

SCAAR holds typewriter smash, wash rally

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Alligator Writer

SCAAR smashed an IBM typewriter on the steps of Tigert Hall Wednesday during its first rally of the semester, protesting what members call UF's passive attitude toward apartheid.

IBM sells computers to the South African government.

The Student Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism then washed sheets painted with slogans identifying various SCAAR causes to symbolically wash "UF's dirty laundry."

As SCAAR members Mary Coomes, Lisa Gibbons and Jim Sullivan pounded the donated typewriter with a hammer in the afternoon heat, Student Body President Pam Bingham said UF students should work to end apartheid.

"This isn't a social hour," Bingham told the crowd of about 250. "We've got some serious business to do at this university. It's probably not half as hot here as South Africa."

The rally began at noon, but by the time

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protesters got around to smashing the typewriter about an hour later, the crowd had dwindled to less than 100.

The relatively small turnout did not bother Sullivan.

"At this university I'm happy if I can talk to one person at a time. I don't base my work on how many people show up. I'm a man of action and will continue to be," he said.

Several speakers, with bullhorns in hand, took turns leaning over the railing of the front Tigert Hall balcony to address the crowd.

Speakers addressed several SCAAR causes, such as opposition to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, American and UF investments in South Africa, and the campus ROTC program.

Sullivan began the rally by telling students they should be serious about the fight against apartheid while at UF.

"If in coming here you wished to escape reality with four years of school, then get off of this lawn," Sullivan said.

UF associate philosophy Professor Tom Simon accused UF of unfair treatment of its minority employees and again called for divestiture of the more than \$3 million the UF Foundation has invested in companies dealing in South Africa.

"If the university was against apartheid, they would divest," Simon said.

University Relations Vice President Al Alsobrook disagreed with Simon.

"The university is on record as being strongly opposed to apartheid. We just happen to

have a difference of opinion on how to resolve the problem. It's truly a matter of opinion," Alsobrook said.

One student who watched the demonstration was Jan Nel, a 25-year-old South African who is a UF graduate student in chemistry. Nel said he just returned from a trip to his South African home, and said he disagrees with the protesters' arguments.

"I want to end apartheid but I don't want them to divest," Nel said. He said divestiture would hurt South African blacks before it ended apartheid because blacks would lose jobs.

"There are so many warped ideas out here. There are 34,000 people on this campus who don't say anything. I can bring 100 people I have talked to on campus who say leave them (the South African government) alone," Nel said.

"IBM just two years ago sent \$3 million in computer equipment to be used only by black students," Nel said. "IBM is doing a world of good for people out there."