedures used in dismissing non-tenured faculty, then one cannot protest the use of the procedures--Allan Schaffer, professor of history.

--That academic freedom, as it applies to students, gives them no right of participation in academic matters other than

the refusal to make public the reasons, since such information is privileged matter.

"There are some nine per cent of the faculty each year who are not re-appointed," Carlin told the students. "The reasons are never given out."

Meanwhile, back in the corridor, a group of freshmen chuckled over the moment during the rally when the whole crowd turned to wave a reassuring "Hello, we're peaceful" to the plainclothesmen who were watching them from an unmarked car parked by the auditorium.

"I was given advice by a democratically selected committee," Carlin told the students, "and I followed it."

"Now you want me to pressure the committee to hold a public meeting," Carlin told the students. "If I did, you'd be telling me I dictated to them." If he were to do so, he said, his recommendation would be "negative."

Meanwhile, back in the corridor, ATL advisory committee member Frederic Reeve told a reporter, "I think a public meeting of some sort would be most desirable. But any attempt to storm tonight's meeting of the committee would be most ill-advised."

Later Tuesday evening the Ad Hoc committee which sponsored Tuesday's rally voted in a meeting at the Union to conduct an all-night vigil, outdoors if necessary, at Bessey Hall. Its stated purpose: to publicize a second rally, to be held Thursday.

following this year's incident from the start.

Associate Professor Gerald J. West of the ATL Dept. defends the Advisory Committee's decision on three instructors. See page 2.

He said he felt student attitude had changed and that there is more concern on their part over matters of academic freedom.

Jim Graham cited a letter from T. Ben Strandess, chairman of the ATL advisory committee, answering a letter in which Graham asked for specific reasons for the firings.

Among the points Strandess made in the letter was a phrase reading "No university worth its name reappoints everyone."

"From my point of view this is not an explanation," Graham said.

He pointed out that the present academic freedom report grants students no rights to participate in academic matters.

"Presently it seems that your only right is to learn," Graham said. "In my view this is not enough."

Graham charged the crowd to take a deep concern over the issue.

"It is not just an issue for Groat, Fogarty and Lawless," he pointed out. "It should be of concern to every student."

Schaffer approached the problem differently, and indirectly upheld the University's position.

He said he feels the University has the right to release non-tenured teachers.

"I cannot protest the firings because I agree with the procedures used," he explained.

Schaffer said that before coming to the university he knew the "rules of the game."

ATL protest rally

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However, he strongly suggested that the case was mishandled and singled out Strandess as the one to blame.

"I think the case was so mishandled by T. Ben Strandess that I must protest his remaining as head of the department," Schaffer emphasized. "His whole handling of the case was inept."

Schaffer told the crowd they should protest "as strongly as possible if you think the three teachers are good ones and should remain at the University."

"I think you should make that protest," he said. "No one else can make it for you."

Garskof said many non-tenured teachers are released from universities all over the country for personality conflicts with their colleagues.

"It seems that the three instructors didn't fit in," he observed. "They were offensive, not incompetent."

Garskof also put the burden of protest on the students.

He said the fate of the three instructors are the students' responsibility.