ANN ARBOR, Mich.—In a note of optimism, the president of the University of Michigan's senior class said that it was a group of Michigan students who, in 1960, formulated the idea of the Peace Corps and persuaded the late President Kennedy to turn the idea into policy. The Peace Corps was first proclaimed on the steps of the Michigan Union during one of Mr. Kennedy's campaign speeches.

"This is the kind of activism which is meaningful and the kind of activism to which we must direct our creativity," said Jeffrey R. Messner, a 22-year-old economics major. Mr. Messner, who is now taking six months of Army training, plans to return to Michigan for graduate studies in economics.