

Mutual Admiration

One of the biggest failings of our present college-level educational system is its tendency to cut down, if not eliminate, any worthwhile communication of the faculty and administration with the student body. This is not necessarily a fault of the so-called 'multiversity', yet it is an intrinsic part of it.

A college or university president, such as Northern's Edgar L. Harden, cannot run everything alone; he needs the deans and other administrators to keep in actual close contact with the students. This is their job. When problems arise it is these people who must handle them. The president of university could not possibly be everywhere at all times.

Thus it is that few of us students actually know Edgar L. Harden — the man. We only know him as a fine administrator and educator who, in helping Northern Michigan University, has helped us.

Yet, in spite of this breakdown of communications, particularly between Dr. Harden and the students, several incidents have occurred in the past few years that have been memorable for the students.

*In April of 1965, 2,000 students organized and carried out an orderly demonstration on very short notice. Their purpose was to give Dr. Harden a vote of confidence when he tendered his resignation from Northern over a disagreement of the policy of the Board of Control regarding administrative functions. Dr. Harden's resignation was not accepted, but Dr. Harden definitely was — by the students.

*Last year a student was hitchhiking home for the weekend — he was even cutting a few classes — when a car stopped and a man offered him a ride. He was then driven to the airport and given a free airplane ride home. The man who picked him up was Edgar L. Harden, although the student did not realize it.

*Just last June a group of restless students carried out an orderly, though not well-organized demonstration on campus to protest such things as rigid housing policies and poor food — some problems common to all universities which had cropped up at onetime or another during the year. They really didn't disturb anyone, but they let off a lot of steam.

*The next night another unplanned demonstration was held for the same reasons, but this one included a parade through, and sitdown strike on, the streets of Marquette. Dr. Harden himself pacified this group by rising from his sick bed, where he was laid up with a virus, and speaking with the nearly 2,000 students participating in the fieldhouse.

*The next morning Dr. Harden met with a committee of students to discuss and search out possible solutions to the problems which had been brought forth the previous night. Since it was the end of the year and final exams had already begun, no definite steps were taken, but the personal involvement and interest of Dr. Harden was one of the greatest forward steps taken during the year to bring about cohesion and communication between the administration and the students.

These are only a few incidents — many others took place — but they are representative of the kind of man Dr. Harden is. Because he showed that he was interested in the students as young people, instead of just numbers filling up the dormitories, the students responded with admiration, respect and much feeling for Dr. Harden. He announced his resignation purposely when the students were not here. He's going to walk out quietly, and although we students must too remain quiet, it is the silence of solitude, because it's going to be different around here without him. We can only wish him the best, because that's what he is — the best.