

Irwin justified the arrests as a necessary decision. "This was a difficult situation made in consultation with faculty leaders — actually after the Student Affairs staff had spent a lot of time warning students of alternatives and of consequences," Irwin explained.

Students who organized the Tent University said their goals were a better and more humanized education, greater respect for free speech at the university, more democracy and dialogue between UCSC students and administration, and the rebuilding of humanities programs. Students demanded that the administration address the lack of diversity on campus and low wages of university workers.

Earlier in the day of April 18, with Day One of Tent University already in progress, no permission from the UCSC administration to set up camp at the base of campus, or any other place, had been made. An offer to camp in the Quarry, deep in the heart of campus, had been offered on Friday morning, only to be pulled off the table Friday afternoon, according to one of the Tent U organizers. Now students were told it was back on the table.

Students gathered together to democratically decide what they should do. Complicating matters, when Tent U organizers had made phone calls to local companies that rent portapotties, they were told they had received calls from UCSC staff stating that if any potties were delivered anywhere on the UCSC campus, they would be immediately removed. No company would rent to them.

Tent University organizers, firm believers in collective decision-making, presented five proposals about whether or not to camp, and if so, whether to do so in violation of the camping ordinance. Over 200 students broke off into circles and discussed the five proposals. Unbeknownst to the Tent U students, UC staff members joined each circle, although that all became apparent in time.

So for an hour and a half, students talked about camping and how to deal

with the administration's unbending attitude against it. "I want to be talking about all the issues we came here to talk about," one young woman complained, "and all we are talking about is the camping ban!" Yet the "don't give an inch" policy of UCSC officials gave the students no choice.

At 4 p.m., Tent U delegates voted to stay the night in tents at the base of campus in violation of the University's camping ordinance. "If this is what homeless people face every night, we can do this for one night," one student declared.

"I don't want to locate in a hole in the ground," another UCSC student told the assembly. "No one will see us there." Other students emphasized the need to connect with the greater Santa Cruz community, including the wealthy and the homeless. At 9 p.m., the students set up 30 tents and prepared to bed down for the night.

Police attack peaceful gathering

Liz Irwin tried to justify how the decision was made to send in 30 cops in riot gear to arrest 19 students for sitting on the ground in a tent at night. "So the final decision was made by the senior administration and it was made with the understanding that there would be every precaution taken for safety," she said.

She blamed the students for escalating the situation, saying, "there seemed an intensive interest in accelerating on the part of the students."

Faced with rows of police in riot gear, dozens of students locked arms and sat on the ground under the "Nome," the biggest tent raised at Tent University. Police with riot helmets and blue latex gloves systematically pressed on pain compliance points, and squeezed arms and thighs in an effort to cause enough pain to cause the students to lose their grip on each other.

Nearly 90 students were locked on the ground, and adhered to the discipline of the civil rights protesters trained by Martin Luther King Jr. Committed to non-violent resistance, no student raised a hand against any officer. None of the 19 arrested (17 UCSC students and two others, age 20 and 21) were charged with assault on a police officer, an impressive fact considering it doesn't take much for police to concoct such a charge at a protest like this.

After two non-stop hours of the police removing students one by one for arrest, only 19 had been taken into custody. Dozens more remained on the ground, arms locked, resisting removal by police. It was clear the police did not have the manpower to arrest everyone. The UCSC administration called off the police. The students had won.

Liz Irwin explained, "We care about the safety of our students very much; we did not want anything untoward to happen to them. We thought it was better to just wait for awhile and see if the situation got less tense. The students became more expressive and seemed to be more interested in the kinds of behaviors that, actu-