

Module 09: The 1960s: Who Won? Student Protest and the Politics of Campus Dissent

Evidence 13: Pam Wimmer, "101 fasters seek support," May 1970

A

Introduction

Student Pam Wimmer's article from the May 20 edition of *The Collegiate Times* chronicles an event that took place after the occupation of Williams Hall and the university's decision to suspend 107 students involved in the protest. As the article below indicates, a number of activists organized a hunger strike shortly after the occupation to protest the university's refusal to give the Williams Hall students amnesty. What remains most interesting, however, is the number of students involved in the hunger strike. Remember that, in the spring of 1970, there were approximately 11,000 students at Virginia Tech.

Questions to Consider

- What deductions can we draw about the level of political awareness and involvement among students on the VPI campus based on the article, the photograph description, and the number of people participating in the fast?
- How much support did the "Blacksburg 107" seem to generate among their fellow students?

Document

[Photograph]

Description: a photo of a crowded dining hall where students are eating.

Caption: "The 101 strikers observing a fast urge students, like those pictured above, to boycott dining halls and to join them in a one-day fast tomorrow."

101 fasters seek support

The 101 hunger strikers are calling for all students and faculty members to

participate in a one day fast from sunup to sundown tomorrow in support of the strikers and their petition.

As of Monday night, 44 sympathetic students had joined the 57 original strikers in protesting the summary suspension of the 107 students who occupied Williams Hall.

The original strikers discontinued their small portions of bread Monday and are now on water, vitamins, and salt pills only. Sympathetic strikers are participating in the fast as long as they are able or want to.

The strike began last Thursday evening after students requesting a statement from Dr. T. Marshall Hahn marched to the president's home. When Hahn would not speak to them, Diane Curling announced that she would return to the War Memorial and begin a fast and urged others to join her rather than resort to violence. Some of the fasters spent the night on the Memorial, and other students joined them Friday morning, raising the number of the original fasters to 57....

Since Saturday the fasters have been spending their days on the War Memorial and their nights on the drillfield, in the dorms, and in various buildings off campus.

Source:

Pam Wimmer, "101 fasters seek support," *The Collegiate Times*, (20 May 1970), 1.