

# Protesters plead defense during Tribunal hearing

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Staff Writer

After six hours of testimony before the Student Tribunal, the status of University sanctions against Mike Richardson, Ron Kurtenbach and Gary Schleiger is still uncertain.

Richardson and Kurtenbach were placed on temporary suspension and Schleiger on temporary probation twice for their participation in sit-ins last Wednesday in protest of the firing of Stephen Rozman.

The Tribunal must hold hearings on such cases within five days after the sanctions are imposed and make recommendations to the Office of Student Affairs on whether to continue the sanctions.

Although the Tribunal voted in private Tuesday night after the hearing, their recommendations won't be released until later this week after the Office of Student Affairs has considered them, according to Michael G. Canar, chairman of the Tribunal.

Michael Barrett, arrested along with Richardson for refusing to leave Varner's office, acted as counselor for Richardson. Barefoot, his face marked with paint, and dressed in reptile-skin pants, Barrett promised the Tribunal "This won't be a normal hearing".

After the defense presented 15 minutes of selections from records, three hours of charges and counter-charges began between the administration and defense.

Barrett asserted that the group that entered Chancellor Varner's office at 11 a.m. Wednesday planned no disruptive action. Their intention, he said, was to ask Varner to arrange for the Board of Regents to speak with them.

Quoting from the Policy Statement on Campus Disorders as published in *The Campus Handbook*, Barrett said it's University policy that "Every effort will be made to end the disruption through reason and persuasion".

"Making threats doesn't show a willingness to discuss," said Barrett, referring to Varner's refusal to discuss the Rozman issue with the occupying students or to define exactly why they were disruptive.

Defense continually stated that the protestors were entitled to a warning of possible probation and never received it. The administration asserted that the 15-minute warning of disciplinary action was sufficient warning, although the word probation was never

stated.

Ronald D. Gierhan, assistant in the Office of Student Affairs, presented the administration's case against the students. He stated that the judgment of whether an action is disruptive depends on the person in charge, who was Varner. The chancellor decided that the students were disrupting normal office activities, he said.

For instance, the chancellor's secretary was forced to leave around 12:00 because of the demonstration, according to Gierhan. Barrett argued that if the secretary had returned at 1:00, after the normal lunch hour, she would have found only two students remaining in the office.

Most of the students left around 12:30, said Barrett. He argued that two people can't disrupt normal office activities.

David Levine, professor and chairman of the department of psychology, acted as an observer at the sit-in for the Faculty Liaison committee. He stated that the actions weren't disruptive and no warning of possible probation was issued by Varner.

After his hearing was concluded, Richardson said "I'm pleased with the thorough and objective investigation. I hope the Student Tribunal isn't treated as a Kangaroo Court as was the Holtzclaw committee".

Schleiger presented much the same defense as Richardson. He stated that he hadn't realized temporary probation would be imposed by Varner when they refused to leave his office.

Steve Strasser, Staff Writer for the *Daily Nebraskan* who was present during the sit-in, testified during Schleiger's hearing. He quoted a secretary as saying, "This is the most hassling thing I've seen. We don't disrupt their classes, why do they disrupt our office?"

President Joseph Soshnik, testifying at suspended graduate student Ron Kurtenbach's hearing, said "at no time did I consider Ron disruptive" during Kurtenbach's sit-in protest outside Soshnik's Love Library office last Wednesday.

Kurtenbach was suspended and then arrested for failure to leave a public building after closing time.

Soshnik said Kurtenbach's request for a security guard during his planned three-day sit-in protest was "an unacceptable arrangement", primarily because "an arrangement with Ron would not be binding on any other students."

# International Fair

The first International Fair in the Nebraska Union Centennial room Wednesday is a cultural bazaar offering information and op-

portunities in foreign study and travel for students. Booths will be open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and discussions and films will be from 7-9 p.m.

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