

The Daily Tar Heel

Section B

Tuesday, August 31, 1971

Leaders voice praise for action conference

"In general, my reaction to the conference was one of extreme enthusiasm, because this group of individually diverse student leaders found areas of common concern."

These are the words of UNC Student Body President Joe Stallings as he considered the recent accomplishments of the Student Action Conference.

More than 300 college and high school students from around the state converged in Chapel Hill to take part in the three-day conference, which began Aug. 13.

The purpose of the conference, according to Stallings, was "to discuss mutual political and educational problems and plan action to solve them."

"We fully expected the conference to come up with concrete plans, which we together can now implement," Stallings said.

Charles Jeffress, one of the student organizers, felt the meetings had accomplished these goals.

"Everybody there seemed to have a specific reason for being there, which was good," Jeffress said. "People were there to make something happen, so it was a working conference, not a talking conference."

The first day of meetings was devoted to exchanging information and identifying issues on which action could then be planned.

The major focus of the conference was in the area of voter registration. The group of students that elected to work in this area decided there was a need for a state-wide coalition to organize the effort.

After compiling information on how a voter registration drive could best be handled, the students decided to meet again in September to organize the coalition.

Bruce Wine, a representative from the Washington Youth Citizenship Fund, was quite pleased with these results.

"We now have a mandate that will allow us to go out and bring in all the groups which would have a vested interest in a voter registration drive," Wine said. "This is

a good chance to involve people and start some community action organizations."

Joe Stallings felt it was a necessity that the students organize in this fashion.

"After my recent work in legislature, I have found it impossible to separate campus activities from politics," Stallings said. "Our voice in voting won't be heard unless we act in a united way. Only through united action are we going to accomplish substantive change."

"With 139,000 college students and over 65,000 high school seniors eligible to vote in the 1972 primaries and elections, we are willing and ready to use the established system to achieve our goals," Stallings added.

The second major issue to which the students addressed themselves was in the area of educational reform.

The students recommended the establishment of an Advisory Committee of Students to the State planning and co-ordinating agency for higher education, and endorsed Gov. Scott's call for the establishment of a Center for the Continuing Reform of Higher Education.

The Student Conference also called on the administrators of all institutions of higher education in North Carolina to cooperate with students in declaring primary and general election days class holidays.

The students endorsed the present study being made by the N.C. Board of Higher Education on student fees and charges, but requested an opportunity for student representatives from each campus to participate in the study.

Copies of these resolutions were sent to Gov. Bob Scott, the Chairman of the House and Senate Higher Education Committees, and the director of the Board of Higher Education. The students then formed a committee which would follow up on these proposals.

On the second day of the conference, 20 college student body presidents joined with five high school leaders to release a statement directed at all potential presidential candidates.

The statement asked all candidates "to confront squarely the young population and respond specifically to the questions young voters ask."

"Students are not to be considered as tools in the hands of any campaign staff or candidate, but a definite political force to be reckoned with," the statement continued. "It will not be the cause celebre or the hero we will follow this time, but the issues. The people who have been obstacles in the paths of progress for the last decade will be removed from office by a new generation of voters. We will be part of that generation."

Stallings felt the ultimate worth of the statement was contingent on two things: "First, we must register a significant portion of the students who are eligible to vote; and secondly, once the voters are registered, the people who signed this statement need to get together again to evaluate the response from the various candidates to the statement, and then to decide if any candidates merit our support."

Stallings further pointed out that both the conference and the statement were non-partisan in nature.

"We built this conference on a politically non-partisan basis," Stallings said. "In my opinion, it accomplished this goal, because no party was raised above another, and no one political candidate was chosen for our support."

According to Jeffress, the original idea for the conference was suggested by Allard K. Lowenstein, the ex-Congressman from New York, and one of the guest speakers at the conference.

"Last spring, Al Lowenstein got together and talked with a few student leaders about what politically needed to be done in North Carolina," Jeffress said. "From that session came the idea for this conference."

The conference was sponsored by 11 universities from across the state. These included UNC-CH, UNC-G, UNC-C, N.C. State, Appalachian State, ECU, Davidson, Duke, Queens, Winston Salem State and Fayetteville State.



Al Lowenstein talks to Student Action Conference organizers Rod Fonda (left) and Charles Jeffress. Lowenstein gave the students the idea last spring to hold the conference, which brought together student leaders from all over the state to Chapel Hill.

