

Puerto Rican Students Charge Administration With Discrimination

By Barbara Boylan

Students from two Puerto Rican organizations on campus united Wednesday afternoon to fight what they feel is growing "discrimination" by the administration against the Puerto Rican Sequence of the Black and Puerto Rican Studies (BPRS) Department.

In a meeting on the ninth floor, the students, joined by a handful of junior faculty members from the sequence, were disturbed by the recent nonreappointment of Edgardo Lopez-Ferrer, a poet who teaches Puerto Rican Literature in the department.

In addition, they were upset with President Jacqueline Wexler's recent appointment of Luis Rodriguez-Abad as interim director of the Puerto Rican Sequence. They felt that the department had not been consulted in the appointment.

Dr. Abad is supposed to hold that position until a new director is found. Professor E. Seda-Bonilla resigned from that position in December after considerable pressure from students and faculty in the sequence.

Wednesday afternoon approximately 40 students from de Hostos and Puerto Ricans United made tentative plans for fighting

the "discrimination." Immediately after the meeting, they went to the office of Dr. Beryl Bailey, chairman of the BPRS department.

"We're not here in the usual way of yelling or blowing you away," Felix Rivera, a student leader in de Hostos, told Dr. Bailey. "We just came by to express support for you. We know you're under a lot of pressure from the Administration."

Dr. Bailey has resigned as department chairman, effective this June, according to Mr. Rivera. Dr. Bailey could not be reached for confirmation.

The students expressed support for Mr. Lopez-Ferrer who has been teaching in the department since September, 1971.

However, Dr. Bailey said that it was not her decision to reappoint Mr. Lopez-Ferrer but that of the department's Personnel and Budget Committee and that committee has ruled against reappointment.

Although no official reason was given for his nonreappointment in writing, the P & B Committee, in a meeting last Monday with interested students and faculty members, reportedly said that Mr. Lopez-Ferrer had not been reappointed because the budget line he's occupying is that of an instructor and that budget line will not be assigned to the department next year. A higher, professorial line, which has more

(Continued on Page 4)

Students Charge

(Continued from Page 1)

(Continued from Page 1)
stringent qualifications for faculty background, has been given to the department. The P & B Committee did not feel that Mr. Lopez-Ferrer met those qualifications, according to Anna Zentella, an instructor in the Puerto Rican sequence.

Miss Zentella, in an interview, said that the P & B Committee, "did not even know that Lopez-Ferrer is a poet and that he's been published." She said she was normally wary of "rabble rousing" by students and felt that the students have enough cause—"not just paranoia"—to protest what she feels is real "harrassment" by the administration.

At the students' requests, Dr. Bailey called Gerald Freund, Acting Dean of Humanities, to ask if he would meet with them to discuss the matter. As Dean of Humanities, Dr. Freund is the next higher authority over Dr. Bailey in the college. According to Dr. Bailey, Dean Freund over the phone said that, "P & B has made a decision and the P & B's

decision has to stick. What it really amounts to is the authority of P & B."

"We won't accept that. P & B made a mistake," replied one student.

From Dr. Bailey's office the students, now numbering about 25, went to room 626 where Dean Freund was attending a meeting of the college-wide Personnel and Budget Committee. This committee reviews the hiring firing and promotion of faculty decisions made by departmental P & B committees and forwarded by Divisional Deans.

"This is not an open meeting," President Wexler warned as the students entered the room.

"We came by to inform this body of the attempt to destroy the Puerto Rican Students sequence," Mr. Rivera announced. "We tried to get an appointment to see Dean Freund" and couldn't.

"If you feel you have a case to put before this P & B, put it in writing and I will put it before this committee," Mrs. Wexler said.

Mr. Rivera said that this com-

mittee was probably already aware of the problems occurring in the BPRS department and why not discuss it now.

"This is not the way we will conduct business in this college," Mrs. Wexler replied.

Then Dean Freund rose (he had been sitting on the floor) and said that he had not refused a request to meet with any group of students. He said that he had received a call from Dr. Bailey at the beginning of the P & B meeting and Dr. Bailey told him, "she was being held in her office by a group of students and she wished to know how to proceed.

"I told her that if she required any assistance to attend this meeting, it would be rendered," Dean Freund said.

The students disputed the implication that Dr. Bailey was being "held" in her office, when Mrs. Wexler repeated several times, "I ask you to leave."

"Can we ask for a place on the next agenda?" Mr. Rivera asked.

"I ask you to leave—put your complaints in writing," Mrs. Wexler replied.

After a brief discussion in Spanish, the students left and talked to Dean Freund outside.

They set up a meeting for this Friday, April 14, at 3:30 in room 729 to discuss the responsibility of the departmental P & B com-

(Continued on Page 7)