

Action on Discrimination

IFC Rationale for Fraternity's Probation

(Reprinted here are the news story and IFC rationale that appeared in last Wednesday's SUN.)

Disciplinary Probation was meted out to Sigma Nu fraternity last night by the Judiciary Committee of the Interfraternity Council for what it termed insufficient efforts to eliminate certain discriminatory policies.

The action was taken in a marathon five-hour session at which Sigma Nu stated its case. Sigma Nu will remain on Disciplinary Probation until September 1, 1962.

Disciplinary Probation has no effect on either the rushing or social privileges of the fraternity.

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The IFC Statement follows:

"The IFC Steering Committee, sitting as the Judiciary Committee, held a hearing with Sigma Nu last night, as a result of a preliminary hearing held Nov. 14. The first hearing disclosed that Sigma Nu national fraternity has a discriminatory clause based on race. The possibility that the Cornell chapter was also practicing on a local level necessitated the second hearing.

The purpose of the judiciary hearing was to determine whether or not Sigma Nu had violated either of the following two sections of the IFC Constitution, By-Laws or stated policies:

"From the Steering Committee report to the Executive Board, May 13, 1961: 'Local discrimination by a Cornell fraternity will not be tolerated. Local discrimination is defined as any group policy by a local chapter which excludes the possibility of selecting a person for membership on the basis of his race, religion or national origin.'

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"From Article IX of the By-Laws: 'Any Cornell chapter whose national fraternity constitution embodies a discriminatory clause shall make a sin-

cere and continuous effort toward the removal of said clause.'

With regard to the charge of local discrimination, evidence was introduced by the local chapter absolving it from the allegation. Members of minority groups have, in fact, been rushed and bid within the past few years. With regard to the second charge, the Judiciary Committee has concluded that Sigma Nu violated Article IX of the IFC By-Laws.

As a consequence, the Committee invoked the penalty of Disciplinary Probation, which includes the following provisions:

1. Loss of voting privileges at the House Presidents' meetings.
2. Ineligibility for representation on the IFC Appeals Board.
3. No member of the fraternity shall be eligible to hold an elective office in the IFC.

This penalty shall be in effect until Sept. 1, 1962, at which time the case will be reviewed. However, should the local chapter secure a waiver (releasing it from the bias clause—Ed.) from the national prior to the above date, this fact could be used as a basis for appeal to the Steering Committee as evidence of fulfillment of Article IX.

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In arriving at this decision, the Steering Committee was cognizant of the national fraternity's stand toward the Interfraternity Council's legislation concerning discriminatory clauses and practices. The national fraternity has stated, both verbally and in writing, that the local chapter could gain the waiver from the national restrictive clause only by demonstrating opposition to the aforementioned Interfraternity Council legislation.

The Steering Committee deplores the national fraternity's attitude, which made it extremely difficult for the local chapter to adhere to the conditions set forth in Article IX.