Catholic Student Protest and Campus Change at Loyola University in New Orleans, 1964-1971

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Catholic Student Protest and Campus Change at Loyola University in New Orleans, 1964-1971

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by
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B.A., Loyola University New Orleans, 2002
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Abstract

This study analyzes the development of the student protest movement at Loyola University New Orleans from 1964 to 1971. It focuses on student protests against racial discrimination and the Vietnam War, student agitation for greater freedom on campus, and battles that Loyola’s faculty had with the university administration. This study argues that Loyola’s student protesters were acting as Catholics against situations they believed were immoral and unjust. In this sense, they were ahead of the Jesuit clergy at Loyola, who took action only after student protest on those issues. Indeed, student protest filled a void of moral leadership that the Jesuit administration at Loyola failed to provide. Moreover, in the areas of student participation in university governance, changes in curriculum and university restrictions, and student rights and freedoms, the student protesters joined with Catholic commentators who advocated for major changes at the country’s Catholic universities.
**Introduction**

In November 1964, several black students from Loyola University of New Orleans entered Phillip’s Restaurant, a popular establishment close to the campus, and were denied service by the restaurant’s owner. Several weeks later a small group of students from the area’s universities – Loyola, Tulane, Dillard, Xavier, and Louisiana State University at New Orleans – picketed the restaurant. Loyola had held a lecture series that fall on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in an attempt to “examine the Act in its religious, legal, political, economic, sociological, and international implications and…to suggest potential means for peaceful and orderly compliance with its various provisions.” The owner’s refusal was in violation of the Act, yet the university administration issued no public statement condemning the discrimination at Phillip’s Restaurant.¹ In the December 11, 1964 issue of the school’s student newspaper, the *Maroon*, an editorial titled “Responsibility Lacking” addressed the university’s seemingly contradictory position on racial discrimination in New Orleans. The editors stated that “it is unpardonable that Catholic universities like…Loyola disregard the opportunity to champion the principles they should uphold.”²

Two months later, in February 1965, a group of about two dozen students, calling itself “Students for Integration” and joined by faculty members from both Loyola and Tulane, staged a sit-in at Phillip’s. The owner had by this time changed the restaurant into a “private club” with a five-dollar annual membership “available only to white patrons.” When one black student handed the owner a membership card that he had obtained from another student, the owner tore up the card. A waiter then grabbed the student by the ear and attempted to forcefully remove him from the building. After tearing up another membership card belonging to John Joerg, a faculty member in Loyola’s English department, the owner called her lawyer and the police. The
police allowed the protesters to stay but did not force the owner to serve them. For the rest of the evening, as a local news crew filmed the events, the protesters continued their sit-in while picketers stood outside the building.³

The *Maroon* articles and the demonstration at Phillip’s Restaurant were the first significant events in Loyola’s participation in the student protest movement then spreading throughout the country’s campuses. From 1964 until 1971, through demonstrations, petitions, and articles in the *Maroon*, Loyola became a small yet full participant in that movement. A small group of students – editors and staff at the *Maroon*, black student groups, and other campus activists – agitated and demanded that the university community confront those issues that came to define the student movement: civil rights, the Vietnam war, and student rights and freedoms. Moreover, the students at Loyola were not alone in their protest. Sympathetic faculty members wrote opinion pieces and letters to the editor of the *Maroon* and joined them at demonstrations. Moreover, the faculty engaged in their own battles against the university administration. By the end of the decade, the efforts of these student and faculty protestors helped to bring significant change to the university, from race relations on campus to university governance.

The demonstrations at Philip’s Restaurant highlight what would be a crucial aspect of the student protest movement at Loyola. In their protests against racial discrimination and the Vietnam War, the students were acting as Catholics against situations they believed were immoral and unjust. In this sense, they were ahead of the Jesuit clergy at Loyola, who took action only after student protest on those issues. Indeed, student protest filled a void of moral leadership that the Jesuit administration at Loyola failed to provide. Moreover, in the areas of student participation in university governance, changes in curriculum and university restrictions,
and student rights and freedoms, the student protesters joined with Catholic commentators who advocated for major changes at the country’s Catholic universities.

The major primary source used in this study is the Maroon, Loyola’s student newspaper. It has provided coverage not only of the major events and developments of the student protest movement at Loyola, but also crucial insight into the comments and thoughts of Loyola’s students, faculty, and administrators at the time. Another important source is Ralph Adamo, an English major who served on the Student Council, wrote editorials for the Maroon, and participated in many of the student protests at Loyola. He provided key insights in an interview I conducted with him. The Times-Picayune, a major New Orleans daily newspaper, has also been used.


Student protest activities at Louisiana’s universities have received some treatment. Gregory Duhe, “The FBI and Students for a Democratic Society at the University of New Orleans, 1968-1971,” in *Louisiana History*, 43 (Winter 2000), 53-74, details the attempts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to infiltrate and disrupt the activities of student protesters at that university. Valera Theresa Francis’s doctoral dissertation, “Pride and Paradox: The History and Development of Southern University at New Orleans, 1954-1975,” covers the student protests there, which were led mainly by black student activists agitating for better facilities and the addition of a black studies department to the university. In *Tulane: The Emergence of a Modern University, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), Clarence L. Mohr and Joseph E. Gordon detail in two chapters that university’s tumultuous student protests, which
culminated in the firebombing of an ROTC building in May 1970. The present study is the first historical analysis of the student protest movement at Loyola University New Orleans. It fills in gaps on the history of the student protests of the 1960s by focusing on a Southern, Catholic university. Its insistence on the centrality of Catholic thought in the actions of the student protesters sets it apart from other studies and adds another dimension to our understanding of the role that religion played in the student protest movement.
Body of Thesis

Loyola University was founded in 1904 by the New Orleans Society of Jesus as Loyola College of the South. It was located several miles west of the Central Business District and French Quarter, in the wealthy residential section of uptown New Orleans. Tulane University sat next door, its gray stone buildings shaded by oak trees in contrast to Loyola’s sun-drenched, red brick structures; both schools faced Audubon Park from across St. Charles Avenue. On Loyola’s campus, a statue of Jesus Christ with his arms outstretched, palms up to the sky, stood in the middle of a broad lawn fronting the avenue. It was the largest Catholic university in the entire South during the 1960s, with a total enrollment per year of around 4000 students. Most of its students, including those from out of state, came from private, Catholic high schools.

Historically, the major functions of the Catholic university in America were to “train clergy and defend the faith,” and vestiges of this twin mission remained in place at Loyola. All students had to take fifteen hours each of theology and philosophy, regardless of their major. The university library operated on a “closed stacks” system in which only the librarian could retrieve books. The Index Librorum Prohibitorum, a list of texts banned by the church, prohibited even faculty from looking at certain books housed in the library. Regulations such as these contributed to the popular notion that Catholic universities were conservative, anti-intellectual institutions.

Loyola’s campus culture appeared politically and socially conservative as well. White Catholic New Orleanians, Democratic for generations but upset with President Lyndon Johnson’s civil rights agenda, largely bolted from the Democratic Party in the presidential election of 1964. Similarly, in a mock election on campus, students delivered Republican Senator Barry Goldwater a victory over President Lyndon Johnson by a margin of forty-seven
percent to forty-two percent. Along with most other university students around the country, Loyola’s students were subject to *in loco parentis* restrictions. As the policy was understood at the time, the university was responsible for acting in the place of parents, ensuring that students living away from home had the supervision and regulation to maintain discipline and good conduct, and to grow as people. To this end, dormitories had strict regulations and students were expected to adhere to the university dress code. Further, all male students were required to take two years of Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) instruction.

The events and members of the fraternities and sororities, honor societies, and sports teams dominated daily life on Loyola’s campus and the pages of the *Maroon*. The annual talent contest, in which groups of students danced, put on skits, and sang popular songs, received front-page coverage; black-and-white photographs showed award-winning students, smiles frozen in celebration of their achievement. Without exception, the photographs in the front pages were of white faces, but black students were not completely excluded from the student paper. Occasionally, in the sports section at the back of the *Maroon*, Loyola’s black student athletes dribbled basketballs past defenders and attempted jump shots.

