

Stevens History of Protest - How Our Past Calls Us To Action

Thanks to documents recently recovered by Stevens Amnesty, we have a new brazen and bold image of the history of protest at Stevens - featuring images of student protesters atop the Torch Bearers Statue, 300+ students marching to the President's House against the U.S. expansion into Cambodia, original scans of the *Stevens Free Press*, Stute articles containing outrage and calls to action, and much, much more. Let's take a trip through Stevens in the '60s and '70s, compare it to our present situation, and see if we can draw a through-line to now, and unravel our next steps as inspired and educated student activists.

October 10-15, 1969 - *The Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam* & *Prof. Bostick's Resolution*

The Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam was a massive demonstration which took place across the United States with the purpose of rejecting America's involvement in South-East Asia. Fred Halstead of the Socialist Worker's Party and candidate for President of the United States in 1968, wrote that the Moratorium was "the first time [the anti-war movement] reached the level of a full-fledged mass movement" ([Source](#)). Stevens students, in conjunction with faculty and staff, called for the cancellation of classes on this date to organize teach-ins and engage in solidarity with college campuses and demonstrators across the country. According to a resolution passed by the faculty on Oct. 8, 1969. "The faculty of Stevens Institute of Technology encourages the participation of students and other members of the Stevens community in activities directed toward a dialogue on the Vietnam war, in conjunction with the national moratorium on October 15th" ([View the resolution here](#)). The above resolution was passed by a three-to-one majority at the faculty meeting. Activities referred to were organized by the Student Action Coordinating Committee, whose members collected over five hundred student signatures urging the faculty to support the October 15th boycott of classes. The petitions also call for an end to the war in Vietnam. Alongside the faculty, the Student Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting a voluntary boycott of classes to support the Moratorium. According to [The Stute Oct. 10, 1969](#), "the tentative schedule for the day's activities begin with a rally at 10:00 a.m. on the lawn in front of the center with music provided by a band. The formal program would follow later in the afternoon with speakers and workshops."

Classes remained open as normal, with President J. H. Davis noting that, "students certainly have the right to expect classes to be continued and I strongly believe that this right must be respected by the institution" ([The Stute Oct. 10, 1969](#)).

Faculty Spotlight: Professor Winston Bostick, internationally renowned plasma physicist, was the professor who sponsored the faculty resolution to encourage student participation in the Moratorium. In the resolution, he commented, “The Vietnam war has become more than merely a national political issue and consequently the universities and colleges, which have traditionally refrained from taking positions on such issues, must now exercise intellectual leadership for the nation.” He also fully endorsed a co-educational undergraduate body, which did not exist at the time, noting that “it would make Stevens more of a real university.”

On October 13th, a few days before the Moratorium officially took place, Stevens faculty submitted a special resolution, calling for “the prompt, rapid, and complete withdrawal of the United States forces [in Vietnam] ([See the resolution here](#)).

October 17, 1969 - *Anti-War Demonstrations*

Despite classes remaining in session, Stevens students still chose to demonstrate their solidarity with the anti-war movement by assembling on Palmer Lawn. Student John Hamm noted the uniqueness of the event in the Stute’s Oct. 17, 1969 issue: “This rally marks the first time in which a large number of Stevens students, having recognized the importance of a major political event, have decided to take an active stand on it” ([View the article here](#)). Almost 200 students attended the demonstration. Via an open mic forum, 20 students and faculty members in total gave speeches to the crowd. Professor Yevick of the physics department said “the real threat to peace is the hunger, poverty, and despair that is prevalent not only in the underdeveloped nations but right here in the United States. To alleviate these problems takes money, and at the present time this money is being channeled away for negative purposes, i.e., Vietnam and defense spending, which might well result in the premature destruction of man” ([The Stute](#)). Guest speakers included Bill Tillson, a draft counselor (important voices of dissent during the Vietnam draft) who conducted workshops explaining alternatives to the draft for interested students, including Canada, the Coast Guard, failing the physical exams, conscientious objection, and jail. Other guest speakers include Dr. Charles West, professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Kim Dawson of the Young Socialist Alliance. According to the Stute, Dr. West “weighed the moral and ethical aspects of genocide” and Dawson “related the war to imperialism and the inherent evils of capitalism” ([The Stute](#)). Mark Schubert (’71) finished off this edition of the Stute with a hilarious ironic piece praising Stevens for organizing the “first war demonstration” in which the “Chemistry department announced a new development which increases napalm’s firepower by 800%” among other digs that I can’t believe I never thought of.

