

January 7, 1941

CHARTER OF STUDENT RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

Adopted Unanimously by Sixth Annual Convention - AMERICAN STUDENT UNION

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We go to college, often at great sacrifice, to develop our talents and skills not alone to better our individual economic position; but also as preparation to contribute toward the fuller utilization of our cultural and natural resources for benefit of our whole nation. Youth can best serve democracy by helping to make democracy serve the needs of the American people for economic security, for jobs, for civil rights, for peace.

The universities must through scientific inquiry equip us with an understanding of the forces which have contributed to the construction of America and the natural and human forces which today forward or retard the further progress of our people. They must encourage the practice of democratic procedures in the university community so that we can learn to be constructive citizens.

But today the aspirations of the undergraduate meet resistance from those who control American education; who seek to utilize its processes for the purposes of war. Obtaining college education becomes more difficult. The production of individuals who can only work or develop machinery of destruction is advanced as the aim of higher education. Independent thinking and democratic activity are rigorously restricted.

Our universities must not cease to serve as instruments of progress. Out of loyalty to our ideals, to our people, and to our country we must resist every perversion of democratic education and unleash the great power of our numbers in common endeavor to maintain and extend the true functions of university education. In answer to the evidence of increasing regimentation of thought and action; we must re-affirm and win universal recognition for:

- The right to higher education for all, regardless of sex, race, color, or economic status,
- The right to a future wherein our education will be utilized in constructive labor for the well-being of the people,
- The right of students and teachers to speak freely within and without the university without fear of reprisal.
- The right of students and teachers to organize in trade unions and co-operatives.
- The right of students and teachers to form, join, and support organizations of their own choosing, whether political, cultural, or religious.
- The right to assemble within the university and to hear speakers of their own choosing.
- The right to participate in matters of university policy and curriculum.
- The right to petition for redress of grievances.
- The right of college publications and student organizations to print and distribute literature free from censorship.

We pledge to fulfill these responsibilities. To every American Student we sound this call: Let us defend our rights and liberties with courage, and determination!

