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Governance at Unionized Four-Year Colleges: Effect on Decision-Making Structures

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# Governance at Unionized Four-Year Colleges

## Effect on Decision-Making Structures

The faculty role in academic governance at institutions of higher education remains a topic of controversy, ambiguity, and misunderstanding among faculty themselves, administrators and, more recently, state legislators. The events of the past decade have further clouded the issues, for over 120,000 faculty on approximately 600 campuses are now unionized [20, 21]. The initiation of faculty collective bargaining has raised issues concerning the faculty role as employee or managerial decision maker [1], standardization of working conditions such as teaching load [3], and the status of the department head as supervisor or peer [28]. Other concerns include the effect of unions on faculty senates [43, 44], centralization of decision making at higher administrative levels [32], and the effect of collective bargaining on collegial faculty-administration relationships [15, 25, 38].

Governance generally refers to the decision-making and policy process in academic organizations. Because there is little agreement among scholars about the manner in which academic institutions are governed [4, 22, 29, 39], the imposition of the industrial model of adversarial relations upon a governance system based upon "shared authority" or "collegiality" has often resulted in confusion and mistrust between faculty and administrators. Most writing on collective bargaining, particularly in the early 1970s, chronicled the problems encountered by administrators unfamiliar with the conduct of labor negotiations [35] or warned of the

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negative effects of faculty unions on collegiality [6, 36]. Other writers provided collections of articles explaining the legal background for bargaining unit formation, structure of bargaining, and administration of the contract [40, 42]. These early writings revealed that, because collective bargaining was such a new and unexpected phenomenon in higher education, it was difficult to predict or discuss the effects of faculty unionization upon academic governance.

More recent research on collective bargaining has begun to address the effect of unionization upon academic governance in its various manifestations (such as senates, departmental committees, and other decision-making mechanisms). **Begin's study of twenty-six unionized institutions found that faculty senates that had predated unions were healthy and not significantly threatened by union encroachment.** He noted the importance of contextual and individual institutional factors in accounting for much of the effect of unionization upon an institution's governance structure. Begin found, for example, that pre-unionization governance practices, the ability of traditional governance mechanisms to address institutional problems, and attitudes of administration and union leaders toward governance played an important role in the effects of unionization upon an institution's governance system [9, 10]. Katz's study of unionization at Temple University considered the institution's history and faculty characteristics in analyzing the effect of unionization upon academic governance [26]. A case study of a unionized New York college noted loss of confidence in the peer evaluation process and concluded that unionization exacerbated the already-existing adversarial faculty-administration relationship [23].

The latest approaches to the study of faculty unionization have examined structural changes in governance systems subsequent to unionization. Mortimer, with various research associates, has completed several studies of academic collective bargaining both on a national level and within the state of Pennsylvania. His 1972 study with Lozier of unionized governance found a "homogenization" of faculty status and power [32], while a later study noted the importance of presidential attitude in facilitating union-administration cooperation [33]. A different approach was used by Kemerer and Baldrige, who surveyed presidents and union chairpersons of all unionized two- and four-year institutions in July 1974 [27]. They found a democratizing of status among faculty and saw a trend toward standardization and quantification of evaluation procedures for promotion and tenure. The researchers cited greater power gains among faculties at institutions where faculty had little or no influence in institutional decision making. They also found, paradoxically, an increase in administrative power as formalization of relationships tended to centralize

much of the final decision making at higher administrative levels, and away from middle management (such as deans and chairpersons). Their results reaffirmed the critical importance of the institution's unique history and policies, external factors such as state coordinating agencies, scope of the union both geographically and in personnel composition, legal structuring of collective negotiations, and faculty expectations for their own influence.

Despite the variations in attitude, approach, and methods of gathering information, those individuals writing about collective bargaining in higher education have tended to agree on a few general points. First, collective bargaining is a dynamic process, heavily influenced by environmental, organizational, and personal factors which often create or exacerbate an adversarial relationship between faculty and administration that does not fit traditional models of collegial governance. Second, collective negotiations change the distribution of power, both formal and informal, on campuses. And third, formalization of relations between faculty and administrators and the increased impact of external agencies upon academic governance structures tend to limit the kind of power and autonomy once enjoyed by many faculty members.