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Let's fast forward to **April 22, 1970** (*The First Earth Day*) - The Stevens Student Council organized the creation and distribution of special Earth Day pamphlets warning of the slow-burning yet devastating "Pollution Bomb" that awaits our future on Earth if we don't combat pollution right now (and somehow, 50 years later, environmentally conscious folks are still making the same plea). The pamphlet includes "7 Things You Can Do" including staying informed, pressuring local politicians, and utilizing consumer and stockholder power to make real change to protect the environment. The pamphlet endorsed Stevens students participation in Earth Day, "along with students from more than 10,000 colleges, universities, and high schools throughout the country" ([Pamphlet](#)). Take note of their strong, dedicated stance: "We're students at STEVENS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY who want to see technology used for the **benefit** of man - to make the quality of life better" ([Pamphlet](#)).



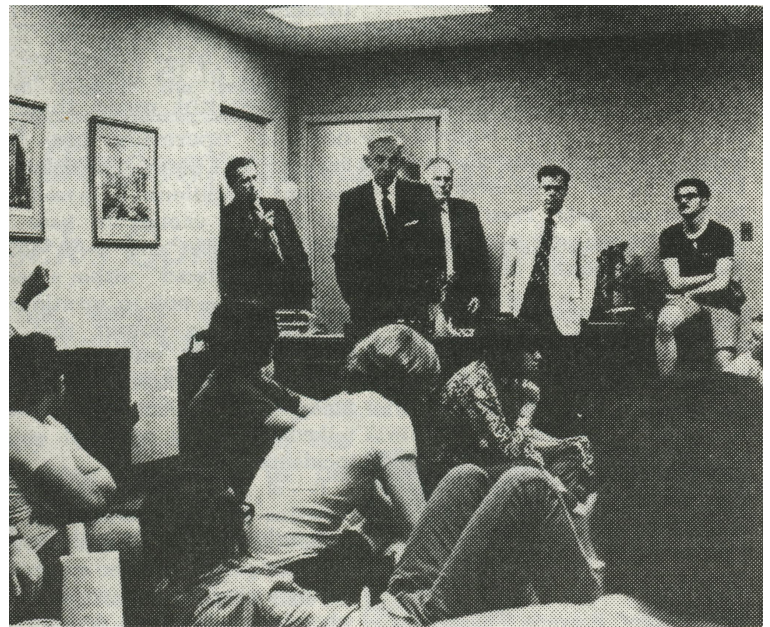
Above: Earth Day Photos. April 1970.

May 7, 1970 - Response to the Kent State Killings: Students On Strike

The [May 7, 1970 issue of the Stute](#) reports on a major campus protest in which the Student Council and the Student Mobilization Committee urged the administration to cancel classes in opposition to the Vietnam War, especially the escalation in Cambodia, and in solidarity with the killing of four and wounding of nine unarmed undergraduate students by the Ohio National Guard at a Kent State University anti-war demonstration. The article outlines how the student groups “initiated a resolution demanding that the Stevens administration call off all classes to show united institutional opposition to the war in Vietnam and the Cambodia involvement.” The objective of the strike was to impress the issue of Vietnam upon the whole campus and to promote worthwhile conversations. President Davis’ response was blunt: “Classes will be held as usual on Thursday, May 7, the day of the proposed student protest. I have reached this decision because I do not feel that the Institute as such should take any stand in connection with political or social issues” ([The Stute](#)). Shortly after the resolution was initiated, a group of 50-75 students met to discuss the next move. Someone offered to confront President Davis then and there on his stance on Cambodia and Vietnam. According to the headlining article of the [May 15th, 1970 issue of the Stute](#) (written by our friend Mark Shubin), the activist group “ran through dormitories and fraternities, enlisting support, till a crowd of 300 students chanting ‘Peace Now’ walked up 9th street to Hoxie house.” Dean Everson arrived to speak to the students, and affirmed his support for the right of students to attend class on May 7th. The group discussed plans long into the night, while the various creative media outlets on campus worked overtime to spread the news of the strike. Members of the Camera Club, Stute, and Link huddled in dark rooms, developing photos of the impromptu demonstration for the local press. WCPR fed tapes carrying the story to media outlets everywhere, while also preparing to join the Moratorium Radio Network, “a group of college and other radio stations throughout the country supplying news of student strikes and related activities.” According to the Stute, “WCPR was the first station to join the network and the only one to maintain 24 hour news of the strikes by co-broadcasting with WNYU in New York, coordinators of the network, even after the network itself went off the air.” Finally, after a full night and a full day of tirelessly hand-delivering news releases to media in Newark, New York, and Hoboken, Dr. Davis announced that classes would be canceled on Thursday May 7th and Friday May 8th. A sit-in was planned that evening, to discuss the plans for Thursday, and between 300-400 students attended. Dr. Davis arrived and was confronted with the students’ demands, including a demand for a permanent draft-counselor.

