

July 24, 1970

Dr. Albert M. Sacks
Law School of Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Dr. Sacks:

I certainly thank you for your kind letter of July 17. I should confess at the outset that my earlier communication was a reaction to the general image of Harvard University—and not specifically the Law School—which has come through to me via the press, alumni bulletins, and the like. I obviously have not been in a position to examine issues at Harvard in detail, and therefore run the risk of being unfair in my general reactions.

I do have the impression, subject to rebuttal, that a considerable degree of permissiveness has been permitted on the campus, particularly among the undergraduates, which has tended to erode the basic environment necessary for the functioning of a university of first rank. I obviously do not single out Harvard as the sole culprit. For example, I read in the Princeton Alumni Weekly—where I was an undergraduate—that Secretary Hickel went to speak there on the subject of ecology last March, at the University's invitation, and a small majority of radicals shouted and otherwise carried on to the point that Hickel could not even be heard. The distressing part was that this appalling discourtesy prompted a debate and a great deal of soul-searching, when in my time and yours it would have been handled by the immediate dismissal of those concerned.

I am reassured by your letter that Harvard Law School is not taking this sort of thing lying down. Until I do more homework, I do not think I necessarily deserve the kindness of a reply, but I remain troubled and by no means convinced that the universities, including Harvard, have done enough to make it clear to the students that good manners and a modicum of discipline are essential if the spirit of free inquiry is to be preserved.

I thank you again for your letter and extend best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ogden Williams