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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

BY 
BING ZUO

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Administration**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1995



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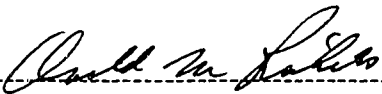
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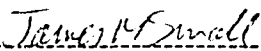
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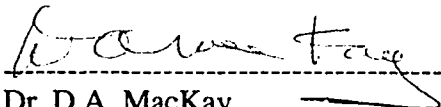
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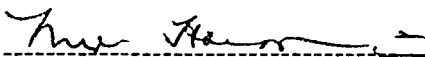
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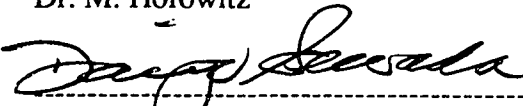
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DEDICATION

To my father, Caijie Zuc, and my late mother, Jizhi Tan, whose love, support, and encouragement will always be remembered.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the scope, process, and effect of student participation in governance at the University of Alberta, including student government, and identified and analyzed related issues, various influential factors, and potential for improvement.

The researcher employed a naturalistic and qualitative inquiry approach. Related literature was reviewed to provide a conceptual framework for the study. Two pilot studies were conducted. Augmented by documentary analysis and direct observations, the semi-structured interview was the major data-gathering technique utilized.

The results of the study reveal that student participation in the governance of the University is beneficial to students, the University, and society. Students have been extensively involved in decision-making at different levels. Both student organizations and students at large employed different informal means, such as lobbying, media, and caucuses to exert their influence. Associations of students as organized forces had much greater influence than students at large. A variety of factors affected how influential they were.

The successful experience of the student government has demonstrated that students are capable of administering their own affairs, satisfying various student needs, and protecting the political interests of students. The University-run student services and the services run by the student government have complemented each other.

Implications of the study include the following: a) further cooperation between the two kinds of student-related services can help them conserve resources and better serve the needs of students; b) joint efforts could be made to improve student participation. The University administration may facilitate student involvement by providing necessary training, including students in some University committees with no student representation, using multiple approaches to obtain student input, and treating students as equals. Students should be aware of their limitations and work to compensate for these limitations; c) in resolving common problems, all members of the University community, including

students, ought to strive to consider the interests of the University as a collective rather than attending predominantly to their own interests; and d) future studies of student involvement in university governance should include student government and the informal involvement of students in their research design.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Traditionally the responsibility for decision-making regarding university governance was assumed mainly by administrators. However, in recent years, participative decision-making in university governance has been fashionable, and it has drawn extensive attention from both researchers and practitioners of post-secondary institutions. Academic faculty members have clearly established a voice in the decision-making activities associated with university governance. As original clients of campus services, students have also become actively involved in university governance for years. Relevant literature has shown not only advantages, but also limitations and issues relating to student participation in university governance.

An initial literature search revealed that the current research base with reference to student participation in university governance is limited. This study examined the nature and perceptions of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta.

Statement of the Problem

The writer investigated the nature (scope, process, and effect) of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta (U of A), including governance of student affairs, and identified related issues and potential for improvement. The following are the purposes of the study: a) to describe the governance structure at U of A, and find out how students are selected and involved in the University governing bodies; b) to describe the student role in the governance of U of A; c) to assess and discuss the effectiveness of student participation in the governance of U of A; d) to find out what means and strategies students employed in their involvement in decision-making activities of the University governing bodies; and e) to explore what can be done to improve student involvement in the governance of the University if necessary.

The following questions based on the above purposes guided the study:

1. What is the governance structure of the University of Alberta?
 - a) What is the administrative decision-making structure of the University?
 - b) What is the structure of the student government? How does it administer students' affairs?
2. What are the University student-related services? How do they satisfy students' needs?
3. How are governance decisions made at the University of Alberta?
4. What are the decision areas in which student involvement is excluded? What are the reasons for such exclusion?
5. What major decisions were addressed by the University administrative decision-making bodies in 1992-1993?
6. What role did students play in making these decisions? What are the perspectives and observations on the involvement of students in decision-making?
7. What informal means and strategies were used by students to exert their influence upon the decisions?
8. What are the factors affecting the impact of student involvement in the governance of the University?
9. What issues need to be addressed and what measures should be taken to lead to more effective student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta?

These questions were formulated to guide the development of the research precisely. During the research, the respondents were invited to provide additional related information which was not addressed in these questions.

Significance of the Research

The concepts of shared authority and interdependent responsibility are important in the development of effective university governance. The position jointly formulated in the United States by the American Council on Education, the Association of Governing Boards

of Universities and Colleges, and the American Association of University Presidents (1966) is that "the variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing boards, administrators, faculty, students, and others" (p. 179). This applies equally to Canada.

Although there is recognition that university students have been involved in the governance of their institutions, there has been very little research conducted concerning student involvement in university governance in Canada. For instance, there have been only two relevant studies among all of the master's theses and doctoral dissertations at the Department of Educational Administration of the University of Alberta. To the writer's knowledge, no study has ever been conducted dealing specifically with student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta. The present study helps to clarify and explain the process, current status, and effect of student involvement in the governance of this university and it identifies pertinent problems.

This study has also yielded some insights which could be useful to administrators and faculty members in other universities. The knowledge and information provided by the research might be interesting to fellow researchers who have been studying participative decision-making and the student role in university governance.

In addition, the research findings should be of value to student organizations and individual students involved in university decision-making. The results may provide them with some suggestions on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their relevant practice. Moreover, students' experience on this campus could be shared by students at other universities. Students' perspectives should also be of use to the University of Alberta administrators and faculty members because those perspectives can help them better understand students' positions and, ultimately, lead to enhanced services and relationships.

Furthermore, as a doctoral student from China, the writer has been concerned about reforms in Chinese institutions of higher education and was involved in the past few years in a collaborative research project between the University of Alberta and the National

Academy of Educational Administration in Beijing, China, which was designed to help the Chinese institutions of higher learning conduct reforms regarding decentralization. This research may provide some insights for reforms in the governance of Chinese universities and colleges in the future.

Delimitations and Limitations

This research was delimited to related practice within the University of Alberta; it can only provide insights into the process, present status, and practical effect of student participation in the decision-making processes of major institutional governing bodies such as the Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council, and some of their respective committees, one faculty council, two selected department councils and some departmental committees within that faculty, and a major advisory body, the Senate, in the 1992-1993 academic year . Therefore, inferences beyond the study must be cautious.

The limitations of this study were as follows. First, the researcher selected as interviewees a limited number of respondents involved in decision-making at the institutional level, the faculty level, and the departmental level. Also, responses of the informants were influenced by factors such as their different experiences, personalities, education, the length of their involvement, interpersonal skills, their own biases, and various environmental factors. Furthermore, the researcher only sought to investigate the current status, processes and effects of students' involvement in the governance of this university in general; no particular decision area was given special attention. All the above factors could limit the overall understanding of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta.

Definition of Terms

The following terms warrant explicit definition to ensure consistency in usage throughout the research.

Governance is "the act of decision-making about institutional purposes (mission), about basic policies, about program objectives, and about resource allocation" (Millett, 1980, p. 495).

Participation means direct involvement in a decision-making process. Warr and War (1975) posited: "From a social psychological standpoint, 'participation' has intended to be defined in terms of concepts like 'involvement' and 'influence' (cited in Chell, 1985, p. 1).

Student Organizations refers to the two major student organizations -- the University of Alberta Students' Union, and the Graduate Students' Association, -- and one faculty students' association, the Education Students' Association.

Student Government relates to the student organizations as a whole at the University of Alberta.

Students at Large refers to those students sitting on various University governing bodies at different levels on this campus who are not appointed or nominated by any of the student organizations of the University.

Outline of the Report

This report has nine chapters. Chapter 1 overviews the background, significance, and purpose of the research. The definition of terms used in the research, and limitations as well as delimitations of the research are also included in this chapter.

In Chapter 2, the literature relevant to decision-making, including participative decision-making, university governance models, student right to participate in institutional governance, and the evolution of student involvement in university and college governance are reviewed. A review of 44 Canadian university and college acts was undertaken to

establish the governance structures and statutory provisions for student involvement in Canada in order to provide a national context for the study. The review includes a description of the two major institutional governing bodies -- boards of governors and academic councils or senates -- and the selection of student representatives, and their terms of office, duties, and responsibilities. The conceptual framework for the study comprises of related literature and a conceptual model developed by the researcher.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology employed for this research which includes the design of the research, the process of data collection and data analysis, two pilot studies, ethical considerations, and specific steps taken by the researcher to ensure trustworthiness of the research.

The governance of U of A is the subject of Chapter 4 which actually has two main sections: 1) the organizational structure and mandates of the University of Alberta administrative decision-making bodies and advisory bodies, the administrative decision-making procedures, and communication procedures; and 2) the student government, including their management and operations, decision-making procedures, their major contributions to the well-being of students of the University, and their internal and external relations.

Chapter 5 describes the student-related services of U of A. Both the University-run student services and the services provided by the student government are presented. The characteristics of the two categories of student-related services are described and compared, and the relationship between them is analyzed.

In Chapter 6, student involvement in the administrative decision-making procedures of the University in 1992-1993 is examined. Different perspectives and direct observations on student involvement in administrative decision-making are reported. The decision areas from which student involvement was excluded are presented, and relevant reasons analyzed. Moreover, major decisions addressed in 1992-1993 are reported, and the informal means or strategies of students during their involvement are presented.

Chapter 7 contains the findings of the research concerning why and how students were involved in student government in 1992-1993, including students' antecedent experiences, motivations, and the perspectives of the informants on the significance of student involvement in the student government. The major achievements of the three student organizations in 1992-1993 are reported to illustrate their specific contributions to students. Issues pertinent to the student government are also analyzed.

Chapter 8 presents the assessment of impact of student involvement in the governance of the University. Various factors affecting the impact of student involvement are analyzed in detail, which include different personal factors, environmental factors, University organizational issues and student organizational issues, attitudinal factors, and program level factors.

The last chapter, Chapter 9, presents a general summary of the research, recommendations made by the respondents for enhancing student participation in the governance of the University for both students and the University administration, major findings of the research, conclusions and personal reflections of the researcher, and the implications for both research and practice in the future.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The primary purpose of reviewing related literature is to present the theoretical and empirical foundations which helped the writer design the research and provided the theoretical bases for the analysis of the data collected for the research. The search of related literature has focused on the following topics: a) nature of decision-making, b) theories underlying participative decision-making, and other supportive opinions, c) university governance models, d) the evolution of student participation in university and college governance, and related student rights, and e) relevant Canadian legislation.

Nature of Decision-Making

According to Griffiths (1967):

The central function of administration is directing and controlling the decision-making process. It is not only central in the sense that it is more important than other functions. But it is central in that all other functions of administration can be generally recognized that decision making is the heart of organization and the process of administration. (pp. 121-122)

MacCrimmon (1974) defined decision-making as a process involving both thought and action that culminates in an act of choice. Simon (1964) believed that one important organizational function was to segregate elements in the decisions of members and to establish procedures for the selection, determination, and communication of these elements. He stated:

The organization, then, takes from the individual some of his decisional autonomy, and substitutes for it an organizational decision-making process. The decisions which the organization makes for the individual ordinarily (a) specify his function . . . (b) allocate authority . . . (c) set other limits to his choice as are needed to coordinate the activities of several individuals in the organization. (p. 8-9)

In addition, Simon (1964) stated that "all decision is a matter of compromise. The alternative that is finally selected never permits a complete or perfect achievement of objectives, but is merely the best solution that is available under the circumstances" (p. 6). Eastcott (1975) pointed out that any thorough analysis of the nature of decision-making

must include a consideration of:

1. The varying abilities of administrators of identifying the need for a decision.
2. The relativity of a decision.
3. The hierarchical and sequential nature of decision-making and decision outcomes, e.g., any decision influences the nature of other decisions to be taken.
4. The relationship in the decision-making process between the beliefs held by decision makers about causation, and their preferences about possible outcomes of decisions. (pp. 15-16)

Participative Decision-Making

Participative decision-making may be defined as the involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process. Steers (1977) explained that

participative decision making represents one attempt to decentralize authority and influence throughout the organization. It is generally thought that such action will often lead to improved decision quality, increased commitment of members to decision outcomes, and increased satisfaction resulting from involvement. Such results are often felt to be associated with effective organizations. (p. 159)

Theories underlying participative decision-making include democratic theory (Pateman, 1970; Thompson, 1970), socialist theory (Kangrga, 1967; Vanek, 1975), human growth theory (Maslow, 1954; McGregor, 1960; Likert, 1967; Alderfer, 1972), and productivity and efficiency (Turner & Lawrence, 1965).

Democratic Theory

Historically, participatory democracy has functioned as a social value in itself. One line of democratic theory envisages a society in which members participate in every aspect of collective life. The assumption that the democratic process educates and develops implies that the process must occur and function in all social, economic, and political organizations, including the family, the school, the work place, and political institutions (Pateman, 1970; Thompson, 1970; Vanek, 1975).

Pertaining to the theory of participatory democracy, Pateman (1970), said that the theory of participatory democracy is built round the central assentation that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another. This development takes place through the process of participation itself. The major junction of participation in the theory of participatory democracy is therefore an

educational one, educative in the widest sense, including both the psychological aspect and the gaining of practice in democratic skills and procedures. (p.42)

Banning (1989) emphasized the necessity of community participation in institutional decision-making on the basis of democratic principles as follows: "All campus members must be encouraged to participate to avoid the impersonal manipulation of many by a select or self-appointed few" (p. 317).

Socialist Theory

The extensive literature on socialism also has a significant bearing on the issues of participation. Karl Marx's concern, especially in his early writings, for a free, unalienated human existence led to theorizing on the debilitating effects of the social and economic order in the capitalistic system. Socialism gives work and the productive process a central role in explaining human personality and social processes (Kangrga, 1967, pp. 13-30). Vanek (1975) believed that a central assumption in the socialistic literature is the potential of people to become economically liberated by participating actively and creatively in the production process, and ultimately controlling it.

Human Growth Theories

McGregor (1960), Argyris (1964), and Likert (1967) put forward several theories of human behavior which focus on personality growth, development of individual potential and efficiency, and mental health in the context of organizations. All these theories hinged on participation as one of the important means of overcoming the debilitating effects of traditionally designed organizations on their members.

Some theories assume a basic hierarchy of needs which culminates in a need for self-actualizing or growth (Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972). Consequently, they argue for assigning greater importance to the intrinsic motivational properties of work itself by allowing greater employee influence, autonomy, and responsibility through such organizational redesign strategies as job enrichment, job rotation, management of

objectives, employee-oriented supervision, and participation (Argyris, 1969, 1975, 1976; Isrel & Tajfel, 1972; Hackman, 1975).

Students' all-round development has been emphasized by some educators. Brown (1989) thought that "the term student development in the definition of a student development educator's role refers to the goals that institutions have for students" (p. 285). Clothier (1986) interpreted the philosophy of whole person: "We are interested in the individual students' development, not in any one phase of his program such as scholarship, intellect, leadership, but from the aspect of his whole personality" (p. 15). Brown (1989) posited that we want students to become alert, sensitive, ethical, knowledgeable, and capable citizens (p. 285). He emphasized that "student development is a required dimension of the collegiate experience" (p. 300). The above statements suggest that the student developmental process is not automatic but must be intentionally initiated and carefully nurtured by the environment if students' full growth and development are to be achieved as a goal of the institutions they attend.

Barrett (1969) summed up the needs for participation and the influence of various relevant concepts and theories as follows:

1. A human organism has a series of physiological and psychological needs which he will strive to satisfy.
2. A degree of needs satisfaction can be derived by involvement or participation in the decision-making process.
3. A human's needs are organized in a hierarchy. The needs of security, love and esteem and self-actualization and their satisfaction are related to involvement in decision making.
4. A human is involved in interpersonal relations. The more rewarding the relationships, the more involved the human becomes. (pp. 18-46)

Efficiency Theory

Productivity and efficiency are also regarded as a rationale underlying participation, conforming to a paradigm which seeks an instrumental understanding of human beings and their capacities, and in which people are considered to be manipulable toward maximum output through appropriate social technologies. Noting widespread alienation,

dissatisfaction, and lack of commitment in the work force, and the consequent cost of reduced efficiency, lower quality and quantity of production, absenteeism, high turnover, and increased sabotage and labor unrest (Turner & Lawrence, 1965), management theorists and business leaders have examined various kinds of social science techniques, including different forms of participation as a solution to these costs.

Yukl (1981) thought that participation in organizational decision-making can improve employees' satisfaction and performance in the following ways:

1. Participation leads to greater understanding and acceptance of decisions.
2. Participation leads to greater identification with decisions and more intense commitment to their implementation.
3. Participation leads to greater understanding of objectives and action plans developed to achieve objectives.
4. Participation provides employees with a more accurate perception of organizational reward contingencies.
5. Participation is consistent with the needs of mature employees for self-identity, autonomy, achievement, and psychological growth.
6. When a decision arise from a participatory process, groups apply pressure on dissenters to accept or at least outwardly comply with decisions.
7. Group decision making promotes cooperation, mutual understanding, team identity, and cooperation.
8. In case of divergent objectives, consultation and joint decision making provide opportunities for resolving conflicts.
9. Participation allows the use of the expertise and analytical skills of individuals throughout the organization. (pp. 208-209)

In summary, the above-mentioned concepts and theories comprise a major part of the theoretical framework of the study and support the rationale of student participation in university governance.

University Governance

Alfred (1985) stated: "Governance is defined as the process for locating authority, power, and influence for academic decisions among constituencies internal and external to the college" (p. 25). The following four major models for university and college governance have been developed by researchers and theorists: bureaucratic model (Weber, 1947), collegial model (Millett, 1962), political model (Baldridge, 1971), and organized anarchy model (Cohen & March, 1972).

Bureaucratic Model

According to Weber's ideal-type concept, "bureaucratic administration, is, other things being equal, always, from a formal, technical point of view, the most rational type" (Weber, 1967, p. 88). In brief, a bureaucracy creates "a systematic division of labor, rights, and responsibilities and enforces it through a hierarchical control system" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 111). In this model, the decision-making power largely vested in the individual depends on the levels of decision-making formally assigned. This model is appropriate for organizations with limited and clear goals, and it helps institutions to achieve maximum efficiency. Nevertheless, it does not address the political constraints, organizational dynamics, as well as ambiguous goals or uncertainties of universities and colleges.

Collegial Model

Student participation in university governance is closely related to the collegial model. Millett (1962), who proposed this model, believed that academic organizations are sufficiently different from other types of institutions and could be better understood as communities rather than hierarchies. He described decision-making in this case as being achieved "not through a structure of super-ordination and subordination of persons and groups but through a dynamics of consensus" (p. 235). This model seeks and assumes egalitarian and democratic values; shared power among faculty, students, alumni, and administrators; professionalism among organization members; academic freedom; a high degree of participation in decision-making; and shared understandings of the purposes of educational institutions (Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1986; Birnbaum, 1988). Baldrige (1971) mentioned that "the supporters of this approach argue that a university should not be organized like other bureaucracies; instead, there should be full participation of the members of the academic community in its management" (p. 5). This model suggests the significance of organizational members' participation in decision-making, which is

definitely beneficial to institutional governance. Nonetheless, decisions are rarely made by consensus in reality. In addition, this model fails to reflect the complexity of conflict and it ignores the role of bureaucratic rule-making in academic institutions.

Political Model

Baldrige (1971) identified the university as a complex, fragmented structure of miniature sub-cultures all with divergent life styles and concerns, all articulating their interests in different ways, all using pressure, power and force to influence decision outcomes (p. 8-9). The political model lays special stress on the dynamic processes of the decision-making act. Baldrige (1971) saw the decision-making process as one which has the following characteristics:

- a. Conflict is natural.
- b. Many power blocs and interest groups try to influence policy in accordance with their values and goals.
- c. Political elites govern most decisions.
- d. Decisions are negotiated compromises rather than bureaucratic orders.
- e. External interest groups have considerable power.
- f. There is a democratic tendency in decision-making. (p. 10)

As a result, "choices have to be made not between good and bad things but rather between competing goods" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 134). In this model, decisions are generally made through negotiations and compromises. The political model mirrors political realities of academic organizations. But it only lays its stress on certain factors such as goal setting and conflicts rather than efficiency in achieving goals, and it also underestimates the impact of routine bureaucratic procedures.

Organized Anarchy Model

This model, also called "garbage can model," was proposed by Cohen and March (1972) who described universities and colleges as "organized anarchies" based on their discovery that institutions of higher education have ambiguous goals, poorly defined technology, and diverse and shifting participation in academic issues. According to Taylor

(1980), "this model suggests that decision-making occurs in a non-rational manner: issues, solutions, and participants meet in the decision-making arena and decisions result from chance encounters of these factors. The model applies in conditions of high organizational uncertainty" (p. 21). The organized anarchy model reveals the goal ambiguity, organizational dynamics and environmental vulnerability of academic institutions. However, it overemphasizes the confusion, conflict, and unplanned activities than what really exist in these institutions.

Glanville (1986) observed that the above four models offered different views of academic governance: "a) a bureaucratic view (decision by rule-making, b) a collegial view (decision by consensus), c) a political view decision by negotiation, and d) an organized anarchy view (decisions by chance)" (p. 24). Wood (1991) noted that there is also a complementary relationship among the four models:

First, the academic bureaucracy and collegium models are extrapolations from observed social reality. The academic bureaucratic model results from the application of a particular generic organizational model to educational institutions whereas the other three have been formulated with considerable attention to the norms and /or social dynamics of universities. (p. 30)

Student Role in University Governance

This section introduces the right of student participation as well as the evolution of student participation in institutional governance.

Right of Student Participation

The right of students to participate in governance arises from three sources -- basic human rights, legal rights as rights of residents of Canada, and rights as members of the academic community.

Tice (1976) interpreted "student rights" at universities and colleges: a) constitutional and other legal rights, b) rights to participation within the institution, and c) human rights. Sometimes, it also means d) the supposed right to special consideration as an 'individual', which transcends even the high moral claim attached to human rights, and which may not, in the strict sense, be a right at all but a license or privilege. (p. 18)

Cunningham (1978) commented on rights related to community membership:

As constituents of the academic community, students should be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student body. Students shall be afforded the right through appropriately established guidelines to formulate procedures for a student government organization, they shall have a role in developing some related school policies and have an opportunity to become involved in planning the instructional program. (p. 57)

Kaiser (1975) claimed that "successful campus design depends upon participation of all campus members, including students, faculty, staff, administrators and regents, which is based on the conviction that all people impacted by a space have the moral right to participate in its design" (cited in Banning, 1989, p. 316).

The Berkeley Free Speech Movement presented two views about the proper role of students at U. S. universities: one view sometimes summarized in the phrase the right of students is the right to learn. The other asserts the right of students to participate in university governance (Trow, 1968).

In June, 1972, the United States Congress enacted the Higher Education Bill (Public Law 93210), which included the following statement: "It is the sense of the Congress that the governing boards of institutions of higher education give consideration to student participation on such boards" (cited in Riley, 1977, p. 242). While emphasizing students' rights, some also argued that it is necessary for the students to recognize their responsibilities. Cunningham (1978) thought that the proper balance of students' rights and privileges with responsibilities and obligations is essential to the development of a creative institution (p. 15).

In a recent study concerning university governance and accountability, an independent study group commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (1993) stated:

We do not share the view that students are simply clients, too inexperienced to grasp their real needs and lacking in the professional qualification for sound judgment. They clearly have direct academic experience of the institution and thus have academic interests that need to be represented directly. Since more of them are older students with longer careers, they bring with them a variety of experiences to the institution. We support such representation. (p. 19)

In summary, by the early and the mid 1970s, students' right to participate in university and college governance was generally recognized in both the United States and Canada. Ever since then, institutions of higher education throughout North America have gradually formalized student involvement in institutional governance.

Evolution of Student Participation

A historical overview of the development of student participation in institutional governance provides a backdrop to this study. Rashdall (1936) commented that "to appreciate the fact the university was in its origins nothing more than a guild of foreign students is the key to the real origin and nature of the institution" (p. 161). McGrath (1970) pointed out that

in the earliest university societies in Italy the students controlled all aspects of corporate life except the processes which the members of the teaching profession used to recruit its initiates. The university was a privately established guild, created by students. The students through the official acts of the universitas, a word applied only to the student population then, and through their own elected executive officer, the rector, imposed rigid control over the teacher's professional activities and indeed over his community relationships. (p. 10-11)

Students gradually lost their power because teachers joined with various outside forces -- town officials and the church -- to weaken students' reign and to strengthen their own. In addition, with more and more funds provided by civic leaders and private donors to the academic establishments, the influence of these outsiders in the internal policy making organization grew. Donors increasingly claimed the right to administer their benefactions and to supervise the activities of those who received them. In spite of the above fact, McGrath (1970, p. 12) indicated that "the history in Western higher education shows that under certain circumstances students were capable of controlling and operating institutions of advanced learning."

As the nineteenth century neared its end, many institutions in America decided that students might possibly be trusted to select their own courses, to find their own housing, to

keep their own hours and to be responsible for themselves. Students began to assume control over their out-of-class lives and to organize their extra-curricular activities.

Ever since then, American students have actively influenced institutional policies through informal channels as well as formal ones. The most satisfactory experience with student enfranchisement was at Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, Ohio. McGrath (1970) observed that

the president, Arthur Morgan believed that colleges ought to use the period of higher education in students' lives to prepare the students for the intelligent discharge of their future civic responsibilities in the large society. Later Algo Henderson initiated the practice of having the elected student sit as an observer with the administrative council of the college, and in the early forties he formalized student membership in this body. (pp. 22-23)

Other universities also made students full members in their policy-making and governing agencies. In 1966, the report of a Commission sponsored by the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada indicated:

With few exceptions, the members of the Association of Canadian Universities and Colleges have brought students into the top policy-making bodies. Canadian administrative officers overwhelmingly believe that students are making valuable contributions to the deliberations of academic bodies. Canadian enterprise of higher education as a whole has become committed to the doctrine that students can and should play an important role in determining the politics and practices which shape their own higher education. (Duff & Berdahl, 1966, p. 65)

During the late 1960s and the early 1970s, students could express their influence over matters of policy through *ad hoc* associations of interest groups. By 1969, based on the findings of a survey conducted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 88.3% of the 875 American institutions that supplied usable information had admitted some students to membership in at least one policy-making body.

Several surveys conducted in the late 1960s and the early 1970s indicated that student membership on academic committees or other governing bodies was a new but widespread phenomenon. Student influence was largely confined to non-academic matters and they still had little decision-making responsibility in such areas as curriculum planning, faculty selection, admissions, institutional fiscal policies, or general institutional planning.

Up till the 1970s, students had virtually no formal power and authority over academic policies and decision outcomes.

In June, 1972, the United States Congress enacted the Higher Education Bill (Public Law 93210), in which institutions of higher education were urged to give consideration to student participation on university governing bodies. However, the results of the American Council survey revealed that in that year, only about 14 percent of all post-secondary institutions in the United States had students as members on their governing boards. According to Riley (1977, p. 243), by 1974, a study of student participation on governing boards of public colleges and universities showed that little change had taken place since 1972.

Jeffares (1971) studied student involvement in the governance of Alberta colleges. He concluded that students preferred a greater degree of participation in college governance than they had already had. They were interested in curricular matters, and policies affecting students; they expressed the least interest in activities which were purely administrative in nature.

By the mid 1970s, student participation in administrative decision-making had become generally accepted throughout the United States and Canada. Schlesinger and Baldridge (1982) contended that ever since the late 1970s, student influence over academic decisions had been exercised predominantly through formal participation on committees and other academic decision-making bodies in the United States (p. 9).

According to Schlesinger and Baldridge (1982), there were three major developments affecting student power in the United States during the eighties: formal student participation in campus government; student membership on trustee boards; and the growth of student lobbies at the national and state levels (p. 10). However, other research conducted in the early 1980s showed that the extent of student influence in the U. S. had declined due to the rising interest of students in careers and the increase in state control which removed some decisions from the institutions.

As would be expected, there were problems in student participation in institutional governance. For instance, Fellman (1970) noted that the lack of experience and knowledge limited student competence in decision-making (p. 7). Knock (1969) was doubtful about whether students would be responsible for the consequences of their own behavior (p. 7). He also believed that "accountability is allied with transience as students who were the legislators of policy, and may not have succeeded will not be on hand to rectify the situation" (p. 7). The above writers also mentioned immaturity and apathy as students' problems in their involvement; a large number of students did not want to spend time and energy in matters of governance. Moreover, students also encountered some problems and frustrations during their formal involvement in institutional governance. Riley (1977) identified three related issues resulting from attempts by students to engage in governance within the confines of traditional academic structures and procedures:

a) student participation and voting rights on governing boards and other key committees; b) state and federal student lobbies which, paradoxically, seem to be more effective than student participation at the local campus level; and c) the impact of academic collective bargaining and unionization on student participation in governance. (p. 242)

Regarding the impact of student participation in governance, Schlesinger and Baldridge (1982) observed:

Formal participation in committees and on governing boards simply has not made much difference to students. The student lobbies have opened up a whole area of action, especially since many of the critical decisions have shifted to the state level. The performance has yet to be fully tested. In short, new avenues for students' influence are simply not very strong, and student power seems to be a precarious issue. (p. 17)

Wood (1991) did a study in Canada on academic staff members, student and support staff participation in college governance. He found that faculty, student and support staff board members' participation in decision-making activities varied significantly from person to person because of personal factors such as ability, education, organizational knowledge, and interpersonal style. He concluded that institutional participation was demonstrated to be a feasible and desirable process for operationalizing the values of colleges and universities, and faculty, students, and support staff associations should

nominate their most effective members to boards to ensure that their interests would be advanced and respected.

In January 1993, an independent study group commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers presented a report on a study which it had conducted on university governance and accountability. The independent study group found that most universities had already recognized and provided for elected student representation on boards of governors and academic senates. They believed that students were able to make useful contributions to the academic discussions of all governing bodies. In general, however, regarding meetings, student senators and committee members were conspicuous by their absence. In addition, openness of boards of governors had, in many universities, been subverted by excessive rules of secrecy. Faculty and students were elected to the board, only to find that practically all the operations were declared confidential. They were unable to report back to their constituencies. Suggestions included strengthening student participation at the departmental and faculty levels, where most students function. All departments and faculties were encouraged to have procedures for the election of students to their departmental and faculty councils. Moreover, every university should have a documents policy, and the operating principle should be maximum openness. The CAUT study concluded that for the university to perform properly there must be an effective student government just as there must be an effective faculty association and unions to represent all the support staff.

Canadian Legislation

Forty-four Canadian university and college acts were examined by the researcher focusing on student representation on two major institutional governing bodies: the board of governors and the academic senate or academic council. The duties, rights, and terms of office of student members, as well as methods of selection also were noted.

The Alberta Universities Act, Alberta Colleges Act, British Columbia Universities Act, and British Columbia Colleges Act are applicable to all the universities and colleges in these two provinces; whereas, in Ontario, Quebec and other eastern provinces, each university or college has its own act. Some university and college acts were not readily available although efforts were made through interlibrary loan and other means. Therefore, relevant information provided by *Composition of Canadian Universities* (1975) was included as supplementary information in this review. The following are the findings of the review of 44 university and college acts (see Table 2.1).

Student Representation

Of the universities and colleges studied, 25 (out of 41) boards or equivalent governing bodies and 25 (out of 31) academic senates or academic councils have student representatives. That means some 60% of the boards or equivalent bodies and about 80% of the academic senates or academic councils have student representatives. Actually, the percentage could be higher because some acts present indefinite information regarding the composition of ten boards and eight academic senates by indicating that "such other members are appointed or selected as the board or the senate determined." Only four boards and senates definitely do not have student representatives. Thus it can be seen that student involvement in the governance of most Canadian universities and colleges has been accepted and formalized.

Duties and Responsibilities

According to all the university and college acts examined, student members on the board of governors and the academic senate or academic council have shared equal duties and responsibilities for institutional policy-making and problem-solving with their fellow members. Furthermore, they have full and equal voting rights with others serving on those governing bodies.

Table 2.1: The University and College Acts Examined

<i>Name of the Act</i>	<i>Year in which the Act was Last Amended</i>
Alberta Universities Act	1990
Alberta Colleges Act	1990
British Columbia Universities Act	1990
British Columbia Colleges and Institutes Act	1979
Brock University Act	1971
Carleton University Act	1969
Dalhousie University Act	1976
Huntington University Act	1971
Lakehead University Act	1965
McMaster University Act	1976
Montreal University Act	1967
Mount Allison University Act	1973
Mount Saint Vincent University Act	1988
New Brunswick College Act	1986
Quebec General and Vocational Colleges Act	1977
Saint Francis Xavier University Act	1986
Saint Mary's University Act	1982
Technical University of Nova Scotia Act	1989
The Memorial University of New Foundland Act	1989
The College of Fisheries Act (New Foundland)	1964
The Newfoundland Community Colleges Act	1987
Trent University Act	1963
University College of Cape Breton Act	1989
University De Moncton Act	1986

University of Guelph Act	1986
University of Laval Act	1970
University of Manitoba Act	1987
University of Moncton Act	1986
University of New Brunswick Act	1986
University of Ottawa Act	1965
University of Prince Edward Island Act	1988
University of Quebec Act	1977
University of Regina Act	1989
University of Saint Jerome's College Act	1986
University of Saskatchewan Act	1989
University of Sherbrook Act	1954
University of Toronto Act	1978
University of Quebec Act	1977
University of Waterloo Act	1972
University of Western Ontario Act	1988
Victoria University Act	1981
Wilfrid Laurier University Act	1973
Windsor University Act	1963
York University Act	1965

Selection of Representatives

Based on these university and college acts, there are primarily two ways to choose student representatives for major university and college governing bodies: a) they are elected by students of the university or college; b) they are appointed, nominated or

designated by student bodies of universities and colleges, or boards of governors, lieutenant governors in council, or academic senates.