The campus culture convinced some students that Loyola was little more than a grown-up high school, with cliques, rivalries, and a limited, parochial worldview. In November 1966, one senior complained, “[I]f Loyola’s image were analyzed it would probably be ascertained that Loyola is at present generally seen as an elevated high school.” Freshman Jim Swinson also voiced his feelings of frustration in a letter to the editor of the *Maroon* in December 1966. “As I stand out…in Audubon Park,” Swinson wrote, “…enduring the barrage of abuses by khaki-clad supermen, I suddenly realize [that] Loyola has ceased to be a university, it is a military school which promises to turn out so many prototypes per year of the close-minded, clean-shaven, bare
headed robots demanded by ROTC and the contemporary status quo. In a printed response, the editor of the Maroon mocked Swinson, mirroring the sentiments of the majority.

Despite the student demonstrations at Philip’s Restaurant in December 1964 and February 1965, Loyola remained quiet during the following school year. Student debate about the issues in the academic year 1965-1966 was limited almost exclusively to the pages of the Maroon. Opinion pieces about Vietnam, arguing both for and against the war, appeared more frequently than reports about civil rights and student issues. Most pieces were supportive of the war effort. A story in the November 5, 1965 issue titled “Pro-US petition begun” reported on a petition circulating among students at Loyola’s law school, declaring that they were against radical student behavior and that the image of the radical student was not acceptable to them. Several stories were devoted to Ronald F. Rod, a Loyola graduate serving in Vietnam, and his plea to the Loyola community to donate supplies such as soap and socks for Vietnamese refugees. The community responded overwhelmingly to Rod’s call for Christian charity, and the drive was a large success. Aside from the articles in the Maroon, the story was also covered heavily in the local Catholic daily newspaper the Clarion Herald. To refute the charge that Loyola students were apathetic, one student asserted that Loyola was in fact acting in support of the war effort, citing the law school petition, the collection of goods for Vietnamese refugees, and the fact that “graduates from Loyola are fighting in Viet Nam right now, and there will be more to go.”

That there was little evidence of strong anti-war sentiment on Loyola’s campus by spring 1966 is not surprising. A large majority of Americans supported the war effort, and this was true among American Catholics as well: a Gallup poll taken in May 1966 found that fifty-seven percent of Catholics favored the war. David W. Levy has suggested that American Catholics’
early approval of the war stemmed from their support of fellow Catholics in South Vietnam and a strong history of anti-communism within the Catholic Church. Among the bishops that made up the Catholic hierarchy in America, there was little to no public dissent from the pro-war position forcefully advocated by New York’s Cardinal Francis Spellman, “one of the nation’s best known and most influential religious leaders.” When, in early 1966, only six bishops replied to a survey on their views of the war, the Catholic periodical *Commonweal* declared that “the near total silence must be judged a scandal. Vietnam, in our opinion, is the number one moral problem confronting the American people, and those entrusted with moral leadership might be expected to address themselves to it.” With moral leadership coming neither from the national Catholic hierarchy nor the university administration, students who were against the war provided such leadership by protesting the war and those from Washington who administered it.

At Loyola, the first such protest took place in the spring of 1966. On April 23, General Maxwell Taylor came to New Orleans to give a talk at the university. The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Ambassador to South Vietnam was serving as a special consultant to President Lyndon Johnson, and he was on a speaking tour to gather support for the war in Vietnam. In his speech at the Loyola Field House that evening, Taylor outlined the American strategy in Vietnam and called the recent elections there the “founding of a new nation.” President Johnson’s escalation of the war the previous year had increased the level of debate on the country’s college campuses. In New Orleans, Tulane University held a teach-in on the war two months before Taylor’s appearance, and the *Maroon* had been devoting more space to coverage of the war. On the night of the general’s speech, a number of university students gathered in protest on Freret Street, at the edge of Loyola’s campus. A picture in the *Maroon* showed students bundled up on a chilly spring evening, displaying anti-war slogans written on
poster board such as “War is a Drag” and “We Need Fewer Generals and More Friends.” Counter-protestors gathered across the street with their own signs: “Dear Peace Creeps – Go Burn Yourselves” and “Squash the Reds.” The majority of students outside of the Loyola Field House that night were Tulane students. The small group of Loyola students protesting Taylor’s talk was joined by members of Tulane University’s Liberals Club, who were aware of the lack of activism on Loyola’s campus. When a reporter asked why there were so few Loyola students at the demonstration, one Liberals Club member responded, “Loyola is…politically immature.”

The Tulane student’s comment reveals that others in New Orleans, like the Loyola students quoted above, found Loyola to be a conservative university with little chance of becoming a locus of student protest. However, that impression seems incorrect when seen in the context of the broader student movement around the country by 1966. One survey found that, during the academic year 1964-65, thirty-eight percent of all American colleges and universities had experienced civil rights protests by students. By contrast, forty-five percent of American Catholic institutions had experienced civil rights protests by students, seven percentage points higher than the national average. During the same year, only twenty-one percent of American colleges and universities, including eight percent of its Catholic institutions, had seen student protests over the Vietnam War. That Loyola did not have any protests during that time should not be seen as “immaturity”; it was well within the majority of colleges and universities that saw no protest over Vietnam. That it had already been in the forefront of civil rights protest and, by 1966, was experiencing student protest on Vietnam, places the university squarely within the mainstream of the student protest movement as it was developing at the time.

University administrators around the country were recognizing that a new era in student activism had begun, and that they would have to rethink some basic assumptions about
Students at Loyola had not yet organized any large campus protests or attempted to disrupt the operation of the university, but their visible protests against Philip’s Restaurant and General Taylor, as well as their published grievances in the *Maroon*, caused the administration to take notice. By the 1966-1967 school year, the university had a new president, the Rev. Homer Jolley, and took its first steps toward engagement and accommodation with students. The editors of the *Maroon* took no time in celebrating what they certainly saw as a new attitude from the administration towards the student body. In the first issue that school year, an editorial entitled “180 Degree Turn” stated that “the new administration is willing to regard the students as a responsible decision making body, someone to be heard and not just ignored.”

Two issues later the *Maroon* reported on the first meeting of a new faculty-student committee, which was formed out of a “great need on Loyola’s campus for a close relationship between the faculty and students.” The university dress code received much criticism in the pages of the newspaper for being an unnecessary impingement on student choice, and it was announced in December 1966 that a committee would be formed to look into revising the current rules. In late April 1967, students circulated a petition seeking to abolish the ROTC requirement. About fifty students organized a peaceful demonstration during an annual ROTC parade, designed to coincide with the presentation of the petition to the administration. By that point, however, the administration had already decided to cancel mandatory ROTC for the next school year. University president Homer Jolley told the *Maroon* at the end of the semester, “[I]t seems almost definite that ROTC will be voluntary by September.”

Faculty members were also concerned that the university policies prevented a free and open exchange of ideas on campus. Professors argued for more openness and intellectual freedom on campus by attacking curriculum requirements. One Jesuit recognized a need to
“fumigate the theological atmosphere on campus by making theology courses completely optional,” while another saw the “lack of forum on campus” as one reason why “the discussion of issues is not prevalent.” One English professor argued in an editorial against the library’s closed stacks system and Loyola’s adherence to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. There was mention of the introduction of student evaluations of faculty members.

The discussions at Loyola that year over changes in university governance, curriculum requirements, and other university regulations mirrored a larger discussion taking place among Catholic intellectuals about the future of Catholic universities. In December 1965, the Catholic Church had concluded the Second Vatican Council, known as Vatican II, which produced a series of reforms aimed at modernizing the Church and making it more responsive to the needs of its members. Out of Vatican II came a concern with how to modernize the country’s Catholic universities, a task that some recognized would not be easy. One commentator observed that “the Catholic university is dreadfully afraid of change because it perceives change as a threat to its religious commitment.” Despite this institutional resistance, the commentator recognized that “Catholic universities and colleges will change in the years ahead, to a considerable extent precisely as a result of student ferment and agitation.” Students at Catholic universities were “impatient with the almost exclusively passive role previously assigned them in the Catholic concept of higher education” and were “agitating…to be allowed to play a more determinate role both in their own education and in the affairs of the university community.” Catholic students were “challenging university rules and standards which continue as vestiges of educational goals that are coming to be regarded in a far different perspective.” Moreover, “students (were) agitating for rights and freedoms which they feel appropriate to a true university.” In one prescient statement, the commentator declared that the turmoil attending the changes at Catholic
universities will be “very little, if the university provides active direction and leadership toward an ideal to which the entire Catholic university community can respond with intellectual integrity.”

