



# Academic Governance 3.0

What could it be? How can we get there?

A conference organized by the

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia

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Edited by Richard Kool



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We are also grateful to all the fine scholars who contributed their wisdom, passion and expertise to the conference, and to this volume.

We would also like to thank Lindsay Ishihiro, CUFA BC's Executive Assistant, for her work in helping to organize this event and assembling and laying out this publication.



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# PREFACE

*RICHARD KOOL AND ROBERT F. CLIFT, CUFA BC*

**Important note:** the writing presented here is based on transcripts of the presentations at the conference. They have been “cleaned up” to a degree, but if they sound at places rather informal or even colloquial, they are not necessarily to be compared to more traditional academic papers.

The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC) represents over 4600 professors, instructors, professional librarians and other academic staff through its member faculty associations. CUFA BC’s purposes are to promote the quality of higher education in British Columbia, including research and the dissemination of knowledge in all its forms, and to advocate for the interests of its members.

In recognition of its 40th anniversary, CUFA BC declared 2012 to be the *Year of Governance* and undertook a number of projects relating to the governance of post-secondary education in British Columbia.

There are 15 post-secondary institutions based in British Columbia currently authorized to call themselves a university. These institutions were established under multiple pieces of legislation, with different legislative requirements for governance, and have evolved different governance practices.

## **Public Research/Doctoral (members of CUFA BC)**

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The overall goal of the CUFA BC Governance Project is to ensure that every institution called a “university” in British Columbia has a governance structure and governance practices that are democratic, effective, result in high-quality programs, respect academic freedom and reflect academic integrity.

This conference grew out of discussions in CUFA BC’s council, made up of the presidents of the faculty associations at BC’s five public research/doctoral-granting universities. Collaborating with the **Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC**, the **Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations** and the **Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations**, we thought that a meeting to examine the state of university governance would help us to find a way to more deeply examine the issues that many of us feel are now besetting our institutions.

Increased managerialism and centralized control; wild, costly and risky foreign adventures into off-shore educational programming with questionable partners; compromised academic standards; an increased intra- and inter-institutional competition for resources with its concomitant reduction in collegial work and collaboration; a continual diminishment of academic control of academic issues by senates, faculty and academic councils; the list could go on, but at the bottom of all of these issues comes the question of how our institutions are being governed, and what our institutions are to become.

*Richard Kool is an Associate Professor in the School of Environment and Sustainability at Royal Roads University. He has been involved with the RRU Faculty Association (RRUFA) since 2005 as a member at large, vice president, president and past president, and was part of the team in 2006 that made RRUFA the first BC university faculty association to vote for unionization. His term as CUFA BC President runs July 2012-2014.*

## **INTRODUCTION: ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE: AN END OR A MEANS?**

**RICHARD KOOL, CUFA BC AND ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY**

*If academic freedom is our right, then academic governance is our responsibility.*

At the 2013 Harry Crowe Foundation Conference entitled *The Limits of Academic Freedom*, Dr. Jim Turk, the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, maintained that the real issue we should be worrying about isn't necessarily academic freedom. Instead, he pointed our attention towards academic integrity as the end we should be striving towards, and universities cannot really have academic integrity without academic staff having academic freedom to pursue their creative and intellectual endeavours.

Academic integrity is the outcome of two things: academic freedom and appropriate academic governance. It seems to me that without engaged and mobilized academic governance, academic integrity is always at risk. Questionable administrative policy and decision-making can result in activities that truly do reduce our institutional integrity. As well, academic staff must have a clear understanding of their right to exercise academic freedom as a function of their role as professors and librarians, and this too is necessary to ensure the integrity of our academic institution. These two features: appropriate governance and the right to exercise academic freedom<sup>1</sup> must go together. Only if they are both found in an institution can we really ensure that the integrity of the academy, an integrity so important to the functioning of a society that aspires to democratic ideals and values, is maintained.

What happens when strong and committed involvement of faculty and librarians is not found in, or is barred from university governance? As university administrators and boards seem to feel empowered by and perhaps even driven by the "entrepreneurial spirit" and the desire to be "nimble", and increasingly by-pass academic oversight of decisions that weigh directly on to the functions of teaching, learning and research, the potential for institutional disaster increases. Derek Bok, past president of Harvard University

and no wild-eyed radical, wrote in 2003:

...in their pursuit of moneymaking ventures, universities also risk compromising their essential academic values... Once such compromises are made, competitive pressures can cause the questionable practices to spread and eventually become so deeply rooted as to be well nigh irreversible. (p. 9)

There are many places where "such compromises" can be made. For some Canadian universities, they seem to be made through partnerships with for-profit international and well-financed educational 'partners' (e.g., Study Group, Navitas). A push towards university-industry partnerships, now being promoted and indeed, virtually required, by the Government of Canada, also offers tremendous risks to academic integrity in the realm of studies on energy, agriculture and medicine.

The literature on the diminishment of academic freedom that results from agreements between what Press & Washburn (2000) call "The Academic-Industrial Complex", especially when those agreements are not examined through strong academic governance structures, has been powerfully argued (for example, see Krinsky, 2003; Press & Washburn, 2000; Washburn, 2005). Faculty members engaging in research collaborations through university-industry partnerships with, for example, the pharmaceutical, food and energy industries, are increasingly not afforded the same degree of academic freedom to carry out research and publish their findings were they to be funded by other sources. A recent report presenting an analysis of ten research collaboration contracts between leading multinational energy companies and major US universities (e.g., UC Berkeley & Davis, Stanford, Texas, Rice), few of which would have been debated or analyzed through any academic governance process, concluded that "...In short, the 10 contracts examined in this report indicate that the balance between Big Oil's commercial interests and the university's commitment to independent academic research,

high-quality science, and academic freedom seems to have tilted in favor of Big Oil” (Washburn, 2010, p. 3). At present, an analysis of industry-university relationships as they relate to issues of academic freedom in Canada has not been done, although the Canadian Association of University Teachers will be releasing a report on the subject by mid-2013.

And sadly, the Conservative Government of Canada seems to be taking a page from industry, increasingly censoring presentation and publication of research, and muzzling government scientists- primarily those working in the environmental domain- from speaking freely about their work, especially when that work might go against the government’s ideological orientation (Harris, 2013). According to a recent report by the University of Victoria’s Environmental Law Centre (Greenwood, 2013),

Government scientists are often “instructed to not speak publicly – or to respond with pre-scripted ‘approved lines,’ ” the report says... The report points to Fisheries and Oceans Canada where communications staff “now comprehensively control interviews” with scientists: “No journalist is to be granted an interview until the minister’s own director of communications has been notified”... Natural Resources Canada has adopted “particularly strict rules restricting the ability of scientists to talk to the media about ‘climate change’ and ‘oilsands’;” the report says... And Environment Canada “specifically forbids scientists from speaking to the public on identified issues such as climate change or protection of polar bear and caribou until the Privy Council Office gives approval,” it says. (Munro, 2013)

And not only are government scientists working for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans now being restricted from speaking or even submitting papers for publication, but their academic co-researchers now must agree to have government censors review documents prior to submission for publication if their work is done in conjunction with government scientists.

Now, under new restrictions imposed by DFO officials, scientists are prevented from sharing any information with a third party without the explicit consent of a high-ranking bureaucrat. According to the 2013 agreement, all technology and information related to DFO research, even if conducted in collaboration with outside parties, is “deemed to be confidential and neither party may release such information to others in any way whatsoever without prior written authorization of the other party. (Linnitt, 2013)

The integrity of our institutions must be at the top of our minds. The academy has come to reflect our culture’s focus on ‘self’, becoming at times places of insularity and individualism as professors expand their own research domains while, for a variety of reasons, they often abrogate

their responsibility to be engaged in institutional citizenship. Our membership in the academy, I would contend, comes, as with citizenship, with rights and responsibilities. If academic freedom is our right, then academic governance is our responsibility. We must have a concern for not only our own integrity, but for that of our institution and our colleagues. I believe we have an obligation to instill a commitment in all academic staff to increase collective engagement in the work of academic governance and the protection of academic freedom.

The concern about and conflict over academic governance issues in front of us may not, as Birnbaum points out, “reflect differences about how a university should be governed, but rather conflicting ideologies and differences in belief about what a university should be” (2004, p. 8). It is through collegial discussion, debate and innovative academic practice that we can explore what the university “should be”, and then bring those new things into the world. It is also through collegial decision-making that we can examine those things that no longer are appropriate nor need conserving, and shed them. As Sarewitz (2004) says, in the context of environmental controversy:

Ultimately, most important decisions in the real world are made with a high degree of uncertainty, but are justified by a high level of commitment to a set of goals and values. Such past political acts... were not taken on the basis of predictive accuracy or scientific justifications about what the future would look like, but on the basis of convictions about what the future should look like, informed by plausible expectations of what the future could look like. (p. 398)

The goals and values of a university, of what the university should look like, and could look like, need to be determined by an engaged community of scholars, administrators, and staff all of whom have a demonstrated commitment to those ideals. Since in 2010, the average Canadian university president, according to the University of Victoria’s President David Turpin, has a tenure of 6 years (Charbonneau, 2012). Since the average professor will spend most of their adult lives in the institution that grants them tenure, it is the academic staff that should take a predominant voice in determining what the university should look like. They are the ones that are going to spend their working lives there and clearly have the greatest stake in the institution – its present and future. The mechanism for determining that future is found in the formal structures of academic governance.

When we consider the future of academic governance, I think it benefits us all to see it as a means to a larger and higher end; the integrity of a class of institutions that, for more than a millennia, have brought practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, innovation, wisdom and artistic creation for the benefit of all. Our model of governance for the future cannot be that of multinational corporations or executive branches of government. Our horizons are much

further and our purposes much deeper than the transitory nature of commerce and politics.

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## END NOTES

1 "Academic freedom includes the right, without restriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom to teach and discuss; freedom to carry out research and disseminate and publish the results thereof; freedom to produce and perform creative works; freedom to engage in service to the institution and the community; freedom to express one's opinion about the institution, its administration, and the system in which one works; freedom to acquire, preserve, and provide access to documentary material in all formats; and freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies. Academic freedom always entails freedom from institutional censorship." (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2011)

David Mirhady was President of CUFA BC from 2010 - 2012, and is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Humanities at Simon Fraser University. He was previously President of the SFU Faculty Association. He has a PhD from Rutgers in Classics (1992) and came to SFU in 2000 after teaching at Dalhousie, Alberta, Lethbridge, and Calgary.

## CONFERENCE WELCOME

DAVID MIRHADY, CUFA BC

My name is David Mirhady and I'm the President of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC.

"Academic Governance 1.0." If we understand the original universities – and I like to think of Aristotle and his *Peripatos*, to which much of my research is devoted, as the very first one – they might take us from about 330 BC to the end of the 19th century and the developments of Humboldt in Germany, which so inspired the North American model. We can then think of "Academic Governance 2.0" as governing perhaps the post-war period when universities grew so much, across the Western world in particular. And now we've entered a third millennium and suddenly universities have proliferated like mad and we're seeing a new era, so many of our assumptions about the way academic governance is done may have to change.



To me, it's all about academic citizenship. With my studies on the ancients, I learn about citizenship as ideally involving both those who govern and those who are governed in turn – ideally, if you're an ancient Athenian, through a lottery system. So citizenship might work equally well whether you're talking about individual members within a department vis-à-vis their chair or across the whole university in talking about senates and boards of governors. The essential element is academic citizenship that should be a component of and lead to governance.

It's not for me to take much time except to welcome you all, to welcome in particular our co-sponsors for this event, the **Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations** – the people who've come the longest distance – as well as the **Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations** who are also sprinkled about here. Thanks very much for joining with us in sponsoring this occasion. I should get out of the way and let our speakers, Glen Jones and Rob Clift, take over from here. Thanks.



Glen A. Jones is the Ontario Research Chair in Postsecondary Education Policy and Measurement, and Professor of Higher Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His research on university governance has included national studies of Canadian university boards and senates, as well as international comparative studies.



## TRENDS IN ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE IN CANADA

GLEN JONES, ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Good evening, everyone. It's a great pleasure to be here, for a couple of reasons. One is because I'm excited to participate in any conversation that involves governance. There aren't very many of us around. Often when you talk to people and you say you're really interested in governance, they move slowly to the other side of the coffee table or perhaps begin to think you've taken the first step at a 10-step program, but governance is something that I've found quite fascinating for a long, long time.

I first became interested in the study of higher education in Canada at the age of 19, when I was appointed to the governing board of the University of Manitoba, and since that time I have been on two or three different governing boards. I then began to do research on university governance, and I've been involved in all kinds of studies and several consulting arrangements focusing on governance. It has been one of my fascinations.

The second reason I'm really interested in this gathering is because, unlike almost all of the conferences I've been to that deal with governance, this one is forward-thinking. And I think that's quite exciting – the notion of not just trying to understand what is happening, but trying to think about what it could become and what you think the key principles are and where you want to take this. I think that is a very exciting conversation to have, so I'm looking forward very much to the conversation over the next couple of days.

I think my role in this really is to try and provide a little bit of a background. I know all of you actually have a lot of interest and experience in governance, but let me provide just a little bit of a background based on some of the work that I've done. My notion really is to provide a bit of an overview of university governance in Canada, to talk a little bit about governing boards, a little bit about senates, a little bit about some recent findings, and to identify what I think are a number of key issues as we think about university governance in Canada right now.

And one of the interesting aspects for me is that I think we're really in a different place than many other countries when it comes to this conversation. I'm not trying to suggest that we're good or better or lucky or what have you, but I think we're in a very different place, and I think we have avoided some of the catastrophes that have happened in some other jurisdictions that we have been reading a lot about in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* or some other publications; we've avoided what I think are some of the catastrophes in terms of academic work that have been taking place in some other jurisdictions. But retaining that distinctiveness means ensuring that we have very strong academic governance arrangements. We've done reasonably well in comparison with some other jurisdictions that have gone through some quite dramatic changes, but I think there is a possibility of us going through a kind of downward spiral. So the notion of trying to ensure that we're thinking ahead in order to prepare and to create a governance structure that's going to work for us in the future is, I think, a timely objective.

Let's begin with a brief overview of university governance in Canada. The first universities in Canada were largely colonial creations, and what a lot of people don't realize is that in many respects their early governance structures were colonial government boards – in other words, they were largely composed of members of the colonial legislature who were seconded or appointed to run these institutions. By the 19th century, as we moved away from that kind of colonial model towards the notion of independent institutions, there was a tremendous amount of experimentation. Different universities tried different governance arrangements. Some of this experimentation was rooted in the denominational relationships that underscored these early universities – so they borrowed from the Presbyterian models or the Baptist models of decision-making, and that became a component part of the decision-making arrangements.

But it's really when we get into the early 20th century that

the notion of bicameralism became the kind of dominant model – this notion of essentially two major governing bodies within the institution, a senate and a board of governors – and that became the kind of classic Canadian model for the 20th century, moving now into the 21st.

So what is this Canadian approach that we might talk about here? I'll talk about it as an approach, realizing of course, as in all of these things, there are tremendous idiosyncrasies both by jurisdiction and by institution. So while it's possible to have this kind of national portrait, it's important to recognize that it hides a lot of very interesting distinctive institutional arrangements that you can find across the country.

But generally speaking, the Canadian approach was to create a separate Act that created the university as an autonomous, not-for-profit, private corporation. That's distinct from some other jurisdictions where universities have been created as public entities, essentially owned and managed by the state; the Canadian approach was to create universities as autonomous institutions, often at arm's length from the state, and as private corporations that were not able to have a profit. The Act often provides the university with an extremely broad mission: they essentially provide the institution with the ability to conduct research, to pursue service and teaching activities, and they generally provide them with degree-granting authority. The Acts generally don't limit that degree-granting authority, though there are some recent exceptions to that rule.

The Act creates both a governing board and a senate, and that becomes important because in many parts of the world, universities are created with a governing board and the governing board in turn creates a senate. I think that is an important distinction in many jurisdictions. So in the United States, for example, it's very common for institutions to have both a board and a senate, but usually the senate functions at the pleasure of the board. Of course, by tradition it would be very hard for a board to get rid of the senate, but in reality the senate can be a creature of the board and final authority, even over academic matters, officially rests with the board.

So that one distinction that became part of the Canadian approach is not unique just to Canada, but I think it does separate the Canadian approach from university governance in some other jurisdictions.

