SPECIAL EDITION

The CAMPUS
Of Allegheny College

Meadville, PA Published Since 1876 Monday, May 14, 1990

ALLEGHENY DIVESTS

by Megan Schneider
Managing Editor



Approximately 150 members of the College community turned out at 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning to meet the Trustees as they entered Pelletier Library. Sarah Leritz Photo

By what has been called an "overwhelming majority," the Allegheny College Board of Trustees voted Saturday to divest College endowment funds from companies that do business in South Africa "in a prudent and timely manner."

Board of Trustees Chairman Samuel Hellman announced the decision Saturday at noon in Ford Chapel. In the resolution passed by the Trustees, the Board reaffirmed its condemnation of apartheid originally stated in its May 1988 resolution and recognized the overwhelming support for divestment in the Allegheny community.

Said the resolution, "The Trustees recognize that the moral implications of apartheid are particularly important when consideration is given to the fact that this issue brings pain to students of color on the Allegheny College campus as they attempt to address both the overt and subtle pressures of racism in their lives."

Saturday's decision reversed the Trustees' decision of two years ago, which was against divestment.

Commenting on the difference between the two votes, member of Allegheny Students Advocating Divestment (ASAD) Kristin Schiffhauer said, "I think the black students definitely had an impact, because before the Trustees thought it was this white liberal problem, and they didn't really take it too seriously. But ABC [Advancement of Black Culture] coming out in support of divestment was important."

Schiffhauer continued, "I think everybody knew and the Trustees knew, if they didn't divest, it was going to make it almost unbearable for the black students here."

Director of Off-Campus and Special Programs Wallace Goode stated, "One thing that was very exciting for me was that Sam [Hellman] commented about the students of color .... I feel that it's important that the College recognize that, and I'm glad the Board did recognize that. I think the Board recognized the energy and effort of all students in making this happen."

Financial Strength Unaffected

In a statement released by the College, Hellman stated that the Board does not think the financial consequences of divestment will compromise the fiscal responsibility of the Board, which includes making decisions concerning the investment policy of the college. This represents a shift in Board philosophy, according to Chaplain Don Skinner.

"I think the key difference was expressed very clearly in the wording of the resolution," Skinner said. "If you go back to the last resolution, [the Board] talked about the fiduciary responsibility of the Board, the need to carefully steward the institution's financial resources. What this resolution addresses, which is entirely different, is the impact of not divesting not on South Africa, and not on the investments of the institution, but on the College community."

Concern for College Community

In reaction to the decision, President of the College Daniel F. Sullivan said, "The Trustees affirmed today their concern and responsibility for the total welfare of the college community—not only their fiduciary obligations, but their responsibility for helping to shape the character of the college. They have made a significant statement about their institutional values—specifically, the importance we place on human rights and social justice both locally and globally."

Other Weekend Demonstrations

ASAD, in conjunction with ABC, planned demonstrations this past weekend before the Saturday Trustee meeting to show their support for divestment.

Approximately 70 participants in the "take to the streets" demonstration Friday night walked from Brooks Circle to President Sullivan's house, where Sullivan hosted a dinner for faculty and Trustees. During the demonstration, students read pro-divestment and anti-apartheid poetry.

A "silent demonstration" was planned by ASAD and ABC for 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning—just before the start of the Trustee meeting in the library—on the plaza of Pelletier Library. Approximately 150 students, faculty, and administrators participated in the demonstration. Groups and individuals who supported divestment made posters and hung them on the outside walls of the library.

Only a First Step

Although the Trustees voted to divest, Goode stated, "We need to develop another organization that addresses the issue of anti-apartheid."

Assistant to the Dean of Students Paula Wurst added that a new group is necessary, "so that we can continue to educate students and everybody in our community about the struggle that continues."

Looking to the future of the college's policy of divestment, Skinner said, "It's still in the hands of the Board. It's a com-

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Senate Approved By Student Vote

by Ann Bomberger
Editor-In-Chief

The Allegheny Student Government Senate referendum swept 80% of the vote Thursday though only approximately 12% of the student body cast their votes.

