Alumni and friends of Northwestern University are understandably interested in and concerned about the events which occurred on the Evanston campus May 3-4, when a group of black students occupied the University's business office at 619 Clark Street. In any situation charged with intense feeling, the actual events tend to become obscured. This is especially true for those whose knowledge of the events is limited to reports in the press and on television. Here, then, is a chronological summary of the events and related documents aimed at putting the various incidents involved into as clear and accurate a perspective as possible.

J. ROSCOE MILLER
PRESIDENT

As early as March 25, when President J. Roscoe Miller met with the executive committee of the University’s Board of Trustees, he told the committee that there were indications of student unrest on the campus and that overall campus problems continued on page 4

Statement by the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University has received full reports from the officers of the University as to the incidents of May 3 and 4 on the University campus, including the occupancy of the University Business Office, the negotiations between the occupying group and the administration, and the resulting agreement; and

WHEREAS, negotiation of contracts including arrangements with student groups is a delegated function of administrative officers under the by-laws of the University, but is subject to the supervisory responsibility of the Board of Trustees in matters of policy; and

WHEREAS, the agreement of May 4 has given rise to great misunderstanding; therefore,

The Board of Trustees RESOLVES:

1. The Board concurs in the administration’s sincere effort to understand the problems of the black student group and to seek a satisfactory program for resolving them. The Board therefore authorizes the administration to proceed with the terms of the agreement of May 4 subject to review from time to time by the Board of Trustees. The Board is satisfied that the administration properly rejected all demands that the University surrender administrative authority or faculty prerogative, and that under the terms of the agreement, students will be consulted in an advisory capacity only.

suggested the possibility that this unrest might find expression in some form of student action.

It was not until a month later—April 22—that the administration received formal notice of grievances from the black student community. These grievances were contained in a petition listing eight major demands for changes in what they termed “the deplorably limited academic, cultural, and social conditions” affecting black students on campus. The demands were presented by James Turner, a graduate student member of the Afro-American Student Union, and Kathryn Ogletree, an undergraduate and member of the organization, For Members Only. Mr. Turner and Miss Ogletree were chief spokesmen for the black students.

Briefly stated, the demands in the petition presented the administration April 22 were for: (1) a statement by the administration deploring white racism; (2) assurance that Negroes would compose 10 to 12 percent of each new freshman class, and that half the black students come from urban ghettos; (3) increase in financial aid; (4) provision for a black student housing unit; (5) new courses in Negro history, literature, and art and a voice in approving professors who would teach these courses; (6) approval by the black student community of personnel hired to counsel black students; (7) a place that black students could use for social and recreational activities; and (8) desegregation by Northwestern of all its real estate holdings.

The administration received the demands from the students late in the afternoon of April 22. On April 24, after the demands had been studied, a meeting with black student representatives was requested by Vice-President and Dean of Students Roland J. Hinz and Director of Admission William I. Ihlanfeldt. Demands were discussed, but no final settlement was reached.

President Miller—who had returned to the campus after a trip to New York on University business—met with top administration officials the next day, April 25, to study the demands at length and to consider the University's reply.

On April 26, after a meeting that lasted much of the day, the administration released to black student representatives the University's formal reply to their demands.

On the following Monday, April 29, the administration heard that its reply had been rejected. Two days later the administration received from the black students a revised and clarified version of their demands, which also contained a formal rejection of the reply given by the University April 26.

After receiving the second petition of grievances, the administration asked the black student community to meet with members of the administration at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 3, but received no reply to its request.

Instead, on Friday, May 3, at 7:45 a.m. the black students

continued on page 2
Any great social crisis confronts us with circumstances for which there is no exact precedent and with difficult if not impossible choices. Whatever resolution is made by those in positions of responsibility is bound to leave questions and ambiguities. Usually more than one principle or tactical approach can be applied, and when it is all over a case can always be made that the choice not made was the right one and the choice which was made was the wrong one.