Stories by Norman Black

Lowenstein, McCloskey attack Nixon

A former New York Congressman and a California Republican with presidential aspirations were the featured speakers at the recent Student Action Conference.

Allard K. Lowenstein, the ex-congressman from New York who led the "Dump Johnson" campaign in 1967, and California Rep. Paul N. McCloskey, a Republican challenger to Richard Nixon, addressed the student leaders in Hill Hall on Aug. 14 and 15, and agreed that the Nixon administration was guilty of deceiving the American public.

Speaking to a receptive audience including about 250 college and high school students from across the state, Lowenstein told the young voters that they have the will and the means to elect a new administration that would be more responsive to the people.

Lowenstein alleged that Nixon has "lied" to the American public, and further charged that Nixon makes Lyndon Johnson look "retroactively rather credible."

"There have been presidents in the past who could be trusted, and there will be such presidents again," he said.

Focusing on the war in Vietnam, Lowenstein insisted that the war will still be an issue in 1972 "because there are millions of Americans who will hold accountable those public officials who were elected to office on the promise to end the war and only extended it."

Lowenstein then quoted President Nixon as having said in a recent speech "that only 14 soldiers had died in Vietnam during a given week." "I don't know when I've heard so obscene an adjective as only in front of the word 14," Lowenstein said.

"It is now too late for the President to save himself, but it is not too late for him to save more lives," he added.

Lowenstein noted that the credibility gap created by the Vietnam situation has served to complicate domestic problems.

He said the present administration has lied so that the American people would not withdraw their support of American involvement in Southeast Asia.

"The present administration is now running this country as if they can get on TV and talk about

anything and expect the American people to be so stupid as to believe everything that is said."

He felt the only possible good that might come of such a credibility gap is that the American public might have "peeled off the blinders" which have caused misunderstanding over what is happening within the country.

"The weapons we have are here," Lowenstein said. "Get the facts to all those people who have been confused by Nixon or the government."

Lowenstein reminded the young voters that "the facts are with us; it's the other side that has to lie."

"Nixon promised to bring us together, and he's pretty well managed to do that," Lowenstein added.

On the final afternoon of the conference, Rep. Paul McCloskey addressed the student leaders, and agreed with much of what Lowenstein had said.

Explaining that he had become a presidential candidate because of the Vietnam war, McCloskey felt it was time to get out of Vietnam.

"The President was elected on the basis that he would end the war in Vietnam," McCloskey said. "Yet three years later, half the troops are still

there. The South Vietnamese have about two million armed forces as opposed to about 500,000 for the Viet Cong. With that numerical superiority, surely the South Vietnamese can hold their own against Communism."

Saying "most" of what Nixon did was for political purposes, McCloskey told the students that "governmental truthfulness is the main issue of my campaign."

"There is a growing tendency for the government leaders to lie," McCloskey continued. "And they don't lie just to the enemy, they lie to Americans. Nobody trusts the government anymore."

"This administration has let out only half the truth and then has the vice president stump around the country telling the people the news media has distorted the half of the truth the administration has let out," he added.

McCloskey then pinpointed a third area of concern: Nixon's latest busing position.

"I can't understand why he wants minimal compliance with one law and meticulous

compliance with some others," he said. "Our President campaigned on law and order, yet has offered only minimal compliance to it."

The California Republican told the students that "busing is an appropriate method to end the dual school system."

Commenting on other domestic issues McCloskey said: "People do not demand excellence in their government," and termed the structure of both parties "decadent," because of public apathy toward party politics.

McCloskey reported he would like very much to campaign in North Carolina.

"I'm not in this thing to lose," he said. "I didn't particularly want to run for president, but somebody has to offer the people of our (Republican) party an alternative in the primaries. Nobody else came forward, so I'm in it."

"We are at a peril in history," McCloskey told the student leaders who filled Hill Hall on the UNC campus. He was running, he said, so voters could have a choice other than politicians who appeal to the "hate, fear, and anger" of people.



N.C. College Young Republicans chairman Sam Currin (l.) answers a student's question during one of the Student Action Conference seminars. Listening attentively are

Young Democrats chairman Chales Wineberry 9c.0 and UNC student leader Gerry Cohen (r.)



Rep Paul N. McCloskey speaks to more than 300 students at the Student Action Conference. McCloskey charged the Nixon administration with "deception" and

urged the students to use the power of the vote to turn the present government out of office. (Staff photo by Johnny Lindahl)