



STUDENT ACTION!



*This document has been published by the **Alliance of Students for Autonomous Power (ASAP)**. We seek to foster a climate of open dialogue around student and community issues and seek to provoke autonomous student direct action against the racist crackdown on dissent and centralization of power occurring at New College. **We absolutely reject the authority of the Administration.** Further, we make it clear that we are not being led by any faculty member or any academic program. It is only through autonomous organization that a true student voice will be heard. It is only through action that true student power will be realized.*

The Administration Attacks Programs and Faculty

Did you know that bureaucratic elements within the “progressive” New College of California are attempting to **purge** programs of radical professors—especially when they’re people of color—and ideas? Did you know that the “progressive” authority at this institution is attempting to **centralize power** and take away **autonomy** from various programs and individuals? Did you know that there has been no **Student** or worker input into the decision-making processes that have propelled these undisclosed, but increasingly visible and reactionary, plans into motion? Did you know that at New College a small number of, mostly white, bureaucrats—such as President Martin Hamilton, Dean of Humanities Mitch Hall, the Board of Supervisors, and others—run the show? Did you know that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges has warned New College that to keep accreditation they must implement increased **democratic accountability** and financial stability?

Grad Psychology: Three weeks ago the head of this program, Ali Chavoshian, an Iranian man, was placed on “administrative leave” by the Administration, in other words he was effectively fired. As part of the ruse, the Administration is spreading false, unsubstantiated rumors regarding his relationship with a previous faculty member. The plan, which is in full swing, is to strip away the autonomy of Grad Psych and place control under Mitch Hall—a white man—who typically acts an extension of President Martin Hamilton’s power. The majority of the Grad Psych faculty opposed this power-play move and voiced their dissent to the Administration. The response was to eradicate one professor’s class and place another professor on “probation”; he has not been allowed to be on campus unless he is teaching an already scheduled class. Both of these professors are People of Color. Again, the **racism** of this power structure is apparent in these draconian tactics to squash dissent and autonomy. They have even threatened the professors’ lawyers.

The Grad Psych program is composed of 6 “core professors,” who are divided in their allegiance to the Authority (some are actively challenging it, some are going along with it); they have some input into decision-making processes. However, a majority of the professors are adjunct faculty (who do most of the actual work), and should be considered **Workers** since they have neither input in administration meetings nor any power whatsoever in terms of decision-making processes at the college.

These are the demands currently being made by the Grad Psych professors who are challenging the Administration:

1. The re-hiring of Ali Chavoshian.
2. A completely transparent school budget.
3. The formation of a council composed of students, workers, faculty, and administration that would regularly meet, discuss, and resolve this issue as well as the many other school issues (such as the tuition hike). Decisions would be democratic and based on the input of all, not the whims of the Administration.

The Grad Psych professors who are challenging the power structure are facing an uphill battle. Their jobs may be in jeopardy and they could be fired by **the Boss**. The vast majority of the Grad Psych students hold solidarity with their professors. In fact, President Martin Hamilton was struck with anxiety when he realized that these students met two weeks ago to discuss this issue.

Media Studies: The situation with Grad Psych is not the first time such scandalous activity has been perpetrated by the Administration. In fact, what has happened with Grad Psych mirrors a similar incident regarding Media Studies. This behavior on the part of the Administration has become a trend, an ad hoc policy of purging radicals while consolidating power.

Last summer, while students were not attending school, and under the cover of the transition from one school year to the next, Media Studies Program Founders and Directors Jon Garfield and Don Foster were stripped of their directorship titles as well as their roles as advisors to their students. Both Jon Garfield and Don Foster were advocates of a radical implementation of Media Studies and Don Foster represented a radical perspective as one of the few faculty members of color. Students returned to or entered school in the fall to find that their advisors had been taken from them, that a gag order had been instituted, and that their new advisor and the new director of Media Studies would be Mitch Hall (yes, the same Mitch Hall who may be placed in charge of Grad Psych). The Administration cited vague and often-changing rationales for its power-grab. False accusations of academic ineptitude and bankruptcy were levied against Don and Jon and when these accusations were proved groundless, new accusations would be created and cited as justification.