At Northwestern last May 3-4, an illegal act was committed, and the rights of others were seriously violated by the students who occupied university buildings and offices. It could be legitimately argued that the forces of law and order should have been invoked, since to condone deliberate violations of the law is to invite chronic disrespect for the law. On the other hand, it was also possible to consider the actions of the students in terms of their moral and human issues involved. The black students felt that their grievances needed to be dramatized to receive adequate attention. In one sense they were not acting as free individuals, since the means they selected to make their point were suggested by the events of our times. For the University, the question was whether to choose a course that might lead to better mutual understanding, or one that would provide an object lesson in the scheme of guilt and punishment. Law enforcement officers and judges often are faced with this choice. The University decided to take the former course, moved by considerations of humanity, and in conformity with an age old academic tradition that a university must first attempt to restore order in its own way and resort to the instruments of law only when its own efforts have failed.

What happened at Northwestern is a small episode in a worldwide phenomenon, a local manifestation of unrest brought on not only by general political and social dislocations but also by unprecedented changes in the American university. The action of the black students and their white sympathizers cannot be approached simply as a student prank, or an act of calculated disorder, or a lack of understanding of the decencies and restraints of university life, though it had some aspects of all of these. The response to the action must be measured by its context.

One test of whether the crisis was met with wisdom and good judgment is to consider the consequences. The business of the university continues without disruption: classes are being held, examinations are about to be given on schedule, laboratories and libraries are in full use, and all the activities of a distinguished university are proceeding normally, and not in an atmosphere of strife, division and insecurity. A closer understanding has been established between the administration and those students who previously felt that the university had insufficient concern for their well-being and success.

There also exists now a greater degree of mutual understanding and respect between the faculty and administration than at any time in the recent past. This state of affairs does not mean that everyone in the university approves of the actions which precipitated the crisis or of the methods used and the decision made in restoring order. It represents something more significant—an awareness on the part of everyone that the university community has been tested by a serious and even dangerous situation and that the situation has been met with candor and humanity, and, in spite of concessions and compromises, without the sacrifice of any principles or safeguards upon which the independence and integrity of a university rest.

If this state of affairs is understood by those who constitute the university community, by its alumni and friends, and by the interested general public, then Northwestern is in a better position today to face the uncertain future and become worthy of its responsibilities than it was even a short time ago. It is in the hope of providing the basis for such an understanding that this account of the events of May 3 and 4 has been made public.

LETTER continued

entered the bursar's office at 619 Clark Street, employing a ruse to divert the security officer at the door, and locked themselves in. At 8:00 a.m. several administrative officers of the University met in an office nearby. Following a predetermined plan for incidents of this kind, they began marshaling Northwestern’s security force. They also alerted the Evanston police department, which assured them eviction could be carried out in just a few minutes, but indicated that two hours were needed to marshal a sufficient force.

The administrators discussed the students' action and the consequences of the plan now underway to regain 619 Clark, i.e.: (1) request to leave; (2) order to leave; (3) use of campus security men in effective removal; (4) use of Evanston police if necessary. Two faculty members, Walter L. Wallace and Lucius P. Gregg, Jr., were called into the meeting. They expressed the view that the students had undertaken their protest not in arrogance, but through desperation and fear. They discussed specific examples of extreme hostility by white students toward Negroes over the past several months.

The consequences of such incidents upon the black students, declared the professors, had been profound. The black students had come to feel alienated from the University. Not only did they resent the hostile actions by certain white students, but they also felt that those white students, faculty, and administrators who professed friendship did not comprehend the severe traumatic experience of moving from a ghetto to a white upper middle-class society in a leading white university. Finally, said the professors, the students were undergoing an intense inner conflict resulting from their avid desire to succeed at the university coupled with the need to adjust to what they felt was a hostile environment. As evidence, the professors pointed to the fact that of 124 black students in the University, 90 were in the occupied building.

The importance of this action by the students should not be minimized, said the professors. Not only did the students fear the University's authority and the power at its command, they realized that they had put their futures and the hopes of their families in jeopardy with their action—futures of a kind that few Negroes have the opportunity to attain. The action, said the professors, was one of desperation in that it was the culmination of a driving desire to achieve opposed by complete frustration.
had not understood the true meaning of the black student petition, and that their reply to it had been inadequate. They agreed that they now faced a moral issue that superseded the legal issue, and that the moral issue required action first.