In order to examine the effect of unionized faculty upon the governance of four-year colleges and universities, this study places particular emphasis upon structural changes in an institution's governance system subsequent to unionization in terms of the levels at which decisions are made and the composition of the groups making these decisions. These structural changes are evaluated in light of pre-unionization decision-making procedures and the primary motivations for the faculty's decision to unionize. Attention is also given to the power of various individuals and groups within the governance structure, and to the effect of unionization upon power distribution. Additional elements include the effect of unionization upon the roles of individuals in decision-making positions (such as deans or vice-presidents), the effect of unionization upon bureaucratization of academic governance, and the effect of traditional labor mechanisms, such as grievance processing and binding arbitration, upon academic governance.

### *Methodology*

Because collective bargaining is a dynamic social process which is heavily influenced by individual institutional and contextual factors, a case study methodology was selected. On-site field research provided an opportunity to study complex interactions among variables in a realistic setting. Van Dalen's [41] causal-comparative case study method was

used, in which the investigator examines the occurrence of a phenomenon in several settings and attempts to discover possible causes by studying independent variables. It is not a true case study, for it focuses upon selected independent variables and their interrelated effect upon the phenomena in question (e.g., the structure and power distribution of academic governance systems within unionized institutions).

This study used the modified Carnegie Commission institutional classification system employed by Kemerer and Baldrige [27], focusing upon unionized multiversities, state colleges, and private liberal arts colleges. All four-year institutions which were unionized as of July 1974 ( $N=90$ ) formed the population for the study. Contracts were studied for several institutions in each institutional category, and the provisions of state public employee bargaining laws were also taken into consideration. In order to reduce as much external variation as possible, it was decided to limit site visitations to two east coast states which are heavily industrialized and which acquired public employee bargaining laws within less than two years of each other. An institution from the public multiversity<sup>1</sup> and state college categories was selected from each state. Two private liberal arts colleges were selected from within one of the two states, primarily to afford the researcher an opportunity to study unions affiliated with all three national associations (AAUP, NEA, and AFT).<sup>2</sup>

A structured interview instrument was constructed which sought information concerning decision-making structure for decisions in four areas (academic, personnel, economic, and planning),<sup>3</sup> organizational variables (authority structure, formal relationships between groups), union and contract variables (union composition, scope of bargaining, nature of arbitration), informal relations (senate and union leadership characteristics, administrative attitude toward faculty bargaining), the reasons for unionization, and contextual factors which influenced governance and decision making. Particular attention was paid to changes in scope of authority of decision makers such as deans and department chairpersons, and changes in governance committees (creation, abolition, or changes in function). The instrument was used at each of the six

<sup>1</sup>Both multiversities are state-related, but are treated as public institutions by legislators and state education agencies.

<sup>2</sup>Because private colleges are not subject to state public employee laws, and usually have minimal contact with state education agencies, locating a unionized private college in each of the two states was less important than location of the public colleges selected for study.

<sup>3</sup>Portions of this instrument were adapted from the questionnaire used in the 1974 Kemerer and Baldrige study [27].

institutions to interview the academic vice-president, one dean, two department chairpersons, faculty members active in the senate, faculty union leaders, and tenured and untenured faculty members not active in governance.<sup>4</sup> A total of sixty individuals was interviewed. Interviews were supplemented with study of each institution's history; college catalogs and faculty handbooks provided additional information on the contextual factors affecting the institution's governance system.

### *Discussion of Findings*

The sixty interviews and background research undertaken generated a substantial amount of data on unionization and governance at the six institutions visited. In order to simplify data analysis, findings are presented and discussed by institution type. Differences within institution types occurred infrequently, and are noted where relevant. Where it is necessary to distinguish between the two institutions with a category, each is referred to by a letter appellation.

#### *Motivation for Unionization*

In order to understand more completely the changes in governance which resulted from faculty unionization and other contextual factors, respondents were asked to explain the primary reasons for the faculty's decision to unionize. Kemerer and Baldrige cite two primary motivations for faculty unionization: preservation of existing decision-making power and autonomy, and the desire of "deprived" faculty at other institutions to acquire decision-making power and autonomy [27, pp. 64–65]. Evidence of both of these motivations was readily observable at the institutions visited.

It was evident that faculty at both multiversities were "preservationists," for they had enjoyed substantial autonomy prior to unionization. Respondents at both multiversities indicated that faculty unionization was a response to increasing centralization of higher education planning at the state level,<sup>5</sup> the fear of being drawn into the union formed by state college faculty, and the desire to protect their more favorable salary scales. These findings were confirmed in a similar study by Begin, et al. [11]. Several respondents at both institutions also indicated that a subordinate motive for many pro-union votes was the faculty's displeasure with

<sup>4</sup>Respondents were guaranteed anonymity in an effort to establish trust and spontaneity within the interview session.