The proposal, which read, "Do you favor the transition from a Hall Council to an ASG Senate?" received 169 votes supporting it and 42 votes against it.

ASG President John Wilcox said Cabinet is planning to present a more in-depth proposal of the senate system as well as the results of the referendum to Council tomorrow evening during the ASG meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the CC Walker Room. He stressed that it is up to Council to decide the details of the system and so it is likely that the cabinet's proposal may be revised.

"Now it's up to Council to forge out the specifics of the idea that will be implemented in the fall," he said.

He and ASG Controller Bill McCloy will make a presentation and then ask Council members to think over the proposal and check with their constituencies over the next week. Extended discussion over senate system is planned to take place during the May 22 meeting and during an additional Council meeting that is scheduled for May 24 at 9 p.m in the CC Walker Room. Wilcox was quick to add that extended discussion of the senate form could come up during tomorrow's meeting if Council members choose to bring it up during the open comments section of the meeting.

Wilcox said he felt the low student turn-out at the polls was not necessarily a negative sign. "Most people on campus were in favor of it and assumed others would vote" he suggested.

Publicity was not a cause of the low voter turn-out, he said, because the senate system was widely publicized during his campaign and because ASG supplied 400 detailed information packets on the senate system before the referendum, as well as holding an all-college open forum last Wednesday.

"It's a shame [that the turn-out was so low] — if students are not interested in the issues there is only so much that you can do — you can't make them vote," he said.

Wilcox also cited the fact that the referendum polls were only open for one day as another reason for the low voter turn out. When asked why the polls were only open for one day he replied, "it was just a decision that was made . . . we wanted students to get out and make their voice heard."

Other reasons he cited for taking the referendum so quickly were ASG Constitutional requirements for a vote five days after the proposal is given to the Director of Student Voting and the shortage of time left before the term is over.

In addition to the senate plans, Wilcox said he will propose his campaign promise to suggest "at least one space for a senator on all student/faculty committees." If both senators and regular students are on the committees there would be elected representatives who could report back to ASG as well as outside student who could give their input.

Wilcox said he would also like to appoint students to these committees by the end of Spring term since procedural requirements frequently have kept students off of the committees until November, making them miss meetings early in the year where many important decisions are made.



ASG President John Wilcox, whose proposal for a change to a senatatorial legislature was favored in a student referendum.
Judy Perry Photo

In the Wednesday open forum, Wilcox explained several key points to his senate proposal.

"An official elected by a vote of a significant number of his peers feels more responsible," he said.

This responsibility, he added, will encourage the student to become more actively involved in ASG.

The new voting procedure would give an ASG Senator "more legitimacy in the eyes of the faculty and administration," Wilcox noted.

Allegheny Board Of Trustees Votes To Divest

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plex matter because what they've done is instruct the investment committee to begin the process. We don't know what that process is yet.

"The next step is going to be for the investment committee to look at the whole investment picture, and then start to make whatever movement they think is appropriate," he added.

Protests began in 1985

Divestment activism at Allegheny started in 1985, when a petition supporting divestment was presented to the Board of Trustees. A committee comprised of students, faculty, administrators, and trustees was formed in the fall of 1986 to examine the issue of divestment.

In April of 1987, the committee issued a statement recommending that the College "not alter its investment policies, which currently do not take moral or social issues, such as apartheid, into account in the making of investment decisions." As a result of student and faculty protest over the committee's report, the Board voted to postpone their decision.

The committee, with a slightly different membership, was reconvened in September 1987. It presented the Board of Trustees with two recommendations, one which favored divestment and another rejecting divestment.

In response to the committee's recommendations, the Board adopted three resolutions in May 1988: to condemn apartheid, to adhere to "sound fiscal policies" of investment without the college selling or disposing of securities solely because a company does part of its business in or with South Africa, and to appoint a committee to study what steps besides divestment could be taken to combat apartheid.

Due to further protests of ASAD and other students, in October 1989 the Trustees agreed to reconsider their 1988 decision not to divest.

The Trustee Divestment Committee, formed out of the third resolution of the 1988 decision, then gathered input from students, faculty, and staff through open forums. The recommendation of the committee to the Board on Saturday favored divestment.

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