Chapter 8: Students for DMH and the Fight for Air Conditioning





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#FAINTIN

Students get heated over building conditions

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Students for DMH held their "faint-in" event, the first ever at San Jose State, on Wednesday in Dudley Moorhead Hall, the building they claim needs to be modernized.

Close to 100 students and faculty joined the student organization by participating in the "faint" and rallying throughout the halls of the building.

Juan Jimenez, a junior sociology major and member of Students for DMH, joined the group because he feels there is a division of prioritizing what matters to the university.

"We claim to be one of the most diverse universities, yet what you see is a lot of separation based on your major," Jimenez said.

The participants of the "faint-in" were situated throughout the three floors of the building and carried signs with testimonials of students.

They "fainted" when directed to and sprawled themselves throughout the halls, leaving room for student who were exiting their classes.

Some students that were exiting classes voiced anger and annoyance, most of who refused to make a statement.

There were many more students and faculty who watched the fainters and expressed their support.

Alexandra Cambra, a senior history major, said that she was glad to see that students cared enough to organize the event.

"What they are doing is for everybody who is stuck in this building," Cambra said. "I think it's starting a dialogue and it's bringing attention to this issue."

Please read the rest of this story online.

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bit.ly/1eBMYmD

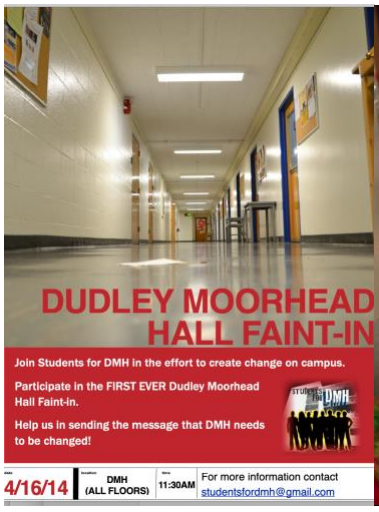
Samuel Brannan | Contributing photographer

SJSU students march on campus on Wednesday afternoon to protest the current conditions of Dudley Moorhead Hall.

Historical Background:

On the campus of San José State sits Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH), a building that hosts four departments, many faculty offices and classrooms, and serves over 3,000 students a day. DMH was constructed in 1957, but without air conditioning. With its west-facing side exposed to direct sunlight, temperatures in DMH on some April through October days reached 90 degrees and above. For the past 50 years, stories had been told about the intolerable conditions of DMH, but little was done to fix the problem. For at least 20 years, the University told students and faculty that there was no need for air conditioning in DMH because the university was going to knock it down and replace it. Unfortunately, there was never enough money in the budget to build a replacement building.

The Event:





Things came to a head when several students fainted in the building on hot days, while others students missed class due to the heat. The Chair of the Psychology Department wrote a letter to the University complaining about the conditions in DMH, which was followed up by a formal

complaint lodged by the California Faculty Association. Then, Amanda Adalma, class of '14, decided that she had enough, and she started to organize students in the fall of 2013 under the name *Students for DMH*.

Over the next two and ½ years, the students held rallies, met with administrators, conducted student questionnaires, handed out hand-held fans with *Students for DMH* on them, passed out water and popsicles out front of DMH, did a cost estimate to install air conditioning, all with the goal of getting the University to agree to their demand of air conditioning in DMH. When *Students for DMH* spoke to other students, their opening line was "Are you hot in DMH?" As part of their research, the students learned that schools with a large population of working-class students of color were twice as likely to have buildings built in the 1950s, and that many of them were without air conditioning. This information provided the students with the frame that they were being treated unfairly due to their social class and race and ethnicity.[i]

On April 16, 2014, *Students for DMH* held a "faint in", which was a theatrical event, calling on students to faint in the hallways of DMH to draw attention to the unbearable conditions in the building. As classes were getting out, and with TV cameras rolling, about 100 students fainted in the hallways. After ten minutes, the students got up and walked through the building chanting "DMH is too hot" and "air conditioning now". After chanting, the students marched to the university president's office, where they attempted to meet with President Mohammad Qayoumi. The "faint in" made it on local television stations and on the front page of the campus paper.[ii]

After continual pressure by the students through the spring and fall semester of 2015, President Susan Martin decided to approve a $3 million air conditioning plan for DMH. The students celebrated with a news conference, which again received local media attention. After the end of the spring semester in 2016, DMH was shut down for installation of the air conditioning, and then at the beginning of the spring 2017 semester, DMH was re-opened with air conditioning in every office and classroom.[iii]

Resources:

- Amanda Adalma, "We Are Students for DMH", *Whathuhmmhm,* January 28, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWDaUmT7070 (accessed February 4, 2018)
- Amanda Adalma, "Students for DMH 2013-2014," *Whathuhmmhm*, October 12, 2014 www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-yUXYFYHgs&list=UUM0ZR3CPlqXSyQuQCpCdbqA&index=10 (accessed Feb. 4, 2018)
- Amanda Adalma, "Nothing is What it Seems", *Whathuhmmhm*, October 12, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oUPpQZJTOc&index=9&list=UUM0ZR3CPlqXSyQuQCpCdbqA (accessed February 4, 2018).
- Mike Colgan, *KCBS News*, December 14, 2015, click to listen (mp3):

[i] Jerica Lowman, "Students Get Heated Over Building Conditions," *Spartan Daily*, April 17, 2014 (PDF); Sonya Herrera, "Dudley Moorhead Hall Inspires Student Action: Decisions Hinge on Possible Demolition, Cost of Upgrade," *Spartan Daily,* October 22, 2014, http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1523&context=spartandaily (accessed December 4, 2017).

[ii] "San Jose State Students Protest Heat in Aging Campus Building", *KTVU News*, April 16, 2014, http://medleystory1.rssing.com/chan-4124848/all_p497.html (accessed December 6, 2017).

[iii] Students for DMH, "Finally, Air Conditioning in SJSU's Dudley Moorehead Hall," Press Release, Dec. 10, 2016 (PDF).