<sup>5</sup>Berdahl has analyzed the national trend toward state involvement in higher education policymaking [13].

presidents who made numerous decisions without consulting the faculty. A new president took office at one multiversity shortly after the first contract was signed, and at the other just prior to the pro-unionization vote.

Faculty at the state colleges had enjoyed little formal power over campus decision making. Although faculty at State College *C* had acquired considerable informal authority because of frequent presidential turnover during the 1960s and a resulting leadership vacuum, that autonomy was threatened by state agency centralization of policymaking. Faculty at State College *D* had never enjoyed a formal role in campus decision making. Motivation for unionization at these two institutions, and for the state college systems to which they belonged, was clearly the acquisition of formal faculty power in governance matters. Also, faculty at both institutions had close ties with the two professional teachers' associations, especially the National Education Association. Although both unions later ousted the NEA in favor of other unions, both state college systems were originally organized by state NEA affiliates.

Faculty at neither private liberal arts college had ever been afforded an effective role in campus decision making. Presidents of both institutions were seen as paternalistic, and had bitterly opposed faculty unionization. In both cases, faculty saw unionization as the only mechanism for introducing faculty views and recommendations into the decision-making process at these colleges.

Although field studies focused upon the effects, rather than the causes, of faculty unionization, it became evident that the motivations underlying the faculty's decision to unionize also influenced post-unionization relationships between faculty and administrators. Although salary increases were a secondary motive in the unionization of at least two of the six institutions, respondents at all six institutions confirmed that the desire for substantial participation in academic governance was, in each case, the primary motive for unionization. In the four public institutions, external pressures generated by the respective state education agencies catalyzed and focused the unionization movement. Impetus for unionization at the private liberal arts colleges, however, was generated internally.

### *Locus of Decision Making*

Specific contractual provisions did not appear to have a major influence on how and at which level decisions were made. For example, the status of the department head as a union member or nonmember appeared rather insignificant to that individual's decision-making role. Chairpersons were members of the bargaining unit at the multiversities and state colleges,

but were not union members at the liberal arts colleges. However, faculty elected their departmental chairpersons at these latter institutions, and respondents indicated that election by faculty, rather than status as a union member, influenced chairpersons' decision-making power and role. Governance committees were created by contract at State College *D* and at both liberal arts colleges, but no preexisting governance committees were abolished by contract. However, faculty at two of the institutions (State College *D* and Liberal Arts College *F*) eliminated their senates soon after the contracts were signed, calling them "company unions" because administrators participated in senate meetings.

A major segment of this study sought to trace changes in the locus of decision making for four different areas of institutional operations: academic, personnel, economic, and planning matters. It was expected that unionization would increase faculty influence in each of these four areas, especially at the state colleges and liberal arts colleges. Data were gathered on the locus of "academic" decisions made about new courses, undergraduate admissions policies, and degree requirements. Personnel matters included decisions on hiring, promotion and tenure, and evaluation of faculty. The economic area encompassed scheduling and workload decisions, class size, and salary decisions. Planning matters which were examined included allocation of departmental budgets<sup>6</sup> and long-range planning. Table 1 summarizes loci of decision making in these four areas after unionization at each of the six institutions.

The locus of decision making for these four areas of governance was examined from two perspectives. First, the identity of the individual or group making the decision was ascertained, along with the hierarchical level at which the decision was made. Second, the restrictions surrounding the decision maker's autonomy were noted. For example, at several institutions where presidents made final personnel decisions, any decision which differed from faculty recommendations had to be justified in exhaustive detail. Often, the "right of authority" over a decision [4, p. 170] was so restricted by the layers of recommendations which surrounded it that final administrative decisions were actually ratifications of earlier faculty decisions.

*Academic Decisions.* It was clear that, at all six institutions, the faculty dominated decisions pertaining to "academic" matters and deans had correspondingly less power. Faculty within departments effectively deter-

<sup>6</sup>It might be argued that budgets belong in the economic, rather than the planning category. However, decisions made during budget allocations affect the purpose and direction of the institution, and therefore may be linked with other planning decisions.