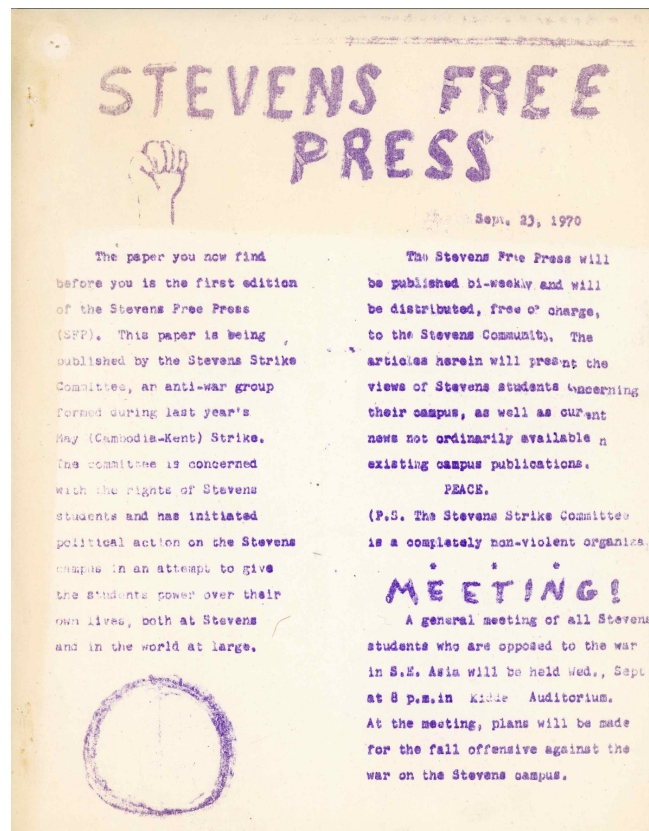
Day of the Strike: At an 11:30am sit-in, students set up a table to distribute petitions, maps to Journal Square for a march that afternoon, as well as timesheets for buses to a march in DC that Saturday. A

memorial service for the students at Kent State followed. According to the Stute, “Following the service, speakers on all sides were heard, no matter how extreme their views or how lengthy their statements. Again news media were alerted and throughout the activity of the past two weeks, Stevens received front page coverage in both local papers, as well as full coverage by UPI, WBAI, and the Moratorium Radio Network” ([See article here](#)). Later, students marched to Journal Square to join the rally with other colleges, continued to St. Peter’s College, and ended up at Jersey City State College, where they “discovered police blocking all entrances to the college.” Police drew clubs and ordered the dispersal of the group. Also on Thursday, a vote was taken at a sit-in to demand Stevens “set aside \$8000 for a draft counselor... [and] that all war research at Stevens be immediately and permanently removed.” On Tuesday, May 12th, administrative action on the draft counselor demand was expected. Approximately 30 students arrived at the office of Dr. Davis and presented their demands. According to our narrator Mark Schubin, “Reports are very conflicting at this point as to how Dr. Davis looked at the demands and what his reply was, but the reply was negative and Davis left for lunch” ([Stute](#)). The President returned, told students they would have to “wait a long time,” then left again. At this point, students were informed that they were interfering with the office and that a court injunction was being sought against them. Names were collected by Dean Everson and Dean Bingham. Professor Pinkman, head of the mathematics department, alongside Lieutenant Smith of the Hoboken Police Department, offered their help to the students. The students eventually attained a lawyer from the ACLU who fought against the creation of the court injunction, but later in the day, court injunctions did arrive, and afterwards students dispersed peacefully.