In 16 out of 25 university or college boards of governors (64%) where there are student members, students are elected by students of the university or college; in 15 of 25 (60%) academic senates or academic councils, student members are elected by students. In seven boards of governors (28%) and four academic senates (16%), student members are appointed, nominated or designated by the student bodies of the university and college. In only two boards of governors (8%) and two senates (8%), student members are appointed by the board, the academic senate or the lieutenant governor in council. The way to choose student members is not indicated for two senates.

Terms of Office

The major difference between student members and other members on governing bodies is the term of office. Student members only have terms of office of one year. All non-student members normally have three-year terms of office.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that students have already formally participated in the governance of most Canadian universities and colleges. In some university or college acts, student involvement in the governance of the institute is not clearly indicated; vague expressions such as "the other persons are determined by the board or the senate" is used in quite a few acts, which made it difficult for the writer to obtain accurate related information. Student representatives are not on major governing bodies in some universities and colleges. Several approaches are adopted to choose student representatives for the institutional governing bodies; student representatives are basically chosen or elected by and from students, some appointed by university governing bodies or the lieutenant governor in council. Students have enjoyed equal rights and responsibilities as the other

members despite their shorter terms. However, the shorter terms of office for student members of the governing bodies may limit their role in the governance of their institutions. Furthermore, only the composition of boards of governors, academic senates, or other equivalent governing bodies is specified in the above acts; the composition of the governing bodies at the faculty and department levels is not reported. Finally, this review has only showed some general data on student involvement in major governing bodies of Canadian post-secondary institutions; there is no information on specific relevant practice.

Conceptual Model of the Study

A conceptual model was developed as the guide of the study (See Figure 2.1). In the model, there are three circles standing for the three main interest groups on any university campus. The central circle refers to the decision-making processes of any university. The two-way arrows between the central circle and the three circles show that members of all the three major interest groups of the academic community have formally participated in the university decision-making processes, and the participants can receive feedback during the processes. The two-way arrows between the circles standing for interest groups refer to informal interaction amongst interest groups during the decision-making processes. The actual effect of student participation depends on personal factors of individual participants and the factors of the environment. Finally, the arrow starting from the box representing the effect of student involvement to the central circle means that students will adjust their performance based on the overall effect of their involvement in decision-making.

The bases of the conceptual model, according to related literature and observations from two pilot studies for the research, are as follows. First, according to theories and models of university governance presented previously, students are, in reality, formally involved in university governance although the degree of their involvement may vary in

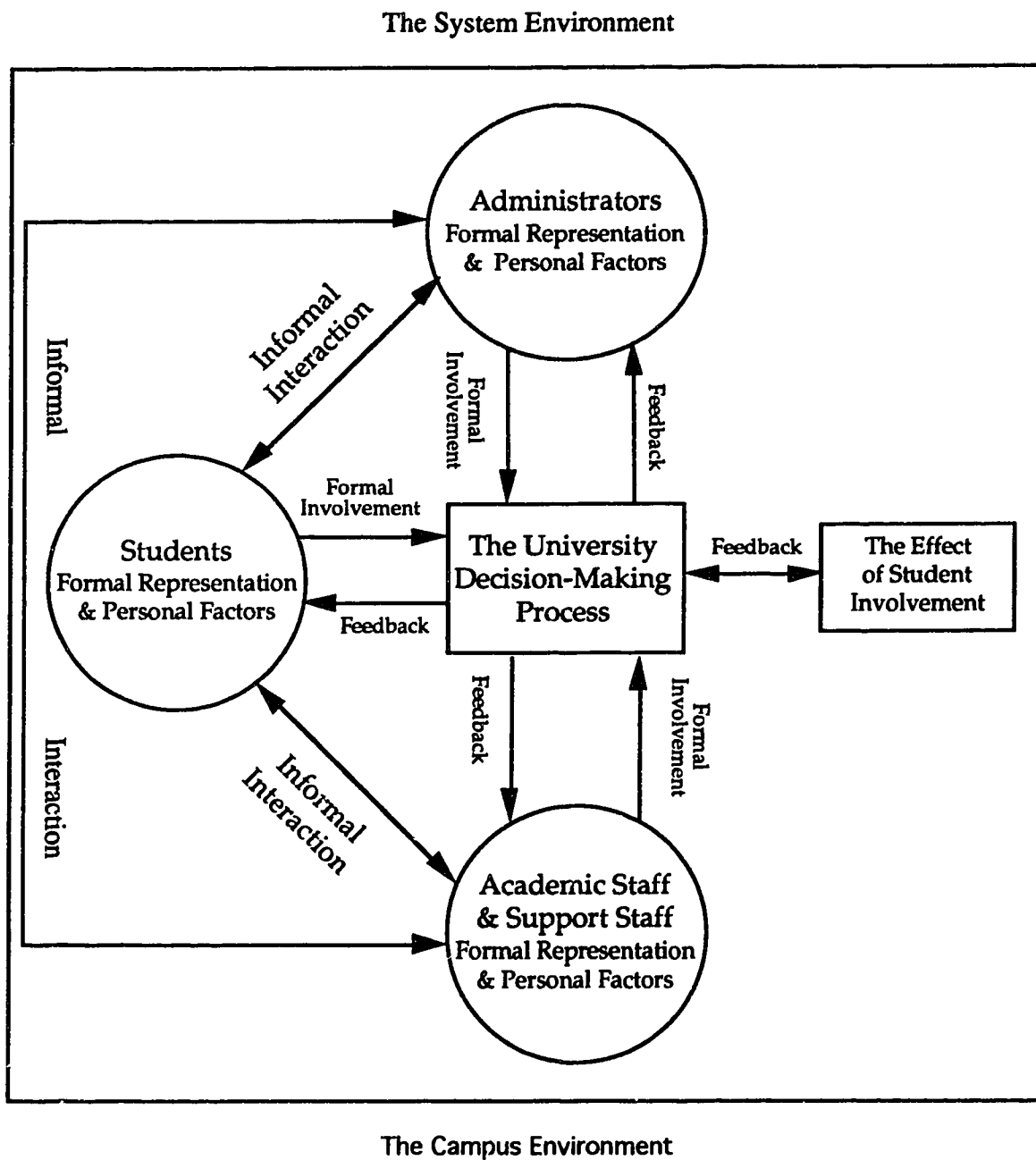


Figure 2.1: A Conceptual Model of Student Involvement in University Governance

different university settings. Moreover, based on the findings of previous research and observations of the pilot studies, informal interaction amongst different interest groups is actually an important part of the practice. There is constant informal interaction amongst different interest groups, and students have actively lobbied others to exert their influence on decisions trying to achieve what they are unable to achieve through their formal involvement. Furthermore, there are two major categories of factors affecting the effect of student involvement: personal factors such as leadership style, personalities, experience, interpersonal skills, knowledge and background information, and environmental factors and organizational factors. Finally, students in practice improve their involvement based on the feedback which can be obtained during their involvement. Thus, this conceptual model is virtually a summary of theories and practice concerning student involvement, and it was used in this study as a guide for the interview questions. To be specific, questions on the procedures of student involvement in the governance of the University, the impact of student involvement, factors influencing the impact and the actual effect of their involvement, and informal strategies and means used in their involvement were principal questions for the interviews.

Summary

The conceptual framework for this study is derived from the literature presented in this chapter and a conceptual model created by the writer that describes related student practice based on previous research and his pilot studies.

The process and style of decision-making are very important to any organization. The concepts and theories underlying participative decision-making and related student rights reflect the rationale of student participation in university governance. The four major models have been discussed; different dimensions of university governance are emphasized by each of them. Based on relevant practice with regard to university governance, each of the models only reflects part of the reality; none of them is complete. However, they are

complementary. All of them are useful because they help us understand university governance and participation from different perspectives. The strengths and weaknesses of each model have been analyzed.

Since the mid 1970s, student involvement in university governance has been widely accepted. Inhibiting factors included student apathy, transience, frequent absence from university committee meetings, limited knowledge and experience, the requirements of confidentiality, and the exclusion of students from sensitive decision issues. The effectiveness of student government was limited by personal factors. After the early 1980s, student participation in university governance declined, leaving some observers pessimistic about the future of student influence.

The findings of the review of Canadian university and college acts indicate that students have already formally participated in the governance of most Canadian universities and colleges. Students have enjoyed the same rights and responsibilities as the others on major university decision-making bodies. However, their term of office is, in most cases, only one year. The process of selecting students for university bodies is examined and reported. Moreover, only the composition of boards of governors and academic senates is specified in the above acts; the composition of the governing bodies at the faculty and departmental levels is not presented.

To conclude, the results of the writer's literature search demonstrate that there has been limited attention to student role in university governance in recent years. The related literature has mainly described research and practice in the universities and colleges of the United States during the late 1960s and around the mid 1970s. There has been no research conducted recently to analyze in a comprehensive manner the cruxes of related problems, and there has rarely been any detailed information on how students are specifically involved in the process. As students' indispensable role in university governance has been recognized, the current effects and problems as well as potentials of this practice are indeed worth studying.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter first presents a description of the research strategy and the theoretical justification for the approach. Then processes of data collection and data analysis, ethical considerations, and the procedures to ensure trustworthiness are presented. Two pilot studies conducted by the researcher in 1991 are also described.

Design of the Study

This is a descriptive and analytical study. The naturalistic and qualitative inquiry approach was employed. The rationale for selecting this approach is that quantitative techniques are generally seen as inadequate in describing cultural dynamics and human behavior. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), a qualitative study has four important characteristics: a) the direct data source is the natural setting where the main instrument is the researcher; b) descriptive data provide the basis for research; c) the focus of qualitative research is upon process; and d) induction is the mode of data analysis and "emerges from the bottom up" (p. 29).

Owens (1987) asserted that qualitative inquiry refers to the nature of the understanding that is sought; it seeks to understand human behavior and human experience from the actor's own frame of reference, not the frame of reference of the investigator (p. 181).

Borg and Gall (1983) believed that the interview situation usually permits the research worker to follow-up leads and thus obtain more data and clarity, and it also permits much greater depth than other methods of collecting research data (p. 436). Augmented by document analysis, the semi-structured interview was the major data-gathering technique for this research. The reason for adopting these two methods to collect data is that the convergence of the two allows for greater accuracy and more valid results. Researchers regard the combination of three methods, including some direct observations, in the study of the same phenomenon as triangulation. According to Jick (1983), the

advantage for using triangulation is "organizational researchers can improve the accuracy of their judgments by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon. Triangulation can also capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study" (cited in Maanen, J. V. 1983, pp. 135-136).

Data Collection

Interviews

According to Blumer (1969), researchers need to find participants who are acute observers and who are well informed (p. 41). Bailey (1982) stated that purposeful sampling is the strategy in which "the researcher uses his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study" (p. 99). Most of the interviewees were selected by the researcher utilizing the purposeful sampling technique on the basis of these people's involvement in the decision-making activities of the University governing bodies and student bodies in 1992-1993. Additionally, the researcher asked interviewees to recommend other potential interviewees who were likely to provide relevant information for the study, and two informants were chosen based on the recommendations of interviewees. One associate vice-president was designated to represent the senior administration of the University.

The researcher chose one faculty, the Faculty of Education, and two departments within this faculty to conduct the interviews at the faculty level and the departmental level. The Faculty of Education is one of the largest of this University, and the Education Students' Association (ESA) is one of the largest faculty student organizations on campus. Furthermore, the researcher himself had been studying at this faculty for several years and was therefore familiar with the environment, which made it easier for him to select interviewees by using purposeful sampling technique and to access pertinent documentary data.

In terms of data collection, first of all, preparations for the semi-structured interviews were made. A letter which explained the nature and significance of the research was sent to all the interviewees to seek their consent to be interviewed (see Appendix 1). Those who agreed were asked to sign a formal consent form (see Appendix 2). Thereafter the researcher contacted them concerning arrangements. In order to create an informal and relaxing atmosphere, the researcher told every interviewee to select the time and place for the interview. All the interviews with administrators and faculty members were conducted in their own offices. The researcher interviewed all the Executive members of the Students' Union in their offices in the Students' Union Building. The interviews with other students were conducted at the researcher's office.

Having considered the special features of each governing body or committee targeted for examination, different positions and characteristics of the interviewees, and the different focuses of the inquiry, the researcher prepared several sets of interview questions. All the interviewees were informed in advance that the information to be provided in the interviews would be kept confidential, and the tapes used for the interviews would be destroyed upon the completion of the researcher's dissertation. Permission to record the interview was sought before each interview started.

During the semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions developed from the research questions, the findings of the pilot studies and the literature search, together with some probing questions, were used as the interview guide (see Appendix 4). When answering the questions, the interviewees were invited to elaborate on the questions by giving examples and to provide additional information which was not addressed by the questions. Each interview normally lasted for approximately one hour. All the interviews were taped.

The researcher interviewed altogether thirty-one people. Of these interviewees, 19 were students, six were administrators, five were faculty members, and one was a community member. 13 students represented three student organizations of this university

and six were students at large sitting on various university governing bodies. Among these student informants, three sat on the Board of Governors, two on the Senate, four from the General Faculties Council, the other three from important respective committees of either the Board of Governors or the General Faculties Council and the rest sat on the Council of Faculty of Education and the department councils or equivalent bodies of the two departments within the Faculty of Education.

All of the above interviewees were asked questions relating to student participation in the administrative decision-making activities of the University. At the institutional level, two senior administrators, one community member representing the Senate (also a member of the Board), one faculty member, and 13 students on major University governing bodies were interviewed. Two administrators and two students representing ESA and sitting on the Council of Faculty of Education were interviewed at the faculty level. Two administrators, four faculty members, and four students sitting on departmental councils and committees were interviewed at the departmental level (See Table 3.1). It should be noted that some interviewees, including faculty members and students, sat on different governing bodies at both institutional and departmental levels. Therefore, they were able and were actually requested to provide information concerning their involvement in decision-making activities of the University at different levels.

With reference to student government, the researcher asked 13 student executive members from the three student organizations: Students' Union (SU), GSA (The Graduate Students' Association), and Education Students' Association (ESA) relevant questions. Five of these students were Executive members of SU; six were Executive members of GSA and two were Executive members of ESA. The other interviewees, including the administrators and faculty members and the community member as well as the two undergraduate students at large sitting on two institutional bodies, were also requested to tell their perceptions of the governance of the student organizations. The four graduate

Table 3.1
Categories and Numbers of Participants in Interviews

Category	Number
<i>At Institutional Level</i>	
Administrators	2
Academic Staff member	1
Community member	1
Representatives of SU	5
Representatives of GSA	6
Students at large	2
<i>At faculty level</i>	
Administrators	2
Representatives of ESA	2
<i>At departmental level</i>	
Administrators	2
Academic staff members	4
Graduate students at large	4
Total Participants	31

students at large on departmental decision-making bodies were only asked questions relating to their role in the administrative decision-making processes. All the data collected through the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and edited by the researcher. The transcripts were numbered in order to preserve anonymity. The researcher returned a copy of the interview transcript to each of the 31 interviewees for their examination and revision,

together with an accompanying letter requesting them to give their permission for the researcher to quote some statements from the interviews in his dissertation (see appendix 3). Eighteen interviewees returned their copies with comments and suggestions regarding revisions. One interviewee requested that the researcher paraphrase his statements during the interview. One participant made major changes in the transcript by systematically elaborating her views on certain issues. All the other informants allowed the researcher to quote whatever they said during the interviews. The researcher also took notes during the interviews to follow up on their requests.

Documentary Data

The researcher examined the minutes of meetings of selected University governing bodies at different levels with the intent of validating and supplementing the data collected from the interviews. Some major institutional governing bodies were contacted first so as to get their permission to access certain minutes of meetings and related documents. The researcher experienced a 40-day waiting period until he was finally permitted to read the confidential part of the minutes of the Board of Governors and the minutes of the Academic Development Committee (ADC) and the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC), the two important standing committees of the General Faculties Council (GFC).

The researcher examined the minutes of the Board of Governors, GFC and the Senate and some of their respective committees. At the faculty level, the minutes of Faculty of Education Council were examined. At the departmental level, the researcher read the minutes of the councils of the two departments and some important departmental committees, as well as related documents of the University attached to the above-mentioned minutes. The minutes of the Students' Union Council, the GSA Council, the ESA Council, official correspondence between organizations, newsletters, brochures, and student newspapers, *Gateway* and *Currents*, were also carefully examined.

Some University divisions allowed the researcher to photocopy minutes, while some governing bodies such as the Board of Governors, ADC, and PPC only permitted the researcher to read the minutes in their offices. The researcher took reading notes throughout the whole process, identifying possible themes, and writing down important content of themes for data analysis.

Direct Observations

In addition to the interviews and examination of documentation, the researcher observed two GFC meetings, two GSA Council meetings and two SU Council meetings in order to obtain personal perceptions of how students interact with administrators and others during the University committee meetings and how the executive members of student organizations communicate and interact with student representatives from different faculties and departments in students' council meetings. The researcher took notes during these meetings and was even involved in voting at one GSA Council meeting as the proxy for one graduate student councilor who was unable to attend the meeting. Despite the fact that the researcher only attended a limited number of meetings, direct observations helped him get some sense of how students participated in student government and in the University decision-making activities and also provided him an opportunity to perceive the impact of students during the University committee meetings. Moreover, the researcher directly observed the procedures of those meetings as well as the interaction among representatives of different interest groups during the meetings. Through such observations, the researcher perceived the dynamics of student participation, which is reported in the following chapters.

Pilot Studies

The researcher conducted two pilot studies in 1991-1992. The purposes of the pilot studies were to test the validity of data collection techniques to be utilized in the research, to

identify problems such as difficulties and ambiguities in question items for the research, and to help the researcher estimate the cost of the research. Most important of all, the researcher intended to gain some experience for a qualitative study.

Pilot study I attempted to understand the students' role in the decision-making process of a specific University division, the University of Alberta Student Services. The researcher initially conducted four interviews. The interviewees included the chief administrator of the Student Services, one undergraduate student representative on the Council on Student Life (COSL), another student services professional on COSL who was in charge of one section of the Student Services and one vice-president of GSA. Additionally, the researcher interviewed a former president of SU regarding his perceptions of the students' role in the University Student Services. The interview tapes were transcribed, and the data were categorized and analyzed by the researcher.

The results of pilot study I indicated that both the administrator and student informants thought student involvement in decision-making of the University Student Services is significant and necessary since clients' satisfaction is key in student services, and students' opinions should account for anything related. Yet, according to the student informants, their influence on the decision-making processes of the University Student Services was not as great as it should be due to such reasons as limited student representation on related committees, students' apathy, lack of pertinent information for students during their participation, and biases against student involvement. In their practice, student organizations tried various informal means to exert their influence upon student-related decisions, including lobbying administrators and others. Student informants believed that the University Student Services should be more student centered as students' opinions are indispensable. Most of the informants held that administrators and students ought to work together to improve services for students on this campus. Student bodies should do more to involve students and improve the effectiveness of their organizations. Most of the informants deemed that students themselves ought to show

through their actions that they are responsible and capable people, and they can contribute well to student services. Administrators have a role in facilitating students' involvement in decision making of the Student Services by providing more pertinent information, bringing issues to students at an earlier stage, and training students to play a better role in related activities.

Pilot study II intended to get a general understanding of students' role in the governance of the University at the institutional level. Three interviews were conducted for the study with one former president of the University of Alberta, one former SU president and the SU President currently in office, and Vice-President (Internal) of GSA. In addition, the researcher recorded one session of a graduate course Educational Administration 605 named *Issues in University Governance* in which two former student leaders of the Students' Union made a presentation on students' role in the governance of the University. The interviews were conducted in accordance with the requirements of interview techniques, and the researcher paid adequate attention to ethical considerations and other related problems. All the interview tapes were transcribed and the findings categorized and analyzed by the researcher.

The responses of the interviewees revealed that student participation in the governance of the University is a significant research topic; the research findings may be of value to either administrators or student organizations as well as students at large. According to the results of the study, although students were extensively involved in the decision-making processes, their formal influence was limited due to their limited representation, lack of experience, related knowledge and background information, inadequate support of the administration, prejudices against students' involvement, the issue of students' representation, and the ineffectiveness of the student organizations. The findings also indicated that students used various informal means to exert their influence on decisions. Student informants felt that student involvement in decision-making at the departmental level and the faculty level was disappointing mainly because of the difficulty

in finding enough students who were willing to be involved. Most of the participants believed that the University administrators and faculty members could play an important role in facilitating students' participation in decision-making by providing some assistance. However, student organizations ought to consider how to encourage more capable students to be involved and how to improve their participation strategies, including organization of related activities and communication with both the administration and students so as to make their involvement in the governance of the University more effective.

The findings of the two pilot studies displayed similar results even though the interviews were conducted at different levels. The results provided the researcher with some useful information and invaluable insights for the main study. The researcher acquired some knowledge and experience for a qualitative inquiry, as expected. The contents of the interview questions were tested and modified afterwards based on the relevant findings. The interviewees who participated in the two pilot studies were not involved in the formal research.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was utilized to analyze the data collected from the interviews, the selected minutes of meetings, related documents, brochures, official correspondence between organizations, and student newspapers. The researcher followed the inductive approach of content analysis method (Berg, 1989) which requires that a) major meaningful themes and categories be defined; b) trial themes be developed and themes be reformulated if necessary; and c) all relevant data be carefully examined before findings, relationships and patterns are determined. The coding system developed by the researcher was influenced by the following statements of Bogdan and Biklen (1982): "Developing a coding system involves several steps: You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories" (p. 156).

During data analysis, the researcher categorized the data based on the research questions and the contents of the data. A draft coding system was first developed through reading transcripts, minutes of meetings, and other documents to identify possible codes and categories. Then the data were carefully read, coded, and included in relevant topical sections. After all the interview transcripts were verified, revised, and augmented by the informants, the researcher began to include additional information, create new categories as they did not fit into existing categories, identify and code new topics, and revise the established ones till the final version of the coding system was completed.

Trustworthiness

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) posited that the major concern of researchers in qualitative studies is that the data are comprehensive and accurate. They believed that "qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study rather than the literal consistency across different observations" (p. 44). Lincoln and Guba (1985) thought that the umbrella concept of trustworthiness includes four criteria: 1) credibility - the results reflect the social world being studied, 2) transferability - the findings are applicable in other same or similar situations, 3) dependability - the findings could be replicated with the same or similar participants and contexts, and 4) confirmability - the outcomes mirror the social phenomena rather than personal perspectives of the researcher. The above statements guided the researcher in his design of the research, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation.

First of all, the researcher made adequate preparations for the research. The interview questions were tested previously in the pilot studies and were revised according to the effect of the studies. Through the pilot studies, the researcher also practiced necessary techniques for data collection and analysis.

Several things were done by the researcher to ensure credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of this research. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks should be considered by researchers to ensure credibility. In this study, all the interview transcripts were examined, revised, and augmented by the interviewees. Additionally, the researcher phoned some interviewees asking them to clarify specific statements that they made in the interviews. When transcribing the interviews, the researcher listened to and reviewed the tapes carefully and discussed with his peer students some related issues when necessary. Moreover, the researcher and his supervisor met regularly to talk about the existing and potential problems in the research. Some of the researcher's fellow Ph.D. students were invited to comment on the researcher's analysis of the data to ensure a relatively objective reflection of those data. After the sorting process was completed, all the interview transcripts, minutes of meetings, and documents were reviewed and recorded to make sure they were consistent between and within topics.

Triangulation of data was given special attention during the research. Data from the interviews were integrated and cross-checked with data from the University documents, minutes of meetings of University governing bodies and student organizations, newsletters, brochures, correspondence between different organizations, and student newspapers as well as those confirmed by direct observations. Administrators, faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students, and one representative of community members were involved in the research although they played different roles in the governance of the University. The comparisons of their perspectives with reference to student involvement in the governance of the University also comprised a triangulation of different views. Quotations from the interviews are included in the dissertation to directly reflect perspectives of students at large as well as participants from each interest group.

In order to establish transferability of the research, thick description was used by the researcher. Efforts were made to describe the specific context or the environment in

which students participated in both the governance of the University and the student government. Factors affecting the impact and effect of student involvement were also analyzed. The study has provided a sufficient data base so that other researchers can decide whether the findings are related to other similar situations.

Another criterion of maintaining the trustworthiness of this research relates to dependability. The appropriateness of all the inquiry decisions and methodological design are identified, explicated, and supported as described in this dissertation. In addition, dependability of the data requires that sufficient data be acquired for grounded findings. All the documents, minutes of meetings, interview transcripts and notes, as well as other materials have been dated and retained. An audit trail was established to permit other people to examine the procedures of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The findings in the following chapters were examined by the researcher's supervisory committee members and some of his peer students. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final chapters.

Confirmability of the study was enhanced by emphasizing recorded data and using appropriate referencing mechanisms. The interview tapes were carefully listened to and repeatedly reviewed to ensure accuracy of meanings of the statements in the tapes. Various perceptions of different people relating to the same issue and different kinds of rich data sources were triangulated to ensure confirmability. A consistent coding process was maintained by the researcher. Finally, the appropriateness of category labels, quality of inferences based on the data collected, and analytic techniques used in the research were carefully examined by the researcher's supervisor, some informants, and Ph.D. students.

To summarize, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research were ensured by choosing adequate, proper and verifiable sources, describing in detail the contexts or the environment of the research problem as well as relevant influential factors, employing member checks, peer debriefing, triangulation of both data sources and research methods, and establishing audit trails.

Ethical Considerations

Several important things pertinent to ethical considerations for the research have been ensured. First of all, the researcher got permission to conduct the research through necessary and appropriate administrative channels. Secondly, the interviewees were clearly informed of the details of the interview, the significance and content of the research, as well as the research methods to be used by the researcher. All of these interviewees gave voluntary consent to their participation in the research. Thirdly, the researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of all the responses. Sources were identified only with permission. Fourthly, this study followed the ethical guidelines set by GFC, and the research plan was examined by the Ethics Review Committee of Department of Educational Policy Studies. Fifthly, after the interviews, the researcher sent a letter of thanks accompanied by a copy of each interview transcript to every interviewee for verification. The consent of all the interviewees was sought in order that the researcher could quote certain statements from the transcripts in his thesis. Specific requests by some interviewees concerning how to quote their statements were taken into consideration. Finally, the researcher has paid adequate attention to descriptions in his research analysis to avoid any potential for injury of participants.

Summary

This study attempted to provide an in-depth picture of the process, scope, and effect of student involvement in the governance of the University of Alberta. A qualitative study approach was selected to achieve this goal. The conceptual model developed by the researcher and literature review guided him in designing the interview questions. In preparation for the research, two pilot studies were conducted, and the researcher practiced certain necessary techniques for a qualitative inquiry and revised some research questions based on the results.

The semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was chosen as the primary technique of data collection. The researcher conducted 31 interviews with students and the representatives of other major interest groups on campus. Related University documents, official correspondence and minutes of meetings of some of the University governing bodies at different levels, student newspapers, minutes of meetings and documents of student organizations were examined. The researcher also attended several General Faculties Council meetings and students' council meetings to observe the dynamics of participants, including students.

All the interview recordings were transcribed and edited by the researcher and verified and revised by the participants. The data collected were analyzed using a topical coding system derived from the research problems and the contents of the interview transcripts. Specific measures were taken to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research. The researcher followed the pertinent University ethics guidelines.

CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

This chapter, concerning the governance of the University of Alberta, is mainly descriptive and is derived from the Alberta Universities Act, various policy manuals and brochures of the University, constitutions and bylaws provided by the student organizations, and the student newspaper, *Gateway*. The information from the above sources is combined with relevant findings from the interviews.

The Alberta Universities Act (1990) states:

For each university there shall be a students' union to provide for the administration of the affairs of the students at the university, including the development and management of student institutions, the development and enforcement of a system of student law and the promotion of the general welfare of students consistent with the purposes of the university (43(1)) When a university has a faculty of graduate studies, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may incorporate a graduate student association for the university, with any name he considers appropriate, to provide for the administration of the affairs of the graduate students and the promotion of the general welfare of the graduate students consistent with purposes of the university (43(5)).

Therefore, there are two major components in terms of the governance of the University:

1) the University administrative decision-making bodies in charge of all the administrative affairs and operations of the University, and 2) the student government that takes charge of an important part of student affairs on campus. The two components are presented separately in this chapter. The information to be introduced includes responsibilities, compositions, terms of office, and organizational structure of the major University governing bodies at the institutional, faculty, and departmental levels, as well as the interrelationships among them. Student representation on various University bodies and how students were chosen to sit on these bodies were examined. The procedures to reach decisions by the University governing bodies, as well as the communication channels between the administration and students are reported. The organizational structure, composition, operations, decision-making procedures, and responsibilities of three student organizations at the University, and their major functions on campus are also presented. .

A model to describe the governance of the University and to explain the interrelationships among the University governing bodies, as well as the relationship between them and the student government is presented (Figure 4.1). As indicated, there is a hierarchical relationship between the University governing bodies at different levels, whereas, such relationship does not exist among the three student organizations.

The Administrative Decision-Making Bodies

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is the University's ultimate governing body which is responsible for the conduct and management of the institution's property, revenue, business, and affairs. The Board reports to the provincial government. In 1992-1993, there were altogether 19 members on the Board. The *ex officio* members were the Chairman of the Board, the Chancellor, and the President of the University. The other members included eight members representative of the general public appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, eight members appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education include one member of the Senate nominated from its members, two academic staff nominated by the General Faculties Council, two alumni nominated by the University Alumni Association, one graduate student nominated by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), and two undergraduate students nominated by the Students' Union (SU). There was one member of the support staff sitting on the Board as an observer.¹ All the Board members held office for a term not exceeding three years, except student members who held office for a term of one year.

¹Following 1992-1993, the Act was changed to include a full member as the representative of the support staff.

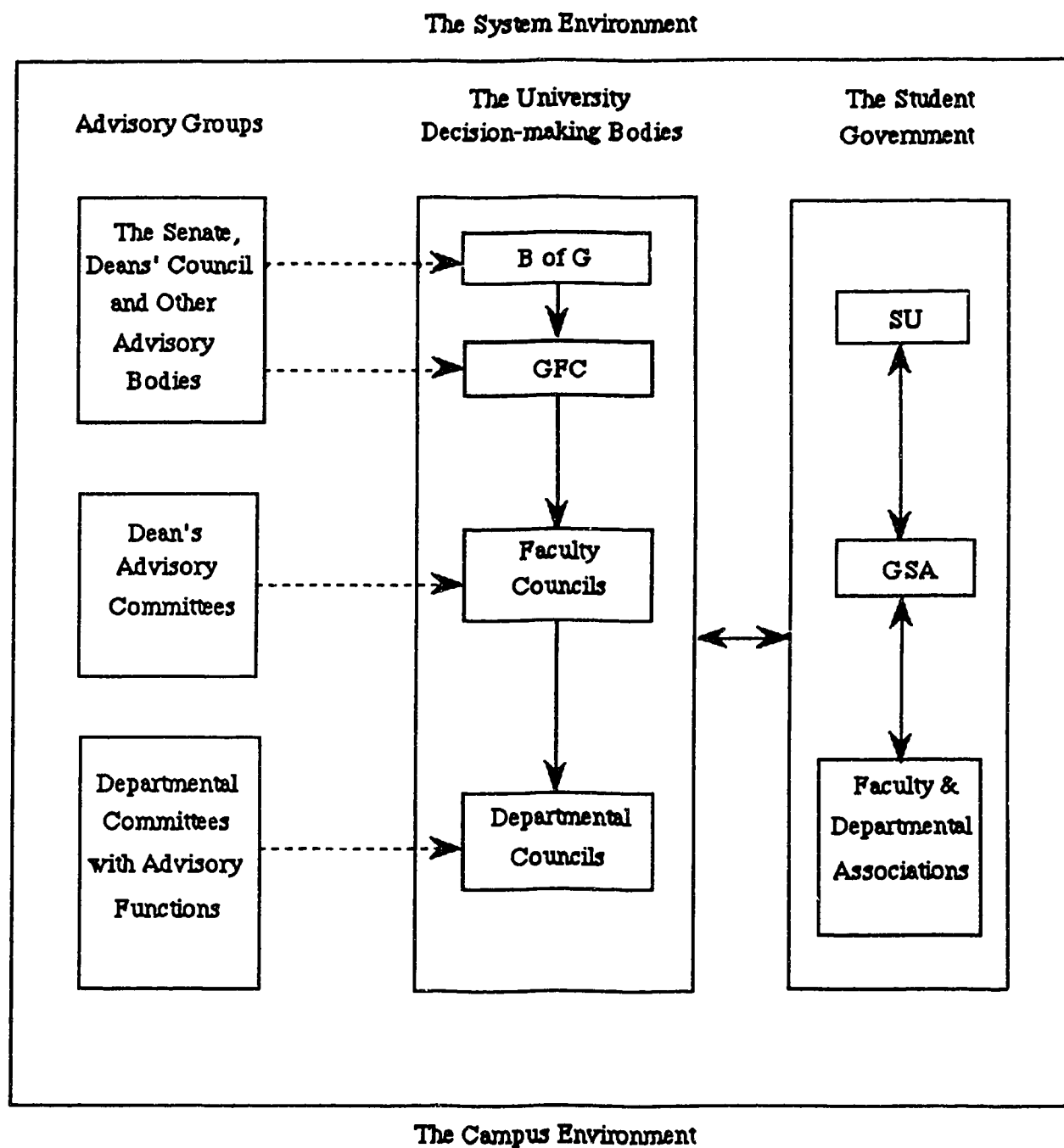


Figure 4.1: A Descriptive Model of the Governance of the University of Alberta

During 1992-1993, much of the work of the Board of Governors was conducted through its five standing committees: 1) the Academic Affairs and Human Resources Committee (AAHRC), 2) the Finance Committee (FC), 3) the Audit Committee, 4) the Investment Committee, and 5) the Compensation Committee. In addition, the Board also had the Nominating Committee which dealt with appointments to various Board committees, the Board/City Liaison Committee, the Board/Chamber Liaison Committee, the Negotiating Committees, and the Agreement Review Committee.