TABLE 1

LOCUS OF DECISION MAKING

TYPE OF DECISION	MULTIVERSITIES			STATE COLLEGES			PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES		
	A	B	C	D	E	F			
<i>Academic</i>									
New courses	Department	Department	Department	Department/ College Committee	Department	Department			
Undergraduate admissions policy	Faculty Committee	Senate	Senate	Central Administration Union Committee	Faculty Committee	Faculty Committee			
Degree requirements	Schools/Colleges	College	Senate	Union Committee	Faculty Committee	Faculty Committee			
<i>Personnel</i>									
Hiring	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department Department & College Committee	Department			
Evaluation of candidate for promotion/tenure	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department Department & College Committee	Department			
Final decision on promotion/tenure	Central Administration	Central Administration	President*	President*	President	Central Administration			
<i>Economic (working conditions)</i>									
Workload, scheduling, class size	Department	Department	Department using contract guidelines	Contract	Contract	Contract			
Salary	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract	Contract			
<i>Planning</i>									
Departmental budgets	Dean Minimal	Dean Joint Committee	Dean Joint Committee	Dean Minimal	Vice-presidents Minimal	Dean Minimal			
Long-range planning	Dean Minimal	Dean Joint Committee	Dean Joint Committee	Dean Minimal	Vice-presidents Minimal	Dean Minimal			

NOTE: President = president acting alone; Central Administration = president acting in conjunction with cabinet-level administrators (vice-presidents, etc.); Joint Committee = committee of faculty and administrators; Contract = certain decisions are required by contract.

\*Using order of preference list submitted by faculty committee.



mined which new courses would be offered, and were challenged only when a new offering overlapped academic offerings of other departments. Decisions relating to new programs at the four public institutions were severely curtailed by state education department policies allowing neither faculty nor administrators the right to create new programs, departments, or majors without substantial justification.

Faculty appeared to dominate decision making regarding undergraduate admission policies and degree requirements, usually within senate or other institution-wide committees. Respondents at the private liberal arts colleges indicated that declining numbers of applicants resulted in few changes in admissions policies, and suggested that admissions office personnel interpreted admissions policy liberally in order to boost enrollments. (This finding illustrates the discretion often afforded to administrators in interpreting and implementing policies made by faculty groups.)

This substantial faculty power over academic decision making was clearly attributable to faculty unionization at State College *D* and at both liberal arts colleges. Prior to unionization, many program and curriculum decisions were made by deans or other administrators, who often did not follow faculty recommendations. Faculty at both multiversities and at State College *C*, however, were accustomed to substantial autonomy over curricula, programs, and other academic matters. Unionization legitimized and protected that autonomy.

*Personnel Decisions.* Although decision authority over personnel matters was less clear-cut than for academic matters, faculty at all six institutions benefitted in at least two ways from their union contract. First, the department's evaluation of a candidate for hiring, promotion, or tenure was given very serious weight at all six institutions. And second, grievance articles in all six contracts ensured due process for personnel decision making by prescribing appeal procedures if due process were violated. (Although a faculty grievance system existed at both multiversities prior to unionization, grievances were handled inconsistently and little formal due process protection existed.) The evaluation process for personnel decisions was regarded by respondents as more consistent and more procedurally fair than prior to unionization because each department was now required to follow written guidelines for the review of faculty performance and its recommendations to higher-level decision makers. Departmental preferences normally prevailed in the hiring of full-time faculty. Although deans retained significant authority in their ability to add or delete faculty positions within departments, faculty conducted the search, screening, evaluation, and selection of their new colleagues.

Deans, however, tended to control the salary level at which new faculty were hired.

Although in no case did departments make final decisions relating to promotion and tenure, departmental recommendations carried considerable weight at upper hierarchical levels. Authority for these decisions was particularly diffuse within the two multiversities visited, for the decision chain included department faculty, the department chairperson, a college-level committee, the college dean, an administrative committee (vice-presidents and/or deans), the academic vice-president, the president, and the board of trustees. If departmental and college-level recommendations were strong and well-supported, promotion and tenure decisions were usually affirmative.

Faculty at the two state colleges also enjoyed considerable authority in promotion and tenure decisions after unionization, but this authority was externally constrained. One state's legislature and the state education agency in the second state each had set a quota for full professorships at 30 percent of the total full-time faculty. For this reason, on both campuses tenure was easier to attain than promotion to full professor. College-wide faculty committees at both state colleges ranked candidates for promotion in priority order, and presidents tended to respect this ranking in their final decisions on promotion and tenure.

