

# Congress Challenges Fr. Peterson

## President's Decision Angers Student Congress Leader

Rev. Thomas R. Peterson, O.P.  
Office of the President  
Harkins Hall  
Providence College

May 10, 1973

Dear Fr. Peterson:

In light of your recent decision regarding the Student Congress proposal for parietal revision, I feel I must make my sentiments quite clear. I am both angered and amazed by your decision; while I never expected this bill to be fully accepted by the Administration, I was certain that the room for compromise within the bill was more than adequate. However, it appears that compromise was not considered.

I thank you for the extensions that you did grant, although in all honesty, I believe they are appeasement extensions. My question, Father, if you hold the power to grant those extensions stated, why do you not hold the power to extend the hours to the limits specified in the bill? It appears to me, that by your decision to refer this bill to the Corporation, the Administration, and more importantly, your own office, is guilty of what my generation would term a "cop-out". How long can Providence College exist, when each time a proposal that is considered to be the least bit controversial, is stalled, and passed to some other committee: Yes indeed, Father, I am angered by the blatant tendency of your office to "pass the buck". I am convinced, that until such time the Office of the President assumes strong leadership, Providence College will wallow in a mire of hypocrisy and mistrust.

If you recall, in last week's issue of the Cowl, I requested a statement of "purpose and goal" from the Administration. I looked forward to a response of some type. To this date I have received nothing. I have heard nothing. What will it take to drag out this statement? Again, the lack of strong leadership points me in one direction: the Administration of Providence College has in fact, no idea where it is headed. If there is some type of theory formulated, why has it not been stated? I plead with you to do so.

Because you have made the decision to refer this all-important bill to the Corporation, we have no choice other than to accept it. However, I must request permission to be allowed to appear before the Corporation, and to speak before them. I feel this is imperative to any chance our proposal may have. I urge you to consider this request, and inform me of your decision as soon as possible.

Respectfully,  
Mark Granato/President  
Student Congress  
Providence College

### MEMO FROM THE EDITOR

Last week, we wrote a wish for a happy summer for all our readers, without any intention of addressing you again until September. Since that time, however, we have been called upon to decide whether this Special Edition of The Cowl would be necessary, feasible, and constructive. In consultation with Mark Granato, President of the Student Congress, we have decided to exercise the duties we set for ourselves, in last week's issue, and provide you with the information found on this page.

In the 3 April issue of The Cowl, we published the bill, framed by the Student Congress, on the issue of parietals. This bill provided for parietal hours of: 12 noon until 12 midnight, Monday through Thursday; 12 noon until 4 a.m., Friday; 8 a.m. until 4 a.m., Saturday; and 8 a.m. until 12 midnight, Sunday. In addition, this bill increased security for the Women's Dormitories. Since 5 April, this bill has cleared both the Committee on Life Styles and the Committee on Administration. In the former, it was passed unanimously.

What we see at stake here is something more than just parietals. Certainly, it is the wish of the Student Congress, as well as The Cowl, to decide on parietals once and for all, so that we could move on to more important issues. It is, indeed, the fact that there are more important issues that is highlighted by this present crisis.

There should have been a student on the Corporation by now. If the Corporation was to be the final judge on this issue, there should have been provisions, which were binding, for the Corporation to be on campus to understand what happened last October with the Student Mobilization Committee and, since then, with the Committee on Life Styles. Indeed, there should have been an answer to the Parietal issue, a final answer, some time ago. There should have been a working communication within the college during all this time so that this crisis would never have happened. Now that it has happened, let us learn from our mistakes. Let us not return in September, only to find that this same battle has to be fought again. This is an institution of higher learning. Let us learn from this experience.

We urge that Mark Granato be allowed to speak in behalf of this bill at the next Corporation meeting. Further, we urge that the present Administration members, who are also Corporation members, present a fair, honest and thorough picture of the atmosphere of the campus and this bill, to the other members of the Corporation. Finally, we urge all our readers to reconsider all they know about Providence College, and to become curious about all they don't know. We want to return next year to an atmosphere of constructive criticism about Providence College. Let us open the windows, and let some fresh air in.

Sincerely,  
Denis Kelly

### THE COWL

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Editor ..... Denis Kelly

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by Mark Granato

As I stated in my letter to Fr. Peterson, I was both angered and amazed by his decision on the Congress proposal for parietal revision. I was not surprised at his decision to neither accept nor reject it; in all honesty, I was very confident of some type of compromise. There was no compromise of any type. The action of referring the bill to the Corporation leaves me bewildered. I am flabbergasted to think that this proposal could actually be termed too radical for consideration by the Administration. Why, I have to ask myself, do we have an Administration, if we must constantly run to the Corporation for a decision every time a controversial issue comes up? Where is the leadership we so direly need?