And then of course there are many unique arrangements. Quebec continues, at many institutions, to elect rectors through an interesting election and nomination process. In Memorial University of Newfoundland, as many people will recall from an incident a few years ago, the president is recommended to the minister, who actually makes the appointment; so it's not a board appointment, but a government appointment on the recommendation of the institution. As you folks are aware, more than I am probably, there is important omnibus legislation in several provinces:

the University Act in British Columbia and the Post-Secondary Learning Act in Alberta. Until quite recently, there was a move to completely change the governance structure of Quebec universities, but that legislation has now been brought off the table. So there are a lot of provincial and institutional nuances that are also a part of this Canadian approach.

Let's talk a little bit about governing boards. I did a study with my colleague Michael Skolnik (Jones and Skolnik, 1997). As far as I know, it's still about the only national study of university governing boards in Canada. We did a survey of the Board Secretaries and Board members at 45 Canadian universities and we obtained a lot of interesting data about the perceptions of board members about what they were doing, as well some general demographic information about the boards themselves.

The average board size – at least in our study, and I don't see much of an indication that it's changed too much since then – was about 27 members. Generally about a third of those members are internal. About 17% of the board members are faculty. About 9% of the total members are students. So we have a fairly strong internal representation. Again, this is not at all uncommon at European universities where there's often very strong internal representation, but it's relatively uncommon in American universities where the boards usually are almost entirely external; there's a perceived conflict to have faculty or students as members of the governing boards in most American state universities.

And of course the other internal member we shouldn't forget is the president, who is a voting member of all the university Boards in Canada.

If there's one-third internal, that means there's two-thirds external. Lay members are appointed by government or by the Board. We have quite a number of "self-perpetuating" Boards in Canada – that is that external members are appointed by the Boards themselves. The older traditional model had been Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments. So there's a mix across the country, but there are quite a few universities now where all the external Board members are actually appointed by the Board themselves – the existing board makes those decisions based on who they think are the best contributors to board conversations.

And in terms of the demographics, these are largely mature and well-educated individuals. In terms of the occupation of Board members - once again this is a national snapshot, so there's going to be all kinds of variations hidden within this aggregate view - about 37% of the individuals who are members of the Boards are from the education sector. Of course, all of our internal members would report that way, so that shouldn't be a big surprise. About 26% are from the business sector, frequently chief executive or senior executive officers with large corporations in Canada. About 13% self-report as "professionals" – that is they

are lawyers, accountants or medical doctors – in terms of their membership on this board. 11% are from “other sectors”, that includes individuals working in the non-profit sector, some individuals working in government, and other occupational categories; and about 11% are retired.

### Governing Boards: Occupation of members

Education sector	37% - includes internal
Business	26% - frequently executives
Professions	13% - law, accounting, medicine
Other sectors	11% - Non-profit, government
Retired	11%

The basic overview picture that emerged from our study of governing boards was that boards seemed to be working reasonably well, at least from the perception of those inside the boards themselves. So board secretaries and board members generally thought that they had the information they needed to make decisions; they self-reported that they worked hard, they knew what they were doing, they felt they had an influence over decisions, and they generally thought that the boards were reasonably effective bodies. Once again, recognizing the usual variations in opinion, they generally thought that the boards had relatively clear roles, they were fulfilling those roles, and they were reasonably pleased with the way the board was functioning.

So, having done a study on university governing boards, the next logical step was to do a study of university senates, which I did with another group – Theresa Shanahan, who’s now a professor at York University, and Paul Goyan, who used to be in government and then came to do graduate studies with us at OISE. We did a study essentially focussing on the senior academic decision-making body of the institution, which I’ll call “the Senate,” but that title varies from province to province and from institution to institution. Most are called “Senates,” but there’s General Faculties Councils in Alberta and there is the Academic Board at the University of Toronto and there are Academic Councils at some institutions. Once again, we surveyed senate secretaries in order to get their perceptions, and they provided us with a lot of the organizational data that we collected, and we surveyed senate members to get their perceptions of what they were doing and how they thought things were going.

The average size of the senate in this case was 61 (Jones, Shanahan and Goyan, 2004), and that of course is one of those numbers that really hides huge variations, because you have a few institutions that have 20 and 25-member senates, and then of course you have several that have numbers in the hundreds. I think the largest one we had in our survey was 190, but we know of several others that are much larger than that – they just didn’t respond to our

particular survey.

Internal members represent about 95% of the senate members across the country. Not a big surprise. Some people are surprised that there is 5% that aren’t. But 95% are internal members.

### University Senate Composition

	% of members	% of universities
Internal members	95%	
Faculty	44%	100%
Students	18%	100%
VPs/Deans	12%	76%
Other senior admin	11%	83%
Staff	6%	54%
Board members	3%	49%
Affiliated colleges	2%	27%
Others	2%	22%
Alumni	2%	34%
President/Rector/Principal	2%	90%
Government Appointment	1%	10%
Chancellor	1%	41%

Faculty make up, on average, 44% of the members of senate. The second number in the table is the percentage of universities that have members in that category. So every university across the country has faculty members on its senate – not a huge surprise – but 44% of the senate members are faculty. Students make up 18%. Again, every senate across the country has student members. Vice presidents and deans, another 12%, at three-quarters of the universities across the country and other senior administration, 11%, at 83% of the institutions. That means that senior administrators have about 23% of the members of senates, which is an interesting factor in and of itself. Staff have about 6%, and about half the universities have staff representation of some sort or other. Board members constitute about 3% of members. About half of the universities have some notion of board members being appointed to the senate, and then often senate members being appointed to the board to facilitate communication between the two bodies. Affiliated colleges for those institutions that have affiliated colleges have about 2% of the members. Alumni have about 2%. The president/rector/principal is on 90% of these senates – not all of them, but 90%. And then we have a small number of government appointees. About 10% of institutions have 1 or 2 government appointees on their senates, while 41% of the institutions have the chancellor as a member.

So essentially what you have is faculty at 44%. Of course, that hides the fact that in some respects, senior administrators of the university are also faculty; and the

representation from affiliated colleges are often faculty members. So again you can play a bit of a categories game here. But one of the things we were surprised with was that faculty were not the majority. They were close to, but not quite, half of the members of the senates in these institutions.

So what did we learn from the senate members themselves? Well, the quick and dirty answer is most senate members did not believe that the senate was an effective body. Only 44% of members believed that it was an effective body, though a large number wanted to point out to us that this isn't a criticism of the senate; they think the senate fulfills a very useful function, but they tended to think of that function in terms of communication, facilitating discussion rather than as an effective decision-making body for institutional governance.

We asked a series of questions about "should" and "does." In other words, "What should the institution do or what should the senate do in these particular areas? What does the senate do in these particular areas?" because we were trying to look at this understanding of role of the senate. That's where we found some issues of discord that I found quite fascinating.

What were some of those issues? We asked, "Should the senate play a role in establishing research policy within the institution?" About 78% of members said, "Yes, it should"; about 44% of members said, "Yes, it does." So one could argue of all of our academic policies, this is a fairly substantial one. It's certainly an area that has been going through an awful lot of change and metamorphosis as a function of some of the activities taking place in the federal government, new ethics review policies, etc., So this is an area where there was significant belief that the senate should be involved, but where a minority thinks that it actually is.

Another interesting question was "Should the senate play a role in determining the future direction of the university?" This was the academic planning and strategic planning question. 89% of senate members said, "Yes, we think it should play an important role in determining the future direction of the institution"; but only 43% said it does. We thought that was an interesting finding, and we found similar results in a number of areas, such as fundraising priorities and strategic research directions.

Working with the federal government, there is a need for research plans to materialize within different institutions. Are these research plans going through the academic senate? What's the role of the senate in terms of budget? What about quality assessment? I think that's one of the key issues that we have to come to grips with over the next 10 or 15 years, and the general notion was that senates haven't been part of those conversations to the degree that Senate members think they should be. That's the key here – it's not that they're not doing anything in these areas, it's that

the individuals who answered the questionnaires thought that the senate should be involved with these areas, while a much smaller percentage of individuals thought that they were.

So what were some of the major findings of that particular study? First, I was surprised that faculty are not a majority of senate members. I guess in hindsight I shouldn't be because I recognize the real importance of having deans and chairs participate in these processes – these are key administrative academic positions – but I had always assumed that faculty would be the majority, and that was, I guess, the surprise for me.

The second was that there was a considerable agreement about the importance of senates in terms of facilitating communication, both in conversation across the various disciplines within the university and as a kind of focal point for discussion within the institution.

But there were a lot of concerns about the role of the senate in relation to strategic academic decisions; a lot of concerns about the role of the senate in relation to board administration and faculty association; a sense that some of the work of the senate was being pulled off in different directions because some of it was essentially being done by the board now or because it had been taken over by the central administration and wasn't subject to the review or approval of the senate; and of course tensions between the role of the senate and the role of the faculty association, and issues of clarification in those two roles within the arrangement.

So what we essentially concluded from this study, which is now over 10 years old, was the need to reform, the need to have some changes within academic governance in higher education in Canada at least to deal with some of the differences of opinion about the role of these bodies and whether they could become more effective decision-making bodies within our institutions. We (Lea Pennock, University Secretary at the University of Saskatchewan, and Jeff Leclerc, University Secretary at the University of Manitoba, and I) are currently repeating pretty much the same study with some new issues now, but we're only partway through. At this point, we have a pretty good sample of university secretaries who have responded to our survey, but we're just beginning to collect the data from senate members, so I just don't have enough data to actually give you anything. This is a process that's taking much longer this time than it did last time, largely as a function of changes in the ethical review processes, of which you're all aware. For our first study, we only had to undergo one ethical review process. This time we have had to do ethical review processes at a number of the universities. My experience is that universities have become much more complicated to study.

In our present study, we asked a series of questions about change, since part of our objective is to take a look at what happened before and try and see whether there's been a

change in patterns over time. It's interesting to see that there actually have been quite a few changes. We asked about changes in legislation, and the answer was about 29% of the secretaries that we surveyed said that there have been changes in the legislative domain. A lot of this is about new institutions, and many of these new institutions, especially in British Columbia, have gone through legislative changes that have had a large impact on their governance arrangements over the last 10 years. These institutions are now operating under legislation that positions them as universities, and they are now responding to our survey.

43% of our respondents reported to us that there have been changes in constitutional documents. By this I mean the major senate bylaws or documents inside the institution; not the governing acts, but the documents inside the institution that essentially control the operations of the senate. And then there has been a lot of activity in terms of committee structure – 73% of institutions say that they've gone through a lot of changes in terms of committee structures in the not too distant past.

What are some of these changes? One of the big ones is simply the new universities, the new kids on the block who have gone through large transformations and now have new governance arrangements because of their university status, and they're now participants in these survey processes.

Another major change we see has been removing government appointments from Senates. I don't think removing government appointments is a strategic decision to rebalance the institution more than it is a recognition that most of the government appointments on the senates that I'm aware of don't really show up. So I think that's a kind of realistic shift in this arrangement.

Another change is the representation from contract and part-time faculty, which I think is an issue at many institutions. There are different categories and different definitions by institution, but overall as the number of contract and part-time faculty grow, the notion of ensuring that these individuals have a voice within academic governance becomes a big issue. Of course in many institutions, these categories of individuals are now unionized in a separate union from the full-time faculty and as that happens, there is a need for that other body to have a voice at the table, and that becomes part of this conversation as well.

There have been some other changes, a lot of which is a function simply of administrative decisions inside the institution. For example, as new faculties and departments are created there may be shifts in internal dynamics of the senate membership, and that's led to new faculty members becoming involved because there's now a new faculty, there's now a new department, and someone has to represent that unit, and senates have had to modify their bylaws to ensure that that takes place.

I think we've seen an overall rationalization of committee structure. This one always makes me smile. There are quite a number of institutions that have five or six or seven senate committees that do most of the work. The number of universities that have more than 20 senate committees is quite interesting; I think the largest one on this list was 26. There's something about having 26 senate committees that just seems wrong to me, but maybe I'm just too rational about some of these things. There has been a notion of redesigning and rethinking the committee structure to ensure that it makes a bit more sense in terms of the day-to-day activities of the governance arrangements of the institution.

## KEY ISSUES

So what are some of the key issues that we might want to talk about as we think about academic governance within higher education? One of the issues that comes up in a lot of the conversations I'm having with people these days is simply about faculty engagement. I was speaking last week at a conference in Ottawa that was organized by the Council of University Secretaries of Ontario. The theme for their conference was actually about faculty and student engagement because of their concern about "How do we get people engaged in this process? How do we think about that? How do we stimulate and have people actively engaged?"

I think that's a key issue. The challenge may be that we actually have to create governing bodies that are engaging, as opposed to finding ways to make it more pleasant. So it may be that it's not a matter of ensuring that there are nice things for people to do, as opposed to ensuring that there is a governance structure that actually leads to real change in decision-making within the institution that faculty can feel part of, and that may be one of the challenges that we have to ponder.

A second issue is what I would call scope of authority; that is, this notion that there are many things that universities do that senates are not as involved in as one might suspect they should be or that they could be. I think there are a couple of reasons for that. One is that some of these activities simply weren't around when many of these senates were originally created. The legislation creating these bodies didn't envision things like ethical reviews or fundraising or even academic planning as an ongoing process within the institution. The language wasn't there; it didn't become part of the bylaws of the governing body, and therefore it wasn't taken into account when the legislation was created, and so it takes place but without any formal executive approval of a particular senate.

I think that this a bit of a challenge, because many of these processes have become extraordinarily important. Academic planning has become a big, key feature in the decision-making at many institutions. The issue of quality has become a huge factor in many provinces, and

in many respects, either the province themselves have taken ownership of that particular issue or the senior administration of the university has created processes and have taken ownership. I think it's less the case that senates actually play a role in dealing with issues of quality within institutions. Again, it varies by institution, and some of you may have wonderful success stories to talk about, but my impression is the answer in most institutions is no, the issue of quality is taken up in a kind of way within the senate but not in terms of "do we actually have the information necessary to make judgements about how we're doing in terms of the quality of this institution, about the notion of how we're doing in terms of the quality of our academic programs, and what are we doing to address issues of quality as they materialize in a systematic kind of way?" So I think that scope of authority over these kinds of issues is a big issue within university governance.

Another is the issue of size and committee structure, both of which I think can relate to this notion of capacity: do our academic senates actually have the capacity to make serious academic decisions about the future direction of the institution? That's a tough question because we do sometimes create these institutions with a notion of them really being a place of oversight or a kind of democratic conversation, and that becomes the kind of ethos of these bodies. The notion of whether it's a kind of democratic conversation versus an actual governance body can take you in quite different directions: "Do you want a body that facilitates campus-wide conversation and discussion? Do you want a body that facilitates academic decisions within the institution? Or do you want a balance, and how do you create that balance in a way that works for you, in a way that is appropriate?" But at the same time, we have to recognize that we're all very busy, we have lots of things to do, but more importantly, we have tremendous pressure on us to move in multiple directions at the same time; to be top-notch researchers, to be top-notch teachers, to do our part in terms of service. But are there ways in which the time we devote to service can be used more efficiently and more appropriately? Twenty-six or 27 senate committees may not be the way of addressing that particular issue. But it's going to look different on different campuses, so it's not as if there's a universal response to that.

One of the things I found fascinating over the last couple of years is that I've been participating in a project called *The Changing Academic Profession*, a study that has looked at perceptions of faculty in 19 jurisdictions, 18 countries. The reason there's a difference between jurisdiction and country is because we have both China and Hong Kong participating in the study, which always makes for interesting conversations. But the study essentially has involved the same survey being administered to a large sample of faculty in all 19 of those jurisdictions.

What I found particularly interesting there is simply that the state of faculty in Canada is really quite different than that in many of our peer countries. Generally speaking,

university faculty in Canada are much more satisfied with their jobs and with what they do than their peers in the United Kingdom, Australia or the United States or some of the other countries that we sometimes compare ourselves to. The place of Canadian faculty is a little bit different in this, but it's also the reality that Canadian faculty work very hard. They work harder at least in terms of how they report their hours of labour than many of the other faculty in many other countries. So it's an interesting situation because we seem to have a faculty which are quite good at what they do, they're worried about the future, and they're working very hard and they're struggling to do research, teaching, and service, and putting it all together. Canadian faculty are reasonably well-remunerated compared to many other jurisdictions. So it's a different picture in Canada than it is in the United States and some other jurisdictions. But I think the key simply is that these individuals really are working hard and they're quite successful. How we take that balance of individuals who are quite satisfied with their work, who are working really hard as productive researchers, productive teachers, and then bring them into and engage them in academic governance in a new way that is productive for the institution and continues to lead us towards very strong universities is something that we haven't yet figured out.

