

Now, Revolt Old Westbury-Style



Newsday Photo by Jim Nightingale

AT THE GRASSROOTS. With his office taken over by students yesterday, Harris Wofford, left, president of the State University at Old Westbury, holds an open-air meeting with his aides, Byron Youtz, center, and Gerald Zeigler.

By Gregory Schirmer

Upper Brookville—Harris L. Wofford Jr., president of the State University's experimental College at Old Westbury, was sitting yesterday with other administrators and some faculty members in the grass outside one of the dozen geodesic domes on the school's temporary campus.

Across a tennis court-size patch of grass that serves as the campus yard, about a dozen students were milling around the doorway to dome No. 11, which houses Wofford's office. The students were sunning themselves, eating lunch and holding numerous "steering committee" meetings inside the office. Among the hand-lettered signs plastered on the outside of dome No. 11 was one saying: "School is closed."

At dome No. 5, which houses the school's switchboard, a heavy-set girl student was sitting behind the switchboard answering incoming calls from fellows: "I'm sorry, but the College at Old Westbury is closed. It is under student control. Can I take a message?" Messages were being delivered by students on bicycles.

Later in the day, the switchboard

girl answered with no more than a cheery "Old Westbury."

Though Wofford's office apparently was occupied by the students, and the campus switchboard clearly was in the hands of the students, no signs of a student-administration confrontation were visible. "What we're having here is a lot of meaningful dialogue," said one faculty member. The students and administration officials declined to discuss the nature of the various meetings that were taking place during the day between Wofford and student representatives. But a notice on the campus bulletin board, dated May 20 and signed by a group called the Non-white Caucus, listed four student demands and threatened "measures that will insure that the administration thoroughly, wholly, resolutely and completely meet our demands" if the administration did not respond to the demands by 5 PM last Wednesday.

The demands posted on the bulletin board were (1) that a provost for the school's urban studies college be named by the Non-white Caucus; (2) that the provost be named by May 29;

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Newsday Photo by Jim Nightingale

BUILDING BILLBOARD. Posters put up by student demonstrators adorn the entrance to a building yesterday at the State University at Old Westbury. Included is a portrait of the late black militant leader, Malcolm X.

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(3) that a former faculty member apparently dismissed by the school be rehired and paid \$1,000 in damages "for defamation of character" and (4) that "machinery" for dealing with future student protests be established by May 29.

Wofford repeatedly declined to discuss the nature of the talks or the progress being made. He would say only, "We have all agreed not to talk to the outside world, including the press, until we have something to say, and then we will say it together."

The 85-student college opened last September on the former William R. Coe estate. Considered the most radical educational laboratory in any public system of education in the U.S., the school was planned as much by the students as by state education officials and school administrators. There are

only pass and fail grades, no final exams, casual seminars instead of formal classes, and no faculty departments. The relationship between the students and the administration has been such that Wofford is known as "Harris" to many students.

In the urban studies college, apparently the subject of yesterday's negotiations, students spent the first semester on campus studying urban life and then spent the second semester working in New York City schools, social centers and anti-poverty programs. The students in the college were scheduled this week and next to discuss their experiences and work in the city with other students and faculty members on campus here.

The school is expected to admit 1,000 students in 1970 on its permanent campus, the former F. Ambrose Clark estate in Old Westbury.