I am convinced, because of the action Fr. Peterson did take, that this leadership does not exist in the Administration. We are forced to turn to the Corporation for decisions. This cannot go on; the consequences are all too plain. Eventually, Providence College will be run entirely by a group of men, many of whom have no ties with the school other than the Corporation. If we do not have an administration that is capable of standing on its own two feet, then Providence College can have no future, and rightfully so. What institution deserves to be successful, when it has no backbone to speak of? It is not as if there were any extraordinary issues at Providence College. Issues such as these we are dealing with have been faced by College and University Presidents across the United States in the past few years. And most of these issues have been decided upon: whether pro or con is not as important as the fact that they were decided. For example, Time magazine, in a recent issue stated that "parietals is a non-existent issue on most major colleges and universities in the United States." We must have been in a closet someplace. What I am getting at, is the fact that whether students won out on their issues or not, they are not still banging their heads against the wall in a vain attempt to solve their problems. They questioned, they proposed, and they were answered. Sometimes they won the argument, sometimes they lost; that's life. But at least they got an

answer; and if what they were looking for was impossible, then those with brains enough moved on to some other issue; equally important. But they did not waste their time. I believe this is our biggest problem. Until we do get some type of answer as to where the limits stand on parietals, we

would only serve to grant us exactly what we've been working for. So now the time comes when someone (God only knows who) will be faced with the task of taking the parietal problem head on...and making a final firm decision.

As you all know, I have requested permission to speak before the Corporation at its next meeting in June. I believe, at least I hope, that this request will be granted. I can see no reason why it should not. In light of scheduled proposals before the Corporation, I feel it is imperative that I be allowed to speak before this body, as a representative of the Student Body. At this meeting, I intend to ask the Corporation for two things: One, a statement of goal and purpose of the College. A statement which will define exactly what the College plans for the future. Two, what the Providence College policy concerning parietals shall be. As of yet, we have no such statement. Twenty-three hour visitation rights appear to be as feasible as the hours we enjoy (?) right now. I feel that these statements of policy are vital to the normal development of Providence College. Because the Administration has not provided the leadership needed to do so, I will request the Corporation to take a firm stand on these student issues, whether they be pro or con.

### Congress Censures Peterson

In an emergency meeting of the Student Congress held May 10, the Student Congress approved the following statement regarding Fr. Peterson's decision on Parietal Revision:

"We the members of the Student Congress, as representatives of the Student Body, feel compelled to denounce the course of action taken by the President of the College, Rev. Thomas R. Peterson, in relation to the Student Congress proposal for parietal revision. We view his decision as actually a course of inaction and appeasement. We consider dealings such as these, with the student, as an insult to the integrity of all members of the College community. We feel that Fr. Peterson has not assumed the role of leadership necessary and vital to the Office of the President. We therefore reprove Fr. Peterson for his actions."

Respectfully submitted,  
The Student Congress

are wasting our time. I'd make book that I could sell this plot to Parker Bros. and they'd have a brand new best-selling game on their hands called: "Pass the Buck."

The extensions that were granted have been met with an attitude of disgust. This should not be the case. Any extension in visitation regulations should be accepted with the knowledge that its at least a "step in the right direction." I can well understand though, the feeling that these extensions are meant to appease. Well, as we all know, we can only be appeased so long, basically because any further appeasement

As the President of the Student Congress, I am embarrassed to see how much parietals has bogged us down once again. I am sure a decision will be reached in this area by Sept. of next year. If not, I will do everything in my power to steer the Congress away from this area and onto important issues that are laying dormant. We have to much to do and to little time to do it in, to allow ourselves to become completely rapped up in this issue. This is not to say that the Congress will drop the issue completely; I vow that will never happen until such time that a reasonable decision is reached. But we will arrange for different means, with less concentration.

I firmly believe, that this Congress is doing all it can possibly do in this matter. The one thing we very definitely need is student support. Without it we'll get nowhere. So please, support us, and we'll continue to do the best we can.

## Peterson Extends Parietals, Forwards Bill

On Wed., May 9th, the long awaited decision on the Student Congress Proposal for Parietal Revision, was announced by Fr. Peterson. After a period of discussion which has extended over the last month and a half, and saw the utilization of the Committee on Life Styles and the Committee on Administration, Fr. Peterson stated that he intended to forward the bill in its entirety to the Corporation for a final decision. However, he did extend parietal hours in certain areas.

Fr. Peterson extended the parietal hours to the following limits: Weekdays-12 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Fridays-12 p.m. to 1 a.m.;

Saturdays-10 a.m. to 11 p.m. These new regulations shall go into effect upon Fr. Peterson's official announcement of the decision.

The original Student Congress proposal called for a much broader change in the parietal structure. (see Congress bill, 5 April, The Cowl). However, Fr. Peterson termed this proposal too radical to be decided by his office, and thus referred it to the Corporation.

Passed on March 14, after a nine hour emergency meeting of the Congress which lasted until early morning, the bill was forwarded to the Committee on Administration. At this time it was sent to the Committee on Life Styles, which

Fr. Peterson had set up earlier in the year to deal with life style complaints. After three lengthy meetings of this committee, chaired by Fr. Francis Duffy, Vice-President of Student Relations, the Committee on Life Styles unanimously accepted the proposal. It was then forwarded back to the Committee on Administration.

Fr. Peterson, after lengthy discussion at two sessions of the Committee on Administration, then reached his decision. He also announced that the next meeting of the Corporation would be held in the beginning of June, and the Congress proposal would be discussed at this time.