Pres. Davis Confronts Demonstrators

September 23, 1970- *The Stevens Free Press, First Edition*



[The Stevens Free Press](#) was first published by the Stevens Strike Committee, an anti-war group formed during the May 1970 Cambodia-Kent strike, in order to publicize the views of Stevens students and to call general meetings supporting the anti-war movement. The first issue highlights how less than four months after the events of May 1970, Dr. Davis' ad-hoc committee "unanimously urged him to institute a competent, professional draft counseling service." The Stevens Free Press claimed their victory with words of encouragement for the student body, which can be read below:

Who forced Pres. Davis to reverse his decision? We did, you and I, the students standing up for our rights and stunning the administration, by demanding a draft counselor and staging a sit-in in Pres. Davis's office. Constant pressure plus support from awakened faculty and alumni forced the administration to back down and give the students our first tangible victory.

The students were so unified and strong in support of their demands that no action was taken against the students participating in any of the protests. So it is now obvious that potentially the student has the power to determine how his school and life should be run.

The issue goes on to describe how Stevens ranks 37th among all colleges in the amount of war research done on campus, and that Stevens handles over \$1.5 million worth of war research contracts annually. Rookie numbers, compared to the present!

October 5, 1970 - *Stevens Free Press Special Edition*

In its October 5 issue, the [Stevens Free Press](#) details the movement's reaction to the banning of Bill Tillson from campus, the draft counselor who spoke at the demonstrations of October 1969. The Stevens Free Press describes Dean Bingham as "Colonel Bingham" for acting like a "dictator," ignoring student voices, and targeting Tillson for his anti-war involvement. Bill Tillson was the only draft counselor many Stevens students relied on - and his removal was seen as a radical attack on free speech. Students quickly organized an assembly and planned a march to the President's house demanding Tillson's reinstatement. The article features scathing demands by the student organizers, such as the one pasted below. It also showcases the deepening frustrations and deepening commitment of the Stevens anti-war movement in their "offensive against the war." This can be seen from demonstration plans, passionate rhetoric, and agreed upon resolutions (especially the institution of a draft-counselor chosen by the students).

Perhaps you, like Dr. Davis, feel that Stevens men are "immature" and incapable of running their own lives. Perhaps, Colonel Bingham, you agree with the statement Jess made last week in which he maintained that because of the "immaturity" of Tech students, the administration must play the role of mommy and daddy. But get one thing straight, Colonel, TECH STUDENTS WILL NOT BE TREATED LIKE MINDLESS INFANTS BY AN AUTHORITARIAN ADMINISTRATION. We will not have our rights trampled on. We will not stand by while people such as Bill Tillson, who have done a great deal of good for every one of us, is persecuted arbitrarily.

We will answer your malicious actions, Colonel Bingham, with actions of our own, ACTION BY THE UNITED STUDENT BODY OF THIS INSTITUTE. We will answer you, Colonel, this Wednesday night, when we will assemble at 7:30 PM at Kidde Lecture Hall and march through the campus to your house on the upper campus, DEMANDING THAT YOUR ACTIONS AGAINST BILL TILLSON BE REVOKED IMMEDIATELY.

Our demonstration will be peaceful and completely non-violent.

We will violate no campus regulations, including those recently issued.

BUT WE WILL BE THERE TO SEE YOU WEDNESDAY NIGHT, COLONEL, AND WE WILL STAY UNTIL OUR DEMAND IS ANSWERED.

Above: A section of the Stevens Free Press Special Edition. Oct. 1970.