And a final feature that I'll bring up is education; I'm an educator so I always have to put "education" on every list. For me, education is the solution to almost everything. One of the things that we found from all of our surveys is a concern over the notion of orientation to the processes of academic governance. This may seem strange, but it is surprising how many faculty members actually don't know very much about academic governance, about the traditions of the university, of a sense of ownership in the academic decision-making process that hasn't been part of their doctoral student experience. So the notion of helping faculty understand that the university is theirs and that they have a part to play in ensuring that it's successful by assuming some sense of ownership over the future of the institution that comes with being a professor, is very important. Some of basic notions, I think, are quite foreign for many faculty, and I think we need to ensure that there's an orientation to an active life in the governance of the university, and that new faculty understand it's not a two-hour, "What is the committee structure?" kind of orientation. A key element must be an "introduction to academic governance at this institution", kind of workshop.

I've also been quite surprised, if we talk about the other side of the house, of how many people in board governance also don't realize how distinctive universities are. I think it is dangerous when individuals who come from other sectors assume that the not-for-profit they ran over there must be exactly the same as a university, and since they can run one institution, they should know how to run another. And again, that notion of education, not in a sense of understanding when to vote or how the committees work, but in a sense of really understanding what universities are

about and why they are distinctive and how you can't draw the same conclusions here as you could over there, those are important parts of this education process that we need to build a stronger governance arrangement.

I just want to conclude by saying that I think that academic governance is going to continue to be the key for higher education in Canada. I think that we've developed a very strong higher education system in this country, but I worry that there's a danger of a weak academic governance structure preventing certain things from happening, and which may be in the way of certain strengths materializing within our higher education system. That's why I think this conference is so important. I really do think that it is important to focus attention on academic governance because it is one of the factors that make universities so distinctive, and if we lose that or if we fail to take action to make academic governance stronger, I worry about what the future for higher education in Canada will look like. And also I agree with the objective of the conference. I think it isn't necessarily a matter of minor tinkering. I think there is an opportunity to rethink what we think academic governance might look like. I don't pretend to have all the answers: the last thing you want is universities run by professors of higher education any more than you want governments run by political scientists, right? My job is to study and research; I don't have the answers. But I do think that this is a thoughtful group and I do think the idea of focusing attention on what we think academic governance might look like in the 21st century is a noble and extremely important cause.

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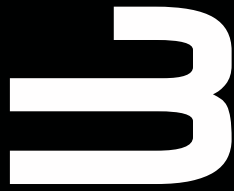
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Additional references and resources can be found on Glen's research website: [www.glenjones.ca](http://www.glenjones.ca)

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## **SETTING AN ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR BC**

**ROBERT F. CLIFT, CUFA BC**

I'm Robert Clift, the Executive Director of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC), the organization that's putting on this event.

Many of you won't know that I'm also a student of higher education as a doctoral candidate at UBC. I came to study higher education through student politics at Simon Fraser University. The first position I had was representing mathematics students – that was my minor at the time – and then I got on the executive committee as university relations officer. I was the liaison between the student society and the senate and the board of governors back in 1985. That was my first taste of dealing with university governance in a formal sense. Later, my master's thesis was a history of the Canadian Union of Students, which was the national student union in Canada in the 1960s. I focused on accessibility to higher education, which was a big issue at the time, but the other big issue for that organization during its short life was academic democracy, or "academocracy" as they called it rather stumblingly. The fact that we have bicameral governance today with 100% of senates reporting student representation is largely due to the efforts of the Canadian Union of Students and its member student associations.

To understand where CUFA BC is coming from in these discussions about governance, a little background is necessary. In the spring of 2007, the UBC Vancouver Senate passed a new student evaluation of teaching policy and then delegated the task of implementing it to a working group. As the new academic year commenced in September 2007, the new teaching evaluation procedures were made public, immediately raising the ire of many faculty members. That same month the UBC Faculty Association launched a grievance against the new policy charging that the policy violated the collective agreement in that the new procedures violated the criteria for evaluation of teaching set out in the agreement.

The grievance was heard by an arbitrator and in a decision

issued in March 2008, the arbitrator decided that he could not deal with the grievance because the Senate policy was outside the jurisdiction of the collective agreement. The Faculty Association disagreed with the arbitrator's decision and appealed it to the BC Court of Appeal. In April 2010, the Court of Appeal ruled that the arbitrator was correct in saying the Senate policy was beyond the jurisdiction of the collective agreement. The Faculty Association then requested leave to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada, but were denied that permission in November 2010.

What was important about the BC Court of Appeal decision is that, for the first time in Canada, the courts prescribed a limit to collective agreements as a tool to get things done at universities. For the better part of 40 years, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has advocated the use of the collective agreement and the development of faculty associations as the way to secure not only working conditions and economic benefits, but also to shape governance and the ways in which faculty members are involved in their universities. With this court decision in BC, we've hit the limit. The court has concluded that there is a line past which the collective agreement can't go – that's senate territory. This resulted in CUFA BC having a lot of discussion about "What do we do now?" There are still a lot of things that our members want us to work on that are on the other side of that wall. So how do we do that?

We talked about what that work might entail and in the fall of 2011, we decided that we were going to make 2012 the year we were going to take a hard look at governance questions. It's a long-term project because there's a lot that needs to be done, but we're going to make a running start in 2012. To coincide with the 40th anniversary of CUFA BC's founding, we have named 2012 the "Year of Governance" with this conference being the first event.

Another part of the project for CUFA BC was that we want to do some research on governance in BC. We have a lot



of ideas and a lot of inside knowledge from our members about the way it works. But a lot of people on senates aren't involved in their faculty associations particularly, so we wanted to find out what they thought, what their experiences were.

Originally, I had planned to report on my preliminary research results tonight. I ended up having a silly illness which I'm well over, but it knocked me out for a while, and so my whole research timing went out the door. Instead, I decided to do a test run of my interview questions with face-to-face interviews of faculty members at a university.

David Mirhady (CUFA President) and I went to the first interview with a very set idea as to why faculty members would want to be on senates, and why they want to be involved in governance. That first day, after we did two interviews, I threw away all my questions. When I went back to the university the next day, I started from scratch because clearly the way I was thinking about governance was not the way faculty members were experiencing governance on the ground. I come from the outside; I'm someone who studies; I'm someone that fights with government about legislation; that's the way I look at the world. So that's the way I looked at the research questions, and then when I actually started talking to folks at the coalface, I found out that my earlier ideas were not dealing with the reality of governance.

My ideas, and certainly all the discussions we've had at CUFA council, were along the lines of "If only we had more faculty members on senate" or "If we only had control of the agenda committee" or "If we got rid of the president as the chair of senate and put a faculty member there, the world would be better," and so that's what shaped my thinking initially about what was going to happen with this project. I thought I'd find faculty talking about the kind of things Glen was talking about – composition of boards, division of powers, community mandates and membership, new member orientation, information flow – very structural things.

But I went to the coalface. I did these interviews at one university and I attended a university-sponsored seminar on governance at another university. These experiences changed my views. What I heard was confusion, frustration, anger, cynicism, disaffection, and resignation. There are a lot of people who have tried to work within the current governance system and they've had a lot of really bad experiences. These were the types of experiences that didn't fit at all within the way I was planning to study governance.

It was apparent to me after the second day of doing the face-to-face interviews, and reflecting back on the governance seminar, that, as Glen noted, there is either a profound lack of understanding or there's a profound ignorance in our colleagues, and in students for that matter, as to the way work gets done at the institution. Who makes decisions? Where do decisions get made? Who actually has

the authority to make certain decisions? Is the authority being exercised correctly or is someone else's authority being usurped?

There's a profound misunderstanding, or a complete lack of knowledge, about the way governance works in our institutions. This, despite the fact that those interviewed were able to describe to me perfectly things like how the curriculum approval process works – what they had to do in their department and how it went up to the dean, and then the management committee looked at it, and then it went to their senate. So they knew how to get curriculum approved, but when I asked them about governance generally, they didn't know anything. They had no idea that this whole curriculum process is really the heart of academic governance in their institution, which is rather scary.

I'd like to share with you some of the comments people made to me. These aren't direct quotations because I think it might lead to identifying the university and the individuals, so I made them a little more generic. But these are the kind of things that struck me in rethinking how we should be approaching this research project.

"All program proposals are vetted by the senior administrators and we're not allowed to proceed to senate without approval." This one blew me away. Faculty members would have to make the business case – which is fair enough since we all have to make the business case for new programs and program revisions – but the administration could say, "Don't have the money," "Not important to us," "Don't like it," and then the proposal is dead in the water. Several people at this institution made similar comments. I was told, "Well, we can still take it to senate, but it's not going to be approved" and "All academic decisions are subordinate to institutional finances." I was told that the VP Finance may as well be the VP Academic because that's the way it worked. If the VP Finance wasn't on side, it wasn't happening. To add insult to injury, I was told it took longer for senior administrators to make their decision than it took for faculty colleagues to make their decisions, at the departmental level, the faculty level, and the senate level combined.

I also heard this from a number of people. "Some senior administrators have been out of the classroom so long, they have no idea how teaching has changed." Whether the change is due to new pedagogical models, or due to the different dynamic in the classroom because of the changing student body, or because of the size of classes we're dealing with, the senior administration have no idea how it works. Yet, they're the ones who assign the work, determine teaching loads, decide how big classes should be, and what kind of facilities get built. They'll gladly invest in technology without having ever taught a course using technology.

Another one that came up at both universities: "Consultations are more about the admin telling us what they're going to do than about asking us." I know this is

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a favourite topic for my colleagues from Alberta where legislation required the board of governors to consult with the faculty association on the composition of the bargaining unit. The board didn't do a very good job of it in the eyes of one college faculty association, and the association actually had to go to court to get a definition of a consultation. Unfortunately, it wasn't a great decision in that it didn't make the definition any clearer, but it illustrates how hollow the concept of consultation has become at some institutions.

"Senate's overloaded with minutiae. We have little control of the senate agenda, but this huge pile of work to be done with all these little things that need to be approved. We're told we have to get these things approved within the fixed period of time." Faculty members also told me things like "Senate meetings last two hours, they last three hours, they last four hours, and this stuff has to be approved tonight, and that discussion we were going to have about the academic plan? Maybe next meeting." This was a constant theme that came up. In some cases, senate members felt that they were expected to rubber-stamp decisions. They weren't expected to question anything.

Now, I'd like to briefly talk about boards of governors. One of the more extraordinary things I heard was "Faculty are not allowed to communicate with board members." In fact, there were severe admonishments from the senior administration and from the chair of the board of governors if a faculty member tried to talk to a board member. Faculty members were allowed to talk to the faculty board member, the student board member and the staff board member, but they couldn't talk to any of the external people at all. They weren't allowed to.

Another thing I heard was that the board of governors isolated the internal representatives on the board from their constituencies. It's something that's come up in our discussions in BC about Bill 18 and conflict of interest issues. That students and faculty and staff members who get elected to boards are told – and I've heard this from many, many institutions – "Alright. Now that you're elected, you're not a student, you're not a staff member, and you're not a faculty member. You're a member of this board of governors and your first responsibility is to this board, and it's not your job to represent anybody's views. You were elected by them because you have some knowledge and some experience, and we very much value that knowledge and experience in deliberating, but it's only your knowledge and experience we value. We actually don't want to know the collective knowledge of all your colleagues." This has gone so far that at one institution, the faculty association had made arrangements for a faculty board rep to come to faculty association meetings to report on what the board is working on, and the faculty board reps were told by the chair of the board of governors, "That's not appropriate. If the board wants to communicate with faculty, we'll send a letter or we'll do it through the president or the VPA. It's not appropriate for you to be communicating board matters

to faculty members." These were board matters dealt with in open session. This wasn't somebody who was going to communicate closed session stuff. This is stuff that's on the public record. But the faculty member was admonished and they decided not to report to their colleagues.

Faculty members reported to me that "Board members don't know what they don't know about the university. They don't know what questions to ask because they don't know what they don't know." So what happens is that, at one institution where the board of governors is kept in this bubble by the management, the only story they got about the university was through the management. This was management that hadn't been in the classroom in two decades. This was the management who thought technology would solve everything, without ever having worked with it. That was the only perspective the board would get.

Now this was an extreme case because I know of other boards – others that weren't involved in these interviews – where this is not the case. At UBC, for example, they regularly have faculty members come in and talk about their teaching and research. These faculty members bring some really interesting perspectives to the board. At the university where I conducted interviews, this wasn't happening.

"There's no capacity for dialogue with the senior administration." This gets us back to the consultation issue. Consultations were used by administrators to talk about what's happening or going to happen, not "What do you think should happen?" Several faculty members said that they had no sense of who the senior administrators were except in a very superficial way. They didn't know what values they brought to the running of the institution or what were their academic or educational philosophies. They weren't able to engage in discussions about these things with their senior administration because the administrators simply weren't interested in making those opportunities available.

Also from several faculty members, "We're not given a sense of the big picture the senior admin is dealing with." And they added, "I'm not sure the board is either."

So, as Glen referred to, we're in a different age in the universities. We've been in that age since the mid-1980s, when we had the wave of public fiscal restraint in Canada. The way in which governments interacted with the higher education sector started to change profoundly around that time. It's almost as if the senate stopped evolving in 1985; that the whole model worked up until 1985 and then the external world changed. And so in 1985, our senior administrations tried to deal with government. In some cases they dealt with the new external challenges in ways that weren't particularly conducive or supportive of collegial governance, or of having discussions about the academic directions of the institution.

Our senates in BC are certainly frozen in that time. Yes, there have been changes. There have been: new types of institutions; new universities getting senate structures; changes in the way the traditional universities do their governance; and new institutions like Royal Roads and UNBC have come along. But it's still essentially that 1985 model that's not been updated for the world that we're in now. A world where our administration, our academic managers, have, because of outside pressures – from government, in particular, but also from funding agencies, from private donors, all these things – have left the senate behind.

So how has this changed the research that I was going to do? Clearly, we need to look at the formal and the informal mechanisms of governance. The one example I gave about no proposal going to senate until the management committee had approved of it? It's not written down. It's just the way the world works at that institution. Being able to understand those informal governance processes – in fact they're almost formalized social control mechanisms – is important if we're to understand how we're going to move forward on governance.

We need to hear from the people on the governing bodies. Glen pointed out we also need to hear from the people who aren't on the governing bodies, and what's stopping them from being on the governing bodies? Why aren't they there? Why don't they understand the governance mechanisms? Why aren't they involved? Why is it something that, in some cases, repulses them?

Perhaps it's explained by a word that I left out of the earlier list of words that described people's experience with governance – “disrespect.” There was a profound feeling that there was no respect from the senior administrators – no respect for faculty members' professionalism, and no respect for the fact that they understand that money is tight and they can make decisions about what to do with limited resources. At one institution, faculty are kept arm's length from big decisions by vague warnings of impending doom – “Don't upset the cart – we don't know what will happen. If we do something, it might upset the board or it might upset the government, then who knows what will happen to us?” This is how a parent deals with a small child, not how management should deal with professionals.

So what does all of this mean for my research agenda, for CUFA's research agenda? We need to move on to action research. We need to get into this research with an eye that we're going to change something and we're going to use the research specifically to drive that change. So the three big questions are: How does the structure need to change? More importantly I think, how does the culture need to change? And, what are the effective ways to pursue change? This is really where I think the heart of this is – the research has to be about how we're going to use that data to get people engaged in the ways that Glen has talked about.

After we do all that, then we change how we engage in

academic governance. I said earlier that this is the first event of the Year of Governance for CUFA BC. We will have further discussions about a long-term plan. There are specific legislative things that we need to see changed. But legislative change for academic governance is a long-term project because there are no votes in it – nobody is going to vote for a government because they have changed the academic governance system. A few faculty members, some people in the university community might vote against the government if they did something stupid, but this is not going to drive the electoral agenda.