Of the above committees, the two major standing committees, the Finance Committee that dealt with the finance affairs of the University and AAHRC which handled matters relating to educational, academic, and human resources affairs of the University, were examined in the study. They were also the only two standing committees with student representation during the 1992-1993 academic year. The membership of the two committees varies every year, depending on the preferences of the Chairman of the Board and the requirement for expertise. In 1992-1993, the *ex officio* members of the Finance Committee included the President and the Chairman of the Board as the chair of the committee. There were seven other members appointed by the Chairman of the Board, namely the President of GSA and SU, two public members, one academic staff member, and the rest were non-academic staff members. The University President, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chancellor were *ex officio* members of AAHRC. In addition, there were seven members appointed by the Chairman of the Board, namely one academic staff member, the President of GSA, one undergraduate student-at-large member, two public members, and the rest were non-academic staff members. The term of office for the student members on the two committees was one year, while the other members held office for a term of three years.

The General Faculties Council

The General Faculties Council (GFC) is the University's highest academic governing body, and it is responsible for all the academic affairs of the University, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors. This Council is chaired by the President of the University. Any recommendations from GFC to the Board are transmitted to the Board through the President.

The *ex officio* members on GFC are the President and the vice-presidents of the University, the dean of each faculty, the director of each school, the Chief Librarian, and the Registrar. There are also elected full-time academic staff members from every faculty or school council, the members appointed by student organizations, and other appointed members. In 1992-1993, GFC had 153 members, among whom there were 27 *ex officio* members, 54 elected staff, three statutory students (the President and the Vice-President Academic of SU and the President of GSA), 15 appointed members, 41 undergraduate students from different faculties appointed by the Council of SU and 13 graduate students-at-large appointed by the Council of GSA. All the GFC members held office for a term of three years except student members who held office for a term of one year.

GFC organizes responsibilities through its 15 standing committees. They are 1) the GFC Executive Committee, 2) the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC), 3) the Academic Development Committee (ADC), 4) the Nominating Committee, 5) the Facilities Development Committee (FDC), 6) the Committee on Admission, Academic Standing and Transfer, 7) the Council on Student Life (COSL), 8) the University Computing Advisory Group, 9) the Committee for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning, 10) the Undergraduate Teaching Awards Committee, 11) the Campus Law Review Committee, 12) the Library Committee, 13) the Special Sessions Committee, 14) the Undergraduate Awards and Scholarships Committee, and 15) Teaching Evaluation, Teaching Awards and Teaching Committee (CITL). Three important GFC standing committees, the Executive, PPC, and ADC, were examined in this research, and are presented below.

The GFC Executive Committee is the executive body of GFC, and it generally carries out the functions delegated by GFC. This committee is chaired by the President of the University. Its *ex officio* members include the Vice-President Academic and the Registrar of the University, as well as the Presidents of SU and GSA. In the 1992-1993 academic year, there were eight members elected by GFC, including one undergraduate student representative, and academic staff representatives from some faculties. The student members only held office for a term of one year, whereas, the term of office for the other members was three years.

PPC makes recommendations to the Board and/or GFC concerning policy and action relating to a) comprehensive planning for the University, b) the establishment of priority ratings for special programs, new academic programs or units, and/or expansion of existing academic programs, c) the termination of existing academic programs, d) the establishment of faculty positions and enrollment quotas, e) the development of the capital budget and the operating budget, f) the planning and use of physical facilities, and g) parking facilities and transportation. Additionally, the committee has delegated authority from GFC to consider preliminary or in-depth proposals for major academic and facilities development, and to receive and discuss recommendations from the University President regarding reports prepared by the unit review committees. In 1992-1993, PPC had six *ex officio* members, including the President of the University as the chair, the Vice President Academic, Vice-President Research, Vice-President Finance and Administration of the University, and the Presidents of SU and GSA. There were nine academic staff members elected by GFC. The term of office for the two student members was one year, and the other members three years.

ADC makes recommendations to GFC, PPC or to FDC concerning policy matters and action matters with respect to a) the development of academic programs, b) the establishment of new academic units or the termination of existing ones, c) the establishment of faculty positions involving external funding, and d) the development of

enrollment quotas, existing and proposed. Moreover, the Committee is empowered by GFC to initiate studies, and to respond to requests for studies, opinions, and information. In 1992-1993, *ex officio* members of ADC were the University Vice-President Academic as the Chair, the Vice-President Research as Vice-Chair, and the Vice-Presidents Academic of SU and GSA. There were five faculty members elected by GFC. All the members of ADC held office for a term of three years except the two student members whose term office was only one year.

In addition to the above three standing committees, students were actually involved in all the rest of the GFC standing committees. The student members on those committees were either representatives appointed by their organizations, or students-at-large elected by GFC. Student representation on those committees varied depending on the nature of the committee and expertise required. It can be concluded that students were thoroughly involved in GFC and its standing committees.

Faculty Councils

There were 19 faculties and schools at U of A in 1992-1993. They were the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Dentistry, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Extension, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the Faculty of Home Economics, the Faculty of Law, the School of Library and Information Studies, the Faculty of Medicine, the School of Native Studies, the Faculty of Nursing, the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, Faculte Saint-Jean, and the Faculty of Science. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research as a unique faculty is the faculty of all the graduate students, which tries through its efforts to ensure that all the graduate students receive a top-quality education, and to look after their special needs and circumstances.

Each faculty has a faculty council, which has a number of standing committees to coordinate its work. Subject to the control of GFC, a faculty council is empowered to determine the programs of study in any branch of learning for instruction in which the faculty is established. Deans of faculties report directly to the Vice-President Academic of the University. Every faculty council consists of the dean of the faculty, the President of the University, all the full-time academic staff of the faculty, and members appointed by a professional association and the students' association of the faculty. The Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (CFGSR) as a special faculty has the following *ex officio* members: the Dean of the Faculty as the chair, the President of the University, the Vice-President Research, Associate Deans, the Graduate Registrar, the Administrative Officer (Secretary), the Registrar, the Directors of Libraries, Chair, Ph.D. in Medical Sciences Committee, and Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals Committee. There are additional members. In 1992-1993, according to the GFC policy manual, CFGSR had one full-time academic staff member from each of the 75 departments with graduate programs, and 20 graduate representatives elected by and from GSA.

In 1992-1993, there were 175 members on the Council of the Faculty of Education based on the records of the Office of the Faculty. The *ex officio* members were the Dean, the President of the University, and all the academic staff members of the Faculty. Additional members included one representative from each of ten other faculties, one representative from the University Education Library, one representative from the Alberta Teachers' Association, the President and Vice-President Academic of ESA appointed by and from ESA, and one graduate student representative appointed by and from GSA. All the faculty council members held office for a term of three years except the student members who held office for a term of one year.

The Council of the Faculty of Education had the following standing committees in 1992-1993: the Academic Appeals Committee (AAC), the Advisory Selection Committee (ASC), the Committee on Curriculum and Program Review and Approval (CCPRA), the

Executive Committee, the Faculty Teaching Awards Committee (FTAC), the Nominating Committee, the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC), the Salaries and Promotions Committee (SPC), the Scholarship and Research Awards Committee (RERC), the Tenure Committee, the Advisory Committee, Center for International Education and Development, the College Liaison Committee, the Equality and Respect Committee, the Field Experiences Coordinating Committee (FECC), the Coutts Library Committee, the Instructional Technology Center Advisory Committee (ITCAC), the Joint Practicum Committee (JPC), the Staff Travel Fund, and the Timetable and Registration Committee (TAC). Students were involved in four of them in 1992-1993, which were AAC, CCPRA, FTAC, and JPC. These committees consisted largely of academic staff, support staff, and students. AAC had fifteen members; seven of them were ESA representatives. CCPRA had thirteen members, and there was only one ESA representative. FTAC had six members; one of them was the President of ESA. JPC had one ESA representative among its eighteen members. Furthermore, one *ad hoc* committee, the Assessment of Teaching Committee, had two students, including one from ESA and the other from GSA among its twelve members. The above student representatives were appointed by ESA and GSA. Student members of the above committees held office for a term of one year, while the other members held office for a term of three years.

Departmental Councils

Every department within a faculty has a departmental council or an equivalent body. Department councils are empowered to work on their budgets and programs within their disciplines. Department chairs are normally chairs of department councils. They report directly to the dean of the faculty, and they are responsible to the dean for the satisfactory performance of the work of the department. Each department council is made up of the Department Chair, the Dean of the Faculty, all the continuing academic staff, members appointed by the Faculty Council on the recommendation of the Department Council, and

representatives of both undergraduate and graduate students. The exact numbers of student representatives are determined by the Faculty Council on recommendation from the Department Council. In addition, each department has some standing committees to organize and coordinate its work.

In terms of the composition of the two departmental councils examined in the study during the 1992-1993 academic year, based on the record of the Department Office, the Council of Department A consisted of 32 academic staff members, one representative appointed by and from ESA, and one graduate student representative elected by the graduate students within the department. The Graduate Coordinating Committee and the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee were the only two standing committees of the Council that involved students. The other four standing committees were the Ethics Committee, the Field Experience Committee, the Special Sessions Committee, and the Social and Benevolent Committee. On the Graduate Coordinating Committee, there were five members, including four academic staff members and one graduate student representative elected by the graduate students of the department. The Undergraduate Coordinating Committee had five academic staff members.

The Council of Department B had 18 academic staff members and four graduate student representatives, including two masters students and two Ph.D. students, who were elected by the graduate students within the department. Department B had three standing committees: the Course and Program Review Committee, the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC), and the Nominations Committee. Student representatives were involved in the Planning and Priorities Committee, and three of the 12 administrative committees of the department: the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC), the Orientation Committee (OC), and the Communications Committee (CC). There were six members on PPC; two of them were graduate student representatives. USC had 11 members, including one undergraduate student representative appointed by ESA and one graduate representative. CC had four graduate student representatives among its eleven members. There were eight

academic staff members and one graduate representative on OC. The graduate student representatives on these bodies were all elected by the graduate students of the department. All the student members of the above-mentioned departmental bodies held office for a term of one year; the other members held office for a term of three years.

Advisory Bodies

The Senate

The mandate of the Senate is to act as a bridge between the University and the public. The Community and the University exchange points of view through the Senate. Chaired by the Chancellor of the University, the Senate is, to a large extent, an advisory body. It has the power to require a report from any part of the University, and it may also receive and consider submission from any member of the public. The Alberta Universities Act states: "It is the duty of the senate to inquire into any matter that might tend to enhance the usefulness of the university" (Section 12(1), Chapter U-5). Additionally, the Senate provides a forum in which issues and concerns about post-secondary education in Alberta may be debated.

The Senate members include the following *ex officio* members: the Chancellor of the University as the Chairman, the President of the University, one senior vice-president of the University, the chief academic officer for student affairs, the Dean of Faculty of Extension, the President and Vice-President of the University Alumni Association. There are also appointed members. In 1992-1993, they were two deans appointed by and from the Deans' Council, two members appointed by and from the Board of Governors, three members appointed by and from GFC, two members appointed by and from the Alumni Association, nine members of the public appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education, four members appointed by and from the SU Council, one member appointed by and from the GSA Council, and two non-academic staff members appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education. In addition, the Senate had 30 members of the public elected by the

members of the Senate to represent affiliated colleges or institutions, geographical areas and groups, and organizations with an interest in the University.

The work of the Senate is coordinated by an executive officer and support staff. The Senate has six standing committees: the Executive Committee, the Finance and Evaluation Committee, the Honorary Degrees Committee, the Inquiry and Planning Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Public Relations and Community Affairs Committee. Students were involved in all the above committees in 1992-1993. The Vice-President External of SU and Vice-President External of GSA were on the Executive Committee as *ex officio* members, and SU appointed one of its representatives on each of the other five standing committees. The term of office for other senators was three years, while student senators held office for one year.

Other Advisory Bodies

There are other advisory bodies at various levels. At the institutional level, the Deans' Council comprised of the President, all the vice-presidents, and all the deans acts as an advisory body to the President, the Board, and GFC. The President's Advisory Committee of Department Chairs, that is made up of all the department chairs, and the Administrative Council, which consists of the Vice-President Finance and Administration as the chair, and all the directors of non-teaching units, advises the President regarding academic and non-academic affairs. In addition, all the vice-presidents of the University have their own advisory committees. At the faculty level, most deans have a number of advisory committees, including dean's advisory committees, which are comprised of people from both within the University and from the community. There are also committees with advisory functions at the departmental level which provide advice to the department chairs and the departmental councils with regard to various kinds of problems faced by the departments. These committees are made up of academic staff members of their departments and others. Among the advisory bodies at different levels, only the

Senate and some departmental committees with advisory functions have involved students. Student members on these advisory committees, like the students on the University decision-making bodies, hold office for a term of one year, while the others can hold office for a term not exceeding three years.

Decision-Making Procedures

According to the researcher's observations, procedures to reach decisions by the University governing bodies at different levels in the 1992-1993 academic year were similar. At the institutional and faculty levels, there was usually an agenda given to every member, together with the copies of documents and some background information, prior to the committee meeting. The decision-making procedures normally included motions, seconds, discussions, and formal vote-taking, which were based on the Robert's Rules of Order. At the departmental level, the two department councils examined were largely committee based. Essentially, members of the committees brought proposals or concerns for committee consideration. The committee could also be asked by the council to identify an issue, to work at gathering information, including comments concerning the issue, and to keep the council informed over a period of time. Then the committee handed in formal recommendations for the issue to the council. Ultimately, the council would look at the motion, discuss it and vote on it. In general, the decision-making procedures at the institutional and the faculty levels were more formal as the size of the committees at higher levels increased, and the committees addressed more important issues. The decision-making procedures of the councils of the two departments, as the smallest academic units, were comparatively less formal. However, the governing bodies at the three levels all followed the Robert's Rules of Order when addressing important decisions in their organizational meetings.

Communication between the Administration and Students

In 1992-1993, at the institutional level, the council of each student organization was the official medium between the students whom the student organization represented and the University administration, outside government organizations, and the community. Additionally, one major task for the executive members of student organizations was to keep the administrators, academic staff members and others both on and outside campus informed of students' concerns. As the minutes of the major University governing bodies showed, they reported in meetings to the administration and others about the latest information on students' problems, what student organizations were doing for students, and what still needed to be done to meet the needs of students. Student representatives on other University committees also made similar reports during their committee meetings. Moreover, the President of the University had his annual visit to the Students' Council hearing concerns and questions from students. According to the senior administrators interviewed for this study, they tried to maintain fairly regular contact with students by visiting SU. The University Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs recalled her contact with student leaders:

We try to maintain fairly regular contact with them. I sometimes go over to visit. They would sometimes call up and say this is an issue they are concerned about. Sometimes we meet on a particular issue that we want to bring forward.

The President of GSA made a suggestion to the Board in 1992 that members of the Board should be receiving *Gateway*; this was accepted by the Board, and the President of SU was asked to look into the distribution of the newspaper.

There was regular informal communication between the administration and students. Sometimes, students called particular senior administrators to talk about certain issues. On special occasions, the administration also contacted the student organizations concerning specific student-related matters. For example, the Chief Librarian telephoned the SU Vice-President Academic to discuss how a certain amount of money he had

managed to get from businesses could be appropriately used for students. On the recommendation of SU, the Library hours were extended during the examination periods.

At the Faculty of Education, students communicated with the administration through the ESA representatives and student-at-large members on the Council of Faculty of Education, and other committees. According to some student informants, administrators made efforts to get student input. For instance, in order to strengthen the communication between the students and the administration, one associate dean was appointed as a facilitator for communication between the Faculty of Education and ESA. The associate dean asked the ESA Council for advice or input regarding the improvement of student related services, and also hoped to establish a committee called Student Advisor Committee. The ESA Council did put forward some pertinent suggestions. Sometimes they communicated on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, the Chairman of Department A sent the Executive members of ESA a preliminary outline of a survey concerning undergraduate students' issues, asking for feedback, and ESA suggested some changes for the survey. There were also informal communication channels; for instance, students talked to some professors regarding their issues, who would later address these issues at the Council meeting or on some other occasions.

At the departmental level, students communicated with the administrators and academic staff members through student-at-large representatives on departmental committees. In Department A, although there was no student representation on the Practicum Committee, students were invited to comment on the effect of the program. According to one academic staff member: "Although we do not have any student on the Practicum Committee, when we evaluate the practicum, we send letters to student teachers. So they had a large voice in it." The coordinator of the practicum program set an open door policy; students could look for her when encountering problems. She spoke of how she communicated with student teachers:

Generally when students are critical about some things, I do try to change it by trying to listen to them. We do listen to the students when they make good sense.

If there is something I disagree with and I am not sure, I will refer it to the associate dean. Usually I will let the associate dean know what decisions I have made and we will talk about it.

In terms of the communication between Department B and students, the Chair of Department B observed:

Our department collects information from all the Ed.D. students although they are not on the Ed.D. Committee. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the existing program based on what they saw in the program. In addition, we also had an exit survey. Students completed them when they completed their masters and doctoral program. Then we did an analysis of the survey. We are taking approaches to involve students.

There was generally more direct contact and communication between the administrators who were teaching and graduate students since they often worked together. Furthermore, departments, as the most basic academic units, were not as bureaucratic as other units at higher levels; the administrators were often directly contacted by individual students with certain problems. Some students always asked academic staff and support staff to pass messages to the administrators. One academic staff member from Department B noted:

As it is a risk for the students to tell the department that the way things are done, it will come through the Communication Committee where more of those issues get raised informally. People will find them easier to talk to at the first level. If it's a big issue, it goes to the Council.

Based on the researcher's observations and the findings of the study, at the institutional level, there was effective communication between the two major student organizations and the senior administration. One graduate student leader felt graduate students had good communication with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. At the faculty and the departmental levels, some administrators observed that students tended to communicate with the administration passively; normally only when asked about their opinions on certain policies, did students talk and make suggestions. One administrator at the Faculty of Education made his observation:

I think we are pretty good at trying to respond, especially if they have thought about what needs to be done and how they would have us to do it. But more likely it is reactive where faculty members are working on a policy and say we had better ask students what they think about it. Then they cooperate and make suggestions. We have students on our Department Council and the Faculty Council. Usually their voices are listened to.

Student Government

The following is comprehensive information on the student government at the University, specifically relating to the membership, structure, functions, funding sources, businesses and services, procedures to reach decisions, and management of three student organizations, the strengths of the student government, the relationship amongst the student organizations, as well as their coordination with organizations outside the campus. There are two major student organizations at the University of Alberta: the Students' Union (SU) which deals with undergraduate students' affairs and represents undergraduate students on campus, and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) which handles the affairs of graduate students and represents graduate students of the University. The President, vice-presidents and executive members of SU and GSA are elected by and from undergraduate and graduate students of the University. Their term of office is one year. Each faculty has a faculty students' association. The writer only presents relevant information on the Education Students' Association (ESA) since the research at the faculty and departmental levels was conducted at the Faculty of Education.

The Students' Union

All the full-time undergraduate students of the University are charged the SU fee at annual registration, and thus they are automatically full members of SU. If willing to pay the full fee, part-time undergraduate students can be full SU members. There were 22,213 full-time undergraduate students (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.3, p. 42, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-1993*) and 3,194 part-time undergraduate students (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.4, p. 48, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-1993*) at the University in the 1992-1993 academic year.

The Students' Council is elected to act on behalf of the members of SU. The Students' Council is responsible for the management and control of SU, its buildings, and resources. As the ultimate authority of SU, it ratifies policies and bylaw changes,

authorizes expenditures, and gives feedback on the performance and direction of SU. The Students' Council is made up of 44 voting members, including five executive members elected by the general student body, three elected members of major student associations on campus, and 36 elected faculty student representatives.

The Executive Committee of SU directs the activities and operations of SU, subject to the authority of the Students' Council. There are five executive positions: the President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Finance and Administration, and Vice-President Internal. These positions are contested every February during the SU general election. Each executive chairs one board and some committees dealing with affairs within his or her portfolio, and each of the boards makes proposals to the Students' Council for discussion and debate on related policies, and voting for the ratification of the policies. The President of SU acts as the Chairperson of the By-laws Committee; the Vice-President Finance and Administration is the Chairperson of the Administrative Board; the Vice-President Internal Affairs chairs the SU Building Services Board; the Vice-President Academic chairs the Academic Affairs Board; and the Vice-President External is the Chairman of the External Affairs Board.

The other standing committees of SU include: the Discipline Interpretation and Enforcement Board as the supreme court of SU, the Council of Faculty Associations that advises the Students' Council on matters affecting associations and departmental clubs, the Council of Residence Associations that helps in the coordination of resident life activities, the GFC Student Caucus which unites all the GFC student representatives for joint discussions, the Housing and Transport Commission which creates policy recommendations to the Students' Council on housing and transportation matters concerning students, and the Nominating Committee that recommends to the Students' Council those who should fill certain student-held positions. There are also the Strategic Planning Committee which makes strategic plans for SU, the Student Newspaper

Committee that acts as a forum for complaints against the student newspaper, the Refugee Student Board, and some committees dealing with social and recreational activities.

The major means to select students to work for SU is through its elections. SU normally has a booth during the student registration and orientation, where the student handbooks are distributed, together with a sign-up sheet for those who wish to be involved in different committees of SU, and those of the University.

The Graduate Students' Association

According to the GSA constitution, the membership of GSA consists of all graduate students registered as graduate students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research; they pay either full or partial GSA fees. In 1992-1993, there were 3,165 full-time graduate students (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.3, p. 42, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-1993*) and 1,103 part-time graduate students (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.4, p. 48, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-1993*) at the University.

The highest decision-making body within GSA is the Annual General Meeting (AGM), usually held in March in conjunction with the GSA Executive elections. GSA members vote for the President and the Executive members at AGM. All the full-time and part-time GSA members may vote at AGM. The budget for the next year is also presented at AGM.

The Council of GSA is a body which meets once a month to administer the affairs of GSA. It is the policy-making body of GSA which has charge of the general affairs of the organization and is responsible for all the properties and funds of GSA. It is also the official medium of communication between the graduate students of the University and the Board, GFC, and FGSR. The Council consists of the eight Executive members, and representatives of all the departments with graduate programs. The Council members are normally elected annually by and from graduate students in individual departments.

The Executive Committee of GSA is a body which coordinates the day-to-day activities of GSA. The GSA Executive members include the President, Vice-President

Internal, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Communications, and Vice-President Services.

In addition to the Executive Committee, GSA has five other standing committees:

1) the Power Plant House Committee takes charge of the general administration of the Power Plant Restaurant and the Bar, a social center for graduate students, 2) the GSA Negotiating Committee does the necessary research on matters such as the regulations governing graduate assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships and proposes positions to take during negotiations with the University Negotiating Committee, 3) the GSA Complaints Committee investigates all personal University-related complaints by the GSA members, and pursues the appropriate University procedures and channels if such complaints are justified, 4) the Long Range Planning Committee receives and disseminates information, and sets priorities to assist the Vice-President Finance in the preparation of the GSA annual budget, and 5) the Communications Committee assists the Vice-President Communications in coordinating the publication and broadcast of information relevant to graduate students. The above committees are under the jurisdiction of the executive members of GSA. The Vice-President Internal chairs the Negotiating Committee; the Vice-President Academic acts as Chair of the Complaints Committee; the Long Range Planning Committee is chaired by the Vice-President Finance; and the Vice-President Services is the Chair of the Power Plant House Committee.

In 1992-1993, the GSA Executive members were chosen through its first contested election. Some graduate students were selected or appointed by their departmental groups to the GSA Council; most became GSA faculty or departmental representatives by acclamation. Graduate students willing to run for a position must first file a nomination. Those who were not clear about what duties were associated with a position could speak with one of the GSA Executive members. A nomination form required a nominator and seconder, both had to be graduate students.

The Education Students' Association

The undergraduate students within the Faculty of Education are not required to pay ESA membership fee at the time of annual registration; membership is voluntary. In 1992-1993, there were 2,137 ESA members out of 3,478 full-time (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.4, pp. 36-42, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-1993*) and 478 part-time undergraduate students (Office of the Registrar, Table 3.4, pp. 44-48, *Summary of Statistics, 1992-93*). That means 54% of the undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education in that year were ESA members. All ESA members, both full-time and part-time, pay the full ESA fee. For years, the ESA Executive members were mostly selected by acclamation since there were few candidates.

The ESA Council is the governing body of ESA. It is also the medium of communication between undergraduate students in Education and the Faculty administration, as well as outside professional organizations. The Council consists of all the Executive members of ESA, the Sales and Services Commissioner, the Publicity Commissioner, the Social Commissioner, the Athletics Commissioner, the Newspaper Commissioner, the representative of GFC, the representative of SU, the Volunteer Program Coordinator, the Job Search Coordinator, and one representative of every affiliated students' association or club. Each of the above Council members has explicit duties for ESA except the representatives from the organizations outside the Faculty. The total ESA Council voting-membership is regulated not to exceed 25.

The Executive Committee of ESA is responsible for the daily administration of ESA, and it has authority to make decisions on behalf of ESA. The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Internal, and Vice-President External of ESA.

In addition, ESA has nine standing committees. They are 1) the Sales and Services Committee, 2) the Social Committee, 3) the Publicity Committee, 4) the Newspaper Committee, 5) the Constitutional Committee, 6) the Membership Services Committee, 7)

the Graduate Committee, 8) the Academic Representatives Committee, and 9) the Volunteer Program Committee. The main function of these standing committees is to assist the executives and commissioners in coordinating and administering their work.

ESA has 11 affiliated organizations, including departmental organizations, such as the Special Education Students' Association, which promote professional development in a specialized field of education, and provide opportunities for students to discuss matters of concern relevant to the teaching profession, and some clubs that organize inter-cultural activities and recreational activities for Education undergraduate students. All these officially registered organizations within ESA generate their own funds, and sometimes ESA assists them financially in their activities. Members of the affiliated organizations are entitled to all the benefits of ESA members, and they are also entitled to assistance in the funding of the conferences and professional development of ESA.

Major Functions

Some details of the mandate for each student organization may be changed due to different philosophies of its student leaders elected each year, however, the two major functions of each student organization, promotion of the general welfare of students and political representation of students, have remained the same over time.

First of all, the student organizations have provided administration of student affairs and various services for students of the University that address the students' concerns and contribute to the fulfillment of the needs of the students, which are consistent with the purposes of the University. Much of the budget of each of the three student organizations has actually been devoted to providing services to students. SU has provided various kinds of services for the students of the University. In addition to its services similar to those of SU, an important function of GSA is to negotiate pay scales and conditions of employment for graduate students with the University administration, and GSA has had an agreement with the University administration which governs graduate assistantships. As

the largest student local of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), ESA serves Education students in their professional development by providing some relevant services and forums. Furthermore, all of these three student organizations have offered different kinds of entertainment and social opportunities for the students on campus.

The student government represents students and students' concerns to the University administration, all the orders of government, and the community. As presented previously, SU and GSA represent students by being formally involved in the decision-making activities of the institutional governing bodies. Representatives of the student organizations sit on the Board, GFC, the Senate, the Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the Council on Student Life, all the faculty and some departmental councils, as well as most of the committees at different levels. ESA represents Education undergraduate students on the Council of Faculty of Education, some standing committees of the Council, and some departmental councils and committees within the Faculty.

The students of the University have communicated with the provincial government and federal government mainly through the student organizations. Federal and provincial government officials are invited occasionally by the student government to address important student issues and to talk to students. The student organizations have made the above government officials aware of the major issues of students.

All of the three student organizations have externally lobbied for students of the University. The Vice-President External of SU and the Vice-President Internal of GSA usually represent the undergraduate and graduate students to the provincial government and federal government. They have regular contact with the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee of the provincial government, and they also meet with the Minister of Advanced Education on an *ad hoc* basis to discuss issues of particular importance to students of the University.

Representatives of SU have actually been involved in the decision-making process of the Student Finance Board, and the student loan programs that are run by the

government of Alberta and the federal government. ESA has been participating in the governance of ATA by having three representatives involved in its decision-making processes to ensure that the issues of students who will become teachers are considered. The leaders of SU and GSA have also made contact on an *ad hoc* basis with different political parties concerning student issues in order to gain their support. Moreover, all of the three student organizations have kept a close relationship with the community. SU has been involved in the activities of Edmonton and Alberta Chambers of Commerce.

SU and GSA have regularly contacted other student organizations within the province and in other parts of Canada to promote cooperation among student governments, to address the common interests and important issues of students, and to arrange the strategies of student organizations in lobbying at both the provincial and the federal levels. The major provincial student organizations within Alberta are the Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council (ACTISEC), and the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). SU and GSA have met them regularly trying to work out a joint strategy for raising awareness of post-secondary education needs. At the national level, the U of A SU has acted as a leader in addressing student-related issues to the federal government.

In brief, student organizations have acted effectively to represent, protect, and promote students' interests both inside and outside the University campus.

Decision-Making Procedures

In 1992-1993, the three student organizations had similar decision-making procedures. Regarding decisions with financial implications, each executive member of the student organizations had the authority to decide things related to his or her portfolio if within the limitation set by the organization -- \$100 for ESA, \$500 for SU, and \$100 for GSA. Costs in excess of these amounts must be approved by the council of the organization. Micro-management decisions were usually made by the executive committee

of the student organization. In terms of events, it was usually left to the individual executive member of the student organization who was authorized to organize the event. When making decisions, some executive members of the student organizations called on their presidents or other experienced executive members for advice.

As for other matters, any executive or council member could bring suggestions to the executive meetings of the student organization. For instance, most items that came to the Students' Council during 1992-1993 were recommendations from either the Executive Committee of SU or from one of the SU boards. According to one SU Executive member:

The SU President or each vice president has been a chair of a board committee. When something comes up at the University level, the chair has to make a decision on it. The chair usually goes to the board which is made up of half students-at-large and half student counselors from different faculties. They give the chair feedback and direct the chair as to where he or she should stand and what he or she should do. Thus decisions are made for any policy by the boards, and the Executive, and they will be voted on the Students' Council.

There was a fair amount of power given to each Executive member of SU who chaired a board through the setting of agendas and control of meetings. Discretion was allowed in deciding between items requiring collective decision-making and items for independent Executive action. In terms of major decisions, the motions were normally brought to the council of the student organization for debate and ratification. When student counselors upheld the motions, they would become the policy of the student organization.

The decision-making process was relatively formal in a better organized student organization such as SU. However, there was also more bureaucracy there than in other student organizations. One Executive member of SU observed:

If we want to start a new service, it's a little bit bureaucratic because it is first brought to the University Affairs Board which is an issues board. Then we probably go to the Internal Affairs Board because they deal with services. Then it will probably go to the Administration Board on which all the executives sit for the financial implications, and then to the Students' Council.

Based on the researcher's observations, ESA appeared to be less organized, and therefore its decision-making process was more casual. According to one vice president of ESA, the most common decision-making process in ESA was *ad hoc*.

Generally speaking, no major difference was noted between the decision-making processes of the student organizations and that of formal decision-making bodies of the University. In terms of the conduct of meetings, all followed the Robert's Rules of Order.

Internal Management

In 1992-1993, the two major student organizations, SU and GSA, hired professionals for the management of their buildings and facilities. The general manager of SU, who is a permanent staff member with financial expertise and background, is responsible for the management of personnel, financial, administrative and operational aspects of SU. The general manager reports to the President of SU, and he also advises the SU Executive Committee. His major responsibility is to give advice and implement decisions made by the Executive Committee. There were approximately 20 full-time office staff including one receptionist, secretaries, business staff, and one researcher and one assistant researcher who were in charge of the SU Research Department which provides updated information on campus and extra-campus affairs. The GSA Office had hired a full-time office manager, one full-time office assistant, and one part-time staff member taking care of the GSA Food Bank. There was only one student volunteer working as a secretary at the GSA office. The permanent staff working for these student organizations are the only people who provide continuity within the student government.

Funding Sources

All the student organizations have their own funding sources for the management and operations of their buildings and facilities, and their services. In 1992-1993, the major funding sources of SU were from the Students' Union fee (\$57.50 per student for one academic year), the businesses and services run by SU, and various fund-raising activities. The SU annual budget summary report (1993) indicated that the revenues of SU in 1992-1993 were \$ 6,030,495. The GSA funding sources included the income generated from its

businesses, the Power Plant Restaurant and the Bar, the GSA fee (\$ 50 per graduate student for one academic year), interest income, advertising income, photocopy income, and other income. Based on its annual budget report, the revenues of GSA in 1992-1993 were \$306,340. Without running any businesses, the funding sources of the ESA were the membership fee of ESA (annual membership fee \$7 per person), matching grant given by the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) (\$5 for the first 200 ESA members and \$3 for every additional member), some funding from SU on occasion for certain purposes, merchandising programs (popcorn, T shirts, job search books, and text books), and an annual grant from the Dean of Education. The total annual revenues of ESA in 1992-1993 were \$32,500 according to the 1992-1993 financial report of ESA.

Businesses operated by the University student organizations are supposed to be profit-making ventures. According to the student leaders, the rationale for running businesses is that they can give students financial power. These businesses help to pay for various kinds of students' activities and services. Of the three above-mentioned student organizations, only SU and GSA run regular businesses. In 1992-1993, as the largest student organization, SU operated one restaurant, two bars, a coffee center, a photocopy center, a computer lab, a theater, a large nightclub, the Students' Union Building game area, and a post office. Being an expert at accounting and financial management, the SU general manager plays an important role in running these businesses with the assistance of other business staff hired by SU, the Vice-President Finance of SU, as well as student services and program directors. GSA runs a restaurant and a bar named the Power Plant Restaurant and the Bar where beer, soft drinks, snacks, movies and other recreational facilities are provided. In 1992-1993, the Power Plant was operated by an outside company based on a contract with GSA.