Immediately thereafter, President Miller met with twelve members of his administration and faculty in a 15-hour session. Together, they reviewed the second petition by the students and drafted a new reply to it, granting some of the demands but by no means all of them—and none that would infringe upon the fundamental authority of the university. This reply was given to the black students late Friday evening. The students asked for time to review it and agreed to meet with University representatives on the following morning.

At 10:00 a.m. Saturday the meeting on the reply given the students began. The administration explained why certain of the student demands could not be granted. The students, for example, had asked to share power on determining the admissibility of students to the University and on approving personnel hired as Negro counsellors. These demands, and others like them, were denied because such authority is vested in the University alone by its charter and statutes. The black students listened to such explanations and accepted them.

Here is a summary of the demands and the University's final response to them. Of the eight major demands made, four were granted, one was partially granted, and three were denied.

• On the demand for a policy statement on the matter of “racism,” the University said that although members of the administration, faculty, and student body had worked to right racial wrongs, “the fact remains that the University, in its overwhelming character, has been a white institution.”—The statement said the University could not be “complacent with institutional arrangements that ignore the special problems of black students.” The University accepted the basic “sentiments expressed in the black students’ demands” and proposed that a special Northwestern University Advisory Council be set up as “an instrument of University administration to function at all administrative levels as the administration deals with problems of the black community related to the University.”

• The administration declined to set up any percentage target or quota for Negro students, pointing out that competition from other institutions for qualified Negro students and the absence of unlimited funds for scholarships makes such a projection impossible. The agreement noted that the University has been committed to increase the number of Negro students at Northwestern as rapidly as possible and to seek at least 50 percent from inner city schools. While welcoming advice and counsel on the admission of black students, the administration said “it cannot permit students to make individual admission selections, this being an administrative responsibility of the Office of Admission.”

• On the matter of expanding studies of black history and culture, the University pointed out that determination of curriculum must be initiated through the faculty of each department, and that initial recommendation of faculty members is also a faculty prerogative. Students can recommend but cannot share in the final decisions. The University stated that suggestions by students in both areas would be welcomed by the faculty.

• The agreement specified that a committee is to be selected by the Negro community on campus to advise the University's Committee on Financial Aid to Students on policy matters regarding financial aid to black students.

• On the demand for special living units, the University said that by the Fall Quarter of 1968 it will reserve sections of existing living units for Negro students who wish to live together. The University also said it continues to believe that a mixture of student types should be housed in living quarters, but that it was modifying that stand for two reasons: (a) the distinctiveness of existing racial concerns, (b) the admitted inconsistency between the ideal of non-discrimination in housing, and the selectivity exercised by some living units of the University.

• The demand that the black community approve the appointment of a counselor for black students was denied. The University reaffirmed its confidence in the Negro counselor who had been hired April 15, 1968, with joint responsibilities in the Admission Office and the Office of the Dean of Students, and indicated that it would as a matter of general practice consult with students on the appointment of counselors.

• The University agreed to provide a room on campus by September, 1968 to meet the needs of Negro students for social activities. This is not unprecedented at Northwestern. Many social and religious groups have separate facilities.

• On the demand that Northwestern desegregate all of its real estate holdings, the University reiterated its concern for open occupancy and noted that in housing under University ownership—the N.U. Apartments, Dryden Hall, and faculty housing—there is no segregation whatsoever. The University said it is committed to working for just living space and conditions for all black people. It said it would be prepared to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Housing Discrimination when that group reports early in June.

Essentially, the agreement adopted was the University reply of the day before. There was no “complete capitulation” to the black students. The final agreement gave formal recognition to the serious problems of one group of Northwestern students and made a commitment to solve those problems, through structured continuing communication and consultation. The administration did not, it is repeated, yield any administrative authority or faculty prerogatives, nor did the black students press for them once they understood the University’s position.

