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[Statement to Clarify the Demands to the Institute for Community Studies, May 10, 1969]

Students Against the Institute, Sarah Lawrence College

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To: the Sarah Lawrence Community
From: students against the Institute

Yesterday a demand came out directed to the SL Institute for Community Studies. This is one of a series of statements which seek to clarify each of the seven points on which we criticized the Institute.

The first point of criticism was that the Institute does not give the people of the Mount Vernon Community the power to decide their own destiny. The following is a specific example of the control exercised by the Institute. Quoting from an Institute publication ("The College in the Community: The Institute for Community Studies and Mount Vernon", pp.5-6):

In cooperation with Representative Ogden Reid the Institute established and administers the Mount Vernon Task Force, which is composed of national, state and county officials whose decisions have an impact on Mount Vernon. The Task Force developed out of a conference held at Sarah Lawrence College in the fall of 1967, in the hope that external agencies (underline added) could coordinate their efforts and policies in Mount Vernon more effectively. The Task Force, which meets monthly at the New York City offices of the State Education Department, is made up of officials from all major agencies, including the Department of Labor, The Office of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The Task Force described above was established with the cooperation of Ogden Reid, A Republican Congressman who failed to carry the majority of South Side votes. The fact we wish to stress is that this is a group of major officials of external agencies (OEO, HUD, HEW) which have made major decisions in Mount Vernon (for example, the Model Cities grant). On this task force there is no community representation. Significantly absent are people from the Black Community which is most immediately effected by such programs as urban renewal, school integration, unemployment---the very problems which the task force is designed to deal with.