A misrepresented “student survey” was conducted by Mitch Hall of Media Studies students, their responses were then distorted and used as further justification for the marginalization of the Media Studies Directors. In fact, it has been verified that one student’s input to the survey was *altered* and used in an official document meant to justify Jon and Don’s ouster.

The marginalization of these Media Studies directors, faculty, and advisor happened *against and despite* the explicit demands of Media Studies students.

A review board consisting of a variety of New College faculty was convened in order to determine the viability of Media Studies. This board was controlled in total by Mitch Hall and was never allowed to articulate a goal or to define its powers. Don and Jon were denied all access to this board. Their various written communications and communications sent on behalf of Media Studies by people from all over the Bay Area (including prominent figures at KPFA) were ignored by the Administration and their input was left out of any proceedings. Students mounted a struggle to speak at the review board—succeeding at the last minute. Their testimony and appeals were successful in rallying faculty member on the review to their cause. After this powerful and seemingly hopeful appeal, Mitch Hall disbanded the review board.

While the struggles of students and Don and Jon were successful in reinstating them as advisors to most of the Media Studies students, the program and its creators have still been stripped of their directorship and remain positively besieged. One student personally witnessed President Martin Hamilton falsely accuse Jon Garfield of being behind student organization against the onslaught of the Administration. These accusations, which have continued in a variety of forms, demonstrate the Administration’s contempt for New College Students. They assume that we students have no reason, cause, or ability to organize ourselves against these things that directly and adversely effect our education. President Martin Hamilton collapses the arena of discourse by implying that without some evil teacher (read: Leader) pulling the strings, it would be inconceivable that students would be discontent and organize to make their educational environment better. Finally, it offers the administration ammunition, in that any organization on the part of us students could be blamed on radical faculty and used as grounds for dismissal.

This behavior by the Administration is disgusting and should not be tolerated by New College students. The struggles of embattled faculty and programs need our help and the rest of us—Students and Workers—should demonstrate our solidarity through action. We must also highlight and **directly** confront other issues affecting us as Students and Workers.

Demand Financial Transparency and Stop the Tuition Hikes!

Do you know how much **Martin Hamilton**, president of the venerable New College of California, makes annually? Do you know that his **salary** will be increasing when our tuition gets raised in the Fall? Have you ever seen the New College budget and do you know where you can access that

information? No? Well, most students at New College don’t and the New College administration seems to think that this is an appropriate arrangement.

Most schools and universities publish their full annual budget reports on their websites and make that information readily available for students, staff and interested parties. New College does not. In fact, it took several rather confrontational visits to Martin’s office to obtain a “budget”, which turned out to be nontransparent, ambiguous, and a sham. This is the same three-page “budget” that was presented to quell students and workers at the recent forum on the **tuition hikes**.

Why does the administration at New College want to keep this information hidden, or at least inaccessible to students? The simple fact is that there is a lack of clarity around most administrative processes at New College. Failure to make this information public and easily accessible allows the administration to retain illegitimate power and authority over school functions. If we, as students, are not aware of the financial status of programs and operations, we have no grounds on which to question the legitimacy of New College finances.

As individuals who pay tuition and fees to the school, we have a right to know how our funds are being used. It is clear that New College employs a hierarchical power structure in which students and staff have little say. Ironically enough, New College promotes itself as an institution devoted to social justice. How can a school dedicate itself to preparing students for social and community action when many of its policies, such as those around budget clarity, are formulated within a hierarchical domain?

We as students must challenge the current New College paradigm by demanding that the administration make its financial proceedings public and easily accessible. This is not an unreasonable demand and it is one that is in keeping with normal procedures for any college or non-profit organization. We cannot accept any stonewalling from the administration with respect to this demand. This would simply be another ploy used to retain power within an administration which has continually rejected valid input on policies and procedures from students, workers, and faculty. We must also vocalize our dissent again and demand an end to the tuition hikes, which are to take place in the Fall (more on this from ASAP to come!). The student body must not only make its voice heard on this issue, but also take action for more transparency and clarity around the fiscal status and decisions at New College.

To get involved please contact the Alliance of Students for Autonomous Power at autonomouspower@hotmail.com.