The issues that the commentator highlighted were being discussed at Loyola, and student and faculty concerns over such issues changed the atmosphere on campus that year. In a Maroon editorial in May 1967, editor Ferrel Guillory stated that “the campus is buzzing and the buzzing is of a different nature than the ordinary Loyola hum….The present discontent – and it is serious – has come dangerously close to infecting student leaders in a way that could cause trouble all over the campus….Students are worried about teachers, facilities, and rules.” Other issues of concern were an upcoming tuition hike, the possible loss of the pharmacy and dentistry schools, and lack of student and faculty input into university decision-making.

A Maroon editorial in the first issue for the fall 1967 semester expanded upon Loyola’s previous “‘year of discontent,” as the editors referred to it. The mood had been created by “student outcry against philosophy and theology requirements, a protest march against compulsory ROTC, and demands that the university update its academic, physical, and social structure in the community it serves.” The editorial pointed to signs that Loyola was progressing and improving, such as the building and renovation of academic facilities, the hiring of new faculty and administrators, and the liberalization of some course requirements. Moreover, the editors expressed approval that “revitalization has taken place in many departments to make the curriculum more academically challenging to the student,” and they concluded with the statement that “the students themselves must play an integral role in the progress of Loyola.”

To this end, President Jolley announced in December 1967 the formation of a President’s Committee on Student Rights and Freedoms to draft a policy statement outlining such rights and
freedoms. As the *Maroon* reported, “[T]he committee [was] unique in that it is the first time equal representation has been given to all three segments of the university – administration, faculty, and students.”\(^{18}\) The university administration was no doubt influenced in its decision to form such a committee by the endorsements by several national organizations, including the United States National Student Association and the American Association of University Professors, of a “Joint Statement on the Rights and Freedoms of Students” at the end of 1967. The “Joint Statement” had been in the works since 1966, and by April 1968 was endorsed by all five of its sponsoring organizations. The presidents of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities endorsed the “Joint Statement” at the Association of American Colleges’ January 1968 meeting. The College and University Executive Committee of the National Catholic Education Association followed with its own endorsement of the statement.\(^{19}\) Students had won another small victory earlier in the semester when new dress code regulations were released. The excitement over the revisions was perhaps mitigated when it was discovered that “the major change in the rules…is that the wearing of socks is not mandatory.”\(^{20}\)

Rev. Jolley had given encouraging signs that the administration would establish more open lines of communication with students and faculty. Despite his pledges, however, an incident in the spring semester provoked more distrust of the administration from students and faculty. In early 1968, two Loyola students were arrested on drug charges in an off-campus apartment; not long afterward, three more students were arrested on similar charges in a different apartment. The arrested students were expelled from the university, and the administration began pursuing an aggressive yet covert action to rid the university of its supposed “drug problem.” The *Maroon* reported shortly afterward that “a member of the New Orleans Police Force worked as an undercover agent on the campus during the recent narcotics crackdown.”
According to the article, police officers had enrolled as “students” for the spring semester and lived in Biever Hall, and there were suspicions that three more undercover agents remained on campus.  

In response, over 250 students gathered the next week in front of the dormitories in protest of the administration’s undercover strategy. Thirty-five faculty members signed a letter of protest “asking for a reason why the administration has allegedly ‘violated the right of freedom of discussion between students and students, students and faculty, and faculty and faculty.’” Thomas Preston, a professor in the English department and spokesman for the group of faculty circulating the letter, expressed support for the demonstration and stated that “such action [by the administration] destroys the idea of a university” and the administration needed “to work with the faculty and students so such an event may never occur again.”  

For his part, President Jolley issued a statement in which he “promised the faculty that a mechanism will be set up in the near future to give full study towards formulating a university policy that will both protect the spirit of confidence between students, faculty and administration, and also furnish effective means for protecting the University community against problems such as the presence of narcotics pushers on campus.”  

The next week Jolley announced that an “ad hoc committee of students, faculty, and administrators will be established for the purpose of ‘considering and recommending policy guidelines for future handling of cases similar to the recent narcotics case involving the police undercover agent.’”  

Tensions over the use of undercover police agents came out into the open at Loyola, but tensions over troubled race relations on campus often simmered just underneath the surface. New Orleans was the nation’s only big city that did not experience major race riots during the 1960s. Adam Fairclough attributes this to blacks in New Orleans being “members of the oldest
urban black community in America.” As such, they “did not feel the sense of alienation so common among recent migrants” to other cities throughout the South and in the North. In contrast, blacks in New Orleans had “a sense of belonging” to their community and they did not want to see it destroyed by violence. 25 Though there were no major riots, the push to secure voting rights for blacks and the struggle to integrate schools and public facilities had created an atmosphere of high racial tension in the city.

During the spring semester of 1968 the Maroon began giving more coverage to the state of race relations at Loyola. Despite the election that semester of Edgar Chase as the first black student council member, the articles made it clear that Loyola was in need of serious examination and action concerning campus race relations. The February 2 issue contained a special report on black students at Loyola, focusing primarily on their place in Loyola’s fraternity and sorority system. There was not one Greek organization at Loyola that included a black student as a member, and the fraternity members that were interviewed were candid about not accepting blacks as a de facto matter of policy. One fraternity president was quoted as saying that “the entire fraternity system is built on selectivity with brotherhood as its aim. And, integration here in the South just hasn’t reached the brotherhood stages.” The head of another fraternity said that, despite the deletion of a clause in the group’s constitution specifying that all members must be white, the “organization was founded 50 years ago on the principle that it was a group for white, Christian men. That’s been the tradition, and we’re all great traditionalists.” Black students interviewed for the article recounted examples of discrimination and prejudice by white students. One recalled that he had been chastised by a white student for being “unnatural,” because he did not behave like other black students who “knew their place” and “acted accordingly.” Another stated that none of his white friends would come to his dorm room or sit
by him in the cafeteria for more that a few minutes. White students also reported harassment for taking interracial mingling too far. Two white female students who violated one of the strongest of racial taboos by dancing with a black student at a university function were told that they were “cutting their own throats.”

Later in February 1968, editor Ferrel Guillory reported that no black students were among the 114 accepted to the university’s fraternities that season, and in March the university formed a committee to investigate racial discrimination by campus organizations. In April, a full-page statement written by Ron Nabonne, the leader of the black student group, Expression, laid out the group’s frustrations with the status of race relations at Loyola and listed five demands to the administration. The group called for, among other things, desegregation of all campus organizations, the hiring of additional black faculty members, and the addition to the curriculum of courses “on the Negro heritage and culture in America.” One student wrote to the Maroon to complain that “the small minority of participants in the campus memorial service for Dr. Martin Luther King is a symptom of the disease called racial prejudice” that was widespread at the university. Indeed, a Maroon editorial declared in its final issue that year that “the racial situation…is probably the number one problem on campus and needs more attention and concern than too many at Loyola are inclined to give it.”

Looking back on the events of the 1967-68 school year, the editors of the Maroon saw reason for both hope and suspicion. The new administration had accepted the establishment of a Student Rights and Freedoms Committee, liberalized some curriculum requirements, and showed movement towards relaxing its hold on other aspects of student conduct at the university. However, students also believed that the administration had violated student trust by placing
undercover police in dorm rooms. Hovering above all of this, too, was the volatile atmosphere of racial tension on campus.