At 6:30 p.m. Saturday the agreement was signed and the negotiations ended. At 9:30 the black students evacuated the bursar’s office, leaving the building as they found it.

In summarizing his position on the action taken, President Miller said, “The easiest and most popular action would have been to remove the students by force, since we clearly had the authority and the manpower to do so. By use of understanding, restraint and compassion we feel that we prevented what might have been a disaster at Northwestern.”

But he added: “This was a single confrontation of a special type. We will not again negotiate with any groups under such circumstances.”

The agreement reached between the administration and the black student community was presented to Northwestern’s Board of Trustees on May 9. The Board appointed a committee to review the agreement. On May 14 the Board met to receive the committee’s report. It concurred with the committee’s recommendation that the Trustees approve the administration’s action in working out an agreement with the black student community and expressed full confidence in the administration. The approval

continued on page 4
LETTER continued

covered all elements of the agreement, but in view of the mis-
understanding that had arisen with reference to the statement on
“racism,” the Board said: “The preamble of the agreement of
May 4, insofar as it is interpreted to impute to the University
hostile and antagonistic ‘racism,’ is wholly unacceptable to the
Board. In fact, the Board decries racism in any form.” (See full
text of the Trustees' resolution on page 1.)

In a statement after the Trustees' meeting May 14, President
Miller said:

“I am deeply grateful to the members of the Board of Trustees
of this University for upholding the decisions made by the
administration in the events of May 3-4. Their approval enables
Northwestern to go forward with programs of the utmost concern
to the future of this country. Our work will succeed because we
have been through these difficult days together—trustees, admin-
istrators, faculty, and students—and have proved that the fruits
of forbearance are understanding and strength.”

STATEMENT BY BOARD continued

The provisions of the agreement with respect to separate
housing of black students have been the subject of considerable
adverse comment. While as a matter of policy the Board favors
integration of University housing units and is opposed to
“separatism” or “segregation,” we feel that the black students,
whether right or wrong in their judgment, were nevertheless
sincere in their belief that separate housing, on the basis of
individual choice, was desirable in view of the special problems
confronting them. On this basis, we approve of the administra-
tion's response to their request.

2. The preamble of the agreement of May 4, insofar as it is
interpreted to impute to the University hostile and antagonistic
“racism,” is wholly unacceptable to the Board. In fact, the
Board decries racism in any form. It is proud that Northwestern
University is in the forefront of those educational institutions
which offer educational opportunity for all qualified applicants,
without discrimination on the basis of race, creed or color.

3. The Board deplores the unlawful action of the students in
occupying the Business Office. The Board does not subscribe to
the philosophy that adherence to a cause justifies unlawful action
and the consequent infringement of rights and curtailment of
freedom of others. In order that there be no misunderstanding,
negotiations will not again be conducted by the University while
unlawful or disruptive activity is in progress. The University will
take whatever action is necessary to terminate unlawful activities.

4. The Board expresses complete confidence in the administra-
tive officers of the University and directs them to take prompt and
effective action in case of any future attempt to engage in tactics
which disrupt the orderly conduct of the University. To this end
the Board formally adopts the following statement as the policy
of the University:

“Northwestern University stands for freedom of speech, free-
dom of inquiry, freedom of dissent and freedom to demonstrate
in peaceful fashion. The University recognizes that freedom
requires order, discipline, and responsibility, and stands for the
right of all faculty and students to pursue their legitimate goals
without interference. This University, therefore, will not tolerate
any attempt by any individual, group or organization to disrupt
the regularly scheduled activities of the University. Any such
effort to impede the holding of classes, the carrying forward of
the University's business or the arrangements for properly
authorized and scheduled events, would constitute an invasion
of the rights of faculty and students and cannot be permitted.
If any such attempt is made to interfere with any University
activity, the leaders and participants engaged in disruptive tactics
will be held responsible and will be subject to appropriate legal
and disciplinary action, including expulsion.

It is further resolved, that copies of this Resolution be made
known to the University community and to the public.

DATED, this 14th of May, 1968