Communication with Students

The two major student organizations, SU and GSA, communicate with students on campus mainly through student representatives from different faculties and departments who sit on the Students' Council and the GSA Council.

In SU, the Vice-President Academic chairs one Board called the Council of Faculty Associations which is made up of the presidents of all the faculty students' associations. The Vice-President Academic is responsible for establishing a linkage between the faculty students' associations and the Students' Council. The president of each faculty students' association sitting on the University Affairs Board of SU can also learn what has happened on campus as the Vice-President Academic of SU passed on the information from the University committees. The Executive members of SU believe it important for them to have close ties with student councilors so that they can exchange information and discuss certain issues with them concerning students' reaction and position.

Similarly, GSA mainly communicates with graduate students through the graduate student representatives on the Council of GSA. There were 75 graduate programs in 1992-1993 according to the record of the Office of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. GSA had forty-five GSA Council representatives that year, which means GSA could at least reach forty-five graduate programs. In addition, the minutes of the GSA Council were posted for those who did not have a Council representative. GSA normally sent their representatives, both Executive members and Council members, to all the orientations in the departments with graduate programs. In 1992-1993, the GSA representatives went out to 60 departments that had formal orientations to speak to the graduate coordinators and graduate students, telling them what GSA could do for graduate students. GSA tried to improve its communication with graduate students during 1992-1993. The President of GSA observed:

This year I believe that the GSA Executive has kept the Graduate Students Council informed of all the matters affecting graduate students. For the most part, all the

Executive members have provided the Council with written reports of activities and issues which impact students in general and graduate students in particular.

ESA also communicated with Education students through the student representatives sitting on the ESA Council from different departments within the Faculty. Moreover, the office of ESA was a place where Education students chose to talk to people about their issues.

In addition to the above means, SU and GSA made surveys to find out what students wanted them to do. The SU Research Department had surveys from time to time to find out students' interest in different things and to gauge student needs for services. GSA conducted a survey in 1993 regarding needs of graduate students. Students' newspapers, including *Gateway*, and the GSA newsletter, *Current*, radio stations, and other media also played an important role in the communication between the student government and students. In brief, there were different formal and informal communication channels between student organizations and students at large on campus.

Inter-relationships among Student Organizations

In 1992-1993, SU and GSA cooperated well when dealing with important problems faced by the students of the University. They kept in touch regularly concerning the development of certain student issues. The GSA President observed:

We have good relations with the SU Executive, which has been a combination of working with them on University committees, Council of Alberta University Students and on a one-to-one basis. We have more things which unite us than separate us. I hope we can continue to maintain this relationship. (The GSA minutes, p. 89)

However, according to the observations of the interviewees, the executive members of the two student organizations were sometimes concerned about different priorities in their work due to the differences of their values, their age, experiences, the nature of their programs, marital status, and so forth. As a result, the two student organizations did not always hold the same positions on some student-related problems.

Faculty students' associations of the University, including ESA, are independent of SU and GSA. The relationship between SU and faculty students' associations is closer

than that between SU and GSA since they are all undergraduate student organizations, and therefore have a lot in common. Many faculty student representatives sitting on the Students' Council are the leaders of faculty students' associations, and SU also has its representatives sitting on different faculty students' councils to increase mutual understanding. This also indicates that the work of SU has been supervised by the faculty student organizations to protect the interests of students of their own faculties. SU provided financial assistance to the faculty students' associations, departmental associations and clubs, and some international students' associations on campus.

Strengths of the Student Government

Gateway reported that the Executive members of SU and GSA who had regularly visited other students' unions and graduate students' associations in North America felt that "the U of A student government is in a better position to serve the concerns of students than most of the student governments in Canada and in the United States because it runs more businesses and services than most of the other university student organizations. The university students in the United States are not even allowed to run businesses" (Aplin, *Gateway*, March 23, 1993, p. 3). The U of A student organizations, SU in particular, are financially better off, as their annual revenues suggested previously. Having observed the activities of the other graduate students' organizations, the President and other Executive members of GSA felt that graduate students of the University of Alberta are better organized.

In comparison with other student governments, the U of A student organizations' representatives were perceived by their leaders to have been more involved in the governance of the University. According to the President of SU who visited some universities in North America and attended the national conference of student organizations several times, student representatives of other Canadian universities are not as thoroughly involved in the governance of their institutions as are the U of A students; many American

universities have not involved students on their boards of governors as yet. These student informants believed that the U of A student government is more influential, and it represents the interests of students better. At least, they perceived student representatives here as being able to voice students' concerns and being taken seriously at all levels of the University community. This observation seems to indicate that the U of A administration has generally supported student involvement in administering their own affairs, and their involvement in the administrative decision-making processes of the University.

Summary

The University administrative decision-making processes and the student government are two major components of the governance of the University. The Board of Governors is the highest authority of the University taking charge of the budget, businesses, and operational affairs. Chaired by the University President, GFC is the highest academic governing body. Subject to the authority of GFC, there is a faculty council at each faculty or school, which is empowered to determine the programs of study in any branch of learning for instruction in which the faculty is established. Controlled by their faculty councils, the departmental councils are empowered to work on their budgets and programs within their disciplines. There are advisory bodies at various levels such as the Senate, the Deans' Council, dean's advisory committees, and departmental committees with advisory functions which provide advice to both the decision-making bodies and administrators.

Students were involved in most of the University governing bodies in 1992-1993. Student representatives had equal rights as the other members on those bodies. However, their formal representation was limited, and they held office for a term of only one year which is shorter than that of other members. There were several means to select student representatives to sit on those governing bodies. Some students were *ex officio* members of major institutional governing bodies and committees relevant to their portfolios. Some

were first appointed by the Council of SU and GSA, and then approved by the Board and GFC. The University administration also chose students to sit on certain University committees on the recommendation of the student organizations. At the faculty level, student representatives on the Faculty Council were appointed by ESA and GSA. Graduate students elected their representatives for the committees of their department; most of them were actually chosen by acclamation. Some student-at-large members were elected by students; some were appointed by SU and GSA to sit on GFC and other institutional bodies; some applied for positions by themselves.

In 1992-1993, the procedures to reach decisions by the University governing bodies at different levels were generally similar; all the governing bodies followed the Robert's Rules of Order. The decision-making procedures at the institutional and the faculty levels were more formal as the size of the committees at higher levels was bigger, and the committees addressed more important issues, while the decision-making procedures of the councils of the two departments as the smallest units on campus were less formal.

The University administration communicates with students mainly through representatives of student organizations and some students at large sitting on University governing bodies. In addition, student organizations do their best to keep the administration and the community informed of students' concerns. The administration also communicated with the student organizations through informal channels. The effect was generally perceived by the interviewees as good. However, having no specific mandates, student-at-large members on University committees may not communicate with the administration as effectively as the representatives of student organizations.

With regard to student government, there are two major student organizations at the University: SU and GSA which represent the undergraduate and graduate students at the University. There are also faculty student associations at faculty levels which are independent of SU and GSA. The councils of the student organizations are the highest

governing bodies of their organizations, and there are an executive committee and several standing committees within each student organization. The executive members of the student organizations can decide things within their portfolio. When making major decisions, all the student organizations followed the Robert's Rules of Order.

The two main functions of the student organizations are promotion of the welfare of the students and political representation of students. The student organizations have their own funding sources, and their business activities help them pay for their services and various activities. SU and GSA have hired professional staff to run their businesses and offices. There are different formal and informal channels between the University administration and SU and GSA. The student government is the official medium between students and the provincial government and federal government. The student organizations lobby externally for the students, and have a close relationship with the community. SU and GSA have also contacted student organizations in Alberta and in other parts of Canada to discuss strategies for student governments and to address student issues at the provincial level and national level.

In 1992-1993, SU, GSA, and ESA mainly communicated with students at large through student representatives from different faculties and departments who sat on the council of their organizations. During orientation activities, students' organizations had their information booths. GSA normally sent their representatives to the orientation activities held by departments with graduate programs. The media of the student organizations also played an important role in their communication with the students.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENT-RELATED SERVICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Student-related services on campus have been offered by both the University Student Services and the student government. This chapter focuses on how these services are delivered, the major functions, the different characteristics, the strengths and weaknesses of the University-run student services and the student-administered services, as well as the interrelationship between them. The relevant information is introduced based upon materials provided by the University Student Services and the three student organizations. Like the previous chapter, this chapter is mainly descriptive, and it also contains interpretations of findings from interviews and other sources. Figure 5.1 is drawn by the writer to describe the composition of the University student-related services.

University Student Services

In addition to all the normal academic services provided to students to support their studies, there is a special office named the University Student Services which provides specific services for students. The University Student Services has seven divisions. They are Health Services, Disabled Student Services, Native Student Services, International Center which provides international student orientation, immigration services, and services for students on international exchanges, Career and Placement Services that offers career planning and job search services to students, and recruitment services to employers, Student Counseling Services, and Effective Writing Resources. The University Housing and Food Services, Printing Services, and Computing Services on this campus are run as unsalaried units by selling space, rooms and food to generate revenue; they do not get a grant from the University. These units do not have a direct connection with the University Student Services although the managers are members of the Council on Student Life.

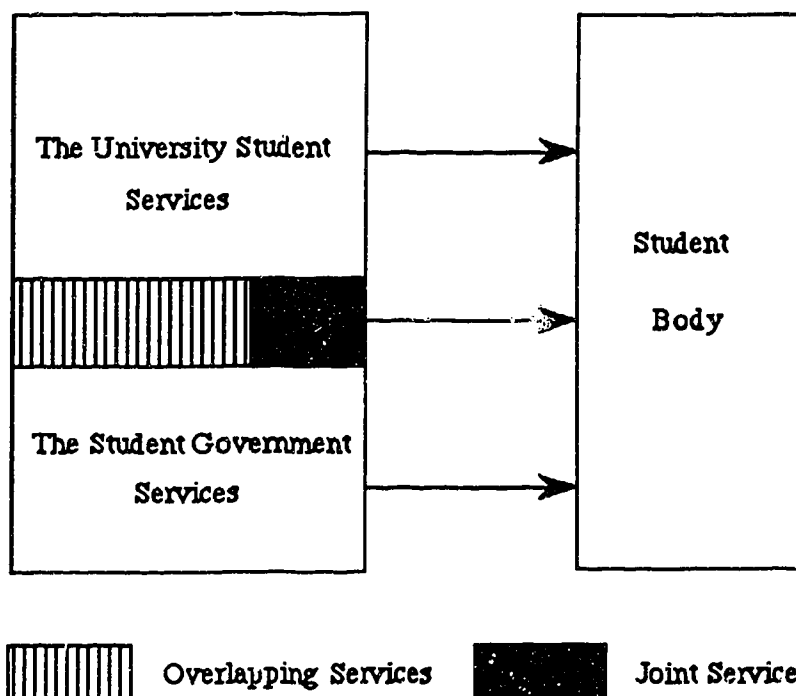


Figure 5.1: The Student-Related Services of the University of Alberta

Unlike a department or a faculty on this campus which has a council as a governing body, the University Student Services does not have a major decision-making body. The Council on Student Life (COSL) is a standing committee of GFC, and it only discusses related matters, evaluates policies and programs, and makes recommendations. Major decisions such as student services fee, budgetary decisions, and the establishment of new programs are made either by the Board of Governors, GFC or Dean of Student Services based on the recommendations made at COSL and other relevant committees, and consultations with the student organizations, the President of the University, and the Budgetary Policy Committee. In 1992-1993, representatives of the student organizations and students at large were involved in COSL and its relative committees including committees relating to food and residence.

Student Government Services

The student government has offered a variety of services for the students of the University. The student organizations have the following categories of services:

a) orientation services comprised of student handbooks and information booths introducing various information for new undergraduate and graduate students, registration, orientation tour, and other activities, b) media services, including the official newspaper of SU, *Gateway*, distributed every Tuesday and Thursday, the monthly newsletter of GSA, *Current*, SU's radio station, EM88, and CFS's weekly radio show on CJSR, which tell what goes on, and address important issues within or outside the University, c) study and research services that assist students in their studies, including a computer lab, a student resource room, exam registry, used book registry, tutor registry, a photocopy center, and workshops on various subjects relating to students' needs for their studies, d) financial aid services which provide emergent financial assistance and financial advice to students, e) peer counseling services for those who have academic or other problems, f) mediating services that deal with appeals and complaints of students as well as disputes with regard to their relations with their instructors, supervisors, and departments, and that ensure that students receive fair and equitable treatment within the University system, g) social and recreational services, including a theater, one of the largest nightclubs in Alberta, bars, restaurants, and recreational centers, and h) volunteer services that help students find opportunities to do various kinds of voluntary work, some of which are related to the subjects they are studying. In summary, the major services offered by the student government relate to information sharing, financial aid, peer counseling, problem solving in both academic and other aspects, study facilities and services, provision of voluntary opportunities, and services and facilities for recreational and social purposes.

The above-mentioned services are largely provided by SU and GSA. ESA and other faculty and departmental students' associations, due to their limited funding, have mainly provided services for students' professional development, including forums on

subjects in which students of each faculty are interested, some mediating and consulting programs, orientation activities, and social and recreational opportunities. Generally speaking, the services that the student organizations are able to offer depend on their resources. With the largest student population and more funding sources, SU has obviously more resources; it owns more facilities and provides more services in comparison with any other student organization within the University.

The services provided by different student organizations have their own characteristics. For instance, the services offered by SU are comprehensive, they can meet most of the needs of the students. The services of GSA have focused on assisting graduate students in solving their financial and academic problems during their graduate studies. The Food Bank, the agreement between GSA and the University administration which governs graduate assistantships, and the GSA Complaints Committee are some obvious examples. As a student organization in a professional faculty, ESA offers services that are more career-oriented, and it has tried its best to provide opportunities for Education students in their professional development.

Comparisons between the University Student Services and Student Government Services

The information presented above has presented the University Student Services and those services run by the student government. Each of them has its own characteristics. The major differences of the two kinds of student-related services are analyzed and listed in Table 5.1. As shown, each of the two categories of services has its own strengths, as well as weaknesses. The strengths of the University-run student services are actually complementary to the services offered by the student organizations, and *vice versa*. The University Student Services have experts, professional staff, and good facilities. Their services are multi-functional, and obviously require professional techniques. In addition, their services are better funded, and they are also well organized and managed.

Table 5.1: A Comparison between the Two Categories of Student-Related Services

Student Services of the University Administration	Services Offered by the Student Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal - costly - based on the expertise of professional staff, and the findings of surveys - mainly technical - multi-functional - large-scale - well organized - with good facilities - able to predict the special needs of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informal - economical - based on students' experiences and knowledge of students' needs - largely practical - simple - small-scale - less bureaucratic and efficient - easy to operate - more responsive to students' day-to-day needs in their studies

Hence the University Student Services has been able to provide complex and specialized services such as different kinds of health services, residence services and so forth.

However, the University Student Services also have their problems. For instance, as a formal University division, the University Student Services is more bureaucratic than any student organization is. Furthermore, sometimes the administration has to conduct surveys to find out what the students need, which is time consuming. Finally, due to the complexity and the large scale of their services, it usually takes a relatively long time to implement some services.

As for the services offered by the student government, they are obviously more student oriented since all the services and program directors are students. Their services

are easy to operate, and practical. It is generally easier for student organizations to find out what the students want because they themselves have experienced as students many things before, and they study and live with their fellow students all the time during their studies. Moreover, some student-administered services such as Student Help are volunteer organizations. Therefore, they have been operated with low cost. Finally, according to the student informants, students tend to look for students for help because of similarities of age, social and other factors. Nevertheless, as indicated before, the student government can not provide specialized services which require professional techniques and expertise in specific fields. The funding for student-administered services is not as adequate and stable as that of the University Student Services. Furthermore, the scale and categories of their services are limited.

Based upon the opinions of the student informants, the University-run student services are not as student oriented as those of the student organizations. It normally takes the administration quite a while to have certain services because of the ineffectiveness that has existed in the University system, while students' services are more responsive to students' needs because students know their needs the best. In addition, services offered by the student organizations are open seven days a week, which is more convenient than some University-run student services. As students themselves, student managers and services directors have a stake in student affairs; they consider issues from students' points of view. Students tend to go to the services offered by students because there is less bureaucracy and they are more likely to trust their peer students.

According to the administrator informants, the University senior administration has emphasized the work for students by appointing a Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs to address student issues. The University Student Services can not always rely on students in terms of what students need; experts have been playing an important role in student-related services. One administrator mentioned that the best example would be the services for the disabled students. The University now has universal wheelchair

accessibility on campus. But it was not done because students here demanded it. Another administrator noted that the administration did implement some services or programs based on the experts' opinions in the past even though students may not like them. Some administrators thought that students may not yet recognize the necessity and significance of those services.

Cooperation and Competition

The University Student Services and SU have been jointly operating some services. For example, in 1992-93, SU made an investigation on students' issues, and then it decided to set up a financial aid center on campus in a joint venture with the University Student Services, which was called Student Financial Aid and Information. SU's objectives were to advise students on filling out applications and appeals, to reduce the error rate in the student loan applications, and to provide seminars on financial planning. The University administration's objectives were to administer emergency loans, to disburse financial need bursaries, and to provide students with the necessary information for planning a restricted budget while studying. The two organizations cooperated very well in providing financial assistance to students in 1992-1993. The Sexual Assault Center is also a joint service with the funding provided by the University administration, and the office space provided by SU. In addition, the establishment of Career and Placement Services was in part made possible by the funding of SU. Moreover, according to the University Student Services Annual Report (1992), the University Student Services Office maintained regular contact with the student-administered offices concerning student-related services.

The two kinds of student services have also competed with each other. There are some overlapping services offered by both the University Student Services and the student organizations such as student counseling and advising services, tutorial services, and student orientation services. On the one hand, the competition between them is good for the student customers in that each of the two services can bring its strengths into full play to

satisfy the needs of students on campus. On the other hand, duplication of certain student services are viewed by some as wasteful of resources.

Summary

The University Student Services as a special University office in charge of specific student services has provided technically complex and comprehensive services to the students; their services include health services, disabled student services, international services, native student services, student career and placement services, student counseling services, and student residence services, including food and accommodation services. Experts have played an important role in providing these services. Student organizations have offered various services relating to information sharing, financial aid, peer counseling, and problem solving in both academic and other aspects. They have also provided study facilities and services, voluntary opportunities, and services and facilities for recreational and social purposes.

Both categories of student services are indispensable, and they complement each other. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. The University-run student services are better funded and equipped, and they have experts and professional staff, whereas the student organizations are closer to students, and thus they understand students' daily needs better. Additionally, student-administered services are easy to operate, practical, and they are less bureaucratic. The findings indicate there was good cooperation between the two kinds of student-related services in the 1992-1993 academic year. Nonetheless, there was also competition between them, and the overlapping of some services may have caused some waste of materials and human resources.

CHAPTER 6: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING IN 1992-1993

In Chapter 4, information concerning student representation on the University bodies at different levels and means of selection was presented. This chapter describes the involvement of students in the administrative decision-making processes of the University in the 1992-1993 academic year. The major contents of the chapter are different perspectives of the interviewees on student involvement in the administrative decision-making process, exclusive areas for student involvement, direct observations of students involved in decision-making at different levels, major issues addressed by the University governing bodies at different levels, and student strategies.

Perspectives of Informants

Rationale for Student Involvement

The theoretical rationale for student involvement in university governance was presented in Chapter 2. The interviewees involved in the process explained why student involvement in the administrative decision-making processes of the University is beneficial to both the University and students.

First, as customers of the academic services provided by the University, students have paid a lot of money to get their education, so they have a right to participate in deciding policies which influence their studies. In this regard, an administrator from the Faculty of Education commented:

We have to have student involvement because they are our customers. Otherwise we forget what the university is. We have people from the student government who are mature, responsible, and compatible. It just makes so much good sense when you want to know what they think about things. We involve them in the decision-making process because they can provide some invaluable input.

Another administrator commented that the involvement of students formalized their feedback and ensured that there would be a student point of view expressed. Some

students thought that they can have some control over what is going to happen to their programs by being involved in governing the institution. In general, students want to be involved in this process to ensure that their opinions are heard, to improve the quality of the decisions, and to share information. The President of GSA added that "sometimes graduate students seemed to be critical of the University because they care about the University's best interests. The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference."

Students were perceived to have provided important information in the decision-making process, for example, about grading, the orientation of the department, and program structuring. In this regard, one student commented that

there's definitely a role for student input because it makes decisions better when there is more information involved. Students are able to bring up points that the administration is not aware of. There are a lot of problems that students talk to each other about, but the administration really don't care normally unless every one gets mad. Without student input, some decisions may be reached, and it seems good from the point of view of the academics and administrators. Once the policy is being acted, it is a lot more difficult because there are fundamental flaws and something has been overlooked.

Administrators were sometimes perceived by students to have missed important details that were part of students' every-day experience. One academic staff member deemed that it is important for the administrators and academic staff to listen to students because they can not always know more than students. One administrator noted that

in term of students' role in decision making process, they have information. For instance, they told us their experience in their practicum. Although we got individual students' experience, it was still ahead of what we heard ourselves. Their input was so important that some problems may not be solved properly without students.

Additionally, some interviewees also observed that students often had very fresh, innovative, and interesting ideas.

Furthermore, some student interviewees believed that many administrators and community members should be told that their experiences as students could be quite different from the experiences students have now. One student Board member stated:

People on the Board who are business people have been to the University before. But they don't realize some of the changes that have happened. Students on the Board have got to tell them what's going on and what is different now. I think my

most important role on the Board is to represent the customer to say something like: "I am not happy with the service I am getting" which is something these business people understand.

Some administrators thought that there were educational benefits to students who were involved in decision-making. Student involvement not only represents students' interests, it also provides opportunities for learning how the University system works, and provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills for the future. Moreover, it prepares them to become qualified professionals. One administrator from the Faculty of Education commented:

We are a professional faculty. We are trying to educate people to become teachers and professionals, and to participate and so on. I think we have a responsibility to help them join in the governance of institutions partly because we need their voice in making decisions, and partly because part of their learning is becoming a professional.

Another administrator added:

I think a lot of times we keep them in the role of students rather than trying to put them in the role of a professional. That worked to their disadvantage in the sense it doesn't prepare them well to become teachers. It worked to our disadvantage in the sense that they don't share some of the responsibilities and some of the load for not only governing the place but more importantly for the learning that needs to go on.

Dr. Lois Stanford (1992), the Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs of the University, stated: "Students have a responsibility to the University family. We expect them to participate - to take active parts in the teaching-learning contract and to be actively involved in University governance and the Community" (p.20). Another administrator also thought:

Their input is a very enriching thing with these committees and a very necessary thing if the University is to operate as a community in which everybody has an active participation and a stake in the outcome of the University.

One academic staff member added that students also have a responsibility to ensure the academic programs they are receiving are appropriate through their participation in decision-making. She stated:

Students are clients of the Department. It's very much a taken-for-granted thing that there should be student involvement in the efforts. But that also accords them certain responsibilities, the responsibilities are to be sure that the kind of program

they receive is appropriate and that the conditions under which they work are the ones that are equitable and fair for students.

Moreover, students were seen as capable of contributing to the decisions of the University. Many students, some graduate students in particular, have adequate knowledge and work experience; some have previous involvement in the governance of institutions. Thus there is definitely a lot of intellectual capability in these students. One academic staff member teaching at Department B supported this view by saying: "I think it is advantageous to our department. Our students come with a lot of background in organizational decisions. It is important that they bring students' perspective." One graduate student studying at Department B also observed:

In our particular department the graduate students are quite mature and sophisticated. Many of us come from the situations where we ourselves had a fair amount of dealings in the governance of institutions. So we will possibly come to the decision-making process with certain sophistication.

In this regard, another academic staff member sitting on GFC concluded:

Students are fairly well educated young adults. They have the capacity to make judgments. So there must be an opportunity made available within the institutional structure of the University for students to have significant input into whether or not what they are getting from this or that professor is worth what it is claimed to be.

Most of the informants, based on their observations, believed that student involvement is a valuable experience. One Board member representing the community commented:

More and more Board members feel that the function of a university is not necessarily to do what the faculty feel is best to do; it's to do what's best for the students. On the whole, the student representation, even if it isn't perfect, is a very valuable part of the governing process.

Most student informants had positive perceptions about their experience on the University governing bodies. Many thought that the senior administration generally supported student involvement, and most of the administrators were quite receptive to students' involvement. Student informants were generally happy about the respect and participation they had on the University committees. One student Board member recalled: "The Board members really listened to us students. I was really impressed. I had Board members call me at home asking for my opinion." Some students were surprised at the

willingness of the administrators and academic staff members to listen. Students' opinions were taken like anybody else's and were valued even if sometimes administrators did not agree with them. Student members were often asked for their opinions and suggestions during the University committee meetings. They felt that the administration at different levels supported credible student involvement in the decision-making processes.

Most student informants believed that they learned much during their involvement, and they were happy about whatever they had contributed to the University. One undergraduate student spoke of his own experience: "It has been very rewarding because I learned a lot about how the University works. I met many interesting people, and I learned a lot about how the committees work, and how people interact." An administrator in Department A felt that the graduate student representatives on the Department Council generally found their involvement an interesting experience as they got a taste of governance of the University and they saw one side of the University which they did not see as a student taking courses.

Some students thought the credibility of both SU and GSA had gone up in the last several years due to the excellent performance of their representatives on the University governing bodies. According to some administrator members on the major institutional governing bodies, in 1992-1993, the President of GSA had brought great credibility to GSA and always provided a balanced approach to the matters at hand.

Contrary Views

Contrary views were also expressed. Some administrator and academic staff interviewees were in favor of limiting student involvement in the administrative decision-making process of the University.

A typical argument was that students are not necessarily part of the decision-making bodies, and students should primarily concentrate on their studies. They are expected to be

good students and to get good grades. One academic staff member from Department B argued:

To involve them in the day-to-day governance or operation of the department is to forget that their primary role here is, as students, to do work of a demanding nature in a specific discipline area. To ask them to sit on all of our committees and to run the department is to hold up their work on their prime purpose which is to do their master's or doctorate degrees. I wouldn't want them to lose sight of what their prime purpose is.

Consequently, according to some administrators and academic staff members, the key issue is whether the students have the time and inclination to be involved in decision-making.

Students were not seen by some administrators and academic staff members as full and equal members of the community. One academic staff member felt that there was an ideological barrier to student involvement in decision-making. He explained:

The university, in one of the metaphors used in North America, is seen as a company of equals. People of formally equal status make decisions that affect their mutual interests and their individual interests. Students are not seen as part of the company equals. They are less equal.

Another argument was that students may not need to be formally involved in decision-making as they had chances of voicing their concerns by filling out questionnaires and evaluation forms during their studies. One academic staff from Department A deemed:

They may be excluded from decision-making sometimes. But we can still have the information from students about our teaching. So they do have a voice. The decisions are made based on the input we get from students. They may not physically be there. But their voice can be heard from formal questionnaires sent to them.

Having noticed the transient nature of students, one senior administrator concluded:

One of the reasons that I think limited student involvement is appropriate is that any student is associated with this institution for only a limited period of time, or for a more limited period than academic staff and non-academic staff. They may not look at the issues in the long run. That's the nature of human beings.

He also deemed that students should not be encouraged to be much involved in politics:

Students in the University need to follow the course of study. I am sure opportunities exist for leadership activity along with that. I don't know to what extent there should be opportunities for students to be full time politicians while they are students. I don't think I would encourage more students to take that approach. The only way they are going to change the decisions is to have them be the majority. I don't think they should be the majority.

One academic staff member was doubtful about the effect of participatory decision-making. He argued that

there is a growing view that the more involvement we have, the better. I tend to be uncomfortable with that. I think sometimes I would just like to be told to do things. We set up a five-person committee when, in fact, two people could do it. We waste a lot of time in committees.

Finally, student involvement was not always effective due to their limitations. For instance, many of them were immature and inexperienced, and they lacked the knowledge required. One senior administrator stated: "When we choose a dean or a department chair, they really don't have the background which allows them to feel comfortable in their participation in a significant way." Some students were even intimidated on the University committees.

Observations on Student Involvement at Different levels

At the departmental level, the administrator interviewee from Department A said that Department A attempted to take students' concerns into account very seriously and continuously. The administrator and academic staff members tried to be as flexible as they could in applying any kind of rules. Students were dealt with as mature, confident, and intelligent adults. A graduate student on the Department Council told of her own experience:

I was asked about my experiences as a graduate student in the masters program. Then I was asked for my opinions and comments and suggestions like the other committee members. One or two recommendations I made were accepted and were going to be implemented.

The academic staff members of Department A observed that, the graduate students on the departmental committees participated fairly well. They made excellent contributions to the Graduate Coordinating Committee. The administrator interviewee observed that, on the Graduate Coordinating Committee, the input from the graduate student representative was regarded as important. He had a fair amount of influence in the sense that a lot of members of the Committee turned to him and asked him what students were thinking as a group, and

how they reacted to a change or something which was ongoing. Many times the academic staff members and administrators looked to that representative for more information than he was willing or able to provide. Nevertheless, some undergraduate representatives were perceived by others to have not participated as much as they should and to have been remiss in gathering information.

At Department B, all the student representatives but one on the departmental committees were graduate students as the department mainly offers graduate courses. The two academic staff interviewees observed that the department attempted to accommodate students in a sincere way. The administrator interviewee felt that the student representatives were fairly committed people who wanted to see the voice of students brought forward. The students' opinions were listened to and were regarded by others as valuable. For instance, students' perspectives were very important and useful in how the department might better market its programs. The students on the committees were generally satisfied with their involvement. One graduate student on the Department Council recalled her experience:

I felt very comfortable. I am a new graduate student and what I was doing here was just totally received and treated as an equal. I felt that I had the equal respect of someone who was faculty member. So personally I felt encouraged to speak and felt very much included in the environment.

The ESA representative on one departmental committee of Department B observed that some of the students' opinions were well received, and some students' recommendations had been implemented. Nonetheless, the administrator interviewee found that some student representatives were not actively involved in discussions of the committees.

At the faculty level, the ESA representatives felt that the administration was generally supportive; some believed that they were not just getting lip service since some suggestions made by students were implemented. The representatives of ESA were perceived by some administrators to have been very political over the practicum since they were really concerned about it. Nevertheless, the administrators observed that despite the

fact that the students provided useful information, most of the students sitting on the committees tended to be reactive rather than proactive.

Students were actively involved in decision-making at the institutional level. The Board of Governors, the Senate and the GFC non-student members were generally receptive to students' ideas. One senior administrator noted:

We have some effective students. One of the greatest thing about student involvement at the University is they are very well organized. I think the Board members do listen to them carefully. When they do act in a responsible manner, people always turn to them.

A representative of the community noted that

their input is welcomed in the Senate. They are treated as equals and they are not looked down upon in any way. Many students are perfectly mature people with their own ideas. On the Senate, we welcome students to express their opinions. They spoke up well, participated well, worked hard, stood up for what they believed in. They were listened to. I think they have made a valuable contribution.

Students on GFC had a much more active involvement. They were well organized and prepared for the meetings. They were felt to have brought more information than professors as they were sitting on different University committees. One academic staff member noted:

I am quite pleasantly surprised at the preparation that many of the students made before they came to those GFC meetings. They were well prepared, better than many of the faculty members. Many faculty members even don't look at the minutes before they come and don't think about the issues before they come. Many students take their positions on GFC very seriously. They often see themselves as a minority. Therefore they think they have to prepare twice as hard in order to be able to influence decisions.

This observation was supported by another academic staff member:

Students do this homework, I think, much better than most of the professors, their questions can be very clear and precise. They carry much more of the arguments in some situations compared to faculty members. Actually if you look at the amount of talking at a GFC meeting, you will find the proportion of talking of students is much higher than that of faculty members.

Other members on institutional governing bodies observed that student participation had been substantial. Students were especially active in the debates at the GFC level. They were able to receive support from the academic staff members. These students were also perceived by others to have been reasonably effective in putting their points across.

However, the administrators and other members on the Board, GFC, and the Senate noted that there was great variation in the effectiveness of individual student representatives.

Based on the observations of the interviewees, different students on the University committees played different roles. Some were watchdogs; and some worked as information providers. Many student representatives worked well as colleagues.

In summary, most of the students who were involved in decision-making at the department level were graduate students as student-at-large members. As a result, there was a lack of coordination amongst them. Many of them tried their best to participate in decision-making and contribute to decisions, while some were reluctant to speak. Graduate students were perceived by others to have participated in the process better than undergraduate students. Most of them felt they were treated well by the others and they were satisfied with what they did for their departments. At the faculty level, ESA was actively involved in decision-making as an organized student voice; its representatives tried their best to influence the decisions relating to practicum which was a major concern to Education students. But many students were seen as passive in their involvement. At the institutional level, representatives of student organizations were substantially and effectively involved in discussions and debates. They were well organized and prepared in their involvement. Many students contributed to decisions, whereas some were not effective. Finally, student representatives on University committees at different levels played different roles in their involvement due to different personal factors.