Student protest during the school year of 1968-1969 would be dominated by the two issues of student rights and civil rights. In the fall of 1968, the university administration announced the adoption of a policy on what it called “disruptive student demonstrations” as well as a Policy Statement on Student Rights and Freedoms. The first policy was drafted following the previous semester’s demonstration against the university’s use of undercover police agents on campus. The administration also likely considered the massive and often violent campus demonstrations that had taken place across the country that same spring. In April, anti-war students at Columbia University in New York had occupied buildings for over a week; violence erupted when police arrived in the middle of the night to remove the protesters, resulting in severe injuries to both students and police, and over seven hundred arrests. Even more intense violence occurred there the next month when police were called out following another student takeover of the campus.31 Also that spring, students and police clashed in the streets of Paris, Berlin, and Mexico City, and in August radical students took the lead in the rioting and destruction during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.32 Loyola’s administration believed the policy “was necessary to provide for any ‘contingency’.” The policy lists several steps to be taken by university officials should a demonstration become “disruptive,” including calling in members of the New Orleans Police Department if necessary.33

The Policy Statement of Student Rights and Freedoms had been in preparation since December 1967, and it was created with input from administrators, faculty, and students. The Maroon published the document in its October 11, 1968 issue. The draft began by stating that Loyola was founded for “the purpose of promoting education at the University level, in
accordance with principles that are based on the eternal truths and for the greater honor and glory of God and country.” It declared that “students, faculty, and administration represent the three integral parts of the community” and that “they share responsibility for the proper functioning of Loyola University in pursuit of its educational goals.” The purpose of the policy statement was “to enumerate policies to assure students’ freedom to learn and the concomitant responsibilities attendant upon this freedom.” As freedom to learn first required freedom of opportunity, the document stressed that applicants to the university enjoyed equal opportunity and would not be denied on the basis of “race, religion, and national origin.” Moreover, those factors could not be used to deny students access to the “facilities and services of the University.” Regarding equal access to membership in campus organizations, the statement seemed more ambiguous. It stated that “campus organizations, including those affiliated with an extramural organization, are open to all students without respect to race, creed, or national origin as a condition for university recognition.” That requirement, however, did not necessarily preclude campus organizations from denying membership because of “race, creed, or national origin,” and nowhere in the document was that made explicit.34

The policy statement further discussed the nature of political and academic freedom at Loyola. It stated that students have a “freedom of association” and outlined rules for campus organizations. Students had a “right to question,” according to one section, and they were “free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately.” They were also “free to support causes by orderly means which do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the institution.” Moreover, it declared that “any segment of the academic community is free to invite and to hear any personality and idea presented in university forum.” The document stated the importance of students’ views on university matters, and it
stressed that “the student body should have clearly defined means to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs.” The policy statement established a University Board of Communications, made up of students, faculty, and administrators, to set procedures for, among other things, “the appointment and removal of editors and broadcast managers.”

In addition, according to the statement, in instances where students got into legal trouble off campus, “the authority of the University should be asserted only in cases in which a clear and present danger to the academic community exists.” The statement outlined the rights of students when facing charges from the university that might require disciplinary action. The university stated that it had an “obligation to publish those standards of behavior which it considers essential to its educational mission and community life” and declared that “standards of conduct” should be “formulated by the academic community with significant student participation.” Something like a search warrant would be needed for university officials to search the residence of any student living on campus, and the student, “if possible,” should be present when the search occurred. The document established a Student Judicial Court and a University Board of Appeals and set forth procedures to be followed during student disciplinary hearings. Decisions on amendments to the document were to be made by the Committee on Student Rights and Freedoms and the president of the university.

Students generally applauded the Policy Statement on Student Rights and Freedoms, and the university soon got its first opportunity to test the document. Steve Vakas, a reporter for the Maroon, had tried in December 1968 to get the Word, a locally published, leftist political magazine, distributed through the university bookstore. The administration prohibited the sale of the Word as well as the distribution of the Catalyst, a newspaper published by the Tulane
University Conservative Club. A petition in favor of the *Word* signed by over one hundred students and faculty members did not persuade the administration to change its position, and the decision was appealed to the Committee on Student Rights and Freedoms. This was the first case to come before the committee, and the outcome could have importance in setting precedents for future cases. The committee, which was made up of students, faculty, and administrators, voted against the administration’s decision, saying that “it could see ‘no reason why the *Word* cannot be sold on campus.’”

President Jolley’s subsequent decision to ignore the committee’s ruling set up a brief confrontation between the administration on one side, and students and faculty on the other. The Student Council passed a resolution threatening that “if student rights are continued to be ignored,…the council will advise all students on all joint student-faculty-administration committees to resign.” Some faculty believed that Jolley’s actions rendered impotent and made a mockery of the Committee on Student Rights and Freedoms. The University Senate passed a resolution which “called for the immediate liquidation of the student rights committee with the understanding that no such committee be re-established in the future” until the administration gave “substantial assurance that the decisions of such a committee will be given full respect and wholehearted and unequivocal support in any and all cases.” Students and faculty were angered not only by Jolley’s stance on the issue, but also by the fact that his decision had not been made according to correct procedures. It was the violation of procedure that produced the Student Council’s resolution, which also urged the president to formally implement or veto the decision of the student rights committee. Jolley followed the correct procedures at the end of the semester, and on May 13, 1969, he officially vetoed the decision of the Committee on Student Rights and Freedoms to allow the distribution of the *Word* on Loyola’s campus.
Beyond the controversy surrounding the *Word*, the much larger issue that school year was civil rights, as outrage at the poor state of race relations on campus erupted in the spring semester. Steve Vakas reported in the February 28, 1969 issue of the *Maroon* that two students, a white male and black female, had gone together to Cusimano’s Lounge, an establishment not far from campus on Prytania Street which was frequented by Loyola students and used as a venue for fraternity events. When the man ordered from the bar, the bartender refused him service and asked that he and his date leave. On campus the next day, a Jesuit priest reportedly approached the white student and asked him if it was true that he had gone out with “a colored girl last night.” When the student replied that he had, the priest allegedly informed him that “we here at Loyola frown on that type of thing.”

Following the publication of Vakas’s article, students, faculty, administrators, and community members met to form a plan of action against Cusimano’s Lounge. Donald Brady, a member of Loyola’s Department of Drama and Speech, and the Rev. Harold Cohen, the university chaplain, had already met with the owner of the lounge to persuade him to change his policy. The owner refused and attempted to obtain a court injunction prohibiting a protest of Cusimano’s. When a judge refused to issue the injunction, the group scheduled a demonstration. For three nights, several dozen people picketed outside the building. New Orleans police were present and customers inside the lounge drank and watched the protest. One sophomore commented that “the people have a good point, but the owner of the lounge has his constitutional rights and he has to do what he thinks is right.” Another student claimed that “Negroes aren’t accomplishing anything by this and are only hurting themselves.” When it was over, the protest participants believed that they had not only successfully called attention to discriminatory racial policies at Cusimano’s, but they had accomplished something else as well.
The *Maroon* believed the demonstration was important because it “was not just a student demonstration, as the anti-undercover agent demonstration primarily was last year. It was also a faculty and administration decision” to protest Cusimano’s policies.41

Throughout the previous academic year, the fraternities at Loyola had been criticized in the *Maroon* by students, faculty, and administrators for practicing racial discrimination. In a letter to the editor, brothers Martin and Ralph Adamo wrote, in response to a black couple being asked to leave a fraternity event, “It seems to (us) that if anyone should take the lead in eliminating social prejudice because of race, it should be social fraternities on a Christian campus.” English instructor Margaret Vandenhaar, who had previously assailed Loyola’s adherence to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, wrote in her *Maroon* article, “Greeks: A Herd of Sheep,” that the fraternities helped cast “a thick, stagnant pall” over the university. The *Maroon* printed on the front page an open letter from the Rev. Joseph Molloy, Vice-President for Student Affairs, in which he said that “we are gravely concerned that some student organizations appear not to have reached the level of full, warm welcome.” Turning away from euphemism one paragraph later, the Jesuit declared, “[W]e…expect all campus organizations divest themselves of any last vestiges of racism and truly accept students on their individual merits.”

