

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Bob Beyers  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
STANFORD—

Student interests will be "irreparably damaged" if Associate Prof. H. Bruce Franklin's dismissal is upheld by the Board of Trustees, two undergraduate members of the Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee warned Thursday, Jan. 20.

Such a decision would deny students "the opportunity to evaluate the single most powerful political force in the world" and limit "the free speech of our professors," according to Elaine Wong, a junior anthropology major from Tucson, Ariz., and Wallace Scott Burke, a junior philosophy major from Farmington, Ct.

Responding to an opportunity from Trustee President Robert Minge Brown to have their views circulated to Board members prior to Saturday's special session, both expressed strong disapproval of procedures followed by the trustees in considering the case.

"Your decision to conduct a closed meeting, your refusal to meet with various segments of the community who have requested the opportunity to present to you their views, your denial of the request that discussion upon the matter be held by the Committee on Academic Affairs before any decision by the full Board can only maintain the secrecy and isolation which have tainted the Board's activities in the past," they said.

"Merely to listen to the opinions of the Stanford community would serve to make you more truly aware of the existing conditions on the campus and give you a firmer basis for predicting the probable effects of any decision you may take."

Responding earlier this week to other student requests for an open session on campus, Brown noted that the University policy on appointment and tenure "does not call for the Board of Trustees to hear new evidence or reweigh the evidence, and the Board. . . does not believe it would be proper to do so."

The students said "Franklin is, to our knowledge, the only professor at Stanford who both calls himself a Marxist and lives as though he were one. . . . [He] exposed students here to the most powerful and influential philosophical-political-economic system presently existing, and did so in a positive fashion such as no one not fully committed to its principles is capable of doing.

"Since notice has now been served upon the faculty that such actions will not be tolerated in the future, the opportunity for exposure to Marxist philosophy in the life and actions of a professor is not possible. . . .

"The grounds used to justify [dismissal] now are precedent and will serve to limit what other professors may advocate. . . . Since laws are no more than attempts to preserve and protect the political system in ascendancy at a particular moment, this means in essence that professors may not advocate that others take immediate action that will seriously threaten the maintenance of the established order. . . .

"Unless he is willing to lose his job, no Stanford professor will now dare to advocate that which might be considered by others as likely to cause imminent lawless action."

In a separate letter sent to Brown Jan. 18, the seven-member Executive Committee of the Stanford chapter of the AAUP said they "fully agree" that the trustees are in no position to "reweigh the evidence" or "hear any new evidence."

Clarifying an earlier letter, they suggested that the Board "should use its normal procedures for gathering information" concerning "the probable impact on academic freedom here and elsewhere of the sanction imposed."

They noted that no evidence at all was presented on this question during the Advisory Board hearing for Professor Franklin. "Our request in no way should be taken to imply that we believe the Advisory Board's decision was inappropriate," they added.

Prof. John D. Goheen, philosophy, is chapter president.