Exclusionary Areas

The findings of the study indicate that there were some decision areas in which student involvement was excluded, and some committees at different levels did not involve students, as indicated in Chapter 4. For example, at the institutional level, some standing committees of the Board of Governors, including the Executive Committee, excluded student representatives. At the faculty level, students were excluded from the Faculty

Salaries and Promotion Committee and the Dean's Advisory Committee. At the departmental level, students were not formally involved in making decisions on personnel, including the selection of new academic staff members, the annual review of the performance of academic staff members, tenure, and promotion of academic staff members, and the progress of specific students. The Field Experience Committee and the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee of Department A had no student representation. Some departmental committees of Department B did not have student members. According to the administrators from the two departments, it was not easy to find students who were willing to sit on the departmental committees. Nevertheless, student informants, including the Executive members of ESA, stated that they had never been invited to sit on the Field Experience Committee and the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee, which were directly related to undergraduate student issues.

Administrator and academic staff interviewees explained the reasons for the exclusion of students from certain decision areas. Some argued that students should not be involved in decisions concerning salaries, promotion, and tenure positions of academic staff members in that the process involves careers and confidential personal information.

One senior administrator deemed that

in terms of the decisions concerning salaries, promotion, and tenure, given the sensitivity of those decisions, my own feeling is that they should not be involved. I am not convinced that the process of choosing students who participate in a particular time would mean we have students on those committees who are particularly well qualified to carry out that particular responsibility.

Additionally, the University evaluation of salary and promotion was based on the premise that decisions are made by peers about peers. Students were not seen as peers. One academic staff member analyzed the reason for the exclusion as follows:

The university is also seen as a professional organization. So it is guided by the principles of professionalism, which is a theoretical notion. Students don't have the right or the ability to make judgment within the notion of professionalism since they are not seen as equals within the elitist model.

Some academic staff members noted that sometimes it was not only an exclusion of students from those decisions, but also of academic staff members. However, some

administrators thought that students should not be totally excluded from the process even if they were not seen as equals. One senior administrator commented:

Certainly some students could handle that and provide valuable input to it. It is possible to get students to meet with people who are going to be hired and talk with them. Then they have a chance not necessarily to vote on whether this person is hired, but at least to express and have input on some of the concerns or some of the issues they think should be kept in mind in hiring.

In short, students were not involved in certain decisions on campus for the following reasons. In the first place, some administrators did not believe it appropriate to involve students in some important decisions, including personnel and budget, at the institutional level. Secondly, certain decisions were sensitive ones with personal career and confidential information involved. Thirdly, students were not seen as peers in decisions concerning promotion and tenure issues of academic staff members; they were in an inferior position as far as knowledge and competence were concerned. The notion of elite had obviously shaped some academic staff members' attitudes towards who should be judging them.

Major Issues in 1992-1993

In the 1992-1993 academic year, rationalization or restructuring of the University faculties and departments, reallocation of resources, and strategies to deal with continuously reducing financial resources were mainly addressed by the University decision-making bodies at all three levels. Almost all the major issues were related to the financial restraint faced by the University. At the institutional level, issues concerning the operation of the University under such difficult circumstances were the central ones. The merger of the Faculty of Home Economics and the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry was specifically discussed. A paper named *Key Issues Facing the U of A* was distributed, and discussed. Tuition fees and student loans reform were also major topics for discussion. The Board of Governors was examining a way to restructure the student loan program. Supported by the GSA representatives, the SU President had been pressing for the income contingency model throughout the whole year. The result was that the Board was firmly

behind the plan, and would work to see it implemented. Furthermore, there seemed to be more concerns about students as the budget cut had real impact on them. Sponsored by the University, several surveys were conducted regarding the first-year undergraduate students' experience, the financial status of both undergraduate students and graduate students, and students' unwanted sexual experience. Changes in the library policy concerning circulation of periodicals and library opening hours were discussed as important student-related issues. The Campus Food Bank was set up by GSA to help international graduate students. Yet, it was not fully supported by the University administration according to graduate student informants.

At the faculty level, restructuring of the Faculty of Education was a major concern. The Associate Dean Planning was asked to review the function and organization of the Faculty, and to come up with some proposals with regard to changing some committees, creating some new ones, and merging some departments. The fiscal realities of Alberta were reported, and analyzed. Moreover, the enrollment management policy concerning the quota for the Faculty was discussed. Assessment of teaching was another major concern, especially how the assessment could be used to help professors improve their teaching.

At the departmental level, budget cuts, a possible merger of Department B with other departments within the Faculty of Education, how to react to the Associate Dean's proposal on the merger, approaches to market its programs, and fund-raising were major topics for discussion by the Council and by the committees of Department B. Building a stronger community of scholars, students' work load, research methodology, as well as issues of practicum were addressed by the Council and by the committees of Department A. A survey on issues of the graduate program was conducted by Department A, and some decisions were made which would affect the development of a set of principles guiding the graduate programs.

Programs available to students who did not live in Edmonton were discussed by both departmental councils. Some practical issues such as teaching, and grading policies

were also addressed by the two departments. Furthermore, both departments reviewed their Ph.D. and master's programs trying to find out things for improvement.

In brief, it can be seen clearly that how to deal with the financial restraint faced by the University was the central issue, and that concern led to the discussions and debates on restructuring the University structure, changes in academic programs and the rise of tuition fees. Hence most of the above decisions were either directly or indirectly related to students' interests, and they were of significance to students.

Student Strategies

As presented previously, the impact of students on decisions of significance to them was limited for various reasons. However, students adopted a range of strategies, including formal and informal means to influence student-related decisions.

Lobbying

According to the interviewees, lobbying on different occasions was a major strategy used by students to exert their influence on decisions relating to students' interests. Both undergraduate students and graduate students made full use of social functions to talk to the administrators, and to build personal relationships with them. They believed it important for them to tell the administrators why students' views are important and to give them enough information. Some administrator interviewees observed that students had certainly been able to buttonhole the Board members and administrators regarding some issues through informal conversations, lunches, and tea and coffee breaks. One Executive member of SU called it the necessary social work in the committees. He emphasized the significance of making use of these functions:

It is interesting to see how much business can be done at the social functions. There are opportunities here to build relationships. You can't get everything done on the committee level; you have to know that there is a whole other set of communication through which more work can be done than just at the committee level. We talked with people -- administrators --after a baseball game about quality

teaching. You can develop with administrators and people on the Board a trusted relationship.

One GSA Executive member commented on what could be achieved during the functions:

"Certainly we can raise awareness, and in many cases there are further questions that can and should be asked to look at what's happening." Another student from SU added:

We have accomplished a lot in talks and other social settings outside the meetings which often serve as catalyst for some decisions that do happen at the meetings. The social atmosphere provided the informal meetings for making some decisions and getting the process started.

A student-at-large member of the Board of Governors believed that students can make most impact during these functions. He stated:

Social functions, that's where actually I think I made the most impact. You talk to Board members back and forth about something, giving them ideas and making them think about things. There are twenty people on the Board. We don't have time to get to know people. So we have to jump right in.

The GSA Executive members invited people to the Faculty Club when they wanted to get something done. They believed that decisions were usually made at the interpersonal level.

One vice-president of GSA said: "I actually found that you would get a lot more done if you knew an important person. Generally speaking, your personal relationship with people is absolutely crucial. You have to sell yourself first, then the issue next." Thus, there was a tendency at GSA to exert influence by talking to a person, and talking to another if that did not work. One of the senior administrators commented on students' efforts in this respect:

They lobby us through various social events, asking us to come to barbecues, and the University Night celebration. There were many public things that they do both for students, and for the community in which I was always asked to turn up, participate or do something of that sort. So that sort of active use of functions to involve the administration in what they were doing, I think, is very effective.

All the student organizations encouraged their representatives to lobby the administrators and academic staff members whenever and wherever possible, especially when important issues were addressed. One Executive member of SU gave an example:

We do meet with the University administration when things come up. For example, our Vice-President Internal talked with the Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs of the University about the Sexual Assault Center, and I think

that's part of the reason why it has been approved now. Through talking with the University President and the Vice-President we now have the University's commitment to the concept of bringing all of the university student services to the SU building. So informal talks with the senior administrators have a very strong impact, provided that it is done properly.

They met not only with the senior administrators, but also with people who had grasped some new ideas. Hopefully, they could help the other people buy into their vision.

Some student-at-large members on the University committees also tried hard to talk to different people prior to their participation in the decision-making activities of the University governing committees. One student-at-large member on the Board stated that

when people know some decisions will come to the Board, they would call me up and say: "I just want to talk to you about this, and I have this information," or I will call them either the deans or the Students' Council representatives to see what I could do for them. All these things happened outside the Board room. In many ways, the decisions are made before you arrive.

Furthermore, SU encouraged their GFC members to lobby professors to build a united front in dealing with the administration. One vice-president of SU stated: "We are trying to encourage our GFC members to mingle and meet with professors, and talk to them because so many times students and academic staff think about things in the same way." Regarding students' influence on professors' opinions, one administrator from the Faculty of Education noted: "They lobbied by just dropping by and talking to a professor. It really influences professors' judgment. Some professors supported students' points of view because of that. This has often happened." In terms of related effect, one senior administrator commented that:

The SU Executive members are pretty good lobbyists. To a lesser extent, so are the graduate students. But the SU people are professional politicians. They are very good and thoughtful ones. They are active in making sure that other people in decision-making positions on the University committees see a full range of issues they think are important.

According to the administrators of the Faculty of Education, ESA was fairly active in an informal way in meeting with the Dean's Advisory Committee which consists of chairs, the dean, and other people to talk about some issues related to undergraduate programs. At the

departmental level, students often lobbied the chair. In this regard, the administrator interviewee of Department B recalled:

They came privately and tried to convince me when there were serious issues. Sometimes they exerted pressure as a group. They were also trying to influence my secretary who then told me. What they did and said in that way made a difference. I may change my decision or make a decision that otherwise wasn't going to be made.

Coordination and Preparations

Students did talk to each other before the University committee meetings, more to compare strategies than to see who was voting for what. SU did well in related activities. There was the GFC Student Caucus organized by SU where students met, looked at the agenda, and discussed some of the implications for students before the GFC meetings. In addition, according to the Vice-President Internal of SU, the Board of Faculty Associations of SU usually met before the GFC meetings to discuss students' positions, and exchange information. She gave a specific example:

Before the recommendations for the Sexual Assault Center went through COSL, we talked with a number of directors of our services that also sat on COSL to see what we were going to say and how we were going to vote, which created a strong voting bloc.

One academic staff member sitting on GFC also observed that

they do hold those kinds of meetings which are both information meetings for them, as well as an opportunity to set their brief. They do alert people who they think will be interested in an item, and say: "This item is coming up, I think you should be aware of it, and you may wish to have this information." They are trying to get people to lobby on their side. There is a fair bit that kind of involvement I think from the students at GFC level and at the senior executive level of both graduate and undergraduate students.

Students also exchanged ideas with academic staff members, and support staff members in order to gain their support. One academic staff member recalled:

I can remember once when I was on the GFC Executive Committee, people from the Academic Staff association, the Non-academic Staff Association, both undergraduate students and graduate students sat down together before a GFC meeting, and agreed on a strategy and defeated a motion prepared by the President of the University. That was well prepared.

One student-at-large member of the Board said that, as a student-at-large representative, he had talked to as many students as he could, including the students who sat on different committees, prior to the Board meetings.

Some students, especially the representatives of SU, laid emphasis on the preparations for the University committee meetings. A few academic staff members sitting on the institutional governing bodies noted that student representatives normally had motions prepared; most of them wrote down what they intended to say and read it from notes. So these students were perceived to have understood the issues, and knew which items to speak to in representing their stakeholders.

Managing Transition

The executives of the student organizations realized through their practice that something must be done to ensure they had a satisfactory transition with the next group.

One Executive member of SU commented in this respect:

You have to give as much as you can to the next person because we only have twelve months. I sat with my successor on the last meeting with the phone list of the University committee members, telling him that: "this person voted like this; he or she has a tendency to talk like this; and he is a friend with that person."

Among the three student organizations, SU was the most successful in facilitating the transition. The President of SU stated: "We really put a focus this year. We made a commitment to professional development and we budgeted money in every one's department so they could go on courses whether it's management training or whatever else." The SU Executive members were elected in the middle of March. They had six weeks' time before commencing their duties, so they could spend time with the outgoing executive members to learn about the positions. The SU Executive members normally had several meetings to talk about different aspects of the role. In 1992-1993, SU started a management training program in which a three-day course was offered for all the directors and all the new executive members, and guest speakers were hired to train the new student Executive members in leadership, communication, and supervision techniques. SU also

had an executive retreat at the end of April in each year, in which outgoing executive members and incoming ones went out of town for four or five days to talk about SU and related issues. The outgoing people usually told the incoming people what had happened in the past year and made recommendations for the next year.

Each member of the GSA Executive Committee was required by GSA to discuss with his or her successor how to deal with the GSA office, and the institutional governing bodies. This was explained by the GSA President:

Each member of the GSA Executive has written a transition report for his or her successor. If new members of the Executive have any questions, they can phone or drop a note. We can talk about things with regard to dealing with GSA office, the Board of Governors, and with the administration, that sort of things, which are not put down on paper.

Utilizing Media

Students' mass media played an important role in assisting their involvement in the governance of the University. One administrator observed that students had their own newspaper and newsletters; they wrote to the editors on different issues. People were influenced by that. According to different interviewees, students used the media to put pressure on the administration concerning some important student-related decisions. They noted that the media supported the students' positions frequently and effectively. One vice-president of SU gave an example:

In terms of the establishment of the Sexual Assault Center, many different groups of students and academic staff voted on it in meetings supporting the center unanimously. We had it in *Gateway*, in the *Edmonton Journal*, and in *Sun*. The media helped. The University administration had to agree to set it up. The couldn't say it is not an issue. You have to put some pressure on them.

Furthermore, to make the public aware of its positions on students' concerns, SU bought full-page advertisements in *Gateway* to put their points across on a number of issues (The GSA Council minutes, P. 49).

Practical Engagement

GSA applied constructive ways of working with the administration in 1992-1993. The GSA President held that things should be approached on a practical rather than an ideological or philosophical basis. It would be more effective if students could come up with some proposals or bargaining positions. One Executive member of GSA thought that students would not be listened to if they went to the meetings with just a predetermined agenda. He pointed out:

If we approach issues on an issue-by-issue basis and ask ourselves what are the pros and cons, and if we can not get this, what we can get as a tradeoff, then we have a better chance of being heard and also being able to effect change, maybe not in one year, but certainly over a period of years.

Another Executive member of GSA supported this view by giving a specific example:

While I realize and acknowledge that the GSA official policy on increasing fees is to oppose them, I also feel that if we only oppose the increase, it is inadequate and counter-productive. These are people on the Board who have said that they expect students to oppose fees and they will not listen to us when we voice our opposition. However, if we come up with bargaining positions, they will listen. Thus one can ask for some sort of trade off between determination on the rate of increase and the kinds of service being provided.

Regarding the strategy used to make the administration accept the proposal for the reform of the student loan program, the SU President commented:

Sometimes I have to say no more tuition for some reasons, then I also have to say: "OK, if we are going to put the tuition up, I want this back." We can not continue to pay more and get lower quality. That is why the income contingency program comes in.

Students felt it necessary to make necessary compromises. One graduate student representative sitting on the Council of Department A spoke of his own experience:

I tried to strike compromise and it still satisfies where I stand. There is a realistic possibility of coming together of the two positions. But between meetings I will talk to people on both sides, actually to talk to them in a more straightforward manner. I might go and meet with people on the opposite side too and explain my position and why I think it is better for the graduate students. Most of the talks have been successful.

In summary, the major strategies used by students included lobbying during social functions and on other occasions, effectively utilizing the mass media, strengthening the

coordination amongst student representatives and with the representatives of other interest groups as well as preparations for meetings, having necessary training for students to be involved in the process, and using realistic and practical approaches in their involvement.

Summary

Student involvement in the decision-making processes of the University governing bodies in 1992-1993 has been described above. Perspectives on student involvement are presented. Students, as customers of the University, have a right to participate in making decisions that affect them. Administrators and academic staff need students' input in decision-making. Students can assume some responsibilities for the quality of their programs through their involvement. Some students, especially graduate students, have enough knowledge and experience to contribute to the decisions of the University. Student involvement in the process is also beneficial developmentally to the students and to the society. Most of the student informants had positive perceptions. Nevertheless, some administrators and academic staff members thought that the primary role of students is to study; they should not be encouraged to be full-time politicians. They do not have to be involved in decision-making because they still have a voice by filling out questionnaires and answering questions. Additionally, students' lack of experience and knowledge, and their immaturity and other disadvantages prevented them from participating in decision-making effectively.

Moreover, observations on student involvement in decision-making at the three levels were examined. Students were generally perceived by others to have been actively involved in the decisions of the University committees at different levels although some of them were irresponsible and passive in their involvement. According to student informants, the administration at different levels generally supported student involvement. Almost all the students on departmental committees were graduate students as students-at-large members. They actively participated in and contributed to departmental decision-

making. Graduate students were perceived to have been more active and better involved in decision-making than undergraduate students. Nonetheless, they virtually acted on their own, and there was a lack of coordination amongst them. ESA appointed its members to participate in the decision-making processes at the Faculty of Education; its representatives tried their best to protect the interests of Education undergraduate students. However, their involvement was seen by others as reactive in most cases. The representatives of the student organizations were perceived by different informants to have been influential on the committees at the institutional level; their involvement was seen as substantial and effective.

The major issues addressed in 1992-1993 at all three levels included rationalization or restructuring of the University faculties and departments, reallocation of resources and strategies to deal with continuously reducing financial resources. It can be seen that almost all these major issues were related due to the financial restraint faced by the University. These issues were either directly or indirectly related to students' interests. Hence, students were concerned about them and were actively involved in related discussions and debates.

The strategies used by students in their involvement in the administrative decision-making processes in 1992-1993 were described in detail. These strategies embodied their lobbying during social functions and on other occasions, managing transition, effectively utilizing their media, coordination and preparation activities, necessary training for students involved in the process, and practical engagement in their involvement.

CHAPTER 7: STUDENT GOVERNMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY IN 1992-1993

Chapter 4 has presented the composition and the major functions of SU, GSA, and ESA, as well as their representation of students on the University governing bodies. This chapter discusses why and how students were involved in the student government, and how they administered their own affairs in 1992-1993. The related data in the chapter, which are both descriptive and interpretive, include the antecedent experiences of students' involvement in student affairs, students' motivations to be involved, indispensable roles of the student government, and the problems as well as concerns of the student government.

Perspectives of Informants

Antecedent Experiences

During the interviews, the researcher asked all the student interviewees to tell briefly the history of their involvement in dealing with student affairs. Of the nine graduate students who replied, six first became active in student governance when they were undergraduate students, and two were first involved during their graduate studies. One graduate student was first involved in high school. Among the nine undergraduate students who responded to the question, five started to be involved in student governance during their undergraduate studies; three became involved in high school or even earlier. One was first involved at a college before coming to the University. Thus it can be seen that almost all of these student interviewees had had some experience in administering student affairs before they were formally involved in student governance at the University in 1992-1993, and their interest in administering student affairs was obviously nurtured during their previous practice.

Motivations

Seventeen graduate and undergraduate students interviewed in the study expressed multiple reasons for their involvement; each appeared to stress one particular motive or motives. The most commonly mentioned reasons are listed in Table 7.1 in sequence following the frequencies of the answers of respondents:

Table 7.1: Individual Students' Personal Motivations for Involvement in Student Governance

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- a) to make constructive changes/good governance
 - b) for personal development because of the professional experience involved and/or for personal political career
 - c) to socialize
 - d) willing to serve other students in return as they previously benefited from the student-run services
 - e) influenced by parents and other students
-

Almost all the student respondents expressed their desire to make changes to improve the student government, specifically to improve the political representation of students on University committees, and to better the services for the students. One Executive member of SU said, "I saw myself as having ideas that I would like to see happen either in SU or in the University. I was stimulated from the desire to propose change." Some students deemed that action is better than words; student involvement itself is a positive action. They really wanted to be involved in the process trying to make changes rather than sitting on the sideline and complaining without making an effort.

The second major reason for their involvement was that their roles in the student organizations were more or less related to the subjects they were studying. In this sense, their involvement was regarded as working experience, which would be useful to their

professional careers. For instance, the Vice-President Finance of SU was an undergraduate student of business; both the Vice-President Finance and the Vice-President Services of GSA were studying in business administration. Some student leaders admitted that they were interested in politics; they considered their involvement in student government to be useful for their future political careers. Moreover, quite a few student interviewees believed that they were involved for social reasons. One typical comment made by the student interviewees was that they regarded their involvement as an opportunity to meet with other people, and a "break" from their busy studies.

One student interviewee emphasized that as a student he had benefited from the student-run services before, and he wanted to return the favor to some other students. In the eyes of these students, the student-run services were more student oriented than the University student services, and therefore they should be strengthened through students' active involvement. Finally, a few student interviewees believed that they participated in the student government under the influence of their parents, good friends or fellow students who were involved in politics.

In addition to the above personal motivations, there were some factors such as family environment and financial status that may have influenced students' personal motivations to be involved in student politics. One academic staff member made his observation on who would be likely to participate in student government:

There is a lot evidence that is tied to social class that children from lower social classes have a low sense of political efficacy and external locus of control, while children from upper class families have a higher sense of political efficacy and more often an internal locus of control. So when they come to universities, it's not surprising you may find students who are most likely to be active participators come from families that have more than their share of wealth.

Similar views were expressed by some student interviewees. One vice-president of GSA made the following comment:

Sometimes students who can actually afford to be involved in student politics are people who have got money and time. So I see this as a very middle-class activity. Some of my students have to go to work at night; they do not have time to be involved.

The above observations demonstrate that all of these students understood the significance of their involvement in student government. Their personal motivations to be involved in the student government were very practical, and they knew their participation would be beneficial to both the University and their personal growth. In addition to making contributions to students on campus and to the governance of the University, they all had objectives to benefit themselves. Finally, as observed by some people, those who were not involved in student affairs before, and who did not receive any political influence from their living environment, and those who had financial difficulties were probably less likely to participate in student government.

Indispensable Roles of the Student Government

During the interviews, student interviewees all expressed their personal views on the indispensable roles of the student government, which, the researcher thinks, are convincing, and more specific than some theoretical arguments in the literature as the students looked at their role in the governance of the University from realistic perspectives.

The most common response from the student interviewees was that the University administration inadequately understood what students would want. Additionally, from a philosophical standpoint, students should be able to administer their own affairs because that is why universities have existed, and power should be shared. The advantages of student government are that, first of all, there are no age and other barriers since it is students working with students; and second, the student organizations were perceived by students to understand student issues better as whatever influenced students also directly influenced the students working for the student government, and they are able to listen and respond to students' needs, to protect the students' interests, and to look at related issues from the students' points of view. One ESA Executive member thought that students involved in the student organizations are very practical, so the goals they set are realistic, concrete, and attainable. Some students felt that another advantage of student government

is that every new group of students brings in some new ideas, which would keep everything done by the student organizations current, and most students do not have those old assumptions that the others might have.

Most administrators, including senior administrators, recognized the significant role that the student government had been playing in providing an opportunity to build leaders for the future, and the different kinds of services that had satisfied the needs of students. One senior administrator noted that many leaders of this country had actually come out of student government. The administrator interviewees also expressed their appreciation of the capabilities, and the effectiveness of students involved in administering their own affairs, in running the SU building, as well as facilities and services for students. The University President stated that SU had played a vital role in the University community through its own specific Students' Union services (Students' Council minutes, March 16, 1993). The Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs of the University spoke highly of the role that the student organizations had been playing in University affairs:

I think they are extremely effective in administering their own affairs. SU is an effective organization. They take steps to train themselves in administration, train themselves in leadership, and train themselves in being effective to accomplish their goals. They are surprisingly able to pass along a set of shared goals across a number of student administrations because any given student government administration is there only for a year. There is a formal mechanism to pass along the projects that are going on. They have been effective in running the Students' Union Building. They run a number of programs that I think are very worthwhile. They have made real contributions to the services to students on campus.

In brief, most of the interviewees believed that the student government is beneficial to both the students and the University, and the indispensable role of the student government in administering student affairs was also recognized by the administration and students.

Major Achievements in 1992-1993

The following are specific things done by the three student organizations for the well-being of the University students, as well as their major achievements within their organizations on campus and outside the campus in 1992-1993.

As the largest student organization, SU did quite a few important things in 1992-1993. First of all, SU rewrote its constitutions and bylaws so as to improve its governance and services. SU celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Students' Union Building (SUB) by acknowledging the achievements of the founders of the SUB and discussing renovation plans for the next 25 years. Renovations of SUB was a big project for SU this year; 2.1 million dollars budget was approved by the Students' Council. There are now over 300 comfortable places in the renovated SUB for students to relax, meet with friends, and study in a living room atmosphere. All the SU services are currently located in one convenient central location on the lower level of SUB.

All the SU services worked together to develop a strategic plan to make services more effective and efficient. Based on a SU report of March 9, 1993 published in *Gateway*, named *Students' Union Year in Review*, and other sources, in 1992-1993, the SU Ombudservice dealt with 220 cases of academic appeals or complaints for students; the Student Financial Aid and Information Center served almost 2000 students; SU set up the new Student Groups Resource Room to open the next year; SU added one information station in the Light Rail Transit Terminal to serve students' information needs; a campus-wide volunteer-run Safewalk Program was set up by SU; the SU Registries provided more new Macintosh computers for students, and lists to help students find a place to live; from this year on, all the University departments must submit their past exams to the SU Exam Registry through SU's efforts, making the system more fair and equitable; SU developed a comprehensive alcohol awareness program for staff and students; SU gave \$65,000 in grants to faculty students' associations in order to sponsor students to attend conferences, to help them upgrade their offices, and start new groups; the SU Administration Board

granted \$30,000 to different clubs, student organizations, and international student organizations on campus in 1992-1993; and the SU Research Department did a survey regarding student vital statistics, academic program information, student loan status, and financial situation.

SU made some significant achievements on the University governing bodies. The Income Contingency Program for student loans was proposed by SU, which supported the study of "income contingency" loan repayment plans to determine the feasibility of their implementation in Alberta and Canada. The Board and GFC were committed to working with students to reform student loans. Several recommendations made by SU were formally adopted by the Senate in its work to improve student finances. The credibility of SU with both the Board of Governors and the Senate resulted in a deeper understanding of student finances. SU worked hard to improve teaching quality through the new teacher evaluation system, and the proposal was making its way through the University committee structure. SU also supported the concepts of universal teaching evaluations and the dissemination of evaluations. Moreover, SU worked and cooperated with the University Student Services to improve the student-related services on campus. SU's strong voice on the Council on Student Life helped achieve campus-wide support for the establishment of the Sexual Assault Center on campus. SU's initiative was based on the survey conducted by the University on unwanted sexual experiences among U of A students.

Cooperation between SU and GSA was strengthened. The President of SU and President of GSA held a joint news conference on 11 August, 1992 to speak out about the proposed provincial freezing or cutback to spending on higher education. The President of SU pushed the need for introducing an income contingent loan scheme. The President of GSA stressed that the loan system needed to be reformed, and the SU President's idea would be one part of a reformation. This marked a spirit of closer cooperation between SU and GSA, something that was sometimes lacking in the past.

SU was also active in its external activities. Working with several other post-secondary institutions, SU got the transit pass for students reduced by four dollars each month. Additionally, the federal government adopted a proposal set forth by SU to increase the amount students can claim as education credit from \$60 to \$80. As a result, students nationwide would be able to take advantage of a new credit. Having submitted a comprehensive report on post-secondary education to both the provincial government and the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) prior to the provincial election, SU was ensuring that their concerns were known provincially. Moreover, as invited delegates to "Toward 2000 Together", a provincial conference, the SU representatives ensured that education was emphasized as the key to students' futures.

SU invited Alberta premier, Ralph Klein, to speak to students, and to field questions from students. The SU President and Vice-President External met with the Minister of Advanced Education on the following issues a) requirements of the admission of students, b) income contingency loans, and c) program rationalization - future budgets and implications for post-secondary institutions. The SU representatives recommended that the 60% high school average requirement be maintained for students to attain full-time status rather than the government-proposed 80% . In addition, the SU representatives also met with several senior officials of the Alberta government to voice students' concerns, and developed strategies for student loan reform and a commitment to higher education. Furthermore, the SU President met with the federal Minister of State for Amateur Sport and Fitness and the Minister of State for Youth, Pierre Cadieux, to discuss proposed changes to the Canada Student Loan Program, established programs funding, and the fall referendum on the unity of Canada. According to Pierre Cadieux, the federal government was looking into changing the student loan system. The U of A SU was the first group the Minister met on these issues, which indicated that the U of A SU gained a certain level of credibility in federal circles.

The SU representatives discussed such post-secondary issues as government policies, students' common experiences and problems with the representatives of the students' unions of different Alberta universities and colleges. These meetings gave the students' unions a good chance to talk to the Minister of Advanced Education as a group and try to understand the government's plans for post-secondary education. Having played a leading role in the discussions, the SU President and Vice-President External represented CAUS to speak to the government officials concerning student participation in any proposed scheme to rationalize or reorganize post-secondary education in Alberta, and to ask that student loans be reorganized on the basis of an income contingency loan repayment scheme as proposed in the Smith Commission Report (The SU Minutes, 1992-1993).

At the national level, SU strengthened its coordination with the students' unions in other parts of Canada. A national conference of student associations entitled "Directing the Winds of Change 1992" was held at U of A from November 12 to 15, 1992. The representatives of 16 students' unions from across the country attended the Conference. The national voice of students, improvement of communication between the students' unions, enhancing student-run businesses, the student loan system, teaching quality, and campus life were some of the issues the Conference participants discussed. The Conference examined options available to student organizations interested in lobbying at a national level. Among the options, was the creation of a national association to rival the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) representing over 50 schools; SU and many large University students' unions in Canada were not members of CFS. SU was also actively involved in other political activities at the national level. For instance, SU distributed a document to 20 to 30 universities, and the general message was along the lines of "My Canada Includes Quebec" to emphasize the significance of national unity. Finally, the SU President represented the U of A SU at the Symposium of the Center for the Study of Presidency in Washington, D.C. where over 600 undergraduate students from Canada, USA and South America attended the Symposium.

In terms of the communication and cooperation between SU and the community, the SU Vice-President Finance contacted the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and discussed student involvement on various committees. The Student Inner-City Services Association was organized by SU in response to the need for volunteers to serve in various community organizations in Edmonton. Additionally, the SU Vice-President External outlined his involvement with the SU Pre-election Strategy Team in getting the SU messages out to the community during the provincial election. The positive approach of SU to building links with the community led the University alumni to work with SU in constructing an Alumni Wall of Recognition in the new living room of the Students' Union Building. Furthermore, SU invited community members to live "the Day of A Student" on campus.

To encourage more capable graduate students to be involved in GSA, the organization increased the monthly stipend for its Executive members. It revised its constitution and by-laws in order to improve its management, and the GSA office was restructured as the leaders thought they had better get their own affairs in order before going out campaigning. The GSA office staff were asked by the Executive to run a more effective and efficient office; the files of the office were reorganized, all the computer software was made to work, and the accounting system was updated. This was the first year when the GSA office was large enough to accommodate all the Executive members with individual work stations. As for its services, GSA renewed the management agreement for the operation of the Power Plant Restaurant and the Bar. The back-room bar of the premises was expanded so as to serve more students.

GSA upgraded the profile of the graduate students on campus in 1992-1993 by undertaking a financial survey of graduate students because the Executive members found it very difficult to talk to the administration of the University without the necessary information. The Campus Food Bank was established by GSA primarily to help foreign students who had to pay additional tuition fees. The GSA Council started a half-hour weekly GSA radio show on the campus radio station, CJSR, which aired graduate student

issues to a much wider audience than in the past. According to the Executive members of GSA, the rationale for having the radio show was that as educational resources became scarcer, and government policies were under greater scrutiny, it was especially important that the community who paid for education should understand a little more about it.

Working with the administration, GSA solved several problems that had troubled graduate students. For example, GSA negotiated with the University administration a new assistantship contract and the improvement of working conditions for teaching and research assistants. The GSA representatives renewed the regulations governing graduate students (the “Yellow Book”) in an attempt to strengthen the position of graduate students in several areas. For example, there was explicit recognition of intellectual property of assistants in the course of discharging their duties. The GSA-University Administration Agreement on Regulations Governing Graduate Assistantship was ratified by the GSA Council. In addition, the GSA negotiating team agreed to set aside 1% of the 2% salary increase for teaching and research assistants to create a fund to help international graduate students paying the additional 100% foreign differential fee. GSA used the fund to wave 50% of foreign differential fee for international graduate students on campus in 1992-1993. Moreover, GSA made the administration change the policy to overcharge graduate students; the methods of assessment of fees for graduate students registered in course-based programs was changed from a program-based model to an assessment-by-course-weight model. The contribution of the President of GSA on the base rate calculation was acknowledged by the Chair of PPC. As a result, the graduate student fee in the proposed instructional fee schedule would be revised from \$ 47.72 to \$ 46.90. GSA also addressed the issue of library periodicals, and made the arrangement with the University library which would allow students to sign out periodicals on weekends.

GSA made progress in its relationship with the national graduate student organizations. For years, the only national organization speaking for graduate students was the National Graduate Conference (NGC), which was a lobbying group within the

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). GSA was only a provisional member of CFS-NGC. The Executive members of GSA had brought back uniformly negative reports on both the organizational relationship of NGC with CFS and the effectiveness of NGC within CFS. The GSA Council was virtually unanimous in backing the Executive members' recommendation that GSA not renew its provisional membership. Since then, GSA was waiting for the formation of an alternative national organization which would address graduate students' concerns. The newly established Canadian Graduate Council (CGC) appeared to be such an organization. GSA sent its representatives to some meetings of CGC with regard to how to run an efficient GSA, how to improve communication with the membership, how to increase participation, and how to deal with ethics in research, and the representatives were favorably impressed. GSA held a referendum in February, 1993 on whether graduate students at U of A should join CGC, and graduate students voted to do so.