Following the appearance of Vakas’s article and the protests at Cusimano’s in March 1969, critics again focused their attacks on the fraternity system. Students and faculty both complained that the administration had been slow to act against racial discrimination by fraternities, although the administration had taken steps to end the practice. In the same issue in which the Vakas’s article was published, another story described new attempts by the administration to integrate Loyola’s fraternities. According to a source quoted in the article, the university realized that “in this day and age, this [racial discrimination] is an
anachronism….Loyola fraternities should change their black ball system in order to facilitate the acceptance of Negroes into the organizations.”42 Heretofore, black students often could not even get in the door at fraternity events. One black student wrote in the *Maroon* that he was not allowed to fully participate in the fraternity rush events because some events were held at Cusimano’s, which would not serve him. Ron Nabonne, the head of the black student group Expression, wrote a full-page article for the *Maroon* in which he laid out many of the frustrations felt by black students at Loyola. Nabonne stated that “the black students have been crying discrimination for over a year. We have been refused service at bars before and we have also been refused at fraternity socials with priests present at them.”43

The presence of Jesuit priests at whites-only fraternity events was an image many critics exploited. As Catholics, the critics were outraged that fraternities described themselves in their charters as “Christian brotherhood” organizations, yet practiced such blatant racism. Gilbert Roxhugh of the Department of Theology produced the most forceful statement from a faculty member. Roxhugh declared that “the fraternities are living monuments to anti-brotherhood right here on campus.” Since fraternities were supposedly “Christian brotherhood” organizations, they “ought to be in the forefront, not lagging behind the rest of society” in integrating. Moreover, the fraternities were doing damage to the Loyola community by “calling into question the very meaning of the university by making respectable a spirit that is the death of decent religion.” Roxhugh demanded that the fraternities change their admissions policies, and he concluded by recommending that “every agency on this campus…make life so uncomfortable for the fraternities that they are embarrassed, if not motivated, into accord with the purposes of this university.”44

In a special convocation at the Loyola Field House on March 11, 1969, Dean of Arts and Sciences Frank Crabtree, who took part in the protests at Cusimano’s, received a
standing ovation for his comments condemning racism on campus. Addressing the members of Loyola’s fraternities and sororities, Crabtree said, “I ask you to look at yourself and think of yourself. Do you say one thing and then do another?”

On April 2, 1969, black students at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), a public university a few miles away near Lake Pontchartrain, had taken the American flag down from a flagpole on campus and put in its place a black, green, and red flag of Black Liberation. Hundreds of SUNO students later gathered and proclaimed, “I pledge allegiance to the Black Liberation Flag and to the cause for which it stands – Black People together, indivisible for liberation, self-defense, self-determination. I am prepared to give my life in its defense.” Police entered campus and engaged in brief skirmishes with the protesters. The students then went on strike and made several demands of the university administration.

Meanwhile, on Loyola’s campus, Expression president Ron Nabonne declared that “we, the black students at Loyola University, take pride in declaring our full and unconditional support for our brothers and sisters at SUNO in their struggle for improvements, liberation, and equality.” Expression held a rally at Loyola’s student center in support of the striking SUNO students, and Dwight Ott, the group’s spokesman, declared that “student unrest at SUNO has ‘roots’ and ‘implications’ at Loyola.” The message was clear enough to a citizenry that had just lived through long years in which terrifying race riots had exploded in hundreds of cities across the country: if Loyola did not do something to improve race relations on campus, the situation might explode in a manner with which Americans were becoming increasingly familiar.

The university administration, prompted by the protests, letters, and articles, did address problems raised in the Vakas article. Students had circulated a petition demanding that the Rev. Homer Jolley, the university president, release the name of the Jesuit priest who had allegedly
confronted the white male student over interracial dating. Rather than immediately identify the priest, Jolley met privately in his office with the priest and students involved, including staff of the Maroon. The administration shortly afterward announced the creation of a fact-finding committee to investigate the incident and report back to the president. On April 24, 1969, the committee released its report, in which it “concluded that it could not determine whether the incident occurred or not.” The accused priest, who was not publicly named in the report, issued a statement saying that he “was confident that the committee would find me innocent of any connection with this incident.” He continued that “the comment attributed to me is totally foreign to anything I have said and done during the many years in which I have been, and still am, actively engaged in the fight for interracial justice.” President Jolley criticized the committee’s report for not making a stronger statement regarding the accused priest’s innocence, “in view of the fact that a great deal of publicity was given to the charge against this member of the Jesuit Community.”

The Jesuits were concerned with how the controversy would affect the public’s image of both the university and the order. Several priests signed a letter to the editor of the Maroon accusing it of irresponsibility in printing the Vakas story, claiming it would unfairly damage the reputation of all Jesuits at Loyola. The order’s reputation, however, was already in need of rehabilitation. The Jesuits, along with the other Catholic orders, had strongly resisted integration of the archdiocese’s schools, and they fought full integration of Loyola until 1962. In the September 1968 issue of Harper’s, novelist Walker Percy, a New Orleans native, provocatively commented that “if the South once again secedes from the Union and throws in with Rhodesia and South Africa, the Jesuits are entitled to a share of the credit.” Percy referred to the Jesuits’ past and current history of racism and conservative politics, but he contrasted it with the order’s
engagement with more progressive causes. As an example of the latter, Percy wrote about the Rev. Louis Twomey, a Loyola faculty member who ran the university’s Institute of Human Relations, and who had long advocated for social justice and labor issues.49

Joseph Fichter, a Jesuit priest and Harvard-trained sociologist who arrived at Loyola in the fall of 1947, provides an even more striking figure. Fichter led Loyola’s first radical political movement as a founder and faculty advisor of the student Southeastern Regional Interracial Commission (SERINCO). The group, founded in 1948, pushed the boundaries of acceptable interracial interaction in New Orleans and agitated for full integration of Loyola. It was composed of students from Loyola, Xavier, Dominican College, Ursuline College, and Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, and it held monthly meetings at the various campuses. For eight years, SERINCO organized an annual “Interracial Day” to foster interracial cooperation and understanding. The group had many supporters, but it endured constant harassment and fierce resistance from members of the city’s Catholic community. Loyola’s administration banned the distribution of SERINCO’s newsletter, *Christian Conscience*, and, in 1956, it prohibited the group from operating on campus. The administration also disallowed Fichter from airing a series of lectures “designed to dispel some of the racist myths that bedeviled rational discussion of integration” on the university-owned radio station, WWL.50 Fichter’s political activities eventually led one president of the university to ask his Jesuit superiors to move Fichter out of New Orleans.51

At the beginning of the 1968-1969 school year, months before the Jesuit priest controversy appeared, *Maroon* writer Gary Atkins warned that the university could yet see itself shaken by student unrest. Writing in the October 11 issue, Atkins stated that a large number of students had
complaints about no academic atmosphere, intrusions on privacy, slighting of arts in favor of sciences, and so on….There are also the more superficial complaints about dorm rules, cafeteria food, curfews, required courses – the ‘non-fundamentals.’ Take any three, add a radical leader, well-prepared and well-organized and Loyola could be as susceptible as Columbia to disruptions. Can it happen here? Yes. Will it? That’s up to the administrators and the students.52

Despite Atkins’s warning, however, no such disruptions occurred at Loyola, even during the tense weeks following the Jesuit priest controversy.

One explanation for why no such disruptions happened at Loyola is that the university did not have a “radical leader” willing to make the leap from rhetoric to physical confrontation. Loyola’s student protesters were not militant radicals intent on destroying the university and overthrowing the government. As middle-class Catholics, they wanted to fix what they believed was wrong with their university and community, and to accomplish this with the help of the administration. Despite Expression’s spokesman Dwight Ott’s ominous-sounding implications, no black students resorted to violence during the spring semester. Ron Nabonne, the head of Expression, articulated frustration and anger in his pieces for the Maroon, but never threats of violence. Other students on the left commented that disruptive demonstrations were not part of their agenda.

In December 1968, two students had attempted to form a group similar to Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which by then had become a fiercely militant organization responsible for the most spectacular campus uprisings across the country. The students referred to their group as “an SDS-type organization” and called it the moderate-sounding “Liberal Coalition.” They did not want to use the name SDS because “students have a stereotyped idea of
SDS; they think SDS destroys buildings, etc.” The two students rejected the militant approach and instead would seek “to work through normal channels as much as possible.” The Maroon encouraged the organization, but the Liberal Coalition never became a major force at the university. In fact, it barely got off the ground: Frank Aseron, a co-founder of the group, was expelled from the university during the summer of 1969 for poor academic performance.

Violent campus disruptions were nowhere on the horizon at Loyola, but the Louisiana Legislature had been studying the supposed threat of radical student groups to the state’s campuses. In January 1969, the Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities released its report, titled Students for a Democratic Society and the New Left: Their Danger to the Educational Institutions of the State of Louisiana. The report opened with the statement that “recent incidents should make it obvious to all that there are forces at work in Louisiana to disrupt the orderly processes of government particularly in education at both the high school and college level.” The report provided a survey of New Left groups and their political outlooks and goals, focusing heavily on SDS, which the committee characterized as “a part of the New Left, perhaps the most dangerous [group] in the movement.” The report declared that “at the present time there are several radical organizations active in Louisiana,” among them the Progressive Labor Party, the Spartacist League, and “several other radical groups of lesser importance.”