CUFA's approach will be to sketch out a plan for change over the next decade. If we could convince the university administrations to go along with us, we could do this over a shorter period. As we've heard from government time and again, “If the admin doesn't agree with the change you want, it ain't happening.” That's problematic in a lot of ways, but one of the way it's most problematic is why aren't our senior admin colleagues coming along with us on this? Yet another question to explore in our research.

Thank you for your kind attention.

*Chris Petter has held a variety of positions as a professional librarian and archivist at the University of Victoria since 1975, where he spearheaded the effort for the UVic librarians to gain their own representation on senate. He has also served as President of CUFA BC where he led the campaign for the removal of mandatory retirement and lobbied for the Campus 2020 report. He has served three terms on the UVic faculty association executive and was elected to the UVic Board of Governors for three years.*

# 4

## **LIBRARIANS, GOVERNANCE, AND THE “PETCH PROCEDURES” AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

**CHRIS PETTER, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

It's wonderful to have this opportunity, for a librarian to come in from the cold, so to speak, and talk to a faculty audience about collegiality and a governance model which can better serve the librarian members of Canadian faculty associations. I'm wondering if this session shouldn't have been called "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," with librarians being "the Ugly." But rather than making this a cautionary tale I'd rather contrast the governance procedures that have developed within our university which have strengthened and undermined the collegiality of librarians with those that have empowered faculty. I think there's more to be gained by that approach.

At UVic, the librarians have taken steps towards gaining some foothold within the academic community. However, they are in the same position Rick Kool described with respect to faculty at Royal Roads: they have continuing appointments, not tenure, and they're not represented in the University Act (which does not apply to RRU). Only our university librarian (UL), who until recently had no fixed term and no provisions for review, is included in the Universities Act, and she is de facto a member of senate, the dean's council and has full responsibility for all aspects of the library. That results in the UL having unilateral decision-making and very little accountability to the rank and file librarians. Her accountability is to senate, the senate library committee and to the vice president academic, to whom she reports: there's very little opportunity for the other librarians to participate meaningfully in governance except by virtue of being appointed by the UL to certain senate committees and committees of the faculties.

In BC, regular librarians are not mentioned in the University Act, and so unlike faculty they do not have legislated seats on senate or the board of governors. Librarians, by a very close vote of the UVic senate, gained an elected representative in 1978; however, there has rarely been an attempt to use that position to further librarian participation in university governance. Election to the board of governors (BoG) is possible, but involves election from a huge and

amorphous constituency consisting of all non-faculty university staff, so it is difficult for a librarian to be elected: I was lucky to gain a seat. Within the board, elected members of faculty and staff at UVic are discouraged from formally representing their constituencies. However, informally, there are opportunities for input to administration and to the majority lay members, appointed by the government.

Even though I was elected on differing occasions to the senate committee on libraries and the two governing bodies of the university, I have felt unable to have much influence on library policy. Within the 10 member senate committee on libraries to which I was elected for a 3 year term in the late nineties, I was on a couple of occasions able to make suggestions with regards to library policy, but they were both brushed aside by the UL without discussion. I felt as if it was regarded as disloyal to express my independent opinion. After I left the committee, it was enlarged to 14 members with two administrative librarians and only one elected librarian. It now has 23 members, many administrators, but only one elected member from the faculty association's librarians' committee.

On the huge and intimidating university senate, as the lone librarian apart from the UL, I was able to contribute little. However it was worthwhile in terms of meeting and getting to know faculty colleagues. The senate committees to which I was appointed allowed better opportunities to understand and contribute ideas in a collegial fashion. I was even offered a committee chair, but declined because of my heavy workload.

The much smaller BoG offered many opportunities to contribute collegially on matters concerning university curriculum, policy, plant and budget. Because of the tight rein on the agenda by the board's executive committee, issues of particular concern to staff and faculty, like day care and tuition waivers policy, were never included unless brought to the board's attention from outside. Library matters such as whether the library's collection

would support the establishment of a new program were considered as part of a consent agenda so, though discussion was not disallowed, slowing the meeting down with detailed discussion of such matters was not encouraged.

Within the library, opportunities for input into academic policies were, ironically, even more limited than in the other governance bodies on which I served. In most Canadian university libraries, governance is in the hands of library administration: the ULs and the assistant and associate ULs and the unit managers. They are responsible for most academic and budgetary planning, and the rank and file librarians have no input to or even knowledge of the plans until they are published. While academic units have both departmental and faculty-wide meetings in which they are consulted and can contribute, librarians have only the library council.

According to the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) model clause on library councils: “[they] shall be mandated as a planning and policy-making body, not merely as an information-sharing committee”<sup>1</sup> with the university librarian sitting as an ex officio member. However, from what I can understand, within most Canadian universities and certainly at UVic, the library council is “an information-sharing committee”. UVic’s library council is not a decision making body and the UL sits on it as chair. As a result it is the libraries’ management team who decide on “future directions of library service and operation; library budget proposals prior to submission to senior administration; new positions; recommendations regarding the acquisitions budget; and memberships on other academic committees. These are all decisions that the CAUT model clause recommends be decided by a library council.

And so, within the library, where librarians spend most of their working lives, they are powerless to affect meaningful change. Whereas they may be consulted about the overall strategic plan they are almost never involved in the planning for its implementation – where the rubber meets the road. Annually or biennially, a new reorganization flows downwards from a new strategic plan: librarians are reassigned responsibilities; new positions are created, others dropped; library policies changed. Rank and file librarians can comment on the changes, but they do so in a reactive rather than proactive manner.

So what is it librarians really want? They want essentially the same thing faculty want: to have full citizenship, to be collegially recognized both within the library and the university and to be able to fully participate in academic decision making. Why? Because their role in collecting, disseminating and making knowledge accessible within the university is seen by them as vital to teaching and research. There’s definitely an idealistic side to wanting to be full-participating members: they want their liaison with faculty

to make those activities of collecting, dissemination and accessibility to be effective and meaningful. But it’s also very practical, because there is a need, if they’re going to play an effective role, to have policy and procedures that enables librarians to work closely with students and faculty. And this is not always appreciated in the governance models that pertain to librarians at UVic and, from what I understand, at many other Canadian university libraries.

The policy that academic librarians most want and need is a policy that provides some check on the power of the UL and their executive. The CAUT Guidelines for the Appointment and Review of University Chief Librarians and Other Library Administrators Outside the Bargaining Unit recognizes this clearly. These policies recognize that administrative librarians and especially the UL need to have set terms of appointment and performance reviews like all other academic administrators. Their review and reappointment needs to be subject to a comprehensive review by their peers. Unfortunately for rank and file librarians at UVic, the university administration has been unwilling to implement any such policy in spite of strong pressure from the librarian representative on senate and from the faculty association, in which librarians are full members. UVic’s first two ULs each had terms that lasted more than 25 years: the first without any reviews and the second with only one. Only recently, after 50 years of lobbying for such procedures, did the BoG articulate a policy of 5-year terms and reviews for the UL. But even now, librarians still do not make up the majority of the search committee (3 out of 12) nor do librarians have a ratification vote.

But there is one very important governance innovation that exist at UVic, and it needs to be noted. Unlike most Canadian universities, the University of Victoria has, over the past thirty-plus years, engaged in a ratification process for most administrators – department chairs, school directors, deans and even the provost – whereby a 60% positive vote on the part of those being governed must be secured before the position is confirmed. These procedures are referred to as the “Petch Procedures” – but they do not apply to UL-level positions. Until recently, you could not find the Petch Procedures anywhere on the university’s website. Indeed, the present university administration does not appear to totally endorse these procedures, which were introduced by President Howard Petch in 1977 in response to faculty unrest around the hiring and review of academic administrators.

The Petch Procedures allowed the faculty to ratify department heads, deans, VPs, associate VPs, right up to the president, on their original appointments and then on their reviews and reappointments. These procedures ensure that there is transparency around appointments and that there’s a demonstrable level of support for the administrators, because administrators know that after five years they’re going to be reviewed, and if they have not worked closely with faculty, if they’ve been unilateral in their decision-making and haven’t consulted, they’re going

1 CAUT Policy Statement on Library Councils <http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?lang=1&page=664>

to be voted out. And it's very definitive: although there's been some discomfort in university administration around the procedures, they have survived for more than three decades. However, in spite of librarian pressure to make the Petch Procedures part of the new policy for appointment and review of the UL, the administration would not agree to a ratification vote by librarians when a new UL was recently hired.

Resistance by UVic's university administration to the Petch Procedures being applied to librarians, and indeed a recent attempt in the UVic senate to undo the ratification vote as regards a dean's appointment, should be a reminder to faculty of just how important such a check on the power of administrators is across the academy. Without it, faculty become like the UVic librarians, and can be put in a position where they are beholden for policy, planning and decision-making which is not open and transparent and where even if there is a review process, it lacks teeth. As the review of academic decision-makers is often chaired by the administrator to whom they report and includes the evaluations by peer administrators, broad input from the faculty is essential. In order to balance the views of administrative effectiveness against collegial perceptions of transparency, fairness, open decision making and process, there needs to be a ratification vote and checks built into the governance model to ensure collegiality.

Long-time UVic faculty members Eric Sager and John Lutz recently submitted this comment to the University's 50th anniversary committee with regards to the Petch Procedures, which sums up the importance of ratification to academic governance.

"UVic has a well-deserved reputation for its system of governance: for collegiality, for mutual trust among staff, faculty and administrators, and for exceptional administrators.

There is one 'great moment' in the evolution of the system. In his first term, Howard Petch sought means to guarantee that academic administrators had the demonstrable support of their constituents. The result was a set of clearly defined procedures for the selection of administrators— chairs, deans, vice-presidents, and presidents.

The procedures required ratification ballots: members of the constituency to be served had the opportunity to ratify the selected candidate. The 'Petch Procedures' were "one of the most significant innovations' of Petch's presidency and one of his finest legacies to UVic" (Peter Smith, *A Multitude of the Wise*, 194-5).

The effects of the procedures are profound. One cannot govern well without the support of the governed. No policy is implemented without extensive consultation. Positive changes in policy, resource

allocation, and strategic direction are facilitated when implementation is based on trust and confidence.

The procedures struck a balance between participatory democracy and administrative authority that is rare among universities. The inauguration in 1977 of the 'Petch Procedures' is one of the great moments in UVic's history."

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# 5

## ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE 3.0: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

JOHN M. USHER, UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Well, there are various memes floating around out there. This is the one for “college professor,” which I found very entertaining.



Now of course the one that my parents think I do is actually from *Good Will Hunting*, not *Dead Poets Society*, which I thought would have been more appropriate. We have got interesting jobs!

I want to make a number of acknowledgements to collaborators, funding agencies, all these kinds of good folks who are out there and helping me to do this work (see at the end of the document). As you will see, the central part of this focus is the present, but it's the present in other places based on the premise that most of you know the present here because you're living it. So I'm going to talk about Europe in particular and throw in a bit from Ginsberg's wonderful *Fall of the Faculty* (2011), which you really should read.

Now the idea, as Rob Clift suggested, is that part of this is going to be about the downward pressure from government on our educational institutions, and so it will be rife with acronyms, and some of them I will define for you and

some of them, which are in foreign languages, I won't because there's not much point. For example, MACSs are "Management Accounting and Control Systems."

I'm going to look at very quickly what's going on with the new public management (NPM) in three parts of continental Europe, ask the question "NPM in Canadian universities – are we there yet?" I will then talk about some of the effects on academic work and the profession, and then give you a sense of what Governance 3.0 seems to be in the EU, what they think it is tending towards.

So the new public management is about public management, and not just in universities, but how the concept and practice has infected the higher education institution sector through the replacement of professionalism by managerialism, which results in the strengthening of the internal hierarchy. A lot of these things are about, and this is particularly true for Europe, a trade-off between universities no longer being managed directly by the state, which they have been in a lot of cases, and with more autonomy being given to individual universities. But that gift of autonomy comes at the price of a lot of controls and a rethinking by the state of who should actually be in charge: "If the state is no longer in charge, maybe we're not that comfortable with the faculty being in charge. Maybe we need to put more power in the hands of administrators." And so that's kind of the overall direction of what's going on there.

The accounting profession of course is interested in all this control stuff, and so they've been studying trade-offs between enabling and coercive controls, organic versus formal controls, and what are very unabashedly called "the levers of control," (see Figure 1) which include soft levers and hard levers. We have been using this as a framework in accounting research to look at the flow-through of NPM concepts into practice in higher education institutions. One of the real concerns about the new public management is not that it doesn't adequately police the teaching function,

## Simons' (1995) Levers of control framework

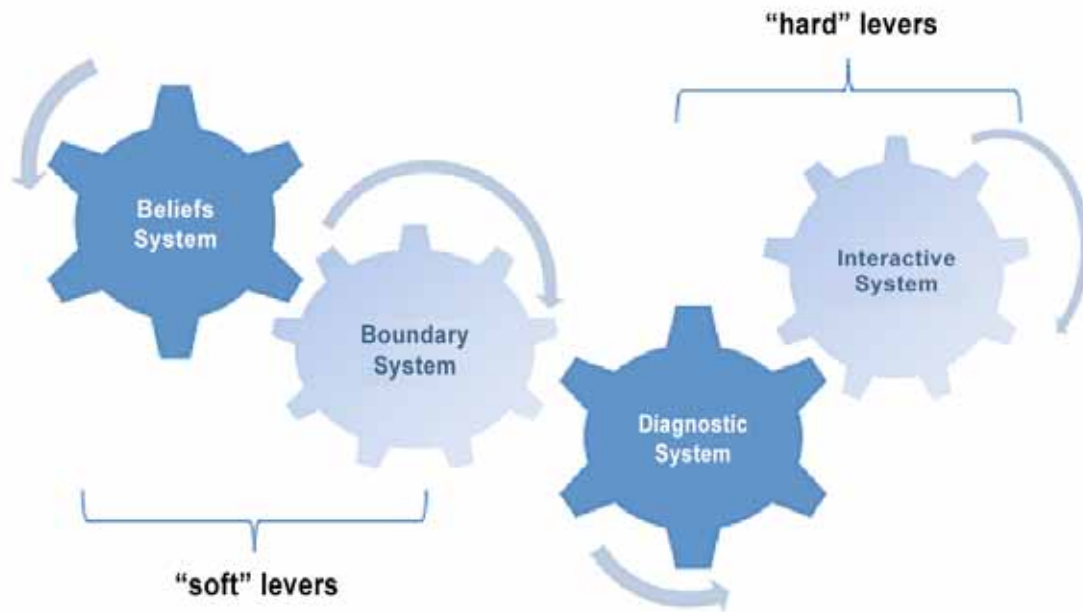


Figure 1: Simons' levers of control framework

which does need a kind of quality control every now and again, but that it will stifle research, and so that's been the focus of a lot of our research.

Here's the flow of a paper that I've been working on with a graduate student in Germany. The new public management is interpreted through levers of control. Boundary and belief systems are about missions. So university research centres have particular missions. Some of them are more about publication and some of them are particularly focused on producing graduate students. Some are primarily about commercialization of research. A lot are fairly balanced but many tilt in one direction or another. The real evil stuff of course are the hard controls, which are the diagnostic and interactive systems around budgets, costing methods, and profitability analyses. In this particular piece of research, we wanted to show that there's a moderating effect of social capital which, depending on whether the mission is sensitive to internal or external networks, means that NPM is going to have a differential impact on research performance. This line of research has been well received abroad and will be presented at the European Foundation for Management Development meetings in Paris in 2013.

But to return to the broader issues, the new public management is really an outgrowth of the Reagan-Thatcher years (1979/80), and it continues to work its magic. Beginning in Australia and New Zealand in the '80s,

continental Europe has been late in adopting NPM. The UK is quite a bit further down the road on this. We wanted to look at these different countries as a kind of an adoption trajectory, where some of the universities in countries are front-runners (Netherlands) and some are laggards (Switzerland).

The Netherlands have been at it the longest and with the most interest, and you'll see that what's changed is that, rather than the state regulating universities, they are trying to steer from a distance, so government becomes facilitative rather than regulatory. There is a logic of competition and performance that has been introduced on the premise that universities need to differentiate themselves, they need to be good at something, they need to find a niche, and more private funding can then be brought in. Now the MUB Act (Modernization of University Governance-*Wet Modernisering Universitaire Bestuursorganisatie*, MUB, 1997) really does encapsulate what this movement is all about. The new governance system strengthens university management in that a lot of the management is now appointed rather than elected – "We can't leave the universities to appoint their own people because if we're not controlling them anymore, we're a little uncomfortable about who might actually get elected." And internal monitoring becomes increasingly used as a steering device. So this stuff gets pushed further and further down to the academic shop floor.