Faculty at the two private liberal arts colleges received significant authority in promotion and tenure recommendations from their union contracts. As was the case at the state colleges, the recommendations of school- or college-wide faculty committees carried substantial weight with the final decision makers, and economic constraints were the chief cause for denying promotion to a candidate recommended by the faculty. High tenure ratios within many departments and tight budgets limited the faculty's power in personnel decisions, and at Liberal Arts College *E*, many tenure decisions were deferred until the proportion of tenured faculty in the candidates' academic units dropped below a certain (unspecified) level. Nevertheless, it was evident that unionization had significantly increased faculty influence over final decisions in personnel matters, for most pre-unionization personnel decisions had been made by deans and presidents.

*Economic Decisions.* Decisions within this area included salary, workload, scheduling, and class size. At all institutions, base salaries were set by contract, either using a standard salary scale or employing an across-the-board percentage increase. Although merit pay provisions were included in contracts at both multiversities, faculty found it difficult to reconcile egalitarian treatment for all faculty with the desire to reward

scholarly excellence, and as yet had developed no mutually acceptable decision criteria or structure for merit increases.

Faculty workload was limited by contract at the state colleges and private liberal arts colleges to the course load in existence just prior to unionization. Contractual provisions set a maximum teaching load, thus preventing most faculty from accepting extra teaching duties for short courses, off-campus offerings, and other special programs. The contracts at State College *D* also limited the number of hours a faculty member could devote to students enrolled in independent study programs. Scheduling and class size were departmental decisions (in consultation with the dean) at all six institutions, although the contract for State College *C* required that present practices regarding class size be continued.

*Planning Decisions.* Faculty enjoyed the least authority over planning decisions at each of the institutions visited. Vice-presidents and deans controlled budget allocations for departments, although faculty within departments generally participated in drawing up the chairperson's budget request. At State College *D*, the union was agitating for more power in the budgeting process, a movement strongly resisted by the administration. Conversely, at Multiversity *B* a faculty committee appointed by the president reviewed all college budgets and required deans to defend their requests. But formal budgetary power clearly remained in the hands of the administrators at these institutions.

It was difficult to ascertain the locus of long-range planning power in these institutions. At four of the six institutions visited, faculty and administrators alike (excluding the academic vice-presidents) felt that long-range planning was minimal. It appeared that whatever planning occurred at Multiversity *A*, State College *D*, and the two liberal arts colleges was carried out by the vice-presidents, presidents, and, perhaps, the board of trustees. If this were the case, few of the planning decisions were communicated to faculty, deans, or chairpersons.

At Multiversity *B* and State College *C*, the president had appointed joint faculty-administration task forces to consider future problems, to collect data needed for long-range planning, and to recommend present actions to anticipate future needs. Both groups were relatively new and their effectiveness was yet unproven, but respondents tended to view them favorably. Whatever authority faculty enjoyed over long-range planning, however, was at the pleasure of the administration, and was not formalized by contract.

Analysis of decision loci in the foregoing four governance areas revealed considerable faculty participation in decision making. Even for decision areas where administrators enjoyed decisive authority (most par-

ticularly in final personnel decisions), their decision alternatives were often structured and restricted by the recommendations of faculty groups. This substantial faculty influence, while usually not expressed contractually, resulted from the more formal procedures and formally specified decision-making roles that followed the unionization process. In budget and planning decisions, unions were attempting to limit administrative discretion by involving themselves in some portion of the decision process.

#### *Other Changes in Governance Structure*

In addition to identifying decision loci in four specific areas, an attempt was made to observe changes in the formal structure of governance at the six unionized institutions. The creation and abolition of governance committees was noted, with particular attention given to the effect of unionization upon the role of the faculty senate.

Governance structures at both multiversities had been highly decentralized prior to unionization. Departmental- and college-level committees remained virtually unchanged, although a few university-wide faculty committees were created as required to implement the grievance procedures. No formal liaison committee between the senate and the union existed, although informal liaison was accomplished through overlapping membership of union leaders in the senate at each multiversity, and by friendship patterns among union and senate leaders.

The structure and jurisdiction of the senates of each multiversity were not significantly altered by faculty unionization. Neither senate had final decision authority, for both were "advisory" bodies. Both senates halted their activities related to economic matters after the union was certified, but the majority of their activities remained unchallenged and unchanged. Respondents felt that union leadership valued the senate both for its role in academic deliberations and because union support for the senate diluted anti-union sentiment among the "collegially oriented" faculty. Also, respondents, including union leaders, admitted that unions at both multiversities were weak and had no desire to challenge the senate as long as union autonomy over contract matters was not infringed upon. Were the unions stronger or the senates weaker, dual-track governance<sup>7</sup> might not have been possible on these campuses.