Legislators paid special attention to the Student Liberal Foundation (SLF), which was founded in the late 1950s and had, by 1969, “become more entrenched” in the state’s universities and “began to attract more hard-core leftists.” At one point, the SLF was approached by members of SDS, who urged an integration of the two organizations on those campuses where SDS could not secure a charter. According to the report, the result was that “SDS simply operated under the cover of SLF,” so that, in effect, “SDS policies became SLF policies.”
Legislators pointed out that “SDS is known to have a chapter well established in a large university in New Orleans,” but did not specify the university to which they were referring. The report stated that “members of this chapter have been actively recruiting on other campuses throughout the state and are beginning to make a definite impression on students with leftist tendencies, those who are hoping for something different to embrace, and the Hippie and Beatnik types of fellow travelers.” The attempts of SDS to mobilize high school students were also noted.

The report did not recommend any direct action for the legislature or any official department to take; rather, it only “urge[d] that all institutions of learning thoroughly investigate and consider the aims of The Students for a Democratic Society should they receive applications for a chapter charter of this organization.” Moreover, it declared, “The Committee feels that there is no place in the educational system and institutions of learning in the State of Louisiana for the Students for a Democratic Society.”

The next academic year arrived with signs of progress on race relations at Loyola, due in part to the actions of those who complained about racial discrimination by the university’s fraternities. Within a month of returning to school for the fall 1969 semester, the Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC) of Loyola issued a statement declaring that “Loyola’s fraternities encourage and support the principles of social justice….The Inter-Fraternity Council desires all to be cognizant of the fact that they do not condone and will not tolerate any discrimination with regard to race, creed, or national origins.” Theology professor Gilbert Roxhugh’s plea the previous semester for members of the university community to put pressure on the fraternities worked, for the IFC also declared that the statement “was fostered by the harassment Loyola fraternities received last year from students, faculty, and administrators.” This act of the IFC was part of a national trend by
fraternities to eliminate their discriminatory racial policies; two national fraternities with chapters at Loyola amended their constitutions over the summer to include a non-discrimination clause. Also that semester, Loyola’s chapter of the international business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi gained its first black member when it inducted Edgar Chase.

In the fall semester, students from Loyola, Dillard, LSUNO, Tulane, and Xavier, as well as several Loyola faculty members, formed a New Orleans chapter of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. New MOBE, as it was called, organized a national Moratorium Day against the Vietnam War on October 15, 1969. Some 1,500 Loyola students signed a petition calling for the suspension of classes the day of the Moratorium, and the faculty senate passed a resolution supporting the student petition. Despite these actions, the administration would not officially endorse the Moratorium. Vice-President for Academic Affairs Thomas Clancy said that “the university cannot by its decisions or actions become the proponent of any one political position or ideological position.” He declared, however, that students who participated in the Moratorium “may freely do so without let or hindrance,” and they would not be punished for skipping classes.

By October 1969, the time of the Moratorium, a majority of American Catholics had turned against the war. Several bishops had come out publicly with anti-war statements, but the Church hierarchy remained, as it had for years, largely silent. Instead, what protest there was against the war came, as it were, from below, “from the priests, nuns and lay people who rejected the pattern of silent complicity and, often enough, risked ecclesiastical disapproval as well as civil penalty for their efforts.” The most prominent anti-war Catholic clergy who practiced the so-called “ultraresistance” to the war were Daniel and Philip Berrigan. The Berrigan brothers were both priests, and both were arrested in May 1968 after burning with homemade napalm the
records of a Selective Service Office in Maryland. In a speech he gave at Cornell University after his arrest, Daniel Berrigan lamented that “the Society of Jesus, which is my community, which I love very much, which is the source of almost everything I have ever learned and valued is silent and will probably remain silent.”

Continuing their commitment to a Catholic approach to protest, the demonstrators began the day of the Moratorium with a mass for peace in the commons between the two dormitories on Loyola’s campus. Following the mass, a crowd of about 200 gathered as students and faculty held memorial services for those killed in Vietnam. One professor gave a brief history of anti-war movements. English professor Herman Levy railed against the war and the government, calling President Richard Nixon “a rotten son of a bitch” and denouncing what he called “a professional murdering branch of the army and government.” Senior Ralph Adamo, a Student Council representative and editorial writer for the Maroon, read anti-war poems to close out the memorial service.

After the campus events concluded, students from Loyola and Tulane met on Freret Street to march downtown together. Police estimated that from 2500 to 3000 people converged in downtown New Orleans for the main rally. In Duncan Plaza, outside of City Hall, participants listened to more speeches. Veteran labor and community organizers Walter and Elizabeth Rogers addressed the crowd as dusk approached and “students with their candles sat in semicircles on the grass.” The seventy-eight-year-old Elizabeth alluded to the slogan “Burn, baby, burn!” that black rioters across the country yelled as they torched their cities when she said that “if the U.S. government continues to burn babies, babies are going to burn back. We are burning babies in Vietnam with napalm, roasting them alive….We burn babies here with starvation, debts, mortgages, pullution [sic], and Jim Crow schools.” The crowd applauded and
Rogers led a call-and-response with lines from the Declaration of Independence. As night fell and the air chilled, “small fires built with paper and cardboard…began to spring up about the sidewalk and street.” Throughout the rest of the evening, bands entertained the demonstrators, and arguments between protesters and war supporters broke out.  

One of the important aspects of the student movement of the 1960s is that it was also, in a sense, a faculty movement. At Loyola, faculty members had participated in the Moratorium and the protests against racial discrimination at Phillip’s and Cusimano’s. They supported the student demonstration against the administration’s use of undercover police on campus. In the pages of the Maroon, professors had publicly lobbied for changes to the curriculum and various university regulations. The combination of student and faculty agitation challenged the power of the university administration to set policy unilaterally.

As students returned from Christmas break in January 1970, they discovered that a serious conflict had broken out between faculty members and administrators. The Maroon put out a special issue during the first week of classes to inform the student body of what had taken place over the holidays. The editors stated that “while no one is quite sure what has been happening at Loyola over the past three weeks, the confusion, name-calling, and politicking indicate that this is a time of change for the University.” In an emergency meeting of the University Senate on January 15, faculty members voted on a motion declaring that the Senate “takes exception to and deplores procedural misusage by the present vice president for academic affairs [Father Thomas Clancy],” and it also “asked that the Board of Directors remove Dr. Frank Crabtree, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, from office.” By then, the sequence of events leading up to the Senate’s motion had been revealed.
The Senate charged that Vice President Clancy had violated university procedures and abused his authority by arbitrarily making decisions about academic departments. The Senate stated that “he has appointed chairmen without the consent of the department involved and has deposed and attempted to depose chairmen in the same unprocedural manner. He has terminated individual contracts without the consent of chairmen and other faculty involved. He has arbitrarily assigned rank to faculty without the approval or recommendation of the faculty or the department involved.” The Senate also listed six specific complaints against Dean Crabtree; many were similar to those against Clancy and involved what the Senate saw as arbitrary abuses of power meant to punish certain faculty members and minimize faculty participation in the affairs of academic departments.

The charges made against both men were serious and the show of faculty solidarity was such that the administration response was swift and dramatic. A week after the University Senate meeting, the Board of Directors met to choose a replacement for Clancy. Though no replacement was immediately decided upon, the Board stated that Clancy would not be in office after June 1. In early February, the university president accepted Crabtree’s resignation and appointed the Rev. Joseph Tetlow as Dean of Arts and Sciences in his place. Another skirmish involving administrators versus faculty and students took place later in February 1970. The university administration chose not to renew the contract of Tom Blouin, a popular instructor in the English department, for failure to make substantial progress toward completion of his Ph.D. Blouin had previously taught at Louisiana State University with Professor John Corrington, and Corrington brought Blouin with him to Loyola when he was hired as chairman of the English department. Ralph Adamo, a senior English major at the time, remembers Blouin as being “a brilliant teacher” and “that kind of intellectual that you…read
about who’s also charismatic too….There were students who really became his disciples.”