In France, they're a reluctant disciple where NPM is concerned. What's going on in France is that all of this linkage between evaluation and university budgets is now being made public with the intent that François on the street is going to lean on the universities to be more accountable for tax dollars. Competition, concentration, research is moving in these directions

France:

**LOLF Act 2002:** annual objectives and performance based budget allocation

**AERES Act 2006:** agency that links evaluation and university budgets and is publically available

**National Research Council ANR in 2007:** more competition and concentration: up to 10 institutions are designated 'excellent'

**LRU Act 2007:** strengthening of autonomy and executive leadership in universities; presidents now manage global budgets

Something that you'll see as I go through these is that you'll say, "Well, that just starts to look more like what we already do." And in a way, that is true, that part of the transition in Europe is about becoming more like North America. But it's funny because we're all converging on similar models but from different directions.

French university presidents now manage global budgets, so strengthening their autonomy and executive leadership. Prior to the LRU Act of 2007, every professor's salary in France came from the state, it didn't come from the university. But accompanying that change there are plans to evaluate individual academics every four years. Imagine how much fun that will be.

Norway was another reluctant reformer in no small part because there was significant pushback from academics about NPM driven changes. In the 1990s, there was some move towards competition, and some attempts to strengthen university autonomy and leadership, but not too much. The Norwegians have a quality audit system, which is a buffer between managerial oversight and institutions. This system closely parallels the Campus Alberta Quality Council. They have also come up with a mixed set of solutions, evolving diverse organizational patterns but with the majority of universities keeping elected rectors and introducing appointed leadership at faculty and departmental levels.

I had the great pleasure of spending a sabbatical year in

Switzerland in the only Italian canton of Switzerland. So if you can imagine Italy run by the Swiss – just a fabulous combination. There, we have two things going on: we have increased institutional autonomy but also a renewal of academic values and practices – trying to get both things right at the same time. Switzerland is very much about participative democracy, and so it's in concert with the national culture that these things happen. There's always a referendum in place and people are always voting for things. There has been soft state pressure for competition, but the emphasis has been on cooperation among institutions. Yet in the 2000s, we have a strong tendency towards deregulation of employment conditions and an increase in private sector HR practices, particularly because there are large part-time teaching ranks.

In summary, the governance declines have been different across Europe. The unanswered question is, is all this just a matter of time? The ones that have been doing it longer seem to be doing it more, and is it just a simple question that over time they will all go in that direction, or are there some distinct cultural factors? Will the Swiss always be a little different, as they are wont to be?

So are we in Canada 'there' yet? If you look at the key higher education institution NPM reforms, it starts to look familiar. We have, in Canada, the creation of competitive markets for institutions, budgetary constraints in amounts and measures, enhanced emphasis on performance and assessment of teaching and research, concentration of funds in elite institutions and greater overall differentiation, and changing institutional governance as executive leadership is strengthened at the expense of collegial power. Those are also the conclusions of these studies of what's taking place in Europe.

What does this mean for the academic profession? I want to talk about three areas.

**Professional self-regulation.** The definition of this speaks to many of the issues we've been talking about. Faculty want to see the power and influence of academics sustained within the organization, they want the freedom to enjoy formulating their research and teaching agendas, reward systems, and influence over operating conditions that affect research and teaching inside and outside. NPM has resulted in a decline in academic governance, but more so in the Netherlands than in France, Norway and particularly Switzerland.

**Academic work.** Among the issues here is the transparency and accessibility of performance, which is becoming a problem. We've also seen major changes in funding, quality assurance and evaluation practices. Academics now spend more time on funding acquisition and writing research proposals. The activities of universities and the departments within them are increasingly being required to fit easily into accessible tabular form. And increasingly, administrators, politicians and the public at large evaluate and compare the

quantity and quality of academic work. While it would be nice to see our students as if they were disciples, I think that one has left the barn a long time ago. Our doctoral students are in fact part of the knowledge machine and we've come to accept that to some extent.

**Careers.** There are concerns in Europe about how this increasing pressure on productivity will further sharpen the divide between teachers and researchers. Increased visibility of individual performance makes the difference between research-active and non-active staff more visible, intensifying traditional tensions within the teaching-research nexus in academic work. I think there's also an increasing divide between qualitative and quantitative disciplines. I sit on university-level funding boards, and it's all about "How much money do you need to get your research done?" because, of course, the VP Research probably has one of those thermometers on his wall that goes up as the amount of funding the university receives goes up. Of course, if you're one of those people that can actually do research in top journals without actually having to have it funded, I mean what is that? That's not adding to his thermometer, so how is he going to move onto his next job if he can't translate your success into research dollars? So you're encouraged to rush out and get SSHRC money and then wonder how to spend it because you don't really need it. Increasing reliance on soft external research funding also leads to an increase in non-permanent staff, increasing competition for permanent positions and status differences among academics on different types of employment contracts.

We see these **new tasks and academic roles** that are out there, like:

- Market research for curricular choices
- Advertising schools and programmes
- Attracting and selecting students
- Designing e-learning tools and programmes
- Building partnerships for joint programmes
- Finding financial support for curriculum development
- Student exchange and internships
- Technology and knowledge transfer of all kinds, patenting and licensing
- Community service and regional economic development
- Policy advice and business consultancy

You can probably recognize those things that you have been engaged in. You look at all this and say, "Okay, we can do them as academics, and we can complain about them and we can say this is part of operating the university," but unfortunately most of the response is the other way. It is "Okay. Well, let's hire some people to do this. Let's hire staff. Let's increase the bloat." But this takes us into the problem highlighted by the *Fall of the Faculty*, and it's a big problem. Look around the university, and there's always a new associate vice president being enacted to do this and a new associate dean or an assistant dean, and part of the problem is Parkinson's Law. Many of you will be familiar with this

law as "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion," but there are also two axiomatic statements that bear on why chapter one of Parkinson's book (1957) is called "Parkinson's Law or the Rising Pyramid." These statements are (1) "An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals" and (2) "Officials make work for each other". So the dean says, "I don't have any time to do this," and you look and what he's doing is spending all his time in committee meetings that he created so that he could hobnob with all the other administrators. And you want to say, "If you guys would stop doing this to each other, most of you wouldn't need to be here."

I want to finish by saying that Governance 3.0 is seen in Europe as moving the action up so that the new contested terrain in governance is no longer about what goes on in institutions but about what goes among the various boards now making decisions about the shaping of institutions, since these decisions are being made not inside institutions but are external to them. So we have a new academic elite, a new administrative elite, and the contested terrain is now what goes on at these external boards. The power of the members of both new elites is based not just on academic credentials, but on network position. So if the government wants to talk to the universities, they want to talk to the president and the VP Academic and maybe the VP Research, and that's it; and the rest of us are just employees.

So I guess I want to be deliberately provocative here and say, folks, maybe we've already lost the larger fight about governance. There's always going to be something inside the university that is about fair wages and working conditions, and we still need to fight that fight. But if it's about shaping the university, what we really need to think about is how best to engage policy makers at the appropriate level, one which I believe is increasingly outside our individual universities. We must strengthen our provincial organizations so that our voices are taken to those tables. But we should also question whether our presidents and vice presidents are actually competent to do their jobs or whether they need some training so that they can truly represent the issues of our institutions clearly and concisely to government. They and we need to join in common cause to push back against the managerial fads and fashions that government seeks to foist upon us.

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# 6

## THE FUTURE OF ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

*CLAIRE POLSTER, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA*

I was asked by the conference organizers to address the future of academic governance in Canada. While there are many issues one might take up in such a discussion, I will focus on two things that academics can do to help bring about a brighter future for university governance, one that is more in keeping with the liberal university's mission to generate and transmit uncompromised knowledge that serves the public interest. My first and longer suggestion involves changing the way many of us are responding to new administrative practices in the university. The second and shorter suggestion involves revitalizing our conception and practice of public service.

In some recent work, I've been exploring the nature and implications of administrative growth in Canadian universities, looking specifically at how new governing practices are impacting on the concrete, day-to-day activities of academics and others. One main outcome of my research, that is relevant for our purposes, was a critique of academics' responses to new administrative practices. In a nutshell, I argue that academics are, for the most part, orienting to what new administrative practices seem to **be**, rather than to what they **do** – or what they accomplish institutionally. Because of this, our actions often entrench and advance these practices' harmful effects. The remedy I propose is for us to attend to how new administrative practices reconfigure institutional relations in ways that erode the academic mission, and to establish new relations that better serve our own, and the public's, interests and needs.

I am going to give you two examples to make this case and then provide some thoughts on how we might establish new relations that better support the academic mission. Before I do this, however, let me offer an analogy to clarify what I mean when I say that academics are responding to what administrative practices seem to be, rather than to what they accomplish institutionally. When I interviewed academics for my research, most of them characterized new administrative practices related to resource allocation,

assessment, regulation, policy-making, and so on as burdens or obstructions that complicated or interfered with their work. If you imagine academics as dancers on a floor, they saw these practices as shackles or weights that administrators put on them, making it more difficult for them to do their work and/or to do it well. What I want to suggest is that rather than as weights that are put upon us, we see these practices instead as obstacles that are placed on the dancefloor, which fundamentally alter the courses of action – or the social relations – that constitute the dance itself as well as the role the dancers. In other words, I suggest that we see these practices not merely as adding to our work as it is, but as fundamentally transforming what we do and what we are. I further suggest that because we neither recognize nor respond to the ways that these practices transform the academic dance, our actions help entrench and perpetuate new institutional relations that undermine our interests. Put differently, we employ our energies and creativity in ways that are not simply ineffective, but counterproductive.

Now let me concretize this with two examples, one dealing with new practices around resource allocation and the other with new practices around university policy-making.

As administrations have grown, there have been various changes in practices around resource allocation. Among other things, institutional resources are being diverted to administrations leaving less for academic pursuits; resource allocation is being progressively centralized; resource spending is becoming more flexible (i.e., short term and unpredictable) in nature; academics are being encouraged and pressured to bring in more resources themselves; and, there is greater use of performance-based funding so that, for instance, those who have special chairs or grants are eligible for funds that others are not.

From the perspective of academics, these changes seriously complicate our work. For example, fewer, less permanent, and less secure resources mean that we must either live

with less, continually find ways around particular resource shortages, or spend time seeking resources – all of which interfere with or add to our work.

While I do not dispute this, I want to suggest that these new practices accomplish something else. In various ways, they help transform resource acquisition from a minor distraction into a central component of academics' job. As well, they help transform faculty from colleagues and allies vis-a-vis administrations into competitors and entrepreneurs, who try to convince administrators to invest resources in them and not in others. In our discussion, I can elaborate on how administrators' practices help set these changes into motion. Right now, I'll focus on how academics' responses to these new relations further entrench and advance them.

One way we are responding is by becoming more defensive in relation to our colleagues and to other academic units. Whereas their resource related activities used to be of passing interest, we now keep close tabs on their budgeting, grantseeking, fundraising, and other related activities, and we try to learn from their unsuccessful strategies, mimic their successful ones, and seek ways to gain a competitive edge over them. One consequence is that resource competition is continually ratcheted up so that ever more vigilance and effort are required. More significantly, as we progressively attend to acquiring resources, we are too busy and distracted to question, let alone resist, the imperative to acquire them in the first place. Thus, resource acquisition becomes further installed as an academic responsibility, and the conversion of colleagues from allies into competitors is further advanced and normalized.

Academics are also responding by becoming more instrumental in relation to our colleagues, such as by prioritizing resource acquisition over other considerations in choosing research collaborators, hiring new faculty, and making tenure and promotion decisions. Here again, our actions help entrench and normalize new institutional relations rather than challenging them.

At the same time, academics are changing how we interact with administrators. Rather than simply asking them for the resources we need and explaining why we need them, we are increasingly acting as entrepreneurs in our relations with them, trying to convince them to invest their money in us rather than in others. We do this in a number of ways, including by publicizing ways we meet their desires and needs in an ever-growing number of newsletters, blogs, magazines, and the like, and by developing and trying to "sell" them new ideas that may meet their needs (or make them aware of needs they didn't realize they had) – often with the help of expensive external consultants. Ironically, these efforts to protect or acquire resources often consume substantial resources, intensifying the very shortages they are designed to alleviate. More importantly, they further transform institutional relations, altering, rather than merely adding to, what academics do and what we are.

I could say more about this, but let me move on to the second example that deals with new administrative practices around university policy-making. Among other things, these include the progressive dilution of academics' participation in policy formulation, be it through the incorporation of more administrators into collegial bodies or the incorporation of external parties (like professional consultants) into policy processes. They also include the progressive restriction of the scope of academics' participation in policy formulation, be it through management's defining more areas of university operations as "purely administrative", or their more tightly circumscribing the parameters of various faculty planning and policy-making exercises. Another longer-standing but increasingly common practice is administrators' use of pseudo-consultation in policy processes. Administrators are also creating various new vehicles for university employees to "have their say" such as town halls, round tables, and coffee and chats with the President.

Whereas many academics say that these changes make it more difficult for them to shape the context and conditions of their work, again, I suggest that they accomplish something else. They help convert academics from self-governing colleagues and policy makers into more individualized, and individualistic, policy critics. Again, I won't focus on how administrative practices set these new relations into motion, but on how academics' responses help entrench and advance them.

One common response is for academics to participate in policy processes they are uncomfortable with – such as on-line consultations that provide little transparency, accountability, or opportunity for collective action – for fear that if they don't "things will be even worse". Due to the very nature of these processes, this harm minimization strategy is often unsuccessful. More significantly, it implicitly cedes the responsibility for policy-making to administrators: academics' job is to clean up the mess, but the mess is administrators' to make.

In contrast, many other academics are choosing to completely withdraw from "meaningless" policy-processes that serve only to legitimize administrative decisions. This strategy, which is generally employed by individual academics and in private, is problematic because the protest may not even be registered by those again whom it is directed, let alone be effective. It may also be counterproductive, as academics' apparent failure to take their policy-making responsibilities seriously can be used to justify, and even advance, new institutional relations.

As older avenues to shape policy are progressively closed down, academics are also taking advantage of newer avenues that are opening up, attending informal sessions with administrators, getting appointed to various bodies that advise them, etc. Rather than using these opportunities to promote the collective interest, however, they are more frequently using them to promote their personal or local

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interests, such as ensuring that their areas of expertise are prioritized in strategic plans or that their departments are spared in program reviews. This strategy also implicitly accepts new institutional relations, as academics attempt only to influence policy directions as individuals, rather than to assert our right to set them collectively. It may also subtly legitimize new relations: for as more academics vie to have their particular needs prioritized in policy processes, it becomes easier for administrators to justify taking over these processes by portraying themselves as neutral arbiters who must balance the divergent and narrow interests that they themselves actually helped cultivate and nurture.

Finally, all these strategies are problematic in that they divert academics' time and energies from developing and carrying forward policy initiatives of our own and, thereby, limit the opportunities for newer faculty to develop the requisite skills and orientations to do so.

There are many other examples of ways academics' responses help entrench new relations that undermine our interests. But, hopefully, I've given you enough evidence to support my argument that, however well intentioned or clever they are, our efforts are ineffective and counterproductive because they are aimed at the wrong target. Rather than trying to manage or cope with new administrative practices, we need to grasp how they fundamentally reconfigure institutional relations, and we need to resist and counter these relations by ourselves establishing new ones that better support our own, and the public's, interests and needs.

The possibilities for putting such relations into place are vast. They are limited only by the particular circumstances in each university and by our energies and imaginations. To give you a sense of the kinds of strategies we might employ, I'll give you a handful of examples. These are not so much prescriptions for action as food for thought and, hopefully, inspiration.

To resist our conversion from colleagues and allies into resource competitors and entrepreneurs, we might develop new ways and means to redistribute institutional resources among ourselves. As do participants in various community economic development initiatives, we might create parallel economies or informal mechanisms of various kinds to share resources, borrow and lend resources, and/or barter for what we need – be it discretionary funds, support staff, teaching or research relief, etc. I can even imagine us creating interdepartmental banks to facilitate the internal redistribution of resources. Such initiatives could ease our preoccupation with and reliance on administrators' resource decisions by making available more resource options over which we have a greater say, and thereby help shift both our relevancies and the courses of action in which we do and do not engage.