Outside the campus, GSA continued to lobby government officials to waive the 100 per cent foreign student differential fee mandated by the province. The GSA President spoke with the Minister of Advanced Education in the fall and explained the difference between graduate students and undergraduate students, and why the differential fee should not apply to graduate students. It seemed that he made an impression, but more work still needed to be done. Yet, having spoken with other political parties, the GSA President felt that there was no will among any of the three opposition parties in Alberta to change this in the short-term.

As members of the Council of Alberta University Students, GSA was actively involved in its lobbying activities to change the student loan system to an income contingency repayment system, to make CAUS become the organization appointing university student representatives to the Provincial Student Finance Board and the Ministerial Policy Advisory Committee and to demand the major political parties provide statements on common education issues. In addition, GSA was involved in coordinating a

common summer outreach program to provide all Albertans with the opportunity to learn about the state of advanced education in the province, to hear the opinions of diverse groups of individuals and groups, and to encourage them to present their vision of education to their provincial and federal representatives. Furthermore, the President of GSA presented his thoughts on what kind of principles should be behind the restructuring of post-secondary education in Alberta at a CAUS meeting, and the GSA Executive members submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Advanced Education concerning the reorganization of the delivery of post-secondary education in Alberta. Finally, the GSA representatives went to the joint election strategy meeting with ACTISEC (Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council), trying to work out a joint strategy for a provincial election in order to raise the issue of post-secondary education.

In 1992-1993, the ESA Executive discussed the changes of the ESA by-laws and constitution so as to improve the operation and management of ESA. ESA also took steps to improve its communication with students in Education. For instance, ESA set up a student information center located in the hallway outside of the ESA Office, hopefully to solve the problem of accessibility. In addition, the ESA Executive discussed the possibilities of having a group of people speaking to the students with the intent of bridging the gap between ESA and students at large.

In terms of its general student services, ESA provided students of Education a variety of services ranging from peer counseling service on courses to forums on changes, issues and trends in schools, and teaching overseas in the field of professional development. With financial assistance from SU, ESA renovated its office in order to serve its members. Moreover, ESA assisted financially the undergraduate students of Education in various activities through its affiliated student associations and clubs. The Faculty of Education administration acknowledged that ESA provided valuable advice and assistance to students, which were complementary to the work of the Faculty Students' Services Office. For the first time, ESA published in conjunction with B & C List

Company a book named *First Look* to provide prospective students at the University with a general overview of the programs that the University as a whole offered.

The ESA representatives on various University committees and on the Students' Council of SU tried their best to represent the interests of the students of the Faculty of Education. On the Council of the Faculty of Education, the ESA representatives addressed concerns of Education students, including issues of admission arrangements and the student practicum. Improvements were made as a result of these efforts.

With regard to its external activities, having been formally involved in the decision-making process of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the ESA representatives voiced the U of A Education students' concerns in the ATA meetings. ESA also facilitated professional activities outside the campus for Education students. For instance, as one major student local of ATA, ESA made preparations for and attended the Student Local Conference organized by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Additionally, ESA selected some undergraduate Education students to attend the West Canada Student Teachers' Conference held in Vancouver, and partially sponsored them.

Concerns and Problems

The researcher discussed the concerns and problems in the student government with the respondents during the interviews. The following are the relevant findings.

Transience

Membership of student organizations is transient in nature. Transience was seen by the informants as a serious problem since there is a lack of continuity in the student organizations with different groups having different expectations. The consequence is that the student organizations have been single-year-focused. Sometimes, one group passes problems to the next year's group. Due to this, one GSA Executive member observed that GSA was not very consistent in developing or devising consistent policies about certain

issues. The ESA Executive members also perceived this as a big problem. They noted that there is a lack of integrity in the ESA policies from year to year. One Education student informant commented:

Probably the most consistent problem is transition. It's very difficult for us to keep continuity and to be aware of what has happened in the past. When the next group of students come, they have completely different expectations of what one person and one department should be doing.

Both graduate and undergraduate student informants stated that they were unable to fulfill some of their tasks as they worked for the student organizations for only one year. A SU Executive member made a comment commonly heard from the other student interviewees:

One of our weaknesses is our term is only one year long. It takes me four months to figure out what I am supposed to be doing. By the time I realize what is realistic for me to accomplish in the year, and by the time I set my goals and priorities, it's almost the end of the year.

As a result of students' transient nature, there were other problems. For instance, inadequate time for student involvement is another major problem. One SU Executive member mentioned that "it is hard to get other students interested and involved in SU simply because students do not have enough time to participate in activities due to the competitiveness in all aspects of the University." Unlike undergraduate students who only take courses in their studies, graduate students have to do their research. Many of them naturally did not get involved in GSA if they saw that was taking their time from what they thought was more important. Moreover, there were other disadvantageous factors for graduate students. For example, one graduate informant commented:

Advisers and departments do not understand why graduate students should be involved in student government, and consequently their transcripts will show that they added extra time onto their program.

Apathy

Apathy is a big problem amongst students; many students do not seem to care about politics and student affairs. One SU vice-president said: "We have a lot of students who could contribute a lot, but end up without contributing anything at all." The ESA President

added that "it is difficult to find people to fill positions of ESA at an exact time when needed. Some experienced people do not want to be involved. It is a matter of matching abilities to positions." One ESA Executive member criticized the apathy of some students:

Many students always complain a lot about something, but they do not want to do anything about it; they are not willing to come and actually meet someone or talk to someone about the problems. Many students have their little place, their little area and they do not see the whole university, the big picture. That's one of the big issues that needs to be addressed.

Very few students actually participated in the student elections; only a small percentage of students on campus voted. In the general election held by SU in early 1992, 5300 out of 25407 undergraduate students of the University voted (Williams, *Gateway*, March 16, 1993, p. 1). Hamilton, M., the GSA speaker and Chief Returning Officer, reported that in the 1993 GSA elections which were the first contested elections to have been held within the last five years, 415 ballots were cast with five of them spoiled, which means about 9% of the total eligible population voted in the elections (*1993 GSA Election Report*, p.1). According to the record of the ESA Office, in the ESA election held in March 1992, only 350 out of 2137 ESA members voted.

In addition to students' heavy course load, there were other reasons for this phenomenon according to the informants. Lack of incentive was one of the reasons. Among the three student organizations examined in the study, only the SU Executive members were able to work full-time and get their salaries; the GSA Executive members received only a small stipend (\$300.00 to \$400.00 for each Executive member per month); the ESA Executive members were unpaid. Some GSA Executive members felt that there was a lack of incentive for them to work like the others. One vice-president of GSA stated:

The GSA Executive members are not full time working for GSA. The GSA Executive members only have little allowance as stipend for all the work they have done for GSA. It's voluntary. Yet we are treated like everybody as if we are a full-time staff with well paid salary. We do not get treated as volunteers. A big problem of GSA is too few people doing too much.

Inadequate Communication

People from the three student organizations all admitted that they did not do a good job in selling what they did for the students. In relation to the low turn-out rate in the GSA election, some Executive members of GSA thought that it was because GSA did not have enough communication with graduate students. The Vice-President Internal of GSA explained:

There is a lack of effective communication with students; the only place GSA failed is advertising. I think GSA is very bad in communicating with graduate students. There's definitely a lack of communication there. We still got the sense that vast majority of graduate students have nothing to do with GSA.

One SU vice-president expressed his similar opinion:

I think SU does a very bad job in selling what it has done in the past. SU has done a lot for students. But very few people are aware of it. For the general student populace, SU does not have legitimacy because at least many students do not know what SU can do for them.

As a result, many students have no idea about what the students' organizations are there for. Many do not know where to start even if they want to get involved. One student interviewee thought: "Many people don't know what SU is doing. It is difficult to get most people to vote in the election. I don't think most people are informed voters. Thus I don't think everybody votes for the right reasons." Furthermore, student informants believed that it was even more difficult to find and recruit students who would stay involved and be active.

The student organizations did not communicate effectively with students at large since not all the departments had student representatives sitting on the council of the students organizations. In addition, student leaders did not go out enough to communicate with students. Sande (1993) reported one student's complaint about it:

Last week I finally met one of the SU Executive members who expected me to vote for him because he served on SU. If SU is to represent us, the least they should do is to stay in touch with us throughout the year, not just during election campaigns. (Gateway, March 11, 1993)

Moreover, there was no formal communication channel between the student-at-large representatives sitting on the council of the student organizations who were chosen mostly by acclamation and other students. According to the student-at-large councilors, they normally either talked to students they had known or contacted the student organizations to find out what students were concerned about. One of them spoke of his experience:

I was sitting on the SU Council which has around forty students representing a large number of other students from different faculties. I knew a lot of them and I did communicate with them. In addition, I knew something through what I read in the paper. If there was something that was really pressing, I would simply go out and ask a few students about it. I would tend to approach other groups before meetings.

Some of them chose to do little or nothing. It really depended on each individual student-at-large representative. In general, most student informants admitted that the communication between the student organizations and students at large had not been as good as it should be.

As the communication between the student organizations and students was inadequate, there existed consequential misunderstanding between student leaders and students. Some student informants felt that student leaders sometimes just wanted to make a name for themselves, especially during the election process. Some executive members of the student organizations were perceived by other students to have been only concerned about what they were interested in rather than what students really needed. One student commented that students had some concerns that were sometimes different from what SU chose to address. He explained his view by giving some examples:

SU addressed quality of teaching, the idea of getting teacher evaluation implemented that is accessible and that is publicly available. There is obviously some concern with residence by students. There is also concern with higher fees by students on campus which SU can't always necessarily do something about.

Furthermore, according to some student interviewees, sometimes there were power conflicts amongst student executive members. Thus one Executive member of SU admitted that sometimes people had negative images of SU and student politicians who were padding their resumes.

There was a feeling amongst student executive members that students often misunderstood them and blamed them for being unable to do certain things for students. Nonetheless, these students did not really see what student executive members had done and how much they had sacrificed. One SU Executive member commented:

We sacrificed a lot. I have spent most days, most evenings and most weekends here in office. You really can't do anything else. You have to take a year off your studies. Sometimes you get burnout very easily, and sometimes it is stressful. I probably spent about fifteen hours every week just going to meetings. I felt reading and preparing stuff took more time than going out to speak to students.

Finally, according to the President of ESA, the ESA Executive members sometimes were not respected by students as student leaders even though they had done a lot for Education students.

Management

There were also management problems within the student organizations. According to the GSA interviewees, the GSA office was a big issue. The work of the GSA office was not well organized, and it remained a problem. One GSA Executive member commented: "At present, we do not have either an office policy manual or a GSA policy manual. This means that our decisions are made on an *ad hoc* basis." Another Executive member added that "nobody has bothered to collect together all the decisions that had been made on the Council over the years." In addition, the GSA Executive members had never had their own offices and desks to work at in the past. Moreover, there was not much supervision for the office staff; they were free to do whatever they wanted. The GSA President criticized this during one Council meeting:

GSA has never had and does not have the office support to provide a full range of secretarial services for Executive or for GSA committees. This has been and is frustrating for the Executive members who have come from other more standard offices (the GSA Council minutes, P. 39). . . . Part of the Executive reorganization was based on the idea that staffing requirements in the GSA are in need of a change. This task remains undone (the GSA Council minutes, P. 90).

As ESA is made up of volunteers, its organizational management is not as good as that of the two major student organizations based on the observations of the researcher. In

1992-1993, its documents and mostly the hand-written minutes of meetings were not well filed with some even missing. The minutes of the ESA Council meetings suggested that some of the Executive members did not have written reports during the meetings; instead they reported orally. Moreover, as students in a professional faculty, students involved in ESA have some special problems. For instance, many of them were away for certain weeks each term for practicum. Consequently, some of the ESA Executive members were often not around when decisions had to be made, which also influenced the management of the organization. Furthermore, as all the ESA Executive members are volunteers, they may not be perceived by others as responsible as those people who are paid salaries and work full-time. In this regard, the ESA President commented:

There is a limit on how much we can expect from the people involved as they are all volunteers. As young students in their early twenties, they were very gung-ho at the beginning. They pulled out later due to their work schedule and family life or their enthusiasm was lost to some extent later.

As the biggest student organization, SU has excessive administrative work. The student Executive members explained their difficulties in running the organization. The SU President stated:

Another barrier is the pressure we have here as an administrator. I have got to split my brain into several directions. I have got to manage this place properly, and I have got to devote a lot of my time to the University and students, and I have got to do advanced reading to manage the organization properly and also try to help to direct the University. It's a huge commitment. There are so many things that go on here and we spend so much time in our offices, sometimes it's difficult to go out and let people know what's going on and communicate with people.

Both the SU President and the Vice-President External admitted that they did not have time to go out and talk to students because of too much paper work. In addition, one SU Executive member stated that when they had students from different faculties involved in the decision-making process of the Students' Council of SU, it was hard to coordinate because not all of them knew the policies of SU. Moreover, some SU Executive members felt that SU did not have a good structure for its employees. For instance, when the new employees came in, there was not adequate training. Consequently, they did not know

much about how SU functioned and how they could be most effective. Another Executive observed that SU did not do performance evaluations for its service directors.

Furthermore, there were also some problems between SU and its official newspaper, *Gateway*; there was often animosity between them. Although sponsored by SU, *Gateway* has its own editorial autonomy. It was sometimes perceived by some executive members of SU to have given misleading pictures of what was really happening within SU. In this regard, one SU vice-president commented:

Gateway, according to our bylaws, is the official newspaper of SU. But in reality it's not true because even though we fund it, what's printed does not necessarily reflect the views of SU. We provide them with space and we buy them lots of computers and we help them do all the things they need to print their papers. However, *Gateway* has editorial autonomy from SU which means they can print pretty much whatever they want to an extent, but within their limits. Sometimes you get things printed in *Gateway* which reflect poorly on SU, and gave a very misleading picture of what's actually happening. They are simply not true. There are some reports in *Gateway* that are definitely very fair and unbiased and objective. However, I think they need to maintain their editorial autonomy and to be able to provide an objective view.

In 1992-1993, one *Gateway* cartoon was perceived by some students on campus as anti-semitism, and caused many debates amongst students, especially within SU. The issue was eventually brought to the Board of Governors; the senior administration had to express its views on the issue. SU seemed to have been unable to solve this kind of issue. In this regard, one SU Executive member thought: "The whole question of *Gateway* is a difficult one because there is no way of making them accountable; you can not control them and shut them down. This was a big concern this year."

Legitimacy

According to the administrator informants, legitimacy of the student organizations is a major issue since only a small percentage of students are usually involved in choosing student leaders. In this respect, one senior administrator commented:

If you look at how their leaders are chosen, whether it is undergraduate students' organization or graduate students' association, a very small percentage of students are involved in choosing their leaders. So you wonder how representative they are.

One GSA Executive member admitted that GSA had a contested election in 1992 for the first time; many were elected by acclamation before then. According to the observations of some administrators, ESA did not have an election for many years. One administrator of the Faculty of Education commented:

It's really important to know that in ESA, in most years there was not an election. The people nominated themselves for positions. So there is not necessarily that sense of representation. They try to serve. They see themselves as representatives.

Summary

Student organizations devoted their time, energy, and resources to administering student affairs. Almost all the student executive members interviewed in the study had some prior experience of involvement in student affairs, and their interest in student government was nurtured during their previous related work. Individual students had various reasons for their involvement in student government; some of them were interested in politics; some were enthusiastic about student affairs; some wanted to meet with other people; most of them intended to get working experience through their involvement; and all of them really wanted to make positive changes in students' campus life. Most of the interviewees believed that the student government was beneficial to the students and to the University. As an indispensable part of the governance of the University, the role of the student government in administering student affairs was recognized by both the University administration and students.

In 1992-1993, the student organizations did a lot for the students. First, they either developed and revised their constitutions and by-laws, or discussed relevant changes to formalize their administration and to improve their office management, as well as their services. All the three organizations renovated their buildings or offices and recreational and social facilities to satisfy the needs of students. SU formally proposed to the administration and the provincial government that the student loan system be reformed, and it was active in telling the community the student viewpoints on post-secondary issues.

Moreover, SU played a leading role in addressing the new priorities and strategies of student governments across the country by being the host of a nationwide students' conference. GSA helped international students on campus by setting up the Campus Food Bank, and by waving 50 % of the foreign differential fee for international graduate students. Externally, GSA joined the Canadian Graduate Council, actively participated in the Council of Alberta University Students to address post-secondary issues, and lobbied the other interest groups within the province regarding issues of the graduate students. ESA mainly addressed issues relating to admission of students to the Faculty of Education, and student practicum. It also organized and financially sponsored professional activities for the students of Education.

Each of the student organizations had problems and concerns. The major ones were their transient nature and relevant problems, students' apathy for involvement, representation issue or the issue of legitimacy of the student government, lack of effective communication with students and consequential problems, and different kinds of management problems within their organizations.

CHAPTER 8: IMPACT OF STUDENTS ON UNIVERSITY

GOVERNANCE: 1992-93

Assessment of Impact

As previously discussed, students were formally involved in discussions and making decisions affecting them. Students made their impact on the decisions by presenting students' concerns and opinions, and providing important information and their expertise in certain areas.

According to the observations of interviewees, students exerted the greatest impact on decisions at the institutional level since they acted as organized forces. On the institutional governing bodies, students exerted their influence by being actively involved in debates and discussions. Student informants believed that the impact of students on the Board was important. Even though there were only three student Board members, they did their best to keep the non-student members informed of students' needs and concerns. Students' active involvement and effective strategies made the others believe that students can not be ignored. One student Board member recalled that the non-student members often lobbied the student members when they recognized that students did have impact on decisions. Another student Board member added:

I got a feeling that whenever I picked up the phone and rang somebody and said who I was, I got their attention instantly. I wasn't dismissed as of no importance. So I think they may realize that we have some influence on committees for sure.

On GFC, the highest academic body, one third of the members were students in 1992-1993. Any academic decision must be discussed and voted on in GFC before it becomes a formal University policy. Hence students had a much bigger impact there than elsewhere. On the whole, the representatives of the student organizations were perceived by others to have been more effective and influential than the student-at-large members who were not coordinated.

At the intermediate faculty level, the information students provided certainly helped the administrators understand issues better, and in that sense, students did influence upon some decisions. In addition, ESA was actively involved in decision-making at the Council of Faculty of Education and some of its standing committees, and exerted certain impact on decisions. One administrator observed:

The student representatives on the Faculty Council were obviously small in number, but very active. When they gave their perspectives, often it would influence decisions in various ways. I have seen decisions swayed by students on some issues. In some meetings, while students were speaking, you could hear the tone of the meeting being changed as a result of some information they had provided.

At the departmental level, students mainly exert their influence by providing student input on various student-related issues, which helped administrators make right decisions in academic programs. There was no organized student impact at this level.

Most of the student informants felt that when students were well prepared, asked the right questions, and made good arguments, their opinions were listened to, and they gained the support of other members. Some examples were given by interviewees to illustrate these views. The best example was the income contingent loan program on which the President of SU had been working. It was only an idea in the previous year. Several months later, students gained the support from the Board and the University Senate, and the provincial government was actually seriously considering implementing it. Another example was that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research wanted to change the way in which fees were assessed for graduate students. The administrators basically wanted graduate students to pay by credit hour, which was opposed by graduate students, and it never came to the table. Instead, the graduate student representatives agreed that only students enrolled in course-based master's programs would be charged by credit hour. With the support of the graduate students, that proposal went through. Other examples of discussion areas influenced by students are the foreign student differential fee, the Campus Sexual Assault Center, and the Campus Food Bank.

Students also made good use of their knowledge and information to contribute to decisions, for instance, student members of the Student Finance Board (SFB) wrote a position paper on how SFB might be better operated to serve students. A representative of SU sitting on the Senate Finance and Evaluation Committee prepared an evaluation model with another member of the committee, which was later adopted by the Senate. Regarding access to libraries and instructional labs, student representatives supplied information that resulted in changes in hours and in the policy for borrowing periodicals.

Students' opinions were given the weight of customers. According to one administrator of the Faculty of Education, if a large number of students thought that something was not working, it was usually going to be changed. One academic staff member commented: "If they do raise questions, then those questions have to be answered. You can not just say well that is very nice, but we are not going to deal with it. There are both undergraduate and graduate representatives there." Furthermore, although excluded from formal decision-making processes concerning tenure, promotion, and merit increments, students had a chance to evaluate academic staff members' performance by submitting their evaluation forms. One administrator commented:

In terms of tenure and promotion of faculty members, we always submit students' evaluations. Actually we would never go for tenure, promotion or anything without positive students' evaluations. So in that way they do have an impact .

As presented before, students employed various informal means and strategies to influence decisions that they were concerned about. The impact they exerted through these informal means was at least as great as the impact exerted by them through their formal involvement in the University decision-making processes.

Despite these examples of successful influencing of decisions, the impact of students was, in general, quite limited. Some interviewees, including students, felt that there was no question that students had played an active role in decision-making, and they represented their interests effectively, but they were a minority in most cases. The administrator interviewee of Department B thought that although students' input was

valuable, they did not carry anywhere near the majority vote. Therefore, they were unable to exert great impact on decisions made by the University committees. One student Board member observed that on the Board, his one vote did not actually make much difference; there were a group of people that were the central power in the Board. Having seen students' limited impact on decisions, one Executive member of GSA concluded:

I think the best we can ever hope for in these committees in our minds is to delay something, not change it, just delay it. Most of the time my activities on committees were relatively fruitless except when there were some political activities in which we were able to publicize the views of GSA in certain respects.

Factors Affecting Students' Impact

The following were considered by interviewees to be important factors affecting the impact of student involvement in the governance of the University.

Personal Factors

Some academic staff members and students emphasized that the philosophy and leadership style of the senior administrators of the University would reflect whether the senior administration was really concerned about student input. They noted there were some differences in the philosophy of two of the main senior administrators of this University. One academic staff member sitting on GFC commented:

I think there is some difference in the personalities of the two different administrators and in their concerns about student participation. I never felt that one of them had deep concerns about student input. It seems to me that he is very much concerned about input of wealthy presidents of corporations in the city who might make a donation to the University. If you look at the document of the Strategic Planning Task Force, you can see four members of the task force are presidents of big corporations. I think he is much more concerned with getting support from the business community than with making sure that students' interests are adequately represented in the administrative structure. Although these are hard times financially, I think that's a choice he has made. Partly I think it's his personality; that's the kind of person he grew up to be.

Leadership style and philosophy of the student leaders were also regarded by some informants as influential factors as individual student leaders had different priorities in their work, which had actually influenced how the student organizations were functioning to

serve the students and how representatives of the student organizations were participating in the University decision-making process.

The effect of student participation also depended on individual participants' character, experience, interpersonal skills, and educational level, which were believed to have affected the impact of student involvement in the University decision-making processes. In addition, some students were highly effective on the University committees because they were older, more experienced, and knowledgeable of campus issues. However, some students were close-minded and had their own agenda, or they just could not get along with certain people in the administration. Consequently, quite a few interviewees concluded that the quality of individuals is a key factor. One senior administrator observed:

I think there is as much variety among students as there is among faculty members or administrators. There are students who truly have insight and vision and political skills to act as leaders of the committee. That is also true of faculty members and administrators. There are students who attend poorly and don't participate, and there are faculty members and administrators who do the same thing. Some students are not leaders, but they participate, consult and offer insights. That is true of faculty members and administrators. It is as dependent on the individual student as it is dependent on individual faculty member or administrator the kind of role that they play. It really depends on the individual.

Inadequate Knowledge

Many students did not have much to say about the agenda items without knowing the history or the background information of the issues being discussed. One academic staff member noted that quite a few students did not really understand the department's functions and history. One ESA Executive member observed that in about forty percent of the cases, student members on the Faculty of Education committees were actually able to participate, while, in about sixty percent of cases, they were there just as observers. One graduate student representative sitting on the Council of Department B spoke of her own experience:

In the course of discussions, allusions were made to events and strategic planning from the past. I didn't understand. I think those of us who are new to the

department were not assured about a lot of the history of things that took place. Without knowing the history, I don't say very much.

Another student thought that some issues discussed on some University committees were jargonistic and not easy to understand. He commented:

A lot of things discussed are technical or jargonistic in a way like a lot of the terms that are thrown around, and a lot of allusions are made, and the past events are mentioned that you do not know. Something happened a few years ago, they won't even refer to that incident. You simply have no idea about what they are talking about. So there is a lot of difficulty like that. We are used to trying to figure out things we don't understand.

Political Factors

According to some academic staff interviewees, as several members of the Board of Governors were appointed by the provincial government of the Progressive Conservative Party, the legitimacy of the Board was always carefully examined by some of the academic staff members. Thus, when the Board was seen by some academic staff members as essentially representing the government, the academic staff members were more likely to go with students in opposing such influence.

In addition, as indicated previously, some executive members of the student organizations had regularly contacted political parties of the province in order to get support from them for students' positions on certain issues. Furthermore, some executive members of the two major student organizations were actually affiliated with the political parties in Alberta, and hence their ideas were certainly influenced by the parties to which they belonged. One student informant revealed that, invited by some student candidates, one political party had actually played an advisory role in the SU elections in 1992.

Economic Factors

The University was facing financial restraint in 1992-1993. Ziegler (1992) quoted the University President's statements:

The U of A faces extraordinary difficult challenges in maintaining accessibility and excellence in its academic programs, in the face of a reduction in real operating

expenditures per student of nearly 20 per cent since 1979-1980. (B1, *the Edmonton Journal*, May 26, 1992)

The Treasurer of the provincial government stated in his report entitled *Education: Meeting the Challenge*: "Our resources are limited. We must continue to restructure our programs to control costs." Ziegler (1992) observed that

this year the U of A Board has approved a \$421 million budget that will produce a small, six-figure surplus, in stark contrast to a seven-figure deficit. It has not been easy getting there: it's meant merging small faculties, phasing out others, increasing tuition fees by 15 per cent, budget cutting. (B1, *the Edmonton Journal*, May 26, 1992)

As presented previously, how to operate the University under such difficult circumstances and restructuring the University and departments were major concerns for the University community. According to the interviewees, fewer students were involved in the University decision-making process because of the prevailing circumstances. With the economic situation in Alberta and other provinces of Canada getting worse, students were concerned more about whether they would get a job. Several graduate students believed that, with the financial pressures and time pressures, there was a tendency for them not to be involved in the governance of the University at all.

In addition, the tuition fee and other fees were raised each year because of the financial situation presented above. As an example, fees for each full-time graduate student in the past few years are reported in Table 8.1 (Source: the University Calendars, from 1990-1991 to 1993-1994).

**Table 8.1: Fees for Full-time Graduate Students
from 1990-1991 to 1993-1994**

Academic Year	Tuition & Other Fees	Differential Fee	Total
1990-1991	\$1796.00	\$747.50	\$2543.50
1991-1992	\$2082.26	\$1877.26	\$3959.52
1992-1993	\$2389.46	\$2142.46	\$4530.92
1993-1994	\$2713.44	\$2422.00	\$5135.44

As shown, the tuition and other fees for each full-time graduate student were raised almost a thousand dollars in the past few years. International students had to pay a differential fee of an additional 50% of all the program fees in 1990-1991, and an additional 100% of all the program fees since 1991-1992; the fee was more than doubled. Meanwhile the fees for undergraduate students were increased at the same rate. Consequently, more students had to work either on campus or outside campus so as to pay the tuition fees.

Continued restraint in funding for health, education, and social services in the years to come was suggested by the previously quoted statements of the government official and *the Edmonton Journal* education writer. The actual shrinkage in the University's base operating budget was reported by Panzeri (1994) as follows: 1992-1993: \$421 million; 1993-1994: \$345 million; 1994-1995: \$321 million; 1995-1996: \$309 million; and 1996-1997: \$ 306 million (B3, *the Edmonton Journal*, December 6, 1994). Therefore, some interviewees anticipated that the climate for decision-making would not be conducive to student involvement due to the tough financial situation. One academic staff member analyzed the relevant factors by making the following comment:

The University should become a less elitist and more democratic. But I see things are going in the opposite direction. Universities are under great pressure from outside to become more efficient organizations, efficient in terms of dollars, in other words, under pressure to become less participatory, therefore, by implication, less democratic. The more this kind of climate becomes prevalent, the more democratic functioning of the University would be discouraged, and fewer students would be going to participate in decision-making. I see that happening both with respect to students and for faculty members as well. There is an emerging more hierarchical model of decision-making again within the universities in Canada. . . . The financial situation is used as a lever by outside agencies, particularly the government as a stimulus to push the University administration towards being less democratic.

Student Organizational Factors

One major difference between the SU Executive members and the executive members of other student organizations was that the SU Executive members all had full-time positions with full salaries. They also got the full assistance of support staff when working for SU. One academic staff member sitting on GFC commented on the difference:

The SU President and vice presidents are paid a certain amount of money. It frees them from having to work, which gives them some time. So at the University level, they have some time to study the agenda materials before the meetings, to consult with other people, to prepare for those meetings and to come ready to speak on issues. At GFC, they are better prepared, and I think they are more confident in feeling like they should be able to speak on issues.

By contrast, the executive members of GSA and ESA were working while studying. They had little or no assistance of support staff. They were basically volunteers. Therefore, the other students, including many graduate students were generally perceived by other informants to have not been as well prepared and organized as SU representatives, especially SU Executive members.

There was a variation in students' opinions, which actually lessened their influence on decisions. Some academic staff members observed that students had diverse opinions about certain issues. One GFC member observed that

students don't necessarily always act in a united way on various matters, including tuition fees and restructuring of the university departments. There is a clearly whole range of opinions that exist among student representatives on these issues. Some favor tuition increase, and some don't. Some are more easily swayed by administration's arguments as to why certain departments are to be cut and why others are expanded and given more money. On many issues they are just likely to have different opinions as faculty members.

In addition, there were a number of student-at-large committee members who acted on their own. In this regard, one vice-president of GSA commented:

We think that GSA should represent all the graduate students. There were some graduate students who sat on committees. They never reported to GSA, and we didn't know what they said. In my view they should be sent there through GSA as we represent a body. We lack a unified mechanism for appointing graduate students to committees.

There was a lack of coordination amongst students prior to their involvement.

The Executive members of SU found it hard to coordinate other students (e.g. individual students from different faculties). The President of GSA observed that

unlike the undergraduate students who always have a caucus meeting before GFC, we were never able to do that because a) there were not that many graduate students sitting on it; and b) it was difficult to schedule logistically to get everybody together and say we want to have one voice.

One of the student interviewees felt that "it seems like the more people you have, the less consistent that quality is. You might get some people who participated very well and some people who barely participated." Some students thought that although there were many positions for students on committees like GFC, the consistency of the quality of people was also an issue.

Moreover, there was inadequate training provided for students on the University committees. Many students had no idea about how they could be effective. Many of them had good ideas and good intentions, but they lacked relevant experiences. Some students could not speak intelligently to the administration and academic staff members. One graduate student representative from Department A spoke about his own experience:

Basically you are just doing your thing, and all of a sudden, there is a flyer in your mail box that says anyone interested in serving on these committees can write your name here. You don't know anything about the committee and you don't know what its history is or anything. I don't think much has been done to solicit that kind of participation. Maybe students who have always had a history of involvement in committees might go ahead and do it. Most students think it should be a negative response thing.

Some students thought that there was definitely a lack of communication between the student organizations and students.

Finally, according to the administrator interviewees, student representation was also a major issue during their involvement in administrative decision-making processes. One administrator from Department A commented that

at the undergraduate level, there are so many students. How can ESA represent fourteen hundred people? It is really problematic. Sometimes you have the feeling that students from ESA are maybe representatives of themselves more than the total spectrum of the students. Sometimes they can get people with their own agendas. Students are no different from the other groups. It would be difficult for them to develop some sort of action plan and push it through the department because they just don't have the kind of representation that would be necessary to do that.

Chosen by acclamation, student-at-large members on departmental committees were generally perceived to have actually represented themselves. One graduate student representative sitting on the Council of Department B told his own experience:

It was a difficult situation sitting on those committees because I am not sure whether I am a representative of my student colleagues or I am a full fledged

member on the committee who has to be a student because there is a substantial difference. If you are there solely as a representative, you are bound to bring the positions and perspectives of the constituency. But if you are there as an equal, you can argue whichever a way that makes the most sense, fully collegial with the people over there. You are an example of students, but you are not representing the constituency *per se*.

As a result, there was no formal communication channel between student representatives and students at this level. One graduate student representative sitting on the Graduate Coordinating Committee of Department A spoke of his own experience:

The major problem would be communication. I am sure there are a lot of graduate students out there I haven't met and many graduate students don't know that I am representing them. I don't basically communicate with the other graduate students.

Program Level Factors

According to interviewees, there are differences between undergraduate students and graduate students in terms of their involvement as they have a different relationship with the institution. Most graduate students have assistantships, whereas the undergraduate students are more like clients in a sense that they paid money to get an education. One graduate student thought that perhaps undergraduate students need to be listened to more because they are paying, and not being paid. Second, in their involvement in the decision-making process of the University, undergraduate students and graduate students had different issues sometimes. Thus, they could not act in complete solidarity all the time. Third, graduate students were generally perceived by others to have been more experienced and more responsible, and to have understood the University system better than the undergraduate students. One vice-president of GSA stated: "We have realized if any changes need to be made, we will have to do it. I take my responsibilities very seriously." Moreover, age might have a bearing on their participation according to some interviewees. Being generally younger, many undergraduate students were intimidated by the situation and seldom spoke during the meetings. One graduate student observed that "the undergraduate students tended to be intimidated by GFC, and they were probably more reluctant to speak out."

Furthermore some administrators and academic staff members noted that graduate students have a home base in their departments. They are closer to academic staff members since they often work together. Hence graduate students are more likely to agree with the academic staff members in discussions on different issues. One academic staff member observed that

graduate students find it easier to see, sometimes, the faculty members' point of view. When there are student versus faculty issues, graduate students sometimes are more likely to side with the faculty members. The undergraduate students are, however, not so closely located with the academic staff members because of the big size of their classes, and there are fewer opportunities for them to contact academic staff members.