Let's fast forward 50 years. Instead of the Stevens Free Press, we have the Stevens Student Resistance, published by Stevens Amnesty. Instead of the Stevens Strike Committee, we have the Stevens Divest from War Initiative. Unfortunately, these near perfect parallels were hidden from each other until now - for the first time ever, we can compare our efforts as student activists with the efforts of students who came before us, draw the line that connects us, and allow their work to filter into our own and blossom into long-awaited systemic change. For the first time we realize that we are not brand new to this, we're not isolated or alone - Stevens, we've been doing this for 50 years! Many recognize Stevens as an apolitical campus, a towering symbol of neutrality that refuses to engage with the state of

the world. But Stevens students have long been showcasing their freedom of expression through strength in solidarity, mass-mobilization, and bravery to confront the forces working against them.

One of the most important methods used by students of the past to organize their efforts - and just about the only tangible relic we have of their struggle - was independent journalism. For example, in 1970, the Student Council and Student Mobilization Committee organized large demonstrations in response to the Kent State killings *within a week* via the Stute. To that, cheers to the Stute and the Stevens Student Resistance for continuing to broadcast student opinion and cover international news. But there's an obvious difference between then and now, which can be seen in the devastating grip of institutional sloth and bureaucratic barriers that prevent fast-responses and organization from students. Have you noticed how long it takes to receive a response from administration through an official channel such as the Letter from the Student Body? The consistently demoralizing 2+ month wait time for responses to the letters signed by over 10% of the undergraduate student body is shockingly disrespectful. And if you've been a part of any student club's E-board, you know just how ridiculous planning and booking events can become. The reduction of access for mobilization from simple efficiency to impossible hoops and hurdles, obviously designed to slow motivation and kill morale, has probably been the administration's (and this culture's) greatest ploy in negating dissent. Since we will not stop dissenting, it is imperative for the students to carve their own path forward.

The recent surge of student organizing on Stevens campus in response to the ongoing genocide in Palestine, continued repression of free speech at home and abroad, and the Trump administration's disgusting xenophobia - ripping lives apart with their Gestapo, ICE - for example, has to date operated safely within the rules of the system; from patiently awaiting approval for flyers from the Office of Student Life, to literally standing within the boundaries of temporary fencing at our first "demonstration" - catted into a cage, beneath a scorching surveillance system, while cops in riot gear train nearby. It is true that our efforts in the past were very purposely fragile, never pushing the envelope, always restraining ourselves to working within a system that would use every means at their disposal to hinder our progress. To even *consider* establishing Students for Justice in Palestine at Stevens was like trying to dismantle a bomb - patience and meekness became our balancing act. Crossing the tripwire required slow, careful steps. But listen: *We have crossed to the other side*. Stevens Students for Justice in Palestine is established and thriving. Stevens Amnesty is doing incredible work in all fields of human rights. Independent journalism on campus via the Stute and the Student Resistance are bringing previously unheard voices to light for the first time in decades. And most importantly, the trust and solidarity amongst all groups in the undergraduate student body have never been more unified. Consider Stevens Amnesty's Letter from the Student Body advocating for Stevens to adopt the name and responsibilities of a "Sanctuary University" which received 712 votes in favor

and was endorsed by 23 student organizations and 6 greek life organizations. With established student organizations, independent journalism, and group solidarity, we have all the ingredients necessary for successful student mobilization. Now: *It's time to bare our fangs and get bold.* Investigate the stories of our collective past, research the documents of independent voices. Be inspired by how far we've come - and take those next steps confidently and with courage. Disregard the rules that restrict the movement - post your flyers unapproved, and use their ink to print more when they tear them down. Organize meetings spontaneously and without permission - just use free space and relocate if needed. Print your own zines and pamphlets. Make as many people as possible aware of each grievance the administration loosely tosses in your direction. Don't pick up their trash, throw it right back in their window. Gather together in-person and be loud and angry. Stay on the move, active, alert, and ahead of the curve. Review the history above, the timeline below, make plans, and take action now.

Stevens Divest from War Initiative Recap & Timeline

The goal of the Stevens Divest from War Initiative is to divest the Stevens endowment from all companies which violate international laws and principles on human rights and crimes against humanity, and reinvest in companies which promote human rights & sustainability. All Stevens students, faculty, staff, and alumni are encouraged to participate in a respectful and open dialogue to move the university's policies towards the goals of the SDFWI.