Additionally, we might work to change the allocation of institutional resources by working for more stable, long

term, and equitable university funding practices. One of many means to help realize this objective might be for us to draw on our vast, collective expertise to develop alternative university budgets, similar to the alternative federal budgets developed annually by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (see, for example, <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/issues/alternative-budgets>). Even if the content of these budgets were not adopted by our universities, both the process of producing them and the various ways in which we might deploy them internally and outside the institution could be very helpful in reorganizing the university's ground to better support the academic mission. There are so many wonderful ideas we could incorporate into these budgets, including a modification of Gordon and Poulin's (2009) proposal that universities simply give all eligible researchers a baseline research grant, rather than investing so much money in helping them compete for grants. Consider how many harmful institutional dynamics could be undone simply by taking up this one idea.



*Clare Polster speaking at Academic Governance 3.0*

There are also many things we can do to resist our conversion from policy makers into policy critics. My colleague Janice Newson makes the excellent point that, in many ways, administrators still need academics to help manage the daily affairs of the university and that this gives us a strategic opening. We can and should take more advantage of their reliance upon us to alter institutional relations, including by collectively refusing to serve on university committees or engage in policy consultations unless meaningful participation is guaranteed. We can also produce more transparency and accountability in university processes ourselves, by openly sharing our feedback with all members of the university community and not just with the relevant committee's members, and by publicly disclosing why the committees we sit on accept and reject particular recommendations. I would also like to see us make greater use of, and attempt to expand our powers on, existing policy bodies - including faculty councils, university senates, and boards of governors - at the same time that we more actively and strategically coordinate the work of the academics who sit on these bodies, as well as our faculty associations, to reinforce our effectiveness in policy

processes.

Another more concrete strategy is to create alternative policy-making bodies that operate outside of established policy channels and attempt to transform existing relations by building new ones apart from or around them. One exciting example of this is the University of Toronto's General Assembly comprised of students, faculty, staff, and concerned citizens. They have opted out of the U of T governing structure and built an autonomous organization to generate policy initiatives of their own and to pressure administrators to respond to their agenda. In addition to policy-making bodies, policy events like institutional – or perhaps provincial – task forces, such as a Task Force on University Administration produced under the auspices of a single faculty association or a confederation of associations like CUFA BC, might also be a useful means of helping reconfigure university relations.

Again, this is a tiny sample of any number of ideas that we could think up and implement to resist and reverse ongoing changes in university relations. While I grant that this is time consuming and demanding work, so too is coping with all the difficulties that new administrative practices produce, and will continue to produce, for us. The difference with the approach I am advocating is that our work will help undo some of the source of our difficulties, rather than perpetuating it. Further, in that we will be working toward re/establishing a kind of institution that accords with our needs and interests, our efforts will acquire new energy and vitality that eludes those merely trying to survive the status quo.

In my final two minutes, I want to take up my second suggestion, which is not simply about how we respond to administrative practices, but why we respond. When I shared my paper with Janice Newson, she challenged my implicit equation of academics' interests with the public interest or my assumption that academics are opposed to new administrative practices because they limit our ability to serve. She reminded me that many academics support the corporate university because they benefit from it, and that many others oppose new forms of governance simply because they limit their professional freedom and privilege. In other words, she reminded me that while academic freedom and autonomy are necessary conditions for us to serve the public interest, they do not guarantee that academics will serve the public interest, and that, for a variety of reasons, many academics no longer have a deep or lived commitment to the university as a public serving project.

While this may be true, it seems to me that in the current neoliberal context, with the politics of envy and everything else it entails, our best, if not only, chance of reestablishing governing relations that support faculty interests is for us to take a clear and active public serving stance. That is, we are most likely to succeed in transforming university governance if we justify our actions on the ground that existing relations

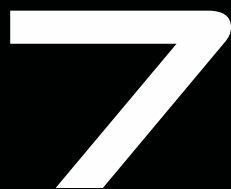
prevent our serving the public interest – and we need to mean it. We need to incorporate this understanding into the formulation of strategies to transform institutional relations, and we need to incorporate it into our efforts to implement them. Thus, our alternative budgets would not just be written by academics for academics, but various public organizations would share in the formulation, production, and benefits of those budgets. Similarly, alternative policy bodies or task forces would have representation from various groups both within and outside of the university and policies would serve a broad range of social interests and needs.

If we do not revitalize our conception and practice of public service, we will be painted, perhaps deservedly, as a bunch of spoiled employees trying to protect our personal privileges, and we won't likely succeed in transforming institutional relations. This will be a loss for us. More sadly, and importantly, this will be a loss for all Canadian citizens, as another opportunity to defend the public university will have been squandered. We are living in times when an appreciation and commitment to public institutions and values of all kinds are under serious assault. If we fully appreciate this and rise to the occasion, we can help to stem if not turn the tide within our own institution and, perhaps, beyond.

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## **ACTIVATING THE SENATE, ENGAGING WITH THE BOARD, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BC**

**ERIK JENSEN, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BC**

I want to thank Rob for inviting me to come down here. I feel a bit in a minority here being a physical scientist. I don't really see many physical scientists represented in the room.

I seem to have fallen into various odd roles over time. I'm currently the Vice President of the Faculty Association, and when Jacqueline Holler (president of the UNBCFA) went away for a research trip a couple weeks ago, of course I stepped in as Acting President of the association. But simultaneously, the Dean went away on a trip, and so he asked me to be Acting Dean while he was away, so I've been, for the past two weeks, Acting Dean and Acting President of the Association.

It's sort of interesting, because very often when I look at the different roles that people play in the university, whenever people bring up this idea of a role, I always think of the hockey player called the role player. The role player is the not-very talented hockey player who is told to go out on the ice and knock some heads together, and that's what the role player does because he understands that he's not paid to score goals. This hockey player is paid to go out and knock heads together. So many of us in the university, particularly when we get pulled into these administrative roles, become the role player, and we understand what those roles are.

The other comment I was going to make before I really started was to acknowledge the lovely comments about Howard Petch and his Petch Procedures. When I was an undergraduate at UVic, as a young physics student, he was President (seconded from Physics) at the time, and so when I had a chance to meet him a few times for some award ceremonies, we would chat – he's a very gracious man.

I was just going to reflect on this idea that in physics, it's actually been a tradition to form these very large research collaborations, and so you bring together tens, even hundreds, or these days with the Higgs boson, thousands of physicists all together, but they need to have administrators who go in and run these large organizations. They elect

among themselves one of their colleagues to be this administrator, but there's a real understanding that while these are elected to be administrators, they're really there as representatives of the research team members; they're not there to be a top-down purveyor of power in these collaborations, because these collaborations would fall apart very quickly if it was run in a top-down way. I wanted to reflect on this as, being a physical scientist, that in some ways we do have some mechanisms where we thought about a more-collegial way of doing our own governance.

The reason that Rob asked me to speak – at least I hope so because I made all my notes accordingly – was almost exactly five years ago, we went through a fairly large crisis at University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), which is in Prince George, about 800 kilometres northeast of Vancouver, in the centre of the province. The reason that we're there is because there's a desire from the community in what we call the northern part of the province to have their own advanced education institution. Our northern population had seen so many young people leaving, particularly coming down south to go to university, and then the northern communities would essentially lose them forever. They would be attracted by the bright lights of the big city and never return. There was a real desire to have this institution, and it was important that it be a university. We had the college already of course, but the northern BC community really wanted a university.

So in the early 1990s, this university was created, and a large fraction of the faculty was hired around that time. I was hired soon after that, coming from the University of Windsor where I'd been before. I came to UNBC to be part of the building of a university from the ground up.

We had a long-term president who, around 2005, was retiring so there was a search for a new president. The board of governors formed a search committee and duly hired a chap from the United States who was formally a Canadian because he'd grown up in British Columbia, but



he'd spent his entire academic career in the United States. He became president July 1, 2006 and came with a plan; to remake this still relatively-young institution. There was this idea, particularly in the board, that they really didn't want the "ivory tower" type of institution as a university. They wanted something a little more practical. That was the backdrop to hiring this particular individual.

One of the things that happened right away, which did actually cause some alarm, was that a large fraction of the senior administration left the university within a few months of this new president coming. The new president clearly had some ideas about where he wanted the university to go. That started to become formalized soon after he arrived, literally within a few months, when we undertook what was called the Academic Visioning Initiative, or the AVI. This AVI was a top-to-bottom reimagining of how the university would be configured and what its role and its future mission would be.



*Erik Jensen speaking at Academic Governance 3.0*

In parallel, what happened at the same time was that there was the budget process, which in most years, is fairly pro forma. But this time, suddenly with this new president, the budget was quickly identified as being in crisis. It wasn't in crisis at the time, but it would be in crisis in two or three years. They had all these impressive charts that showed that in two or three years' time, there would be a huge and growing gap between revenues and costs. Soon after that, the deans in particular were tasked with trying to identify how they would meet the need to cut. What happened in the academic programs was that the deans went through an exercise called a "report card" evaluation process. They developed a set of measures to look at costs of various academic programs, and it was pretty clear, like literally within a few days, that some programs – such as my own – were particularly under scrutiny here because, as many of you know, in physics, we have a relatively small number of students who graduate with a physics degree. We have a very large contingent in first-year service teaching, but we have a relatively small number of students who continue through to graduation. One can see quite quickly that a simple way to save quite a bit of money would be to have

one or two faculty to teach first-year courses, and dispense with all the rest of it because that just adds costs.

So we undertook this process, and it was pretty clear where this was going right from the start. We had the deans working on this report card structure, but of course they were doing it in what most faculty felt was a falsely consultative way. We really spent many meetings going through the motions of this process with the deans and administrators. I had only been chair for about a year before this started, and I was really quite taken aback by how my fellow chairs in other units were fairly happy to go along with this kind of process, because it also became clear to them that they were not the target. And so you get into this process where "As long as it's not me, then it's okay."

Do any of you listen to Radiolab? If you don't listen to Radiolab podcasts from US National Public Radio, you should. They did a very good episode recently on the Milgram experiment. The Milgram experiment was this famous psychology experiment where they had test subjects shock people, and shock them to the point where it was thought that these people were being killed. The question that comes out of something like that is essentially "Why do good people do awful things?" Or, "Why did my colleagues in the university happily go along with an empty exercise of cost-cutting?" The surprising answer that comes out of the Milgram experiment, when you look at it in detail, is that the reason that people do awful things is because in some way they've been brought into the belief that what they're doing is acting towards a better common good. It's not that anyone does something that they think is evil; it's that they believe that there's a common good that they're all working towards. That's the way that you get people to go along with some of these things.

What happened after this process was that the administration announced that there would be a suspension of admissions into four academic programs; physics, economics, women's studies, and one specific aspect of the anthropology program. There was never really a proper discussion about "What really is the academic value of these programs to the institution as a whole?" What would a university look like if it didn't have a physics department? That was the question that I had been asking, and was trying to ask my colleagues. Is an institution without a physics department really still a university? Is an institution without an English or a history department still a university? But no one had really asked that because this was all about cost.

The faculty association did negotiate with the administration because they wanted to come to terms on how these sorts of faculty reductions would happen. There was nothing in the collective agreement that would allow the sorts of reductions that were being envisaged, but the faculty association in the end decided that what they wanted to do was to get something – a process on paper as opposed to something outside the agreement. So the faculty association did agree on something. The target was to reduce the

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university contingent by 11 full-time faculty positions. That was the President's target. At the time there was about 130 full-time faculty at UNBC, so this was nearly 10% of the full-time faculty at the institution.

One of the things that became clear throughout the budget process was that this new president really wanted a flexible budget, because I think coming from an American private institution, in that context university presidents have a lot of flexibility. That is to say they have a pot of money that they can use for targeted funding of things, whereas at a public institution, there is really little flexibility from year to year in the budget. One of our president's goals was to have this pot of money that he'd be able to use according to his own will.

At this point, there was of course a lot of furious debate among the faculty about how to respond. I was on the faculty senate, and so not only was I targeted, but I was on the body that was part of the process. Although, as people pointed out, these proposed cuts should have been an academic decision – suspending admissions into an academic program is really an academic decision. Suspending admissions has budgetary implications, which is the purview of the board, but the faculty really believed that this was an academic issue and so it should come naturally to the senate. In fact, that's really in the end what saved us, because in British Columbia we do have the University Act, and the Universities Act very specifically gives powers over academic content and decisions to the academic senate. That was our way of interrupting what was going on.

So what we ended up doing... it seems so mundane, but really what we did was ask the board to consult the senate on matters of the academic integrity of the institution. That's almost word for word the start of the motion that we made. We said to the board, "You have to consult the senate about matters of academic integrity." We passed this motion in senate and the next day, the university administration rescinded its motion to suspend admissions because they didn't want to go in front of the board with this motion from the senate. It was clear that we did have the authority to do this in senate, so this was really an important message that senates did still hold some power, at least those of us who operated under the University Act. A few months later, the board of governors was reconfigured, they selected a new chair, and surprisingly the university president resigned only slightly over two years into a five-year appointment. So our president then was quickly gone.

It may seem slightly heretical, but we now have annual meetings between our senate members and the board of governors at one of the board meetings. We actually get together with the board of governors. We have workshops where we talk about academic planning for the institution, and what vision we see for the university in the future. We've tried to keep our faculty senators engaged, and this is obviously a continuing problem for everyone.

We've also done some good things, I think, in terms of improving rules on transparency. I think transparency is a huge thing for what we need in order to maintain a good working relationship inside the universities. For instance, we recently made changes to how senior administrators are hired. It used to be the case that when we were hiring a president, all the applications were completely secret because there was this argument that good people would not come forward if it was thought that they were looking elsewhere. I think that's something that as institutions we really have to combat. We have to understand that people will move on and we have to be able to deal with that, because we need to have this transparency and ability to properly vet applicants, and ask them the hard questions about what their vision is and what are their intentions for the future.

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# 8

## **POWER, MONEY, AND GOVERNANCE AT UBC: THE UNIVERSITAS 21 MINI-SCANDAL**

**WILLIAM BRUNEAU, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

I'll begin with a name many of you may have forgotten, Alan Gilbert, former Vice Chancellor of Melbourne University. Alan Gilbert died a couple of years ago, but for reasons to be given in a moment, it is fair to say we came to know him pretty well at UBC around the year 2000.

Alan Gilbert was born the same year as I, 1944. From 1996 to 2004, he was Vice-Chancellor, or President, of the University of Melbourne. While there, this man became a great enthusiast for business in all its forms, all its methods, all its madness, all its moxie, brought in merit pay and with it the "star" system for hiring. Stars were noticeable especially in business studies and in the natural sciences. Remarkable enthusiasm for institutional rankings characterized his entire reign. That last is perhaps the correct descriptor of Alan Gilbert's time at Melbourne. Accounting and investment practices familiar in big business became familiar at Melbourne; there was rapid expansion at Melbourne—growth for the sake of growth.

Shortly after he arrived, Alan Gilbert created Melbourne University Private Ltd. It was a private parallel university meant to circumvent regulations limiting the moneymaking educational ventures of Australian public universities. The business was a financial catastrophe, lost \$150 million, and the public side of the university then had to save the private side. All the people hired on the private side came over to the public side – at great expense and with grave difficulty. There were serious and not entirely predictable consequences for Melbourne's collective agreement with staff.

This is the fellow who came up with the idea of an educational consortium at the international level. Alarmingly, the new plan resembled Melbourne Private University. It was called U21.

In its earliest form, Universitas 21 or "U21" was no more than a group of universities who announced a wish to collaborate, to cooperate, to share what were called "best

practices," and thus if all went well to raise their ranking in the Times Higher Educational Supplement lists of the best universities in the world. By that time, the Jiao Tong index was coming to be well known. Rankings like these had led to considerable anxiety in all 17 of U21's institutions. The 17 universities included Melbourne of course, some other Australian ones, Singapore, a couple of Chinese universities, McGill, the University of Toronto, UBC, Michigan, Edinburgh, two United Kingdom places, and so on.