Nonetheless, in terms of the influence of students, a few student informants believed that real power came from numbers. As there were more undergraduate students, there seemed to be greater impact at the undergraduate level.

Attitudinal Factors

Some students believed that appropriate student participation as well as their credibility would bring about good effect. One Executive member of SU held that "students are more effective by being diplomatic and by gaining the respect of the administration." Other interviewees deemed that the attitude of students is key. The community member stated:

Effectiveness depends upon the attitude which students bring. When you have somebody who has come with preconceptions and who believes in confrontation, then nothing happens. They almost get isolated and become ineffective. When they understand that if they are dealing with a group, they must get to know the people on the Board, and realize what is the most acceptable way to get their views over. Finally, they realize that there are limitations to what they can do. You build your reputation for intelligence, for ability to compromise, for doing what is the best for the total university, and not necessarily only for the students.

Several student interviewees felt that sometimes they were not shown respect on institutional governing bodies. Some administrators and academic staff members did not take students seriously, and there were some biases against students. One student noted that "there is a certain amount of intellectual arrogance; they are not willing to accept what

they consider as the uneducated views." The President of SU observed that "there are a number of people in the University that react to students as if students are an inconvenience." According to the students sitting on the Senate, some community members thought that students were too young to make decisions that would affect so many people. One undergraduate student felt it easy to be ignored as a student. Two SU representatives even resigned from two University committees because they thought the decisions would not have been different if they had not attended the committee meetings. Finally, some female students felt that the University decision-making process was dominated by men. One vice-president of SU commented: "I still think that is the boys' club. Being a student and a woman is like double difficulty."

Some student interviewees felt that students and others were not in an equal position because of the power differences between them. The others could ruin students' lives in terms of graduation and course credits if students put themselves in a vulnerable spot. One academic staff member of Department B believed that it is a risk for the students to tell the department that they do not like how things are done.

Some students felt doubtful about the sincerity of the administration in involving students in the University decision-making process. Some graduate students sitting on the institutional governing bodies felt that their involvement was only for window dressing. One student interviewee complained: "Although the University is very thorough in including students, it is a token vote. The University wants to show that they are really accountable, and they really listen to students, which is not true." Some student interviewees felt that the decisions were already made before the administration involved students in related discussions; students were very late in hearing about what happened. One Executive member of GSA believed that basically the University administration would come up with close-to-finished proposals at the point it was very difficult for students or the academics to propose changes.

Moreover, many students were indifferent to important issues even if the issues were related to their interests. Japlin (1992) reported that when the University senior administration was speaking about the University's financial future and answering questions at the Myer Horowitz Theater in the Students' Union Building, there were about fifty faculty members present, but almost no students showed up (*Gateway*, November 24, 1992, p. 1). It was difficult to get students to run for the positions of the University committees or to accept appointment by either the student organizations or the University governing bodies to sit on those committees partially because many students ignored this opportunity.

Some student members did not actively participate in the decision-making activities of the University committees. The administrator interviewee from the department observed that: "sometimes they are a bit more reluctant to speak. They are likely to be reactive to something that is proposed rather than themselves making proposals at the Council or at the other meetings." Students' low attendance rate for the University committee meetings was another problem. The administrator of Department B observed that

students do not always attend the meetings. Some meetings concerned important matters, even the matters that might affect them. We had a Council Retreat and two-day planning meeting, only one student out of four was there, and even she wasn't there for the entire period of time. To me that was a disappointment because students' views are important.

In terms of the negative effect of inactive student participation in discussions or decision-making, one faculty member stated that

the biggest danger is that as they did not effectively and actively participate in decision-making, they may be perceived to be not useful. Therefore we don't need them any more. I think they are more lacked at the Department Council level.

According to the informants, there were some reasons for students' inactive participation.

Students' heavy course load was one major reason for students' absence from the University committee meetings. Additionally, many discussions were related to items that were of no interest to them. As mentioned previously, lack of necessary knowledge and background information prevented them from actively participating in the discussions.

Young and inexperienced, some students were intimidated by the situation. One academic staff member thought they were not used to participation because they did not have any necessary training that had prepared them to be involved in the decision-making activities of the University. He commented:

They are not used to participation. They don't have any experience that has prepared them to expect to play a participatory role in university governance. I think the research has been done on our schools in both our elementary and secondary schools -- students have had thirteen years' training in accepting directions from the administration, not on questioning. They come here not to expect to have anything to say about the policy decisions that affect them. Unless something dramatic happens that gets them involved in ESA or in the election of members to SU, I don't think there is much likelihood that students will feel adequately empowered to be confident in participating.

However, there were also some students who did not attend the meetings without any reason. One vice-president of GSA concluded: "It is more difficult to get people to actually prepare for meetings and come out for meetings than to get them to sign up in the first place." One administrator observed that students actually were like anybody else. They wanted to be included. Once they were included, they did not necessarily want to participate. Some students perhaps thought it would not make any difference even if they were actively involved.

Some students took a confrontational attitude during their involvement by opposing everything, and other interviewees viewed such an attitude as counter-productive. One senior administrator of the University addressed this as a major barrier to effective student involvement. He commented:

The major opportunity for a problem is when students feel they are in opposition to the administration; it's somehow a competition, and somebody has to win. That tends not to be a productive relationship and then really nobody wins. On some occasions, that happens where students see their role as confrontational. I think that's a problem.

The interviewee representing community members also criticized the negative attitude of some students:

We had some students before who did not have a correct attitude. They were absolutely dreadful. Particularly there were some graduate students who were always trying to be radical. It's hard because when you are young, you always have the most radical ideas.

One Executive member of GSA admitted that

the major barrier was that students had sometimes taken a confrontational attitude. Last year some GSA Executive members approached problems from an ideological point of view rather than from practical point of view. They went to the University committee meetings and said: "We are going to oppose all tuition increases, and we don't see any point in discussing this." That was really not credible.

One academic staff member of Department A in charge of student practicum also observed:

One of my students who was a vice-president of ESA went out for practicum. He was paranoid about going out, doing a practicum, and about the new model. He was really negative and against the practicum for no reason. He had no information to say this was not going to work in the practicum and did some damage. That is the problem when you get somebody who is misinformed.

This academic staff member concluded that it had not been easy working with students holding such an attitude.

Finally, some administrator interviewees, in particular, thought that the student representatives on University committees sometimes overemphasized their own interests.

The representative of the community members analyzed related causes from social and political perspectives:

I think one of the problems of our society here is that we have lost sight of sacrifice of the individual for the many. Capitalist system has created a higher standard of living for everyone. But in the process, you probably lose some of the social cohesion, some of the willingness to sacrifice, and some of the feeling that you are part of the totality, which is a very important thing. People are social beings, not just individuals. So individualism works materially, in my opinion, and yet it does not necessarily work for other social functions.

University Organizational Factors

Issues Caused by Transience. As student representatives on committees usually had one-year terms, by the time they got familiar with what they should do, and by the time the administrators came to know student representatives on the University committees, it might be half way through the year. The GSA Executive members just hoped that their successors could pick up the tasks they had not finished. The discontinuity of their involvement was a problem. One administrator noted that "one of the problems in

working with student government is the short span they are there. Even if students have continuity, we do not have continuity with them." Another administrator stated:

I find the lack of continuity limits the students' ability to contribute because for the faculty members they have five or six year's history on an issue, while students come usually in August and leave us in May and next year somebody else comes in. Their impact is limited.

As students were here on campus only temporarily, many students could not afford to spend their limited time for something in which they did not have much of a stake. One academic staff member observed:

Students can't really get involved into these battles that take place from year to year in GFC and other committees completely and wholeheartedly because they are transient. There are limited amount of time they can spend. The SU people may not have this problem but the graduate students have this problem. That limits their participation.

One student participant talked about his own experience:

The big thing is the course load. A lot of students simply are not able to attend meetings. Take the Committee on which I was sitting as an example, they had a workshop which lasted for three days. If you have five courses, you can't give up three days.

One student-at-large member on the Strategic Planning Task Force stated that he had to often miss class or the meetings. Graduate students had to get organized for their research proposal and for their candidacy at the Ph.D. level. The majority of the graduate students were married and had to look after their families.

As a result, some administrators and academic staff members believed that students might not think of the impact of the decision in the long run. They were thinking more about their time on campus, and so were more concerned about it. In this regard, one senior administrator observed:

Any student is associated with this institution for only a limited period of time or for a more limited period than academic staff and non-academic staff. They may not look at the issues in a long run. That's the nature of human beings.

Also it was hard for students to look at things in the perspective of administrators. The administration may try to look at things in the long run, while students may focus on some short-term issues. One senior administrator observed:

What the student leaders would like to accomplish for students is the area of student finances. They are very anxious to make some changes in the activities of the Student Finance Board and they are concerned about how the Student Finance Board operates for students. The student government has been working with the administration to ensure that there is sufficient timely consultation about current matters such as fees. It has been consistently hard for them to realize that we have a very short window in the fall to develop the fee policy for the next year to get it through all of the governing boards.

Because of the above problems, it was difficult to find students to sit on the University committees. One academic staff member sitting on GFC noted that GFC had trouble finding student members. Another administrator from Department B reported the same problem:

We had trouble getting student representation on some of the committees. Students have not always taken an interest in the administration of the University because their prime purpose is to work on their programs and get their degrees. They sometimes won't volunteer to be on committees.

Conflict of Scheduling. The scheduling of the University committee meetings often conflicted with that of the courses students were taking. One student on GFC commented:

GFC has a problem. The meeting of GFC is scheduled for two o'clock on Mondays. So anyone who had a class that afternoon was not able to come or they skipped their class to attend the meeting. A lot of people did not attend meetings just because of that one reason.

Moreover, some decisions of the University committees were made in May, June, and July when students tended not to be on campus. One senior administrator observed:

Certainly decisions can be made in May, June and July when students are not usually on campus. They are an important part of the decision-making process. But they are not around. You can't ignore them. It is difficult to get the timing correct so that there is enough consultation with them.

One administrator from the Faculty of Education also noted that the Faculty of Education had a lot of meetings during the summer, while the students, especially undergraduate students, had jobs all over the province or out of the province.

The Issue of Confidentiality. The requirement of confidentiality for University committee members prevented students from effectively participating in the

decision making process. The SU Vice-President Academic commented that the confidentiality of ADC could potentially make it difficult for her to consult with students on certain issues. Selected by the undergraduate students on campus, she was on the committee to represent their interests in the first place. Some student representatives on other committees also saw this as a problem. Nevertheless, other committee members held a different view. One community representative criticized students' violation of the rules: "Some students even did not believe in the rules. We had someone who disclosed information from the Board, which was terrible. Nobody would speak to him." One administrator from the Faculty of Education observed that

students by their very nature don't feel like they are part of the Faculty; they feel they are part of the student body. So there are times when you have some problems with confidentiality, they feel they need to report back to other students what they heard.

Structural Barriers. Some students held that there were structural barriers to student involvement. One Vice-President of GSA analyzed the issue as follows:

At one level, there is this concept -- democratization. But on the other level, I don't think it's being fulfilled. I think, to a great extent, it is because of the structure. I think there are some structural barriers to this kind of decision-making. There is assurance that the majority of the voting members will not be students. It seems to me we structure the bodies in such a way to make sure the hierarchy is maintained simply by the number of eligible voters. There are structural inequalities here.

Another GSA Executive member pointed out:

We have a very ironical, traditional, and bureaucratic body which pretends to have democracy. The fact is that it is not really a democratic process because students turn out to be the minority on every single committee. There is substantial enough block that prevented them from swinging opinions.

At the departmental level, some academic staff members felt that the administration may not have set up the structure well enough that students would know whom to go to as their representatives if they wanted to have a matter raised. The administrator interviewee from Department B noted that the administration had not successfully been able to involve the part-time students because they were not around often. Yet, the part-time students at Department B actually comprised a major portion of the clientele. Moreover, students were

not represented on some departmental committees relating to student issues, such as the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee, and the Field Experience Committee of Department A.

Inadequate Communication. Some interviewees felt that the administration did not make adequate effort to communicate with students. One academic staff member observed:

I don't think we communicate very well with them. I do not know why this is so, perhaps because we are so busy or we don't have the opportunity. It is a large university with its bureaucracy. The students who are very vocal are the ones who often get sent from here to there and have all of those problems and they think nobody listens to them.

The community members observed that a serious concern was the lack of communication between the student body and people on the front-line whose role it was to assist with financing (Senate Task Force on Student Finance, Senate Minutes, November 20, 1992).

One academic staff member from Department A analyzed the related causes:

A major problem is the size of the University. I mean it's so large and the Faculty has so many different departments. I think we have no idea about what people from other departments do. It's difficult when you don't have any personal contact with all the students. In a smaller college where people actually know many students, I think students there have probably a lot more to say. We don't communicate well with students.

Special Environment. Some interviewees thought that Department B had a tradition of respect for students' input, and of giving students an equal voice since its discipline area relates to administration, and many graduate students studying at this department are administrators. In this regard, one academic staff member teaching at this department explained:

I think there is a culture here in our department that says we ought to be sensitive to these people's needs. Some of these people are going back to more prominent positions than I have right now. I mean X is president of a college and a number of them have been superintendents of substantial school jurisdictions. So we don't see them in a position where we dictate to them. If they indicate to us that they have concerns, we treat those as legitimate concerns because of the students we have. They are not junior high students. They are mature adults with different insights. So it works because of the sensitivity of the staff members. What students say here counts.

Certain special circumstances may also have a bearing on the effect of student involvement. As Department B was facing a possible merger with other departments within the Faculty, the interviewees from Department B felt that the department became more cohesive. One graduate student sitting on the Department Council observed:

This department is in a conflict situation. So I would suspect the cohesiveness of the department is the human reaction to an external threat which is to draw together. Maybe the Council meeting that I have been seeing this year is a bit more cohesive than they were in the past years because right now there seems to be an external enemy.

Students sitting on the departmental committees were, therefore, perceived by others to have actively participated in relevant discussions, and have provided useful input since the possible changes would have impact on their programs. The administrator of the department admitted that perhaps the budget cut for the department would have been more drastic if students had not been involved in relevant discussions and decision-making.

Summary

Students actively participated in University decision-making at different levels either individually or as an organized force. They expressed their perspectives; they used their expertise and knowledge to contribute to the decisions of the University committees; they argued strongly for the interests of students. Having made good preparations and reasonable arguments, they were sometimes able to convince others to support them. The representatives of the student organizations were perceived to be politically smart and more influential than the student-at-large members. However, since they were a minority in almost all the cases, students' influence upon decisions was generally perceived by others as quite limited. Some administrators felt that although students were given a fair hearing, their participation did not make much difference because of their limited representation and their own limitations.

A variety of factors that influenced the impact of student involvement were analyzed. Individual participants' personalities, philosophy, leadership style, interpersonal

skills, age, experience, and maturity were personal influential factors. There were attitudinal factors, including disrespect shown by some administrators and academic staff members for student participants, students' indifference to the University issues, students' overemphasis on their own interests, and students' confrontational attitude during their involvement. Program level factors related to differences between undergraduate students and graduate students. Some students were not actively involved in the process due to their lack of knowledge of the University system and background information of issues, and necessary training for their involvement.

Moreover, there were University organizational factors and student organizational factors. Related problems included students' transient nature that caused consequent problems, the excessive requirements of confidentiality, and conflicts between the scheduling of University meetings and that of students' courses. Additionally, there were structural barriers to student involvement; some students were frustrated by their limited membership, their limited influence on decisions as well as the domination of men over the decision-making process. Students themselves had such organizational problems as representation issue, communication problems between student representatives and students, diverse opinions among students regarding issues, a lack of coordination, and lack of training for student involvement. Some problems existing in student government were also reflected in student involvement in the administrative decision-making process of the University due to the nature and limitations of students.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, FINDINGS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the study, recommendations for enhancing student participation in the governance of the University, the researcher's findings, conclusions, personal reflections, and implications for practice and research in the future.

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The writer investigated the nature (structure, scope, process, and impact) of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta, including student government, and identified related issues and potentials. The purposes of the study were a) to discuss governance structure at the University of Alberta, b) to describe student roles in the governance of the University of Alberta, c) to assess and explain the effectiveness of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta, as well as related influential factors, and d) to explore what can be done to improve student involvement in the governance of the University.

Research Design

This is a descriptive and analytical study. The naturalistic and qualitative inquiry approach was employed to investigate the process, current status and practical effect of student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta. Related research was reviewed to provide a theoretical foundation for analysis. Two pilot studies were conducted to test the research questions and to provide necessary experience for the formal study. Augmented by document analysis and direct observations, the semi-structured interview was the major data-gathering technique for this research. The researcher followed ethical guidelines of the University during the research.

Review of Canadian Legislation

The researcher examined 44 Canadian university and college acts prior to the research to examine student representation on the board of governors and the academic senate or academic council of Canadian universities and colleges, the rights and term of office of student members, as well as the approaches used to select them.

Relevant findings suggest that students have formally participated in the governance of most Canadian universities and colleges. Student representatives are either elected by and from students of each institution for its governing bodies or are appointed by the administration of the institute. Students have the same rights as others. Student representatives are still not involved in major governing bodies in some universities and colleges, and the shorter term of office for student members of the governing bodies may have also limited their role in the governance of their institutions. There is no information presented in the above acts concerning the composition and the function of the governing bodies at the faculty and department levels.

Data Collection and Analysis

Most of the interviewees who participated in this study were selected by the researcher on the basis of their involvement in the decision-making activities of the University governing bodies and student organizations in 1992-1993. The researcher chose one faculty and two departments within this faculty to conduct the interviews at the faculty and the departmental levels. The Education Students' Association, as one of the largest faculty students' organizations on campus, was examined as part of the student government.

The researcher interviewed 31 one people; they were 19 students, six administrators, five academic staff members, and one community member. Thirteen students represented three student organizations of the University, and six were student-at-large members sitting on various University governing bodies.

During the semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions developed from the research questions, the findings of the pilot studies, literature review, as well as the conceptual model developed by the researcher were used to guide the interview. The interviewees were invited to elaborate on their answers by giving examples and providing additional information. All the data collected through the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and edited by the researcher. The researcher returned a copy of the interview transcript to each interviewee for his or her examination and revision. Eighteen interviewees returned their copies with comments and suggestions.

The researcher examined the minutes of meetings of selected University governing bodies at different levels with the intent of validating and supplementing the data collected from the interviews. Related documents of the University attached to the above-mentioned minutes, the minutes of the Students' Union Council, the GSA Council and the ESA Council, official correspondence between organizations, brochures, and student newspapers (*Gateway* and *Currents* during the 1992-1993 academic year) were also carefully examined.

Furthermore, the researcher observed two GFC meetings, two GSA Council meetings and two SU Council meetings in order to obtain personal perceptions of how students interact with the others during the University committee meetings and how the executive members of student organizations interact with student representatives from different faculties and departments in students' council meetings. The researcher took notes during these meetings. Through direct observation, the researcher learned much about the dynamics of student participation in the governance of the University.

Content analysis was utilized to analyze the data collected from various sources. A draft coding system was first developed to identify possible codes and categories. Then the data were carefully read, coded, and included in relevant topical sections. After all the interview transcripts were verified, revised, and augmented by the informants, the researcher began to include additional information, to create new categories, to identify and

code new topics, and to revise the established ones till the final version of the coding system was completed.

Recommendations for Enhancing Student Participation in University Governance

The interviewees made recommendations for improving student involvement in the governance of the University. There were recommendations for solving some students' problems in both the student government and their involvement in administrative decision-making activities, as well as the recommendations for the University administration to improve their role in facilitating student involvement.

Recommendations for Students

Improving Management. The executive members of the student organizations all thought they need to make further efforts to improve their management. The GSA Executive members believed that they should improve their office management further. The ESA Executive members believed that they need to learn more about the administration of student affairs. The representatives of SU suggested that their committee structure be reformed to make their work more effective. To overcome problems caused by bureaucracy, the SU Executive members advocated reduction of unnecessary office work. Furthermore, one SU Executive member thought: "Although we have changed our constitution and by-laws, further steps need be taken to see if they are working properly." Finally, one ESA vice-president emphasized that collective consciousness is required to improve student governance since a collective would be far less likely to make big mistakes when they think things through.

Improving Communication. Almost all the interviewees, representing different student organizations, considered it necessary to improve their communication with students. The executives of the student organizations, especially SU with its relatively

large bureaucratic structure, should leave their offices and talk to students in classes and in their lounges on a regular basis. One interviewee believed that better communication can help the student organizations improve their student services so that they can engage better in what students want.

The student interviewees felt that student organizations should come up with more global approaches to reach students to let them know that there are opportunities for them to get involved in the process. One Executive member of GSA thought that GSA needs to develop its awareness on campus with more publicity. The SU Executive members deemed that they should try to find out about more approaches to students' input. Direct communication may work well but the impersonal communication of posters had not been effective in the past.

At the departmental level, communication between the student representatives and students of the department ought to be improved. Some graduate student interviewees recommended that a students' council be set up at each department to take charge of the communication among students, exchange of ideas, and student election, and that there should be a common mail box for graduate students of each department. One graduate student representative sitting on the Council of Department B held: "If there is a reasonable student representation on issues that truly represent students' voice, then it should be something that comes from students as a body, not a representative." Furthermore, some student interviewees believed that if the communication between students and academic staff is improved, academic staff members will be more than willing to listen and to change.

Solving Transition Problems. The student interviewees thought that measures should be taken to overcome problems caused by transience. SU needs to improve its training program by taking specific measures such as overviewing the functions and policies of SU, doing some team building activities, and implementing performance evaluation for both new student executive members and student service directors. Training

programs of SU can be implemented in the other student organizations. New councilors of student organizations need to make efforts in understanding the background of issues by reading through the minutes of the student organizations and different University committees for the last year or two. Moreover, they should try to find out what is not in the documents by talking to the former executive members and by going to the University committee meetings with the former executive members to get familiar with the people and structure there. Finally, one former leader of SU emphasized the need for harmony between the new and old student executives despite their disagreements and differences on issues.

Cooperating with the Administration. Most of the student informants deemed that students should work pro-actively and positively with the administration instead of opposing them unthinkingly. The GSA President believed that students should concentrate on the issue to solve problems rather than the person speaking either for or against it. If the University is seen as a cooperative community, everybody has to think about other people's concerns. Therefore, students should try to understand the positions of the University administration pertinent to different issues. Just as academic staff members and administrators have to learn to look at things from students' point of view, students should realize that there is a viewpoint of the academic staff and a viewpoint of administrators. Finally, to contribute to the decisions of the University, student organizations and individual students also need to look at issues in the long run as they are short-term oriented.

Participating Responsibly. Most of the interviewees held that students should conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner when they participate in the University administrative decision-making process. The executive members of student organizations should be responsible for their organizations instead of representing only themselves. The GSA President stated: "For those who shall continue: remember, GSA

is for but a year, while the transcripts are for ever." Students' positive attitude and responsible manner will contribute to better effect of their involvement. One Executive member of SU thought:

Students can gain respect from the things they do. SU has respect with the senior administration because of what we have been able to accomplish. If in most cases students are involved actively and effectively, they can get respect from their professors.

Moreover, to participate in decision-making effectively, students should be willing to understand the University system, and to learn the history of certain issues. Stress on the importance of their involvement as well as relevant responsibilities, and better arrangement of the University meetings are possible solutions to the problem of high absence rate of student members from University committees. Finally, most of the student informants thought the SU newspaper, *Gateway*, should be run as an accountable service.

Improving the Selection Process. Some student interviewees believed it important to improve the selection process for student representatives so that capable, responsible and experienced student representatives can be chosen to sit on the University committees. Thus more students should get involved. Student organizations should seriously consider how to increase students' interest in the positions of the University committees. Obviously, work needs to be done on such areas as guidelines for elections. In addition, student organizations should make people aware of what they have been doing for the students, and the important issues and concerns addressed by them in order to establish more of their legitimacy among the student populace. In order to encourage more graduate students to be involved, some of the GSA Executive members suggested GSA have full-time positions like those of SU with full salaries. Some other Executive members of GSA believed that the incentive needed does not have to be money. They hoped the GSA Executive members would get tuition waiver, course credits, or some acknowledgment that their time was spent in the student government, and they should, at least, be allowed to have a legal absence from their studies.

Strengthening Coordination. Quite a few interviewees, including students, believed that, to be effective in their involvement, students should act as a strong united force. Students need to have better organization of activities for their own affairs and for their involvement in the University administrative decision-making process. It is important that students come together as a group at the beginning of the year for planning strategies for action. They certainly should make better preparations before their involvement. One Executive member of SU stated that students should try to get a consistent message through coordinating all their representatives on different University committees.

Building a Sense of Collectivism. According to some administrators, it is important that students do not feel that things are done for them. They should feel they are participating members of the University community. To overcome the problem of selfishness, the community member recommended that students develop a sense of collectivism. He also encouraged students to participate in voluntary work.

Recommendations for the Administration

Obtaining Student Input. The administrator interviewees believed that the administration needs more approaches to collect students' opinions than are currently in use -- for instance, more open forums where students, administrators and academic staff members have opportunities to get together and discuss issues, and more informal contacts outside courses. Such steps have already been taken in Department A. For instance, the Graduate Coordinating Committee is going to have a newsletter which will improve the communication between students and the administration. Moreover, administrators and academic staff members ought to be better listeners and should pay more attention to students' issues. More professors should be in the field with students during their practicum to have some sense of what the student teachers are doing. Finally, the administrators need to increase their contacts with ESA both formally and informally.

The administrator interviewees believed that at the faculty level, they need to have a form of mechanism to be sure that things are working. The communication between the administration and ESA as well as individual students needs to be strengthened. The proposed Student Advisory Committee comprising of faculty members and a significant proportion of students is believed to be providing a forum for discussion and resolution of student services issues.

At the institutional level, the senior administrators should do more to initiate the communication with the students. One senior administrator thought that it is important for the University administration to work closely with SU and the other student organizations. Some other administrators believed that the administration must have a measure of students' opinions on what they feel they are getting and be more responsive to their concerns about the quality of education.

Respecting Student Viewpoints. Most of the administrator and academic staff interviewees deemed that they need to ensure that students be treated like everybody else. Those who felt that students are not a very high priority may need to learn that indeed they are. One administrator of the Faculty of Education stated: "We have to make students believe that we really care about what they have to say."

Scheduling Meetings Properly. Most of the interviewees, including administrators, suggested that, at the institutional, faculty, and the departmental levels, the decision makers try not to bring contentious issues during the summer since many students may not be around. Something should be done by the administration to make sure that students' different schedules do not interfere with their involvement in the University decision-making process. One Executive member of SU suggested that

the University needs to accommodate students very well in committee meetings. For example, GFC meetings should be held at five o'clock on Monday instead of two o'clock. There's just a bit more commitment to actually having students involved.

Encouraging Student Representation. Some administrators hoped to have a broader involvement of students so that the administrators can hear representative voices from many factions of the students. More formal representation on some departmental committees is also required. Student informants suggested that all the faculty and the departmental committees that deal with student-related issues include representation of students as it is important to involve them in discussing the initial proposals related to students' interests.

The administrators from the two departments endorsed the inclusion of student representatives on some departmental committees. Some academic staff members advocated that there should be elected representatives of graduate students on the Faculty Salaries and Promotion Committee.

Providing Training for Students. Some administrators and academic staff members from the Faculty of Education deemed that the administration could help students develop certain skills in student involvement, and foster that as part of the learning process in that teachers by their professional roles are usually involved in committees. One vice-president of ESA supported this view by making his comments:

If the University really wants students' input, they will take a far more active mentorship role in it by finding somebody to establish a working model of what it takes for a person to go to these committees, to interact, to be effective, and to be credible. Once we have these guidelines, we could develop on our own.

One academic staff member believed that, at the departmental level, one thing that can be done is to try to organize students in small cohorts that stay together during the time they are in a program, and give them some regular meeting time to talk about problems, and to get used to exerting some influence in the small body. This academic staff member actually practised this activity with his students, which proved to have helped the students develop their sense of involvement in decision-making, and nurtured their sense of responsibility in the process.

Major Findings

The major findings are presented in this section in a format consistent with the main questions for the study, together with some data analysis and the writer's personal reflections.

What Is the Governance Structure of the University?

According to the Alberta Universities Act (1990), there are two components in terms of the governance of the University: 1) the University administrative decision-making bodies in charge of all the administrative affairs and operations of the University, and 2) the student government that takes charge of an important part of student affairs on campus.

a) What Is the Administrative Decision-Making Structure of the University?

The Board of Governors is the highest authority taking charge of the budget, businesses, and operational affairs. The General Faculties Council is the highest academic governing body. Subject to the authority of GFC, there is a council at each faculty or school, which is empowered to determine the programs of study in the field of the faculty. Controlled by their faculty councils, the departmental councils are empowered to work on their budgets and programs within their disciplines. There are advisory bodies at various levels such as the Senate, the Deans' Council, dean's advisory committees, and departmental committees with advisory functions which provide advice to both the decision-making bodies and administrators.

In 1992-1993, students participated in the decision-making activities of most of the governing bodies at the institutional, faculty and departmental levels. They were particularly thoroughly involved in the most important academic decision-making body, the General Faculties Council. The student members on various University decision-making bodies had equal rights as others. Nonetheless, their term of office was regulated by all the

governing bodies as only one year which is two years shorter than that of the other members, mainly due to students' transient nature and consequent limitations. There were several means to select student representatives to sit on governing bodies. Some student leaders were *ex officio* members of the University committees, and some students were first appointed by the council of the student organization and then approved by the administration. At the faculty level, student representatives on the Faculty Council were appointed by ESA. On departmental committees students were normally chosen by acclamation. Student-at-large representatives on University bodies were either elected by students or they applied for positions on their own.

b) What Is the Structure of the Student Government? How Does It Administer Student Affairs?

There are two major student organizations at the University, the Students' Union (SU) and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), which represent the undergraduate and graduate students on campus. Additionally, there are faculty student associations in each faculty which are independent of SU and GSA. The councils of the student organizations are the highest governing bodies of their organizations, and there are an executive committee and several standing committees within each student organization. This study examined new areas such as history of individual students' involvement, students' motivations to participate in student government and in the decision-making activities of the University, and influential factors affecting their motivations to be involved. Almost all the student executive members had some prior experience in student affairs. Most student executive members really wanted to make positive changes in various aspects of students' life on campus, but they also intended to pursue their personal goals through their involvement.

All the three student organizations have their own funding sources. The major funding sources of SU are from the Students' Union fee, its businesses and services, and

different kinds of fund-raising activities. The funding sources of GSA include the income generated from its businesses, the GSA fee, interest income, advertising income, and other income. The funding sources of ESA are the membership fee of the ESA as a local of the Alberta Teachers' Association, matching grant given by the A'TA, some funding from SU on occasion for certain purposes, merchandising programs, and an annual grant from Dean of Education. SU and GSA have hired professional staff to run their businesses and offices. The major responsibility of the employees is to give advice on what to do, and the ultimate decisions are made by the student executive members.

Promoting the welfare of students and protecting student interests are two major functions of each of the student organizations. The student organizations provide administration of student affairs and various services. Much of the budget of each of the three student organizations has actually been devoted to providing services to students in the past years. Amongst the student organizations, SU provides comprehensive student-related services. In addition to its services similar to those of SU, an important function of GSA is to negotiate pay scales and conditions of employment for graduate students with the University administration. As the largest student local of the Alberta Teachers' Association, ESA tries its best to serve Education students in their professional development by providing some relevant services and forums. Furthermore, all of these three student organizations offer different kinds of entertainment and social opportunities for the students on campus.

The student government represents students and student concerns to the University administration, the government, and the community. SU and GSA have represented students by being formally involved in the decision-making activities of the institutional governing bodies. ESA represents Education undergraduate students on the Council of Faculty of Education, some standing committees of the Council, and some departmental committees within the Faculty. The three student organizations lobby externally for students of the University and try to make government officials aware of the major issues

of the University students. They regularly contact the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee of the provincial government, and they also meet with the Minister of Advanced Education on an *ad hoc* basis to discuss issues of particular importance to students of the University. Moreover, all of the three student organizations keep a close relationship with the community by being involved in the activities of the community. Finally, the University student organizations coordinate with other university and college student organizations either within Alberta or in other provinces to discuss strategies for student government, and address student issues at the provincial level and the national level.

With more resources, adequate assistance of its full-time and part-time support staff, and attractive incentives (full salaries for the Executive members), SU has been more effective and better organized than any other student organization on campus in either student government or in student participation in the administrative decision-making processes of the University. SU has played a leading role in the student government in serving the U of A students and in protecting their interests. The facilities, businesses and various services of SU have been run professionally since its staff provide it with professional advice and maintain the continuity of SU. Yet, the volunteer-based student organizations such as GSA and ESA have not been as effective as SU in administering student affairs due to their lack of resources and incentives, and they have played a subsidiary role in student government.

The student government is generally effective and well organized. Its successful experience has proved that students are capable of administering their own affairs, satisfying the needs of students, and protecting the interests of students. The student government has contributed tremendously to the improvement of the quality of various University decisions as it has been actively involved in the University administrative decision-making activities at different levels. In brief, the student government is an important part of the governance of the University, and it is indispensable if the University is to be operated properly.