June 10, 2024: Sent an email to President Favardin, expressing interest in a conversation on ethical investing with student signatures. Sara Klein took responsibility. James Hooker ('25) and Emily McCormick ('24) met with Sara Klein (vice president for student affairs), Lou Mayer (CFO), and Ed Synakowski (vice provost for research). Pitched the Committee on Investor Responsibility (CIR), which provided a prefatory list of guidelines for ethical investment. Requested access to the IPS and disclosure of investments. Outcomes: Sara Klein pitched the idea to the President's cabinet and told us she will bring it to the [Board of Trustees](#) when they meet in December 2024. This did not happen.

June 2024 - February 2025: Financial research and divestment proposal writing. All draft versions of the proposal have been archived by the SDFWI and may be distributed upon request. Please email stevensdivest@gmail.com for info. Note that many specifics of the original proposals were cut due to conversations with the SGA. Pay careful attention to all company examples, sourced from research with help of the Institute for Ethical Venture Capital.

February 5, 2025: SDFWI alongside numerous student organizations open the Unofficial Poll to gain support campus-wide prior to the SGA meeting on [Proclamation S-25-001](#). [875 responses, 683 in favor](#).

February 23, 2025: [SGA reads Proclamation on Stevens Divest From War Initiative](#). Click here for this version's [proposal](#) and [proclamation](#). Quite a childish meeting. Meeting minutes are probably available somewhere, if you want to burn a few brain cells. Outcome: Tabled to the following week.

March 2, 2025: SGA reads Proclamation on Stevens Divest From War Initiative V2. Key differences: Generalization of info (removal of specific references and mentions of Israel) and statements on openness for collaboration. Click here for this version's [proposal](#) and [proclamation](#). [Outcome](#): Failed to pass (*23 votes yes, 12 votes no, 2 abstentions*).

April 14, 2025: [Stevens Divest from War Letter from the Student Body](#) voting opens (2/3 in favor of 10% undergrads required). We promoted this with instagram posts, email campaigns, and tabling in popular student areas.

April 25, 2025: The Stute publishes an opposition article [When Ethics Become Harmful](#). Note that at this point, many official emails from Stevens Hillel (advisor: Sara Klein) have been published, citing the divestment initiative as hateful, discriminative, and anti-semitic.

April 28, 2025: Stevens Divest from War student letter passes. Click here for the [Stute article](#) and the [results](#).

May 13, 2025: SDFWI members James Hooker and Mohamed Bengabsia meet with the faculty senate to discuss support for the initiative. View the presentation [here](#). Outcomes: Faculty senate was interested in helping the student body have their voices heard in administration, and asked to receive a copy of the Board of Trustees response to the LSB.

May 21, 2025: Stephen T. Boswell, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Nariman Farvardin, President, respond to the SDFWI LSB, which we forwarded to the faculty senate, currently headed by Gregory Morgan. Outcome: Rejected the SDFWI, admitted to investments in genocidal Israel, made a fashionable "amendment" to the policy statement. View the [response here](#).

September 19, 2025: The Stute publishes [The Case for Divestment – When Ethics Becomes Groundwork for Systemic Change](#), which outlines the SDFWI's official response to the BOT.

November 13, 2025: The SDFWI publishes a video response to the BOT, reiterating points made in the earlier response and pushing for both student engagement and Board action. [The video can be viewed here.](#)

November 18, 2025: The BOT closes all dialogue related to divestment, reaffirming its initial statement and declaring that they will no longer be revisiting the subject matter of the SDFWI.

We finally reach the present moment, where we have the unique opportunity of planning for the future by unraveling the past. Can you see the parallels between the 1969 resolutions and the two recent Letters from the Student Body? And how, a year after their first demands were rejected, the Stevens Free Press was formed to continue mobilizing the student body? We have the history: in the short term, over two years of experimentation in mobilization; and in the long term, an entire cultural movement to draw continuous inspiration from, and to validate our struggle. We have the journalistic power: in the State, the Student Resistance, and other creative orgs. We have the solidarity of pretty much every organization on campus, and budding connections with local news outlets. Stevens, gather together! Have sit-ins with real conversations, learn from and educate each other, gather wisdom from the wise. Find allies in the faculty, staff, and even the administration. And no matter what, don't stop. This story will continue with or without us, but without our participation, it will be molded by those who have the power to do so. Take your chance, earn your future. It's ours now - how would you like to shape it?

PEACE.

-SDFWI