From 1997, there was a small office – usually in Edinburgh but sometimes in Singapore, sometimes both – which worked to assist people to make arrangements for sharing course syllabi, pedagogy, encouraging meetings between administrators. One of my colleagues at UBC was to go to Siberia a little worried he might never return, but was reassured by a personal message from Gilbert saying, "Don't worry, Murray, you will return." As indeed he did, apparently wiser than before. This was the whole idea; that one would go to places named by Alan Gilbert and the U21 folks and come back wiser than when they left.

Then came a moment of "enlightenment." Many of those involved in U21, including those at UBC, had broad connections to the world of big business and multinationals. In 1999-2000, somebody got the bright idea that it might be possible to unify the 17 voluntarily associated U21 institutions and make a kind of multinational singular university out of it—to make a functioning business of U21. Connected to this idea was the proposition that one needs infrastructure and communications know-how in an enterprise like this, especially if the degrees you're to present are to be online. One would need informatics and computational know-how to bring it off.

In short, U21 needed a partner. The partner turned out to be – and this is largely Alan Gilbert's doing – Thomson Corporation International.

By summer 2001, U21 Global had come into existence to

do what I've described, complete with a parallel university senate called Universitas 21 Global Pedagogia. It turned out that the only degree they would offer was an MBA. I had thought there might be degrees in other fields, but of course I had not been privy to U21 Global calculations about market.

The market was 325 million people, according to the president of Thomson, mostly in Southeast Asia, Central America, underdeveloped parts of southeastern Europe including Bosnia and Kosovo and all sorts of unusual places. Students from these markets would pay from \$6,000 to \$15,000 apiece to enrol in an MBA online from Universitas 21 Global.

It's a picture of exquisite horror, but intriguing and informative too. The story has begun to recede from our collective memory. That is not for the best, since the story of U21, when you come down to the details, is partly about a profound misunderstanding of the purpose of higher education, and about a mistaken approach to the whole question of university governance.

By the summer of 2001, Martha Piper was president of UBC. She was indistinguishable from her predecessor, David Strangway, in nearly all respects. When Martha arrived, she sounded like a younger version of David. We don't know if the move to U21 was entirely her doing, as Mike Goldberg, then the Dean of Commerce at UBC, was pushing hard for the scheme. His work in behalf of U21 occurred in private in the deans' council, in the personal councils of President Piper, and in the board of governors.

By late summer 2001, the U21 scheme had big problems. There was a question of UBC's name and logo, which were to be used internationally for dubious purposes, particularly in the Third World. There was a copyright question. We profs were busily arguing about copyright at the time – we are still doing. We were concerned about what would happen with courses we had developed. There was no clear policy about U21 courses at UBC, who would own them, who would run them. Although U21 seemed to be a straight business venture, its eventual purposes and mechanisms were unknown to most UBC people. The problem was especially acute in respect of copyright.

Professorial compensation and appointments at U21 were of course outside the purview of the UBC collective agreement.

We didn't know how much U21 would cost over the long term. We learned, though, how much it would cost immediately. It was to cost US\$500,000 to join Universitas 21 Global. At the time, the exchange rates were bad, so UBC finally had to produce CA\$771,000 to join.

A number of us had, meanwhile, become aware of sharply critical arguments of U21, arguments made by colleagues in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and the USA. Documents

available at the time (e.g., UNIVERSITAS 21 Strategy Meeting; Letter to Alan Gilbert from National Faculty Associations; International Student conference questions Universitas 21; Staff and students around the world seek answers from Universitas 21; U21 Student Network questions regarding the proposed joint venture between Universitas 21 and Thomson) should have alerted us to the dangers inherent in U21. In the event, we were more than a little surprised by the size and significance of the U21 proposals given to us by President Piper, Dean Goldberg, and their administrative companions.

The first time UBC faculty came to know of all this was some 7 or 8 days before the meeting of the UBC Senate on September 19, 2001. A package came in the dark of night to all senators, faculty senators included, telling them that the administration was going to present for information a major academic development – U21. It was immediately clear that U21 was essentially an academic matter, not a question for business/corporate decision making. It was something for our whole academic community to decide. As one might expect, the poop then hit the fan.

The University of BC Faculty Association published three articles about U21 in the weeks and months immediately following the September meeting. Through the faculty association newsletter, the faculty association, with its 2,000 members and its guaranteed access to the facts, made a difference. The association was able to raise royal hell over the fact that President Piper and her minions were about to foist this device on the community.

So the faculty association role and our capacity for communications made quite a difference. Yet we didn't stop the progress of U21. We may have slowed it, but not by much. The money was spent, although the administration had then to explain (among many other things) where the \$771,000 had come from. We never did find out exactly where it came from; it was said that it came from an endowment of some sort, somewhere. No one was or is quite sure. For us in the UBC Faculty Association, the point was to make public a series of financial dealings that would otherwise have been done entirely behind the scenes, and without unaccountably.

Now one might say, "Ah, that's a pittance in an operating budget of \$1.595 billion," which is what UBC's is at the moment. "Who cares?" But I care, and many of us did. It's not just the million bucks, more or less. It's also the \$1.5 billion that is largely in the hands of the vice president finance, the president of the administrative apparatus of the university, and so on. So we had to care. It was, at it were, the tip of an enormous iceberg. Public discussion and transparency were our primary goals in the U21 exercise, and these are surely essential in any system of public university governance.

There were hard questions on the UBC senate floor in succeeding months and years. The administration tried to

fortify its position, announcing that the money came from endowment funds. The faculty association and its newsletter continued its work for a year. By 2002 and '03, the senate had forced the administration into a tactical retreat, even as it became obvious our money would likely be lost- which it was.

The potential beneficiaries of U21Global were a small constituency at UBC, which raises another important question of governance. The central administration was not just ignoring the vast majority of university faculty, staff, and students; but worse, they were actively caving into a vision of the university proclaimed by a tiny fraction of the community. It was a smelly deal. Even our commerce friends and colleagues weren't happy with it, and for good reason.

In the end, Barry McBride, the VP academic, was compelled to give two annual reports explaining why we were still in Universitas 21 Global. It became clear that we were making no money, one of the primary objectives of going into it in the first place. There was no proof whatsoever that our rankings were going up, which had been a central objective in the first place. It became increasingly common wisdom to ask why we should care about Jiao Tong's view of UBC's commerce, physics, history or education departments.

The net effect was not as Martha Piper had hoped. Over a period of several years, the U21 "mini-scandal" led to renewed discussion of what is really in the public interest, to renewed argument about proper governance at the university, to new questions about the commitment we have to academic decision-making made by academics in the legislative setting of the academic senate.

Those are the things we had thought crucially important all along. In the end, Barry McBride chaired a special committee on the whole matter. In January 2007, a senate motion instructed the president of the university, who (unfortunately) chaired the UBC senate, to go to the board of governors to request cancellation of the contract. We left U21, we lost the money, and we have no further contact with Universitas 21 Global.

Universitas 21 Global lives on without us. It claims to have something like 7,000 students, but it's hard to say what's going on behind the scenes, using documents available on the Internet. We can't be sure just who those 7,000 students are, nor have a precise idea who's teaching them.

Some key governance points remain. The UBC faculty association acted as a kind of policy police force in this tale, as they should. The senate apparently couldn't take care of the matter on its own; the UBC faculty association therefore stepped in. The academic senate needed a push and it needed help, and these things we were only too happy to provide.

The lesson is, in the last analysis, that our academic senate needs an effective way to see into the financial

and administrative activities of the university senates and are hesitant, even weak, in taking up this kind of work in Canada. Certainly at UBC they were unable to cut through the U21 problem on their own. There was and is no active senate finance committee at UBC. Senate has no staff to keep track of administrative and finance activity at the university and to report out to the broader community. Money talks, and financial decisions are academic decisions in a university. The senate's role should be to superintend them in a general way and to inspect them in a detailed, precise way.

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# 9

## **GOVERNANCE TRANSITION: FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY**

**ZENA SELDON, THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY**

I was asked to talk about the governance transition from Cariboo College, in Kamloops BC, to Thompson Rivers University. I don't know how many of you know anything whatsoever about the college system in BC. It's amazing to me when I talk to university faculty; they always get this look on their face and I'm never quite sure what it means. "Patience" I think is the best description.

In any case, it was quite a ride, this transformation, and so I thought I'd talk about it because I think that our experience says something about brokenness, and something about transitions.

I want to say just a few things about the actual transition, about what happened. Then I want to say something about education councils, about our board, and a little bit about COEDCO (the Council of Education Councils) an organization made up of all of the chairs of education councils in the system. Finally, I just want to give you a description of what I observed from my perspective.

### **THE TRANSITION – WHAT HAPPENED?**

In British Columbia in 1988, somebody had an urge, an election urge, to have more access to higher education. And the way in which we were going to get access was that the province was going to take a number of the colleges and turn them into what so cutely was named "university colleges."

In Kamloops, Kelowna, and a couple of other places such as Malaspina College in Nanaimo which became Malaspina University College and is now Vancouver Island University, and Fraser Valley College, which became University College of the Fraser Valley and now the University of the Fraser Valley, individual institutions were somehow supposed to transform, and the process was different depending on who you were. Cariboo College (the progenitor of Thompson Rivers University), like Okanagan College in Kelowna, was an early adopter. The process for us was to

offer existing degrees from the BC universities, so we had to make individual arrangements with various 'established' universities to offer their degrees. The results were often not a logical or coherent structure for the students or the faculty. For example, at what was then Cariboo College, we were offering UBC's arts degree, UBC's science degree and SFU's business degree. This was difficult because the SFU business degree was designed to mesh with the SFU arts programs. Similarly, the UBC commerce degree was designed to mesh with the UBC arts degree. As long as a student didn't want to change degrees it worked well. But if they did, it did not. It also did not work well for faculty, who often faced very different qualifications from one another in the same faculty in order to be allowed to teach third and fourth year. There were no across the board rules. The mentor departments were aware of it, but their solution was to try and remake us in their image. So I would get phone calls from individuals in UBC economics (which was in the arts faculty) saying, "don't worry, we'll get you out of the business school." Since it was not their university, they did not have the power to solve these problems, and those of us who found ourselves in these situations often preferred the structure we were developing to the ones the traditional universities offered. Mentoring was uneven, and often focused only on making sure we hired faculty members who had doctoral level qualification.

### **GOVERNANCE IN THE SYSTEM**

Because we were a college, we had what was called an education council, and they still exist for all the colleges. I think in some ways they were actually preferable to our senate. They started out with 20 voting members and had to be half faculty. Although you didn't see librarians, they could be on council because some of our librarians are faculty members. Council had to have students and educational administrators appointed by the president, and they had to have two support staff, and everybody elected their own. More importantly, in my mind, was the fact that the

president was on council as a non-voting member. He or she could not chair council. In the time I was there, our councils were chaired almost entirely by faculty members. It was an extremely empowering opportunity for a number of faculty members, including a lot of women.

Contrast that with our new language that delivered us our senate. I will admit I am not on senate, I will never be on senate, I will not run for senate, I will not participate in our senate as it is now structured. It is more about power at the top. I was told that this language was written by the president of TRU in consultation with the college lawyer. He wanted to be the president who was, like everybody else in BC, the chair of the senate. I said to him, in my usual grace and élan, “What the hell do you think you’re doing? Are you crazy?” Our president had taken the role of being our face to the outside world and now you want to be this external guy, who’s going out to China and doing all this stuff, to chair the senate? What does he have to do with academic administration? If you have to have somebody you own control the senate, at least make it the VP Academic because there’s some legitimacy there. You can tell I lost the argument.

One of the reasons I lost was because over the past twenty five years, there has been a change in the governance landscape. Historically, I do not believe that presidents in specific, or administrators in general, chaired senates. But our president provided me with data that suggested it was now the rule in Canadian universities. I see this as an exercise in the retention of power at the administrative level, but one might ask how this happened? Were faculty asleep? Were they too busy publishing so they could be promoted? I think this latter point is really important, because there never were that many rewards for being an administrator. Now that we allowed, even encouraged, professional administrators who are well-paid to run our universities, there is no need for faculty to “get stuck” with that role, but we are paying for that choice.

So the senate was created, and I was approached the day the Thompson Rivers University Act came out by the college lawyer who said, “Gee, I really hope you’re going to run for the vice president of senate, for the vice chair,” and I said, “Why?” And he said he just wanted someone to do the work. “You’ll lose all of your power if you don’t become the vice chair.” And I said, “Okay.” I didn’t run for senate and I probably did lose any power I had at TRU.

## **WHAT I OBSERVE AS I LOOK NOW AT THE LANDSCAPE**

The present senate is an interestingly broader group than our old education council. It very specifically includes chief librarian, registrar, and other people who were not statutorily on our other council. If you look at the powers of ed council in our old world, they were more limited. In most ways however, they look an awful lot like what your

senates probably look like. If you look and compare those with the powers of the senate, you’ll see that there’s really not a whole lot more. You can get a copy of the education council’s powers by looking online at any of the BC colleges and compare them with the University Act. But a lot of the power was what you made it.

The relationship with the board is now broader in the case of ed council because the council didn’t have as much theoretical power. But in the entire six years I chaired education council, not once did I see the slightest hint of the board turning down anything that had passed council that was academically interesting. It just didn’t happen. I gather it did happen at some other institutions, perhaps in relationship to the larger amount of union involvement in some of the other colleges; the greater the union involvement in the selection of council members, the more likely academically interesting proposals were to be turned down, because the issues became seen as contentious. I’m not sure they were contentious, but they were seen as contentious. In our case, we had a virtual separation of people who were involved in union activities and people who were not. I was on the bargaining team the year that I was elected to education council and I withdrew because I was concerned about an apparent conflict of interest. I was told by the union that I didn’t need to. I did anyway because I thought, “Why make it more complex? There’s no need.” So I don’t know. For those of you who think about substituting the union for the senate as your governance advocate, be careful. I don’t know whether that raises the level of perceived contentiousness. I think it does.



*Zena Seldon speaking at Academic Governance 3.0*

We’ve also looked at the difference in relationships between the senate and the board and the education council and the board, and I think if you look at this, with very few exceptions, there’s not a lot of changes in the way in which we did things. What did we lose in the transition (besides having the president be the chair, which I did I think was an enormous loss)? Well, faculty members interested in administration lost something. First, in the ed council days, there were support groups such as the Council of Education Councils, where all the college education council chairs got

together a couple times a year and talked about what was going on, and so you got to find out a lot of dirt about other colleges which in and of itself made you feel better. But you could also trade strategies, you could talk about alternative ways of making things go, you could see what worked somewhere that you hadn't tried and it was really helpful. What disappeared was our connections to one another, which were invaluable for the faculty members during this transition. Now, the only talking is within the unions.

One of the most interesting things about COEDCO, from my perspective, was at least at that time and I suppose still now, that it didn't exist in the eyes of the government. The government wouldn't fund it, and they sent a representative who attended our meetings, who was told, "You can do this on your day off if you'd like," but they did cover his expenses. So it was sort of a fascinating institution that wasn't quite real. The other issue was that at the time, we had representatives on what ultimately became Degree Quality Assessment Board, whom government removed when they restructured the DQAB.

The point I'm trying to make is that there was an awful lot of actual power and an awful lot of actual learning in the education council model. I don't know what's still there in our senate model. I do know that now in our contract, the word "service" appears, and there are a lot of white men running things who were not there when they didn't get credit for it. I don't know that that's good or bad, but there are far fewer women. I happen to be in a department that is not universally white; I think 50% of our faculty are not. And economics is not the most female profession, but we've got, I think, four full-time female faculty now. So we're not doing too bad in terms of diversity. I do not see the same diversity being preserved on senate that was there in ed council. So good, bad, or indifferent, as the power and apparent prestige rose, as the institution started looking more and more like a university. The senate "citizenship" starts looking like Rome. Only "white boys" get to vote – few girls, no slaves, little diversity. And I think you need to ask yourself when you think about academic governance citizenship, "Do you look like Rome or do you look like ed council?" I personally would rather look like ed council.



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# 10

## **CLOSING REMARKS 1: COUNTERING THE STOCKHOLM SYNDROME**

**CINDY OLIVER, PRESIDENT, FEDERATION OF POST-SECONDARY  
EDUCATORS OF BC**

What has happened? What has happened to put collegial governance on the academic radar screen? You know, we're all concerned about it. The organization that I represent, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE), have had conferences and we're working on a paper and other pieces of policy on it.

