

'Governing' body?

The time is coming again, like it does each spring, for ASUN elections. When filing ends Friday, a myriad of candidates, tickets and in some cases parties will have indicated they are ready to scramble for seats of power in our student government. But once elected, what then?

If the records of the past two ASUN governments are fair examples, they probably won't do much. Is this because the senators and executives are incompetent? Are they interested only in personal glory? Neither. The problem of ASUN is not the people in it, but its structure and its relation to other governmental units within the University community.

ASUN does provide some services for the student. The World in Revolution conference and soon-to-be record store are examples. Likewise, ASUN appoints the students who sit on various University committees. Some of the results of the ASUN education committee have been valuable, and past ASUN action in housing and open hours has profited students. But although student government does affect students' lives, how often does it affect them? How much power does ASUN as a "governing" body have?

The answer to the first question is not enough, yet. The answer to the second must be very little. ASUN, and consequently all students, will never have any power sitting totally apart from the real power structure in the University. Not until students can sit equally, side by side with faculty and the administration in making the decisions which really count in the University community will they have proper control over their affairs. Whereas student government committees and appointments can get positive and progressive results, ASUN Senate cannot. And Senate will never be capable of making the important decisions or exercising any power as long as University government is structured as it is now.

THE MOST equitable, efficient and productive form of government for this University would be a University Senate comprised of administrators, faculty and students. Existing ASUN authority and procedure is so ill-defined that the Senate is unable to exert the will of the student body effectively. It is conceivable that the committees now under ASUN and the services that body performs should be retained in a separate, budgeted organization of some sort. An integrated governmental structure whereby students join in the decision-making which affects them most, however, is needed to replace ASUN and give students a real voice in determining their affairs and the affairs of the University.

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"Here's a little trick I picked up from Lyndon Johnson . . ."

If you liked Vietnam, then you'll love Laos

by FRANK MANKIEWICZ and TOM BRADEN

Before rising congressional temper about the presence of Americans in Laos runs its course, fault is certain to be laid at the doorstep of the Central Intelligence Agency. In part, this is because the agency cannot answer back.

But the CIA is also a convenient target because it has become a synonym on the far, far left for everything wrong with our foreign policy and inimical to our ideals. Some academic circles will believe anything about the CIA provided it conforms to the picture of a department of government out of control, responsible to none and bent upon destroying democracy all over the world.

In the argument over Laos, there are points to be won on the issue of secrecy — and the bewildering and contradictory communiques from the White House over casualties. But there are also — alas — points to be won by suggesting that our difficulties in Laos are the responsibility of the CIA. And it is this easy argument which is refuted by an examination of recent history.

WE ARE in Laos, so history tells us, because President Eisenhower ordered us there and Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon acquiesced in turn. Thus, no partisan points can be scored by those who wish we weren't there and who fear the consequences.

In fact, it was John F. Kennedy who put the CIA into Laos to replace some 800 American military advisers, ordered out by the Geneva Accords of 1962.

It became immediately clear that North Vietnam had no intention of withdrawing its troops, though many were put into civilian clothes. On a much reduced scale, the United States did the same thing.

Both the United States and North Vietnam then proceeded to aid "their" side of South Vietnam from the Laotian sanctuary. The North Vietnamese used Laos for a supply and regrouping area, and we used its airfields as bomber bases.

SO THE trouble with Laos is Vietnam. The two cannot be separated. Yet a discussion of the CIA role in Laos is instructive if only because it proves what Vietnam proves — that a tiny commitment has a way of growing.

CIA's intelligence job in Laos was relatively simple — to count the number of men coming down the long jungle paths from the north. The operations job was more difficult and more important — to preserve the Laotian government as one that would continue to ask us to bomb the trail in Southern Laos.

If we couldn't bomb the trail, the war in Vietnam — it was thought — would be immensely more difficult, though, as CIA officials have privately conceded for some time, the bom-

bing in Laos isn't working any better than it did in North Vietnam.

But in order to preserve a Laotian government which would ask us to bomb its country, the CIA had to find an army. A local strong man was ready to provide one — and so the escalation began — armies provoke armies. When CIA's army got strong enough to drive the Pathet Lao out of the Plain of Jars, the North Vietnamese began a counter buildup. By last year they were able to put 25,000 additional men into the field and drive CIA into the corner in which we now live in Laos.

IT IS NOT a comfortable corner. The possibility of a deal between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao would revoke our permission to bomb the trail — or to use Laotian territory at all.

The moralistic bombast of John Foster Dulles brought us into Vietnam. That error — continued on a low level by Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy — was compounded by Lyndon Johnson's attempt to make that moralistic bombast — "aggression," "the Free World" — a basis for all-out war. And Richard Nixon now has the job of trying to get American troops off that sticky ground. It has been a mistake — a ghastly mistake — but it must be faced squarely and not blamed on the CIA.