Few similarities in governance structure were evident at the two state colleges. The experience of State College *C* was similar to that of the multiversities. Little change in departmental- or school-level committees

<sup>7</sup>Kemerer and Baldrige [27] define the coexistence of a senate and union which have separate decisional jurisdictions as "dual track governance."

was observed, and the strong faculty senate retained its power over all matters except those included in the contract. All senate committees remained intact, although the contract required that the union place one member on each college-wide faculty committee. This senate had extraordinary decision powers, for even prior to unionization it was allowed to set policy in some areas to mediate unpopular administrative decisions. The statewide union chapter on this campus was extremely weak and was perceived by most faculty as unnecessary.

Matters were significantly different at State College *D*, for the contract established departmental- and college-level governance committees where virtually no faculty participation in governance had existed. The union insisted that the faculty senate (created two years earlier) be abolished upon ratification of the first contract, so all faculty participation in governance was through the union structure. The only mechanism for joint faculty-administration decision making was the contractually mandated "meet and discuss" sessions, for the administration was prohibited from dealing with faculty outside the "meet and discuss" framework. Thus, at State College *D*, unionization completely transformed the governance structure.

The governance structure at both private liberal arts colleges was also substantially altered by faculty unionization. Contracts at both colleges created department- and school-level governance committees to deal with personnel matters. At College *E*, several faculty committees were created outside the union structure to address curricular and academic policy matters, while at College *F*, a contractually required executive committee addressed curriculum and other academic policy matters. Grievance articles in both contracts mandated specific faculty committees to participate in grievance processing. Pre-union representative faculty groups fared differently at these two institutions. The senate at College *F* was not abolished by the union, but "withered away" as its leadership became active in the union and as contractually mandated committees took over its prior functions. At College *E*, a representative faculty council (similar to a senate) which predated the union continued virtually unchanged after unionization.

It was evident that, at institutions where faculty had enjoyed considerable autonomy prior to unionization, governance structures were only minimally affected. Senates which had predated unions by several years (thereby establishing their credibility and decision jurisdictions) were not substantially affected by the union presence. Conversely, recently established senates which were perceived as powerless and administratively dominated were quickly abolished or died of neglect.

Even though senates at three of the institutions survived and appeared

unscathed, respondents agreed that a combination of union tolerance and the union's lack of strong faculty support were the major causes of the senate's continuation. Should the union perceive a jurisdictional challenge from the senate, or should a larger percentage of faculty support the union, the senate could easily be weakened or abolished by the union. Currently cordial friendship patterns among senate and union leaders also protected the senate; shifts in these informal relationships could alter the balance between senate and union jurisdictions.

### *Contextual Factors Affecting Governance*

Numerous scholars have emphasized the influence of contextual factors upon academic governance, whether or not the institution is unionized [8, 9, 24, 27, 33]. Institutional size and type of control, its relative wealth, the quality of its faculty and scope of its programs, its ability to attract students, and its responsibilities to higher-level governing or coordinating boards all have a significant impact upon how and by whom decisions are made. These factors also influence the amount of bureaucratic regulation and the degree of faculty autonomy within an institution [5]. It was critical to this study, then, to evaluate the role of contextual factors, in addition to unionization, in the governance of these institutions. Table 2 summarizes the most frequently noted contextual factors influencing governance at the six institutions visited during this study.

In the decade before unionization, all six institutions had experienced substantial changes in institutional mission, size, faculty composition, and range of program offerings. This rapid expansion ended just before the institutions unionized, and enrollments levelled off and declined at four of the institutions. While enrollments were decreasing, state education agencies were attempting to centralize authority over the four public institutions. Promotion quotas and restrictions on new programs circumscribed faculty autonomy, and retrenchment threats eroded faculty job security. Legislatures became increasingly reluctant to appropriate funds at the levels requested, and the private liberal arts colleges saw their endowments shrunk by inflation at the same time that alumni donations decreased. Research support from the federal government decreased for all six institutions just as federal guidelines relating to affirmative action, access for the handicapped, and athletic programs increased budget expenditures in several areas. Clearly, external or "environmental" forces had considerable impact upon the governance structure and the locus of decision making at these institutions. Thus, in studying changes in the governance structures at the six institutions, it was often difficult to separate the effects of unionization from the effects of other contextual