After the administration’s decision to fire Blouin became public, Gary Atkins wrote in the Maroon that “Blouin’s student support runs wide – from the ‘involved’ to the average student.” Professor Corrington and Vice-President Clancy debated Blouin’s case in Loyola’s Danna Center as dozens of students and faculty looked on. Students in the audience “hissed, moaned over and yelled at” Clancy, and they repeatedly pressed him to explain the university’s decision to fire Blouin. When he stated that the order to terminate Blouin “was passed by the Board of Directors,” one student asked, “But what is the reason? Why should the top management of the university be concerned about one man with a master’s degree?” Clancy replied, “I don’t know. You’ll have to ask them.”

Corrington eventually brought the Blouin issue before the university’s Rank and Tenure Committee. Acting Dean of Arts and Sciences Joseph Tetlow then sent a letter threatening to fire Corrington if he did not withdraw his request for an investigation by the committee. Tetlow also stated in the letter that he was removing Corrington as chairman of the English department. In March 1970, a student petition supporting Blouin was signed by over 600 students and presented to the university president, and over 100 students demonstrated in front of the university along St. Charles Avenue. Professor John Joerg of the English department believed that students and faculty should collaborate on the issue and “sent a letter to faculty members…urging them to ‘join the student pickets.”” Joerg and Corrington both demonstrated alongside the students, with Corrington holding a picket that read, “What happens when truth dies?” Despite the protests and petitions, the Board of Directors upheld Blouin’s termination at the end of the year.
The Blouin affair was an important moment in the increasing politicization of some members of the student body, for it was another instance in which they found themselves increasingly at odds with what they perceived as an intransigent, unresponsive administration. Student Louis Lassus wrote in the *Maroon* that “the most outstanding phenomenon to occur at this university in the past year has been the liberalization of a good many students and faculty.” According to Lassus, “the liberalization can be traced to a number of things,” one of which was the Blouin affair, which “united both faculty and students in a confrontation with the administration.”

Ralph Adamo recalled that students were beginning to identify their dissatisfaction with the university administration with their anger over the Vietnam War and the Nixon administration:

> The Blouin issue became completely wrapped up for a lot of people….We had our own version of a government that we hated and mistrusted,…the president and university administrators who were doing things against our will and against the popular will, and who were not at all responsive to that will.

The actions of several hundred Loyola students during the national student strike at the end of the spring semester showed just how much they had become radicalized during the school year.

On April 30, 1970, President Richard Nixon announced that the United States was expanding its bombing campaign of Vietnam into Cambodia. Within hours of his announcement, protests occurred at colleges and universities around the country. Four days later, on May 4, National Guard troops opened fire on protesters at Kent State University in Ohio, killing four students. The combination of Nixon’s announcement and the killings at Kent State prompted a nationwide student strike; roughly thirty percent of the country’s colleges and universities “participated in some way” in the strike.
On Thursday, May 7, some one thousand students from Loyola, Tulane, and LSUNO gathered in front of the Loyola Field House and began a march downtown to Jackson Square. Several protesters were arrested as the group made its way along St. Charles Avenue, including Loyola’s Herman Levy, who was arrested for “disturbing the peace and using obscene language.” A New Orleans Times-Picayune reporter observed that, as the students gathered in Jackson Square, “a team of policemen armed with billy sticks advanced on the scene” and watched over the demonstration. The reporter noted that “the march…was much less joyful than moratorium day seven months ago,” and that “raised fists were to be seen much more often among the marchers than the raised two-finger peace signs.” However, the rally ended without any confrontations between students and police.74

On Loyola’s campus that afternoon, several hundred students gathered in the quad outside the Danna Center. That night, many decided to sleep in the quad as a form of protest. The next day, Friday, May 8, they demanded of President Jolley that the Catholic university take a moral stand and condemn the bombing of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State. They also demanded that the administration cancel final exams for that semester. When President Jolley stated that he could not specifically endorse their demands, students began discussing whether or not to occupy the Danna Center. Several hundred students were inside the building, and Ralph Adamo recalled that two of them joined their hands and lifted up their arms, forming an archway….Someone said, “This was the vote on whether we would sit in. If you wanted to sit in, come under the archway and we would count your vote.” And I don’t know how many people, hundreds of people went under the archway and plopped back down, and the sit-in had begun.75
Students then elected members for a committee that would speak for the group and act as intermediaries with the university administration.

The next day the students decided on a course of action for the protest, which they planned to continue into the following week. The forms of protest that they adopted again reveal how central their Catholicism was to the protesters. They held a candlelight vigil that evening in front of the administration headquarters at Marquette Hall, and at midnight about 150 students began fasting. During Sunday mass the following morning, students held a demonstration along St. Charles Avenue outside of Holy Name of Jesus Church. With no moral leadership from the administration, the students had taken it upon themselves to insist on how a Catholic university should act in response to what had become, for them, an unequivocally immoral war.

Early Monday morning, a group of Loyola students who had left New Orleans a couple of days before to attend a rally in Washington returned to campus. According to Ralph Adamo, the protesters in the Danna Center “were kind of hanging around, having our conversations, chatting, eating,” when the returning students arrived. Those who had been to Washington were “just fired up, totally radicalized” from their experience at the capitol, and they rounded up a group to confront the Jesuits in their residence at Thomas Hall. When they entered the building they found cooks preparing breakfast. The students began “slamming their boots on the ground and yelling things up the stairs,” and a priest appeared in the stairwell, telling them to leave the building. The students did not leave until after they had met with President Jolley for about an hour, although they were unable to convince him to concede to their demands. That evening, after the students voted to continue the protest “indefinitely” until the university took a stand on the issues, they burned the administration officials in effigy during a demonstration outside of the dormitories.
On Tuesday, May 12, students and faculty held another general demonstration in front of Marquette Hall. Speakers gave anti-war speeches, denounced Loyola’s administration, and vowed to continue on with the strike and fasting. For all of the rhetoric and protest, however, the occupation came to a sudden end the next day. On Wednesday afternoon, a majority of the students voted to leave the Danna Center because “the administration of Loyola will not respect peaceful protest and because we are unequivocally opposed to campus disruption.” The students had grown frustrated with the administration’s refusal to concede to any of their demands, and they had given up. Along with the vote to end the occupation, students voted to “reaffirm our disappointment in the failure of the administration to take a strong, moral stand” on Vietnam and Kent State and “the failure of the administration to give sufficient consideration to the hardships of students in taking final exams at this time.” The students also voted to continue the general strike at the beginning of the next semester if more demands “have not been satisfactorily dealt with.” Among these demands were “the tenure of Mr. Tom Blouin; the chairmanship of Dr. John Corrington,” and “the resignation of the university president, the vice president for academic affairs and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.”

Despite the vote to officially end the occupation, a group of fifteen students and faculty refused to leave the Danna Center. Just before two o’clock the next morning, twenty-five police officers arrived at Loyola to remove the demonstrators; when they still refused to leave, the police arrested them for trespassing and “interfering with the educational process.” A small crowd outside the Danna Center cheered as police hauled the protesters away. On Sunday, May 17, the university lowered the American flag on campus to half-mast “as a symbol of our grief” over those killed in the Vietnam war and at Kent State and Jackson State University, where two black students had been shot dead by National Guard troops during a protest. Ultimately, the
administration dropped charges against those arrested. Of the four faculty members who refused to leave the Danna Center, three were fired and one continued to teach at Loyola because he was protected by tenure.81

A study of the campus unrest of May 1970 found that a large majority of students, faculty, and administrators believed that “incidents of disruption or violence were not likely to occur on their campuses during the new school year [1970-71].”82 This proved to be the case at Loyola, where many of the student and faculty protest leaders had left after the upheavals of the spring semester. Ralph Adamo recalled, “We all graduated….All the people I remember being…either on that [protest] committee or…leaders of this thing were seniors. And so we really were all gone.” Several of the students arrested in May had graduated or been expelled, and three of the faculty members arrested, including Herman Levy, were fired from the university. The firing of Tom Blouin continued to get coverage in the Maroon, but there were no more demonstrations over the issue. John Corrington was reinstated as chairman of the English department by Joseph Tetlow, who remained acting Dean of Arts and Sciences despite student anger over his role in the firing of Blouin and the temporary removal of Corrington. Two other polarizing administrators, Father Clancy and President Jolley, had left Loyola over the summer.

