

commentary

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Cooper solution overdue

When it becomes necessary for students to risk life and limb to get something resolved, then matters have gone far enough and it's time to settle the problem once and for all.

Such was the case last week when a small band of overzealous but well-meaning students stepped into rush-hour traffic on Cooper Street between Davis and University halls to protest the lack of results in depressing or rerouting the street.

From an idealistic standpoint, the demonstration, says Student Congress President Royce West, "kindled the fire" of student resentment toward the two-year-old negotiations.

From a practical standpoint, it accomplished nothing but endanger the life of one demonstrator who was thrown from the hood of an angry motorist.

The students were frustrated at their inability to stop the stubborn traffic. Their mood failed to improve Wednesday after a meeting with Dudley Wetsel, vice president for business affairs, who suggested their protests should continue to come through the President's Office.

The students say they're tired of all the talk. They want action. I wonder what they think about Wetsel, President Wendell Nedderman and the rest who have heard the same broken record from the Arlington traffic department for the last two years.

A temporary measure involving a series of traffic lights will do little but create colossal traffic jams and leave students as well as community motorists livid.

Sadly, it has become a battle of wills with the city holding out for a six-lane depression or a reroute (tentatively agreed to) along Pecan Street. The school argues that the reroute would still leave the campus bisected. A narrowed depression appears more favorable to them but the city feels it would choke the 25,000-car daily traffic flow.

The decision, whatever it is, must come soon. There are some 9,000 students crossing Cooper Street daily. With the January 1975 opening of the Fine Arts Complex, the pedestrian traffic will likely double.

The school may have an edge in the matter if it chooses to use it. That edge is the UT Board of Regents.

Administrators here should decide soon if further talk is going to accomplish anything. If not, turn the problem over to the regents. They have already offered their help in resolving differences.

The power of the "Fourth Estate," as the regents have been called, can only be guessed at but it's an odds-on bet the situation wouldn't drag on for another two years.

—DON HARRISON