TABLE 2

**INFLUENTIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AFFECTING GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING**

	MULTIVERSITIES		STATE COLLEGES		PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES	
	A	B	C	D	E	F
<i>External Factors</i>						
Declining enrollment	-	+	+	+	+	-
State education agency attempts to centralize and standardize policy	+	+	+	+	N/A	N/A
Promotion/tenure quotas	-	-	+	+	+	-
Retrenchment initiated	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Internal Factors</i>						
Recent change and expansion of institutional mission	+	+	+	+	+	+
Historically strong faculty governance role	+	+	+	-	-	-
Well-established faculty senate	+	+	+	-	-	-
Administrative resistance to unionized faculty at local campus level	-	-	-	+	+	+
New president since unionization	+	+	+	+	+	-

NOTE: + = factor influencing governance; - = factor not observed as influential on governance at this institution; N/A = factor not applicable to this institution.

factors. Generally, it appeared that administrators tended to react to external pressures by assuming greater decision-making authority, causing faculty militancy to increase. While the resulting unionization legitimized the faculty’s role in decision making, external pressures sometimes circumscribed the administration’s ability to implement faculty decisions.

Several factors within these institutions influenced the shape of governance after unionization. The importance of a historically stable faculty senate has already been established. Also, the attitudes of central administrators, and the president in particular, toward the faculty union appeared to play a significant role in the quality of post-unionization relationships between faculty and the administration. Stiff administrative resistance to unionization at State College *D* and at both liberal arts colleges was translated into mutual distrust and strained relations between faculty and administrators subsequent to unionization. Conversely, presidents at both multiversities and at State College *C* cooperated and consulted extensively with the union, and both sides strove to build a positive, trusting relationship. The most important factor influencing the present governance structure, however, was the faculty’s governance role prior to unionization. Faculty who already enjoyed considerable autonomy appeared satisfied with the pre-unionization structure, while those faculty historically “deprived” of governance authority insisted upon altering the governance structure to formalize their decision-making role.

*Informal Governance Relationships*

One criticism leveled at faculty unions has cited their tendency to polarize faculty and administrators, complicating or preventing informal communication and cooperation between these groups. This polarization has occurred on some unionized campuses, and was especially observed on the campus of State College *D*, where the sole mechanism for faculty-administration interaction was the union-controlled “meet and discuss” sessions.

However, extensive informal union-administration cooperation was noted at three of the six campuses visited, and attempts to establish trust and cooperation were beginning at two others. At both multiversities and at State College *C*, external pressures catalyzed union and administration cooperation. Efforts by the state education agency to centralize planning, policymaking, and personnel decisions threatened the autonomy of these public institutions. In each case, the union and administration formed an informal coalition to preserve local autonomy. These coalitions appeared to reinforce the cooperation between the union and administration in other areas of campus governance, although it was difficult to determine whether trust and cooperation were the cause or the effect of the coalition. It appeared that these phenomena were mutually reinforcing.

Research at State College *D* revealed that the state-level union leaders had entered an informal coalition with state education agency leadership by arranging a series of trade-offs to avoid retrenchment. Campus administrators were excluded from this coalition and felt themselves bypassed by the union and ignored by the state education agency. Respondents felt that this union-management coalition at the state level had increased the polarization of faculty and administrators on that campus.

Many respondents stressed the importance of preserving decision mechanisms outside the union structure as a method of building faculty-administration cooperation. A healthy faculty senate facilitated this goal, as did joint faculty-administration committees on planning, personnel, and other governance matters. Rather than threatening the union, respondents felt that the existence of multiple avenues of access to decision making strengthened the faculty’s role in governance while promoting the cooperation between faculty and administration which facilitates joint decision making.

*Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Further Research*

The multidimensional nature of academic governance makes the tracing of causes and effects of changes in governance procedures extremely

complex. A number of factors may be interacting, although their significance, interactive effects, and even their presence or absence may be difficult for the researcher to detect. Institutional characteristics, structure of pre-unionization governance, and attitudes of administrators and faculty members toward both unionization and the legitimacy of the faculty's role are only a few of the contextual factors which influence governance at a college or university.