The only demonstration that year was a peaceful meeting about dormitory regulations in February 1971. Around 250 students gathered in the Danna Center to protest the decision by the new university president, the Rev. Michael Kennelly, not to extend visitation and curfew hours in the dorms, and to ban the use of incense in dorm rooms. The day after the meeting, the president met with representatives of two groups that represented dormitory residents, the Men’s Residence Council and the Women’s Residence Council.
President Kennelly explained to the *Maroon* why he was opposed to loosening the current regulations. Kennelly complained that “there is a lack of discipline in all of this….They’re staying up late at night. They’re blaring radios. They’re blasting television sets….This isn’t discipline. This is a way of life that will only lead to more carelessness.” He continued: “[W]e have to keep the discipline and order that is needed for good work – sound work that will provide a reason for their parents to make a great sacrifice….It’s a tremendous burden on the parents of these people.” He concluded by positing that the university administrators, as Fathers in the Catholic Church, should act in the role of parents: “Why shouldn’t we Fathers, cognizant of what sacrifice is, keep an eye on the parent back at home and say ‘They’re sacrificing to send this boy or girl.’ For what? Blasting the radio?...We are directing them. We love them too much to endanger any one of them.”

Despite President Kennelly’s sincere recitation of the idea of *in loco parentis*, the practice had largely become a casualty of the student movement. The student protesters of the 1960s rejected *in loco parentis* restrictions and insisted on their right to govern their own lives. One Catholic commentator joined the students’ calls for reform, arguing that “the important point is that the *immediate* norm for Catholic university student behavioral standards can never be ‘parental wishes’ but must always be the needs of students as members of a Catholic university community” The traditional *in loco parentis* restrictions must be lifted, he declared, and “a new, viable, realistic formulation must be found which more accurately describes the university-student relationship.” Most universities went along with student sentiment by loosening and revising outdated, arbitrary, or overly strict regulations. At Loyola, students had won victories by persuading the administration to loosen dress code regulations and to adopt the Policy Statement on Student Rights and Freedoms. In May 1971, Kennelly sided with students and
adopted a policy, already approved by the Student Council, which eliminated “mandatory dormitory living for sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have consent from their parents.”

The policy would be in place as an “experiment” for the next school year and would then be brought before the Board of Directors for a decision on whether or not it would continue.

In September 1970, the Council on Academic Planning (CAP), commissioned in 1969 to outline a long-range academic plan for the university, issued its preliminary report. The council surveyed the state of Loyola and made recommendations on improving facilities, strengthening programs, and raising funds to continue the university’s expansion. The CAP also touched on the areas of authority, governance, and curriculum, three aspects of university life that were often at the heart of the student protest movement. The CAP noted that the university no longer operated on an authoritative basis in which the “administrative structure channels all decision-making on every level to the president of the university.” The president now shared power with the Board of Directors, and faculty and student advisory bodies had gained more importance. As far as student participation is concerned, “while progress has been made, students believe that legitimate goals have not been attained….Students believe that they can contribute to ordered and profitable change if given an opportunity to serve meaningfully on relevant committees.” In terms of the relevance of the curriculum and classroom atmosphere, “there should be a progressive movement away from the classroom lecture-contact hour method of teaching to one of individualized study and tailored instruction” with “a more flexible curriculum, and an increasing emphasis on cross fertilization among and between disciplines.”

The CAP was composed of fifteen students, faculty, and administrators, but its report was produced with the input of the hundreds more surveyed over the course of a year. The report shows that all involved considered the implications of the recent events at the university and took
seriously their task of constructing a new vision of the university’s future. Significantly, the council took into consideration and formally recommended many of the changes in the university structure that students and faculty had fought for during the second half of the 1960s. They recognized that despite all of its parochialism, what Loyola had gone through in the last half of the 1960s was not isolated and could not be ignored or settled without major changes to the university. The Loyola students that raised the issues of civil rights, student freedoms, and Vietnam were integral in shaping the vision of Loyola’s future as outlined in the CAP report.
Conclusion

Change might have come to Loyola in any case, but the persistent and vocal display of grievances on campus and in the *Maroon* made the need for change much more urgent. This was so largely because the students were acting as Catholics in a campaign to make their Catholic university worthy of the name. In their campaign against racial discrimination, the students revealed the hypocrisy of widespread racism on a Catholic campus. By putting pressure on the administration, the fraternities and sororities, and their fellow students, activists had a role in eliminating some of the institutional racism that existed at Loyola. In their protests against the Vietnam War, the protesters believed they were acting as a Catholic community should, by taking a moral stand against an immoral war. They lobbied for and received from successive administrations more participation in decision-making at the university, and they influenced the creation of a Policy Statement on Student Rights and Freedoms. These, too, were part of a broad pattern of change at Catholic universities around the country to modernize and make themselves more responsive to the needs of their students. Moreover, student-faculty relations improved during the years of protest as the two groups collaborated to address mutual concerns. Loyola’s activist students often felt that they were alone on an island of political conservatism, racial ignorance, and apathy, but their causes linked them to the student movement that encompassed not just America but many other parts of the world as well.
Notes


12 Carolyn Bereznak, “Faculty-Student Board Conducts First Meeting,” *Maroon*, October 14, 1966.


18 “Group set up to delineate Student Rights,” *Maroon*, December 1, 1967.


20 “Rules for dress are promulgated by Rev. Molloy,” *Maroon*, September 29, 1967. The student protesters of the 1960s fought against university dress codes around the country, and the counterculture that arose during those years was characterized by changes in dress and appearance, psychedelic rock music, and drug use. The student protesters, however, were not always a part of the counterculture, which was, very often, not political at all. Students at Loyola grew mustaches and beards and wore their hair long, but the counterculture did not have as heavy a presence there as compared to Tulane University right next door. For more on the counterculture, see Sharon

21 *Maroon*, March 22 or 29, 1968.


46 Fairclough, Race and Democracy, 429-430.


50 Fairclough, 200-201.


52 Gary Atkins, “Loyola and ‘student power’,” Maroon, October 11, 1968.

53 “Campus activist groups organizes: membership now at 35,” Maroon, December 6, 1968.

54 Louisiana Legislature, The Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities, Students for a Democratic Society and the New Left: Their Danger to the Educational Institutions of the State of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1969), 9, 13, 17.

55 Louisiana Legislature, 17-18. Gregory Duhe, in his study of SDS activity at LSUNO in the late 1960s, stated that, although that university had a SLF chapter for a number of years, an SDS chapter would not be officially formed until the spring of 1969. Therefore, it is most likely that the report is referring to Tulane University. See Gregory Duhe, “The FBI and Students for a Democratic Society at the University of New Orleans, 1968-1971,” Louisiana History 43 (2003), 53-74.

56 Louisiana Legislature, 18, 22.

57 “In policy statement, IFC explains frats’ purpose,” Maroon, September 12, 1969.


59 “Loyola to Hold Class as Usual,” The Times-Picayune, October 12, 1969, section 1.


64 “Editor’s Note,” Maroon, January 27, 1970.

Most historical analyses of the student protest movement argue that it was a conflation of the issues of racial discrimination, the Vietnam War, and campus and local concerns that led to the radicalization of students. Adamo states, however, that it was the Blouin affair and the actions of the Nixon administration that led to the radicalization of the students at Loyola, and that racial discrimination “was a separate issue in a way.” He states that the multitude of issues “probably all merges…somehow…but I don’t remember race being part of that conflation.” (Adamo, 8, 11.)


Adamo, 19.

Adamo, 22.

“200 At Loyola Extend Sit-In,” The Times-Picayune, May 12, 1970, sec. 1.


According to the Times-Picayune, the “laws concerning the ‘educational process’ were enacted last year by the legislature” and were classified as felonies.” “Police Arrest Protest Group,” The Times-Picayune, May 15, 1970, sec. 1.


The four faculty members arrested were Tom Blouin, Thomas Grange, John Joerg, and Herman Levy. Joerg was the one faculty member who remained at Loyola. “Police Arrest Protest Group,” and Debbie Bourque, “Administration drops demonstration charges,” Maroon, September 4, 1970.

Garth Buchanan, Survey of Campus Incidents as Interpreted by College Presidents, Faculty Chairmen and Student Body Presidents (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1970), 4.


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