The results of the study show that each of the four governance models presented in Chapter 2 reflects only part of the reality of the University. Yet, these models have helped the researcher understand different aspects of the governance of the University. For instance, both the University administration and the student organizations have employed bureaucratic administration in practice. As one interest group, students are actively involved in the activities of the political arena of U of A. The dynamic processes of decision-making act as described in the report have reflected the political reality of the University. Moreover, based on democratic principle and collegial governance model, students have participated in decision-making as members of the academic community. Occasionally, some decisions, such as the decision on the income contingency program for student loans and so on, were made by consensus. Furthermore, because of the continuous government funding cuts, the administration attended to some unplanned activities and addressed related issues, including the restructuring of the University organizations and the increase of tuition fees, and the University faced more uncertainties than before. In brief, U of A has practised and will continue to practise a combined governance pattern derived from the four governance models since each of them has its own practicality, and none of them is independent in reality.

What Are the University Student-Related Services? How Do They Satisfy Students' Needs?

Student-related services on the campus have been offered by both the University Student Services and the student government. In addition to all the normal academic services provided to students to support their studies, the University has a special office named the University Student Services which provides specific services for students. The University Student Services has seven divisions providing health services, disabled student services, native student services, international services, immigration services, career and placement services, student counseling services and so on. The major services offered by

the student government relate to information sharing, financial aid, peer counseling, problem solving in both academic and other aspects, study facilities and services, provision of voluntary opportunities, and services and facilities for recreational and social purposes. ESA and other faculty and departmental students' associations, due to their limited funding, mainly provide services for students' professional development including forums on subjects in which students of each faculty are interested, some mediating and consulting programs, orientation activities, and social and recreational opportunities. With the largest student population and more funding sources, SU owns more facilities and provides more services than any other student organization within the University.

The findings suggested that the strengths of the University student-related services are actually the weaknesses of the services offered by the student organizations, and *vice versa*. The University Student Services has experts, professional staff, and good facilities. Their services are multi-functional, and complex professional techniques are required. In addition, their services are better funded, and they are also well managed. Hence the University Student Services is able to provide complex and specialized services such as different kinds of health services, residence services and so forth. However, as a formal University division, it is more bureaucratic than any student organization. Furthermore, the administration has to conduct surveys to find out what the students need, and due to the complexity and the large scale of their services, it usually takes a long time to implement some services. As for the services offered by the student government, they are more student oriented. All the services and program directors are students and they consider issues from students' points of view. Students' services are more responsive to students' needs as students know their needs the best. Their services are easy to operate, and practical. In addition, services offered by the student organizations are open seven days a week, which is more convenient than University Student Services. According to the student informants, students tend to look to students for help because of the similarities of age, social and other factors. Nevertheless, the student government is unable to provide

specialized services which require professional techniques and expertise in specific fields. The funding for student-administered services is not as adequate and stable as that of the University Student Services, and the scale and categories of the student-run services are limited.

In 1992-1993, the University Student Services provided most of the student-related services; the services offered by the student organizations were subsidiary. However, both of the two categories of student services were indispensable, and they complemented each other. The University Student Services and SU jointly operated some services. The University Student Services Office maintained primary contact with the student-administered offices concerning student-related services. The two kinds of student services also competed with each other as there were some overlapping services offered by both the University administration and the student organizations.

How Are Governance Decisions Made at the University of Alberta?

In 1992-1993, the procedures to reach decisions by the University governing bodies at different levels were generally similar; all the governing bodies followed the Robert's Rules of Order. The decision-making procedures at the institutional and the faculty levels were more formal as the committees at higher levels were bigger, and they addressed more important issues, while the decision-making procedures of the councils of the two departments were comparatively less formal.

The process to reach decisions in the three student organizations were identical. In terms of the procedures for making major decisions, all the student organizations followed the Robert's Rules of Order. Regarding the decisions with financial implications, normally each executive member of the student organizations had the authority to decide things within his or her portfolio. Micro-management decisions were usually made by the executive committee of the student organization. In terms of major decisions, motions were normally brought to the council of the student organization for debate and ratification.

The decision-making process was usually more formal in a better organized student organization such as SU. According to one vice-president of ESA, the most common decision-making process in ESA was *ad hoc*. There was no major difference between the decision-making procedures of the student organizations and that of formal decision-making bodies of the University.

What Are the Decision Areas in Which Students Are Excluded? What Are the Reasons for Such Exclusion?

The study also investigated specific decision areas in which student involvement was excluded at the University, as well as the rationale for such exclusion. The findings of the study indicated that, in 1992-1993, there were some decision areas in which student involvement was excluded. At the institutional level, students were excluded in some important standing committees of the major institutional governing bodies, such as the Executive Committee of the Board. At the faculty level, students were excluded in the Faculty Salaries and Promotion Committee and the Dean's Advisory Committee. At the departmental level, students were not involved in making decisions on personnel, including the selection of new academic staff members, the annual review of the performance of academic staff members, and the tenure and promotion of academic staff members. The Field Experience Committee and the Undergraduate Coordinating Committee of Department A had no student representation. Students were not included in some other departmental committees in both Department A and Department B.

Students were not involved in certain decisions on campus for the following reasons. In the first place, some administrators did not want to involve students in some important decisions including personnel and budget at the institutional level. Secondly, certain decisions were sensitive ones with personal career and confidential information involved. Thirdly, students were not seen as peers in decisions concerning promotion and tenure issues of academic staff members; they were in an inferior position as far as

knowledge and competence were concerned. An elite notion had obviously shaped some academic staff members' attitudes towards who should be judging them.

What Major Decisions Were Addressed by the University Administrative Decision-Making Bodies in 1992-1993?

In the 1992-1993 academic year, the University decision-making bodies at all three levels had mainly addressed issues pertinent to rationalization or restructuring of the University faculties and departments, reallocation of resources, and strategies to deal with continuously reducing financial resources. Almost all the major issues were financially related due to the financial restraint faced by the University. At the institutional level, the central issue concerned the operation of the University under such difficult circumstances.

tuition fees and student loan reform were also major topics for discussion. The Board of Governors was examining a way to restructure the student loan program. Supported by the GSA representatives, the SU President had been pressing for the income contingency model throughout the whole year. The result was that the Board was firmly behind the plan, and would work to see it implemented. Changes in the library policy concerning circulation of periodicals and library opening hours were discussed as important student issues. The Campus Food Bank was set up by GSA to help international graduate students.

At the faculty level, restructuring of the Faculty of Education was a major concern. The Associate Dean Planning was asked to review the function and organization of the Faculty, and to come up with some proposals with regard to changing some committees, reorganizing some departments, and merging some departments. Moreover, the enrollment management policy concerning the quotas for the Faculty was discussed. Assessment of teaching was another major concern relating to how the assessment could be used to help professors get feedback on their teaching.

At the departmental level, budget cuts, a possible merger of Department B with other departments within the Faculty, how to react to the Associate Dean's proposal on the merger, approaches to market its programs, and fund-raising were major topics for discussions by the Department Council, and the committees of Department B. Building a stronger community of scholars, students' work load, research methodology, as well as issues of practicum were addressed by the Council and the committees of Department A. Moreover, programs available to students who did not live in Edmonton were discussed by the council of both departments. Some practical issues, such as teaching and grading policies, were also addressed by the committees of the two departments. Furthermore, both of them reviewed their graduate programs in an attempt to find out things for improvement.

It can be seen that all the above issues were of significance to students as they were either directly or indirectly related to students' interests. The representatives of both student organizations and student group members on the University committees were involved in discussions and debates concerning these issues.

What Role Did Students Play in Making These Decisions? What Are the Perspectives and Observations on the Involvement of Students in Decision-Making?

The findings indicated that the role that students played in making these decisions depended on each individual student participant. Some students acted as colleagues; some played a leadership role in related debates or discussions; some acted as watchdogs; and many students worked on the University committees as information providers.

Most of the interviewees believed that students as customers of the University have a right to participate in making decisions that influence them. Administrators and academic staff need students' information and valuable input in decision-making. Some students, especially some graduate students, have had enough knowledge and experience to

contribute to the decisions of the University. Administrators, as educators, have a responsibility to facilitate student participation in the decision-making processes of the University since student involvement not only ensures representation of students' interests, but also provides opportunities to learn how the University works, and to develop skills for leadership. Students also have a responsibility to make sure the academic programs they are receiving are appropriate. Many informants thought that students' input is necessary if the University is to operate as a community in which everybody has a stake in the outcome and in the health of the institute. Most of the student participants and others generally perceived student involvement in the process positively. They felt that the administration at different levels generally supported student participation in the University decision-making activities. On the contrary, some administrators and academic staff members thought that students' primary role is to study; they should not be encouraged to be full-time politicians. They do not have to be involved in the University decision-making processes because they still have a voice by filling out questionnaires and answering questions. Additionally, students' lack of experience and knowledge, their immaturity and other disadvantages prevented them from participating in decision-making effectively.

In general, students actively and effectively participated in decision-making at different levels. They contributed to the decisions of the University committees by providing their input, including their information, knowledge, and perspectives in certain areas, and they argued strongly for the interests of students. The representatives of the student organizations were perceived by others to have been politically smart and more influential than the student-at-large members who normally acted on their own. Student participation was substantial on institutional governing bodies. Students were very active in the debates at GFC level; they were reasonably effective in putting their points across. However, there was a great variation in the effectiveness of individual student representatives. Representing undergraduate students of Education, ESA was actively involved in decision-making procedures on the Council of the Faculty of Education, and it

exerted some influence over issues that were of interest to the student teachers. Student representatives on departmental committees were mostly graduate students selected by nomination. Students exerted the least influence on decisions at the departmental level because there was no coordination amongst them. As minorities in most cases, students generally exerted limited influence over the decisions of the University. Although students were given a fair hearing, their participation did not make much difference because of their limited representation and their own limitations.

What Informal Means and Strategies Were Used by Students to Exert Their Influence Upon Decisions?

As student involvement in university governance is virtually a political process, students at the University used different kinds of political strategies during their involvement in the process. They intended to use these informal means to achieve what they were unable to achieve through their formal involvement, and these informal means and strategies generally proved to have been effective in practice. Lobbying was a major informal means used during their involvement in administrative decision-making. Their media, caucuses, training programs, practical engagement and so forth also played an important role in assisting their involvement in the process. These informal means and strategies included lobbying on different occasions, effectively utilizing their media, organizing student caucus and discussions with representatives of other interest groups, providing students necessary training to overcome the problems caused by transience, making adequate preparation for the University committee meetings, and using realistic and constructive approaches in their involvement. According to different participants and observers, these strategies were proved to have been effective.

What Are the Factors Affecting the Impact of Student Involvement on the Governance of the University?

The impact of the actual effect of student involvement in the governance of the University depends on personal factors such as individual participants' philosophy, educational level, degree of maturity, personalities, age, leadership style, experience, interpersonal skills, and the environmental factors, including political and economic factors, the culture and special circumstances of an organization. Other factors included program-level factors, attitudinal factors, the University organizational factors and students' organizational factors. The writer believes that student role in the governance of the University may be further limited due to the problems of the University caused by the current financial restraint. In brief, the effect of student involvement in the governance of the University relies, to a great extent, on what individual participants intend to do, and how they do it, as well as various factors existing in the environment.

This study found more influential factors affecting student involvement in university governance than previously reported. Some of the above factors such as political, economic, and organizational factors, program level factors, attitudinal factors, and organizational culture were reported for the first time. The researcher found some more personal influential factors such as leadership style, philosophy, and knowledge of the University system and issues. Moreover, the study also revealed the issue of student representation on the University committees, scheduling conflict between the University committee meetings and the courses that students were taking, students' lack of attention to the interests of the University as a collective, confrontational attitude held by students, the issue of the legitimacy of student organizations, and so forth.

Some related results of the study are consistent with those of other studies conducted in the past. Such influential factors as individual participants' experience, degree of maturity, interpersonal skills, and educational levels were presented previously.

The confidentiality issue for student members on the University governing bodies discovered by this study has coincided with the result of one previous nation-wide study (the Independent Study Group on University Governance, 1990) which found that both students and academic staff felt that their representation became pointless due to the confidentiality required by university governing bodies. Problems such as transition, apathy of students, high-absence rate of students for university meetings, disrespect of some administrators and academic staff members for students, and some biases against student involvement, students' frustration due to their limited representation and influence were also reported in previous research.

The impact of students on decisions of the University is generally limited because of their limitations and other factors, and they will remain the minority on the University governing bodies as the existing University structure suggests. Consequently, their impact on decisions will continue to be limited. However, they will keep doing their utmost to protect the interests of students on the University decision-making bodies, and they will continuously contribute to decisions of the University by providing valuable student input.

What Issues Need to Be Addressed and What Measures Should Be Taken to Lead to More Effective Student Participation in the Governance of the University?

With regard to improving students' participation in the administrative decision-making processes of the University, the interviewees thought that efforts should be made jointly by the University administration and students. The University administration needs to facilitate the student involvement in the University decision-making processes by providing necessary training, appropriately scheduling the University committee meetings, increasing student representation on certain University committees, and using multiple-approaches to get student input. Some administrators and academic staff members should change their negative attitude towards student involvement and show more respect for

student members on the University committees. Student organizations and students at large ought to cooperate and work pro-actively with the administration. They need to gain respect from others by being mature and responsible, actively involved in decision-making, and taking initiatives in learning the knowledge and background information required in the process. Students ought to improve the selection of student representatives for University committees. Students organizations should strengthen their training work for the new student executive members and student services directors in order to compensate for their limitations, and to improve the administration of the student organizations by restructuring their committees and reducing bureaucracy. Furthermore, students need to pay more attention to the interests of the University as a whole instead of overemphasizing their own interests. Finally, both formal and informal two-way communication between administrators and students should be improved to reduce the misunderstanding between them and to increase the cooperation between them.

To better satisfy the needs of students, there should be further cooperation between the University Student Services and the student government. Specific steps may be taken to make student-related services more efficient, economical, and accessible. The characteristics of the two categories of student-related services being considered, they need to bring their own strengths into full play. More cooperation between them will help them conserve resources, which is significant especially in the current situation. The overlapping sector in student-related services should be reduced to the minimum; each of the two categories of student services could take charge of certain services at which it is good. The University Student Services needs to strengthen its communication with the student organizations and students at large in order to improve its services. A formal mechanism may be required to coordinate the communication and cooperation in student services between the administration and the student government.

What Are the Other Findings?

The findings of the study have confirmed the theories presented in literature review as the rationale for student involvement in university governance. For example, students' practice at U of A has supported human growth theories. Most of the interviewees believed that student involvement is beneficially related to the future career of students, and their involvement help them understand the University system, the University-community relationship, as well as the University-government relationship.

The results of the study have also supplemented those theories. For instance, in addition to the theoretical rationale for student participation in university governance, there are practical reasons for student participation in decision-making. As clients of academic services, students have provided important information, and their concerns and opinions that can certainly help administrators make right decisions and improve the quality of decisions. Moreover, students, who are members of the academic community, have a responsibility to ensure that the academic programs are appropriately delivered.

Certain findings of the study are different from those of some previous studies presented in literature review. For instance, according to Riley (1977), student involvement in university governance in the U.S. declined because state and federal student lobbies seemed to be more effective than student participation at the local campus level. Yet, based on the findings of this study, students are still actively involved in the University decision-making processes and there is so far no sign indicating student roles in the governance of the University has declined. Additionally, the research in the 1970s showed that unionization and academic collective bargaining negatively impacted student participation in institutional governance. However, this study has revealed that there is no such impact at the University of Alberta. By contrary, according to the observations of different interviewees, students were, in many cases, better organized and better prepared than academic staff members in debates and discussions on issues; students were in general

perceived by others to have been more influential than the average academic staff members. Of course, cultural differences between the two countries and different environmental factors, as well as the different times when the studies were conducted should be taken into consideration. After all, this study has shown the current status of student involvement in the governance of a Canadian University. In general, this study has presented more detailed information than previous studies, found new areas for related studies, and expanded understandings of certain areas examined before.

Implications

The implications of the study are presented in two sections: a) implications for practice, and b) implications for further research.

Implications for Practice

The study has generated insights for the researcher which may have general implications for practising university or college administrators, leaders of the student organizations, and individual students involved in the governance of their institution.

The first implication is that student involvement in institutional governance should be intentionally nurtured by the environment if students' full growth is to be achieved as a goal of the institution they attend. Student involvement in the governance of the University is part of their overall development, which is beneficial to students, the University, and society. The administrators at different levels need to understand that student involvement in university governance is indispensable. Students can not effectively participate in the decision-making processes of the University without the full support of the administration. Thus the administration needs not only to take a supportive attitude towards student involvement in the process, but also to provide some concrete assistance in facilitating it.

The second implication relates to students' practice. All the students who intend to be involved in university governance should first develop a thorough understanding of the

significance of their involvement, as well as relevant obligations. In addition, they ought to be willing to learn knowledge and background information required in University decision-making procedures. They should be aware of their own limitations and take concrete steps to compensate for these limitations. In brief, students need to take initiative in improving their involvement in university governance by showing constructive attitude and taking effective and practical approaches.

Moreover, the student organizations of the University need to employ various means to encourage capable students to be involved in student government and in administrative decision-making of the University. More incentives are required for students who hope to be involved in this process since their financial and other limitations would otherwise not allow them to do so. Conditions permitting, some student organizations may want to require that their executive members have one-year absence from their studies with the permission of the University administration and financially assist them during their involvement, as SU did. The limited funding of the student organizations being considered, the numbers of student executive members and their committees may be reduced to the minimum to guarantee proper operation and efficiency of the work of the student organization. Course credits, certain kind of recognition of student involvement, and other incentives could also be considered for student participants. Nevertheless, the results of the study demonstrate that, sometimes, it is the personal quality of student participants and their effective approaches and strategies other than the quantity of student membership that make a difference in the actual effect of student participation. Thus importance should be attached to the improvement of the selection process of student representatives for the University committees.

Another implication derived from this study is that students were involved in the University decision-making mainly through student organizations because they have adequate resources to support and coordinate student involvement. Hence, it is necessary for administrators, senior administrators in particular, to understand more about the role of

student organizations in the governance of their institution, and to maintain a good working relationship with them. The successful cooperation between the administration and the student government in handling student-related issues and in making joint efforts in student-related services presented in the study suggest that they can cooperate well for the well-being of students and for the improvement of the governance of the University. Furthermore, there should be organized student representation on departmental committees in order to represent students' interests effectively.

The U of A student government, as one of the largest student governments in North America, is effective in administering student affairs. Its experience and lessons in operating student organizations, running businesses and services, protecting students' interests, employing various effective strategies in their involvement in University decision-making, and cooperating with the administration and the community are surely of use to other student governments in Canada and elsewhere.

As members of the University community, all the interest groups, including students, should strive to consider the interests of the University as a collective in which they all have a stake. Students' collegial role on the University committees is important, which is partially why they are invited to be involved in the governance of this institution. Emphasizing the interests of the collective by no means suggests that the interests of individuals and specific groups can be ignored, whereas valuing collective interests can be seen as a positive means of increasing mutual understanding and reducing conflict among different interest groups. As a matter of fact, the interests of individuals are not guaranteed when collective interests are endangered. So there should be more communication and cooperation rather than confrontation amongst the University community members. The disregard of collective interests has been one of the major weaknesses of Western society where individual rights are sometimes predominantly attended to, and collectivism has been ignored. The consequences could be devastating if nobody cares about collective interests.

Therefore, it is significant for people here to think more about the interests of the organization, the institute, and the country as a whole.

Implications for Research

A number of the conclusions stated earlier provide the basis for suggestions for further research. The researcher believes that the research suggested as follows will improve the general body of knowledge on student involvement in university governance and provide the basis for improving the effectiveness of student involvement.

First of all, any future study relating to the governance of a university should include “student government” as an important component. A study on student involvement in university governance would be incomplete if it only focuses on student participation in administrative decision-making activities of the university.

The interpretive approach within the naturalist paradigm was effective in studying the research questions. The writer collected enough data for this study. Multiple approaches for a qualitative study were used to collect related data, which made the study different from previous ones that were mostly questionnaire surveys. Yet, the writer feels that other researchers may want to have more observations than was the case in this study to understand further the dynamics amongst different members, including students, on the governing bodies of an institution at different levels so that more direct impressions will be obtained.

Based on the results of the study, the conceptual model presented in the study that describes how students are involved in university governance is consistent with relevant practice in the University. Although formal student involvement in university governance is important, students' informal involvement and strategies are of equal importance. Therefore, other researchers who are interested in student participation in university governance should acknowledge the informal structure and include student informal involvement in their conceptual framework.

The findings of the study have provided some significant data on how students of the University administer their own affairs, including their operations, funding sources, office management, decision-making procedures, and both internal and external relations and activities, which have rarely been studied previously. Research on any other student government in one university or student governments in several universities may provide a further understanding of student government, and may help these student governments find out problems and related solutions.

Since this study was restricted to only one professional faculty, a future study may need to look at several faculties as well as departments at the University of Alberta, including both non-professional faculties and professional faculties to investigate the similarities and differences between student involvement in decision-making at several faculties with different characteristics. If adequate financial resources and time are available, a multi-university study within one province or in different provinces of Canada would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of relevant influential factors in different university settings.

As student-related services was not the major focus of this study, an in-depth study is required to obtain a thorough understanding of related issues, such as what specific things need to be done to increase the cooperation between the services run by both the university and students, to make better use of the limited resources available, and to improve the overall quality of student-related services in one or more universities.

Furthermore, the writer hopes the implications derived from this study will be of use in China. As Chinese universities are currently practicing reforms in their governing structure and other areas with a focus on decentralization, the implications of this study may be valuable to them. To the writer's knowledge, Chinese students are not legitimately involved in the governance of universities, and student role in university governance has never been studied there. In spite of its deficiencies, the democratic governance of universities has proved to be effective in reality. The writer believes that Chinese

universities will gradually implement a similar governance pattern. Although the educational and political systems as well as the cultures of the two countries are quite different, the two peoples can learn a lot from each other as proved by the success of the cultural exchange activities and collaborative research projects between the two countries conducted in the past. There is a Chinese saying: "Stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one." In other words, advice from others may help one overcome his or her shortcomings. Hopefully this study will arouse the interest of Chinese scholars in looking at students' role in the governance of Chinese universities. A copy of this dissertation will be sent to the Beijing Library for Chinese researchers and practitioners.

Finally, the writer's personal reflections on the experience and lessons of the study may have implications for other researchers. First of all, the cooperation between the participants and the researcher in such a study is key. Prior to the formal study, the writer spent some time observing the work of students' organizations and made friends with student executive members, which made it easier for him to obtain useful information from student participants, to access different sources of data, and to analyze data based on his direct observations. The writer also went to the offices of the University governing bodies for the same purpose. Most of the participants were cooperative, and they actually provided various sorts of assistance to the study. In addition, the writer paid particular attention to the timing of the interviews; he chose to conduct the interviews with student interviewees after their exams in April when they had been involved in the governance of the University for a complete academic year and when the other members of the University committees had been familiar with their student colleagues.

There were unexpected problems during the research. For instance, two senior administrators declined to be interviewed on the ground that they were too busy. The writer had to make changes accordingly. In addition, some minutes of the student organizations were missing due to their poor office management, and some important data were not available there. Furthermore, it was hard for the writer to find student

interviewees since some students moved frequently. Finally, a few student interviewees were irresponsible. Some did not reply to the writer concerning the revision of the interview transcript even though they were still around, and two students did not show up for the interview in the pilot studies without giving any reason. Hence, it would be wise for researchers to make flexible plans for their data collection in order to cope with the unexpected.

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Appendix 1: Gaining Entry

March 25, 1993

From Dr. J. M. Small, Dept. of Ed. Admin.

Re: Doctoral Research by Bing Zuo

Dear _____:

This letter is to introduce Bing Zuo, a Ph.D. student studying under my supervision, and to indicate the nature of his study. Mr. Zuo's doctoral dissertation focuses on student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta.

The purpose of the study is to investigate and describe the current status of student participation in the university decision-making process, and student involvement in student governance at the University of Alberta. This study is descriptive and analytical, and will explore issues concerning student participation in university governance. Semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis will be employed. A sample of students, administrators and faculty involved in decision making activities at different levels on the campus will be interviewed, and related documents and minutes of meetings will be examined and analyzed. I am writing to seek your consent to be interviewed. The interview will last for about 40 minutes and it will be recorded. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. Responses will be identified only as 'student', 'administrator' or 'faculty'. All interviewees have the right to discontinue at any time during the study or to request that specific comments not be included. I appreciate the demands made on administrative staff, but I hope that you will be able to fit in an interview. Mr. Zuo will contact your office in a few days to explore possible times. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 3651. Attached to this letter are a consent form and a brief introduction to the study as well as an outline of the methodology to be used.

Many thanks.

c. Bing Zuo

7-104 Education Building North
Department of Educational Administration
The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5

February 25, 1993

Dear _____:

I am a Ph.D. student studying at Department of Educational Administration, the University of Alberta. I am currently conducting a study concerning student participation in the governance of the University of Alberta for my doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of the study is to investigate and describe the current status of student participation in the university decision-making process and student involvement in student governance at the University of Alberta. This study is a qualitative research and it is descriptive and analytical. During the study, semi-structured interviews and documentary review and analysis will be employed; a number of students, administrators and faculty involved in decision-making activities at different levels on this campus will be interviewed and related documents and meeting minutes will be examined and analyzed. I am writing to you to seek your consent to be interviewed. The interview will last for about 40 to 60 minutes and it will be recorded. Anonymity and confidentiality of all the responses will be guaranteed. You have the right to opt out at any time during the study without penalty. To make the study a success, your cooperation and assistance are required and appreciated. It is my hope that you would agree to be involved in the study and reply to me as soon as possible in order that we could arrange the interview at your convenient time early. You can reach me by phoning me at 4923094 (Office) 4374963 (Home). Attached to this letter are a interviewee consent form and a brief introduction to the background, significance of and ethical considerations for the study. As well, the methodology to be used to conduct the study is presented. Many thanks and all my best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours,

Bing Zuo

Appendix 2: Interview Consent Form

INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

Date_____ 19_____

I hereby consent to participate in a research conducted under the direction of Mr. Bing Zuo as part of his requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Alberta.

It has been explained to me and I understand that a) the interview will be recorded; b) my identity will not be disclosed at any time; c) the tape will be kept by only the researcher and the recordings will be erased upon the completion of the study; d) my involvement in the study is voluntary and I may opt out as I wish at any time during the study without penalty of any sort; and e) the information from the study may be published after the study is completed.

As arranged, I will review a copy of the interview transcript completed by the researcher and revise it. I understand that I will be free to ask for further information and clarification.

Interviewee Signature_____
Researcher Signature

Date _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: A Letter of Data Verification

Dear :

January 8, 1994

Here is the transcript of the interview that I had with you a few months ago concerning student involvement in the governance of the University of Alberta. Please check and revise it and send it back to me through campus mail. You are welcome to add a few more comment if you wish. As my first letter indicates, the anonymity of interviewees is guaranteed. My research activities have been and will be supervised by Ethics Review Committee of my department. The tapes will be destroyed upon the completion of the dissertation. I may quote some of your statements in my dissertation with your permit. If you have any concerns about that, please write to me or phone me as soon as possible. Thank you again for your cooperation.

My Mailing address is as follows:

Bing Zuo

Dept. of Ed. Admin.

7-104 Education Bldg. North

Tel. 4374963 (H) 4924913 (O)

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Samples of Interview Questions

The following sets of questions were prepared by the researcher for the semi-structured interviews with regard to student participation in the administrative decision-making process and student governance of the University.

Questions for the Interviewees on GFC

1. How long have you been on the General Faculties Council?
2. How do you look at student participation in university governance?
3. Are student representatives able to participate in all the decision-making processes of GFC? If not, in which areas is students' involvement excluded and for what reasons?
4. What procedures are used to reach decisions by GFC?
5. What major decision areas has GFC addressed during 1992-1993? Which of these decisions are of particular relevance to students?
6. What are your perceptions of the impact of students on the decisions made by GFC?
Please tell some examples.
7. In addition to their formal involvement in the decision-making process of GFC, what informal things have students done to exert their influence on decisions? Please give some examples.
8. What are your perceptions of the problems of and major barriers to student participation in the decision-making process of GFC?
9. In your opinion, what issues need to be addressed and what measures could be taken to make student participation in the decision-making process of GFC more effective?
10. Are there any other things significant that we have not yet discussed?

Questions for Senior Administrators of the University

Part I

- 1). What do you think of student role in administering their own affairs? What are your perceptions of the student government?
- 2). How do you compare the University student services and the student services offered by the student organizations? Please give some examples.
3. According to your observations, what are the problems in the student government? Please give specific examples.
- 4). What are your opinions on how to improve the student government on this campus?

Part II

- 5). How do you view student participation in the administrative decision-making processes of the University?
6. Could you describe briefly how students are involved in major institutional bodies of the University? Are students able to participate all the decision-making activities of these bodies? If not, what are the decision areas in which students are excluded?
7. What are the procedures to make decisions by major institutional governing bodies?
8. What major decision areas have these institutional governing bodies addressed during 1992-1993? Which of these decisions are of particular relevance to students?
9. What kind of role have students played in making these decisions? What do you think of the impact of students on the decision? Please give some examples.
10. According to your observations, in addition to their formal involvement in the University decision-making processes, what have students done informally to exert their influence on decisions? Please tell some examples.
11. What are your perceptions of the major barriers to student participation in the decision-making processes of the institutional bodies? Please give some specific examples.

12. Based on your observations, what issues need to be addressed and what measures may be taken to make student participation in the University governing bodies more effective?
13. Are there any other things you think significant that we have not yet discussed?

Questions for the Administrator of Department of B

1. How long have you been working at this Department?
2. How do you look at student role in university governance?
3. Are student representatives able to participate in all the decision-making activities of the Council of the Department? If not, in which areas is student involvement excluded and for what reasons?
4. What processes are usually used to reach decisions by the Department Council?
5. What major decision areas has the Department Council addressed during 1992-1993?
Which of these decisions are of particular relevance to students?
6. What do you think of the impact of students on the decisions made by the Department Council? Please give some examples.
7. What are your perceptions of the problems of and major barriers to student participation in the decision-making processes of the Department Council? Please give some examples.
8. What issues do you think need to be addressed and what measures may be taken to make student participation more effective?
9. Are there any other things you think significant that we have not yet discussed?

Questions for Student Members on the Council of Department of A

1. How long have you been on the Department Council?
2. Have you been involved in any activities of student organizations before?
3. What makes you interested in participating in the decision-making activities of the Department Council as a student representative?

4. Are student representatives able to participate in all the decision-making activities of the Council? If not, in which areas is student involvement excluded, and for what reasons?
5. What processes are normally used to reach decisions by the Department Council?
6. What major decision areas has the Department Council addressed during 1992-1993?
Which of these decisions are of particular relevance to students?
7. What do you think of the impact of students on the decisions of the Council? Please give some specific examples.
8. In addition to their formal involvement in the decision-making process of the department, what informal things do students do to exert their influence on the decisions? Please give some examples.
9. What are your perceptions of the major barriers to or major concerns of student participation in the decision-making process of the Council? Please tell some examples.
10. What are your comments on how to make student participation in this process more effective?
11. Are there any other things you think significant that we have not yet discussed?

Questions for the Student-at-large Member on the Board

Part I

1. Have you ever been involved in any activities of student organizations before?
2. For what reasons do you think students should administer their own affairs?
3. According to your observations, in what way does the Students' Union contribute to the well-being of the students on this campus? Please give specific examples.
4. According to your observations, what are the major problems or concerns in the student government?
5. What do you think should be done to improve the work of the student government?

Part II

6. Could you describe student involvement in the decision-making process of the institutional governing bodies that you have sat on in 1992-1993? Are student representatives able to participate in all the decision-making activities of these bodies? If not, in which areas is students' involvement excluded and for what reasons?
7. What major issues, which are of particular interest to students, have these bodies addressed during 1992-1993?
8. How do you look at students' influence upon these decisions?
9. In addition to formal involvement in decision-making of the above bodies, what informal means have students used to exert their influence upon the decision-making process on this campus? Please give some specific examples.
10. What do you think are the major barriers to or concerns of student participation in university governance? Please give some examples.
11. What are your comments on how to make student participation in both the administration of student affairs and the decision-making processes of the University more effective?
12. Are there any other things important that we have not yet discussed?

Questions for the Executive Members of GSA

Part I

1. How long have you been on the GSA Council?
2. Have you ever been involved in any activities of student organizations before?
3. Could you tell me why you are interested in the student government?
4. For what reasons do you think students should administer their own affairs on campus?
5. Could you describe briefly in what way GSA contributes to the well-being of the graduate students on this campus? Give specific examples please.

6. What are the differences and similarities between the University student services and the student-related services run by the student government?
7. How do you comment on the relationship between the two kinds of student-related services?
8. What major decisions has the GSA Council addressed during 1992-1993?
9. What are the major problems at GSA? Please tell some examples.
10. What do you think should be done to improve student governance at GSA?

Part II

11. What institutional governing bodies have you sat on in 1992-1993?
12. Are students able to participate in all decision-making activities? If not, in which decision areas is student involvement excluded and for what reasons?
13. What major decision areas have these governing bodies addressed during 1992-1993?
Which of these decisions are of particular relevance to students?
14. What do you think of the impact of students on the decisions this year? Please give specific examples.
15. In addition to their formal involvement in activities of decision-making bodies, what informal means have students used to exert their influence upon the decisions? Please tell some examples.
16. What are your perceptions of the major barriers to student participation in the decision-making process of the institutional governing bodies? Please give examples.
17. What are your comments on how to make student participation in both student government and the decision-making processes of the University more effective?
18. Are there any other things important that we have not yet discussed?

Personal Data Collection

Name:

Date:

The program (undergraduate program or graduate program) the respondent is in:

The position the respondent is currently holding:

The place where the interview is conducted:

The interview starts at _____ and ends at _____

* The above personal information was acquired before each interview. The information on the telephone number and mailing address of the interviewee was acquired after each interview for follow-up questions and the verification of the data by the interviewees.