Despite the importance of considering these and other contextual factors while analyzing the effect of unionization upon governance structures, data from the comparative case studies supported several findings. These findings generally confirm the conclusions of Begin [7, 9, 10], Kemerer and Baldrige [27], and Mortimer, et al. [32, 33].

1. Faculty as a whole gained formal governance power through the union contract. Even on campuses where faculty had enjoyed considerable decision-making power, the contract legitimated and in many cases broadened the scope of the faculty's governance role.
2. Administrators at the vice-presidential and presidential level acquired greater authority over formal decisions, particularly in personnel matters, many of which had once been made by deans and "rubber-stamped" by administrators at higher levels. Contracts now stipulated decision responsibility and accountability at levels above the dean.
3. Deans appeared to have lost much of their autonomy over personnel and workload decisions; however, they retained much of their authority to allocate budgets.
4. The single most significant effect of unionization at the six institutions visited was the promulgation of a formal grievance procedure. This process resulted in promotion and tenure policies which were generally considered to be fairer and more consistent than practices prior to unionization.
5. At institutions where senates were relatively new or had minimal faculty support, senates were abolished and replaced with union-dominated faculty committees. At institutions with a traditionally strong faculty senate, unions respected senate prerogatives and focused on economic issues. At these latter institutions, senate and union leadership overlapped.
6. On campuses that had a tradition of faculty participation in governance, union influence appeared minimal. However, it was evident that external threats against faculty autonomy or a reversal of the administration's cooperative attitude would energize and strengthen the union.

7. Unionization tended to formalize relationships between faculty and administration, regardless of the quality of these relationships. This formalization reduced the ability of an individual to influence decision making by informal means.
8. Departments, as academic units, either retained their former decision-making power or gained additional power as a result of unionization. Nearly all academic and most personnel decisions were made at this level, and usually prevailed (unless prevented by budget restrictions). Because the grievance process usually started with the chairperson or the dean, departmental decisions were seldom challenged except on due process grounds.

An additional finding at each of the six institutions visited was unexpected and difficult to document. The attitude of the president and other high-level administrators toward the faculty's governance role and, subsequently, toward faculty unionization appeared to be a major factor in the faculty's decision to unionize, and in the quality of post-unionization governance relationships. At five of the six institutions visited, a new president arrived near the time of the signing of the first contract, a finding that compounded the difficulty of tracing cause and effect relationships between a union contract and changes in the institution's governance structure. Faculty at all six institutions ascribed much of the quality of the union-administration relationship (whether cooperative or adversary) to the attitudes of top administrators toward the propriety of the faculty's governance role. It is evident that this factor deserves further study and analysis.

Other findings merit further exploration in studies of unionized governance. On several campuses, unions were attempting to gain representation in budget decisions controlled primarily by administrators. Acquiring decision power in the budget allocation process would strengthen union influence exponentially on most campuses. Another finding meriting additional study is the informal coalitions formed between union and administration as they battle state agencies for local campus autonomy. A third area for analysis is the effect of retrenchment decisions on union power.

A final area deserving further examination does not arise out of this study, but suggests itself as a corollary to present research. It has been noted that numerous environmental and contextual factors affect an institution's governance structure: factors which prevent the attribution of all governance changes to faculty unionization. Similar analyses of changes in governance structures should be conducted at nonunionized

institutions with characteristics similar to those of the institutions visited. Especially interesting would be comparisons of governance changes at institutions whose faculty voted "no agent" in unionization elections with unionized institutions and with institutions which have been relatively free of unionization activity, Adler [2]. Important factors other than faculty unionization might then be identified as catalysts of changes in governance structures.

The case study approach was used in this and earlier studies as a tool to identify variables which require further study. However, this methodology does not permit generalizing from the small number of institutions studied to the universe of unionized colleges and universities. Now that many of the variables that require further study have been identified, future research might examine a few of these variables at a larger number of institutions so that data are more generalizable. However, the influence of contextual factors must be incorporated into any data analysis of the variables relating to unionization and faculty governance.

There is little doubt that faculties have either gained or maintained a substantial role in institutional decision making as a result of unionization, and that it is ultimately the faculty who will preserve or destroy traditional governance mechanisms at unionized colleges. Now that these fundamental effects have been confirmed, attention should be turned to the *quality* of governance relationships at unionized institutions. This and other studies have indicated that the faculty and the administration have the capacity to build a governance system which, although it may not represent the optimal solution for either side, will be mutually satisfactory as a mechanism for addressing the problems of governing institutions of higher education.

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