

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN • COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

JOHN A. CLARK, CHAIRMAN

ANN ARBOR 48104

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

March 12, 1970

President Robben W. Fleming  
815 S. University  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear President Fleming:

I was disgusted with the tone of the program during the ENACT program opening night in the Crisler Arena. Surely it was evident to yourself and many others that many of the speakers simply took this as an opportunity to promote extreme left-wing political views and an open call for revolution and revolt. It is time, in my opinion, for the University through the Office of its President to disavow this kind of destructive influence on the campus and in particular the dishonest actions of the few mentally and emotionally twisted dropouts from our civilization who seem to have taken hold of our legitimate efforts towards environmental improvement. So as far as I am personally concerned, I want nothing further to do with these radical elements no matter what banner they may pretend to fly.

Let me hasten to point out that as an engineer and as an engineering educator and administrator, I am personally and professionally committed to all reasoned approaches towards environmental improvement. More than 25 percent of the faculty in the Department of Mechanical Engineering are presently involved in meaningful solutions of the problems of highway safety, biomedicine, and atmospheric pollution. The director of the bioengineering program is a professor of mechanical engineering and several of our faculty have been involved in biomedicine for more than a decade.

Another of our faculty has devoted essentially his complete professional career to a study of the distribution of effluence from large stacks down wind from steam generating power plants. In the field of air pollution our faculty has essentially led the nation from a standpoint of research at a University in studies of exhaust emissions from internal combustion engines. In this work our faculty in the Automotive Laboratory were selected by the Automobile Manufacturers Association and the U. S. Public Health Service from more than 20 contractors for a large recent study dealing with exhaust pollution. They were selected because of the broad experience in this area and their deep professional understanding of the technical problems involved. For many years this department cooperated with faculty in the Chemical Engineering Department and the School of Public Health in presenting a graduate program of studies dealing with air pollution. During the last two years of this program I served as co-chairman of this program with Dr. Harold Magnuson of the School of Public Health. I mention these various activities to you to indicate the genuine depth of meaningful activities this department is engaged in, often in collaboration with colleagues in other parts of the University. This work is receiving total cooperation from both myself and the College of Engineering and will, so long as there is a finite contribution



ident Robben W. Fleming

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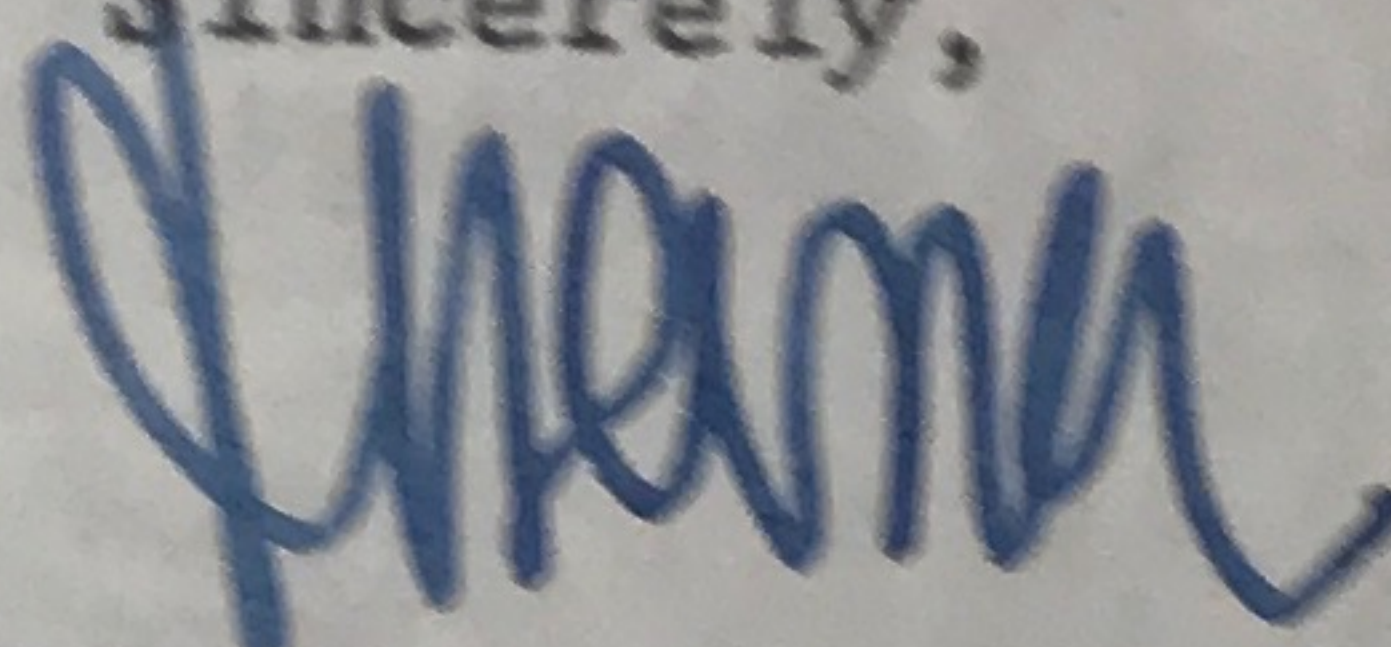
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we feel we are able to make in this important interface where technology and society meet.

It was quite dismaying to me to hear some of the things that were said on this ENACT kick-off rally. In particular the remarks of Mr. Commoner displayed an agonizing ignorance of technological developments in the field of internal combustion engines. He either is unaware of the vast improvements that have been brought by technological research or is so highly ideologically oriented that he is unwilling to admit this progress. Off-hand I suspect that it is a mixture of both.

There are a great many problems to be solved in the environment. Those which are technological in nature will be worked on by engineers and undoubtedly a great deal of additional progress can be expected. A climate of hysteria, of shrill invective, of left-wing "hate America" extremist politics, a form of pollution in itself, can only add to the problem without contributing an iota to its solution. This was the atmosphere in my judgment of the ENACT kick-off rally. I found it discouraging, anti-productive and a set back for any positive environmental improvements.

Sincerely,



John A. Clark

Professor of Mechanical Engineering

JAC:bw

cc: Vice President Allen F. Smith  
Dean Gordon J. Van Wylen