When FPSE uses the word "faculty," I just want to say we mean everybody, I'm being inclusive – librarians and counselors, others, and certainly even staff, so we include everyone. Faculty are feeling marginalized, and we heard that word today. Librarians are feeling that they don't belong and they weren't allowed to belong. Faculty are being more pressured by the corporate agenda that is taking over our institutions. It's a fact. We can look around and see what's happening. There's chronic underfunding in our public institutions across the country, not just in British Columbia.

And with all of that, we've got the emergence of the student as a consumer and education as a product. "Got to put out a good product," like we're making widgets or something. Student as consumer has been building up for a while now. I remember when I was teaching that the odd student would come by and want a different mark, felt they had a right to a better mark, and there was a process, and sometimes they got it, sometimes they didn't. But what we're experiencing now is when students come in with "I want a better mark, I've got to get a better mark to get into engineering," or to get anywhere, they pretty much get it. I mean it's that concept that "They're the consumer, they're paying a lot of money for it, we better find a way to make them happy."

We're also reeling from the effects of punitive legislation. We mentioned just in passing Bill 18, which is on the order papers of the legislature in British Columbia and which says that if you belong to the executive of your faculty association, or if you are a bargainer or a chief steward, you can't sit on a board of governors. If you are on a board or a senate or whatever and if two-thirds of the people on the

board don't like you or don't want you there, they can vote to remove you even though you've been duly elected by your constituency. That's bad legislation, frankly.

So we're suffering from those things. We've also developed this culture of stars in our faculties. We're also dealing with inequitable pay scales and pay schemes that all feeds into the concept of "Some are more worthy than others."

Faculty have always felt pressure, I believe, to publish and do research, but there's a huge amount of pressure now to secure grants, and frankly your job is to help finance the institution. There's an egregious example of that at Texas A&M where they actually do a net-worth spreadsheet on you and determine "Okay, what's your salary?" that's going to be in one column, and then in another column it's "What grants have you brought in?", What kind of status have you brought to the university? And they add all that up and subtract one from the other, and if you have a negative in front of your name, you're not really that worthy to them.

The other thing we're hearing today is consultation has become meaningless. It's a top-down structure. There's no room for that meaningful dialogue that we all need or for shared decision-making to make our workplaces better. There's more of a paternalistic "father knows best" kind of attitude amongst admin. You know, "Well, I have to consult with you, so let's consider this talk our consultation" and off we go.

So there's this concept of a loss of power, and we've heard the word "power" a lot, and I'm going to come back to it as well; we see a growing culture of exclusivity, people being told they're not welcome in certain areas There's also something else that I refer to as "Stockholm Syndrome"; that, as we elect people to positions of governance, to senates and education councils and boards, they become co-opted.

Then there is the concept of being co-opted, ostensibly

“for the common good”; “You’re here now for the common good. You take off that faculty hat you’re wearing and you start making decisions about what’s good for the bottom line.” Our institutions are not asking the questions “Is it good for UNBC to not offer physics?” That’s not the point. “Is it good for Northwest Community College to not offer Aboriginal training?” That’s not the point. The point of our institutions is increasingly “Can we afford it?” And that in itself has I think turned our governance on its head.

But how do we re-establish a strong academic governance reality? It came up in a couple of sessions, about how important it is to entrench things in our collective agreements, but there was some back and forth with it. Collective agreements lay out the terms and conditions of our employment, and thereby our collective agreements establish rules, processes, procedures for things like evaluation, hiring. Why do we put academic freedom or financial exigency in our collective agreements? We do that to make them stick, so that they will be solidly adhered to, as opposed to policy, which can change. You get a new dean, you get a new policy. You get a new VP, he or she changes the policy. Well, you can’t change a collective agreement as easily as that. That requires a whole different process.

The other thing that’ll re-establish strong governance is establishing meaningful consultation, truly collaborative at all levels. Someone had mentioned – and I can’t remember who it was – about the senior administrator who said, “My office is open once a month for coffee. Just come in and we can consult.” Well, that’s not good enough – setting up those kind of false situations, like every Thursday at 2 o’clock, or once a month, you can come in and see me. We have to truly engage the community. Not just open up the campus once in a while to the public, but take the university, take the campus out to the street. I mean take it out, do the outreach that you need. Make yourselves and our academic community visible in the communities in which we live and work. Get people out there to have a stake, have an interest, in the institution.

The other thing that’s important is lobbying. Certainly, we have to work with governments of any political stripe, it doesn’t matter. We don’t always like them but we’ve got to work with them, sometimes through lobbying them to head off bad legislation.

Also, we must also educate our allies – and not only our own members, who I mentioned before about becoming the “Patty Hearsts” of the board, where they take on that concept of “Well, I’m now a senator, or on the board, or ed council, so I better do what they want me to do here.” We need to educate them about how important it is and who they represent so that they don’t become co-opted and then, frankly, become our enemies in some cases; that’s not a good thing.

And don’t work in isolation. We have a large network out there. We have CAUT, with all of its policies and model

clauses. We have many allies. We have the Canadian Federation of Students, support staff at our institutions and people who live and work in our own communities, and that’s really important. And get political. Let people know what is going on, let the community know. Ultimately, it’s a process of educating people too. They’re going to get tired of it.

So if I had to summarize what we need in Academic Governance 3.0 in four or five different words – I’ve got five here – it would be power, responsibility, transparency, accountability, and respect.

*Rob Abbott is one of Canada's leading sustainability and strategy thinkers, writers, and speakers. A frequent advisor to the c-suite across Canada and internationally on the integration of sustainability with organizational and competitive strategy, he is also a trusted advisor to government agencies, NGOs, and academia. His interest, emphasis and expertise lie in creating the conditions for transformational rather than transactional change. At present, he is Executive Director, Climate Action Secretariat, for the Province of BC.*



## **CLOSING REMARKS 2: EASING INTO THE CONVERSATION**

**ROBERT M. ABBOTT, ABBOTT STRATEGIES AND THE BC CLIMATE  
CHANGE SECRETARIAT**

It goes without saying that when Rick Kool made the invitation for me to say some closing words to you by way of synthesis, it sounded like a good idea at the time. It's been an incredibly rich discussion last night and today. I am not going to somehow distill all of that discussion and parrot back to you all of the great ideas, be they practical, concrete ones or somewhat more expansive ones. What I do want to do is provide a little bit of context around my experience last night and today, and reflect that back to you in a way that I think hopefully has meaning for all of you.

The other thing, just before I jump in, is last night when Rob Clift was describing me briefly, he suggested, I think fairly, that I'm the outside observer; I'm not inside the system, so to speak. I reflected on that last night and I said, "Well, that's true, and yet I did a bachelor's degree, two master's degree, and a doctorate in this system, and I ran one of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence for a time and worked extensively with a number of university ILOs. So I am not an expert in the notions of academic governance, but I've definitely been affected by academic governance." And so within that context, I want to share two pieces of history with you that underscore the need for the kind of conversation that lies at the heart of academic governance 3.0.

In 1983, Hannah Holborn Gray, the former President of the University of Chicago, delivered a major public lecture in which she critiqued the emergence of "higher learning and the new consumerism". She was responding to a piece in the Chronicle of Higher Education which urged the post-secondary educational "industry" to take lessons from the automotive industry – lessons that signaled a need for universities and post-secondary institutions to redesign, repackage, and sell their "products" in response to shifting consumer priorities. Ms. Gray patiently explained that this attitude subverted the assumption that universities exist to keep alive and to create subjects and ideas that may not be fashionable and may never be popular and to educate others to understand how and why those things are

important.

In a similar vein, the sociologist Robert Bellah echoed Ms. Gray's argument in his observation that:

What is freedom in the market is tyranny in other spheres, such as the professions and politics. A decent society depends on autonomy of the spheres. When money takes over politics, only a façade of democracy is left. When money takes over the professions, decisions are made on the basis of the bottom line, not professional authority.

Against this grim backdrop, is it any wonder that so many of us must confront discussions of academic program efficacy based on faculty "productivity", or the service demands brought about by consumer sovereignty? And so it is that we need a new conversation about academic governance – a conversation that leans deeply into the internal structure, organization and management (formal and informal) of our post-secondary institutions.

It is my considered opinion that we are witnessing (indeed, have witnessed) a shift from a collegial shared form of governance to one that is corporate and business oriented. The rise of corporate governance and the decline of shared or consensual governance should be seen for what it is – the inevitable result of a decline in academic participation, a growing tendency towards managerialism and the new operational and environmental context or "space" in which universities and post-secondary institutions are operating.

To begin navigating toward a new conversation about academic governance, it is important to situate the governance conversation in the broader context of the idea of the university and the metaphorical path that the university is traveling through time. Put another way, I would encourage everyone who is concerned about academic governance to keep their eyes not on the ball that is governance experience at their particular institution, but

on the larger game that is the position of the post-secondary institution in society. Which of course speaks to the forces and emergent outcomes that we see in society at large:

- A decline of social capital;
- Economic chaos and concern;
- Environmental chaos and concern;
- A profound demographic shift within our post-secondary institutions, especially in the last decade;
- The politicization of academic work;
- The simultaneous intrusion of government constraints and the decline in financial support from government;
- The expansion of bureaucratic administration; and
- The disaggregation of universities as communities.

I would add that the esteemed scholar of organizational development, Alfred Chandler, famously noted that structure always follows strategy. Therefore, whatever governance concerns might excite us have their root in the prevailing strategy of the university administrators – and those who influence them.

So, if we've situated the governance discussion in this broader context, we then need to distinguish between the idea (and the ideal) of governance and the reality of governance – how things actually happen. This is the nuanced, multi-layered, multi-dimensionality of governance that we live with every day. And my prevailing view is that executive or administrative leadership and power has strengthened at the expense of professional power.

We must also be clear that we know what the governance structure actually is, and are not operating under the assumption or illusion that our institution's structure is of a particular type. Similarly, we must know and accept that there is no single inoculation that will "fix" what ails academic governance. The strategic, structural, and cultural changes necessary to improve governance will need to be tailored to particular circumstances and will, of course, take time to implement.

For some, I know that it is tempting to say we have lost the governance fight and should refocus our energies and talents on negotiating what we can in collective agreements – making the situation less bad, perhaps, but not changing the underlying system conditions. For others, the question is one of acknowledging that it is not the frame that is important, but what is framed. Thus, can we change the way faculty, in particular, respond to new administrative practices, and in so doing, transform what faculty is and does, crafting a new "academic dance"? This is a call, an invitation, to a new set of practices, behaviors and relations. This is the process by which academic governance 3.0 might be viewed as an emergent outcome of doing several things well. An important part of the navigational work to move in this direction is knowing what the parts of the governance system are – governments, senates, boards, faculty, students, communities, and others – and how these parts ought to relate to each other. Equally, for those who will

lead the intellectual charge on academic governance, you must know your institution's policies and practices and be assiduous in tracking how and to what extent the institution follows them.

The seven operating or design rules that might guide some of the work for CUFA BC and others in moving forward are:

- Be aware of the environmental context – the external forces that shape the operational and competitive "space" in which your institution operates. Adjust your course as appropriate in light of these forces, but don't be a slave to them.
- Lean deeply into the question of what it means to be an active citizen of the academy.
- Don't be afraid of naming the tensions that exists between individual and collective aspiration and action.
- Be clear about what collegiality and service mean, why they matter to you, as faculty, as public servants, and why others should care about them.
- Don't underestimate the influence of students – and your own faculty associations – in your desire to improve governance.
- Be clear about what you want (a reaffirmation of professorial power, legislative control over the budget, university civil service under faculty scrutiny, and so on), and the changes that are needed to realize them.
- Model the behavior you wish to see. Find your voice, use your voice and speak to the narrative that will excite people who are otherwise "trapped" or see themselves as trapped by the current governance system. Fear will push a few people into something new, but hope, hope for something better, hope embodied in a galvanizing narrative, will pull many more people along towards a new model of governance.

In closing, let me leave you with the admonition that all magic is ultimately a shift in consciousness. This conference, this dialogue, was the first step by CUFA BC towards a research agenda on governance. That agenda is, ultimately, about shifting consciousness and it is powerful, exciting work. More than that, it is the kind of work that should ignite us to think differently and act differently and craft something new. There is no higher or better call. It is yours to take up that call.

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## **POSTSCRIPT: ONE WAY FORWARD: TAMING THE THIRD POWER**

**ROBERT F. CLIFT, CUFA BC**

A recurrent theme in the discussions at the Academic Governance 3.0 conference was the role played by university senior administrators in the governance of their institutions. Historically, the board of governors and the senate may have had more power and been more independent, but senior administrators have never been passive players in university governance. However, their power was more in their ability to lead through influence, rather than in their use of formal authority.

In BC, this started to shift in 1983 when the provincial government instituted a series of government spending cuts and public sector reforms inspired by the neo-conservatism of US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The so-called “Restraint Program” put considerable pressure on universities to reduce expenditures, after many years of growth in funding and student numbers.

In dealing with this unprecedented situation, university boards of governors had little choice but to rely on senior administrators to identify the cuts to be made. Although the campus communities were consulted about proposed cuts, senates were largely bypassed in deciding what cuts to make, even when they had substantial academic consequences. As an undergraduate student during this period, it appeared to me that, in the aftermath of the cuts, there was grudging acceptance that it was a time of crisis and things would return to normal once the crisis had passed.

But the crisis never really passed. Continued government spending restraint, insufficient funding for new programs and rapidly expanding regulatory requirements resulted in the formal and informal delegation of board of governors and senate authority to the senior administrators. Once vested with this authority, university senior administrators seemed to treat their power as inherent to their role instead of as a delegated authority. Consequently, their values and interests began to diverge from those of university

community and, to a lesser extent, from those of the boards of governors.

In the absence of legislative authority for their role, university senior administrators use the tools bureaucracies have long used to exert control: they set the agenda and control the flow of information. This is illustrated in Figure 1, where the peripheral lines represent the formal authorities granted by legislation, and the lines in the center represent the power exercised by senior administrators without legislative sanction. In this way, they have become the Third Power in university governance.

A number of Academic Governance 3.0 conference participants, some playfully and others resolutely, proposed that the solution to this perceived power grab was to strip senior administrators of their power and return them to the proper role as servants of the university community. Although an attractive proposition to those of us who have butted heads with the Third Power, it’s simply not practical. The modern university is sufficiently complex that it needs a cadre of senior administrators with the authority to act on a wide range of matters. Rather than strip university senior administrators of their power, I propose instead that their authority be explicitly recognized in legislation and that new checks and balances be implemented to ensure accountability in how they exercise that authority.

At present, senior administrators are accountable to the university president and the president is accountable to the board of governors. This arrangement has two fundamental problems. First, university senates, who exercise legislative authority in academic decision making, have no means, other than moral suasion, to hold the senior administration accountable for carrying out senate’s policies and directives. Second, if the accountability for the entire senior administration flows through the president, then questions about or challenges to the policies and actions of anyone on the senior administration team can be framed as an attack on the president. A board member of a BC university once

told me that when he joined the board of governors he was told that a vote against any proposal the president brought to the board was considered a vote of non-confidence in the president—hardly the environment for robust deliberations and accountability.

The full details of how the Third Power might be recognized and subject to checks and balances is beyond the scope of this discussion. However, I have three concrete suggestions that would move us in that direction.

First, exclude vice-presidents, deans and their associates and assistants from acting as faculty or staff representatives on boards of governors, senates, and committees. One of the more pernicious manifestations of the Third Power has been the use of these administrators, who retain their status as faculty or staff members, as proxies for the senior administration in the guise of representing frontline faculty or staff members. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the divergent interests of senior administrators from the rest of the university community than does trying to “stack” governing bodies and committees in this way.

Second, establish an independent budget office in each institution. Transparency in the budget-making process through an independent office will ensure that university community gets the accurate and trustworthy financial information so that it can render effective judgments about

institutional activities and priorities. Such an office should also have the authority to conduct financial reviews of specific departments and projects as necessary.

Third, give senate the authority to call senior administrators to testify before senate on specific matters, and to question that person. It would be inappropriate to give senate the authority to fire or discipline a senior administrator, but if the accountability of senior administrators is to be more than symbolic, senate has to have some means to compel them to account for their activities.

Academic Governance 3.0 is about reinvigorating university governance to be inclusive and effective in the 21st century. Taming the Third Power is certainly not the only way forward, nor is it necessarily the best way, but it is a way to ensure university governance is grounded in some basic principles that we are in risk of losing if we don't take action.

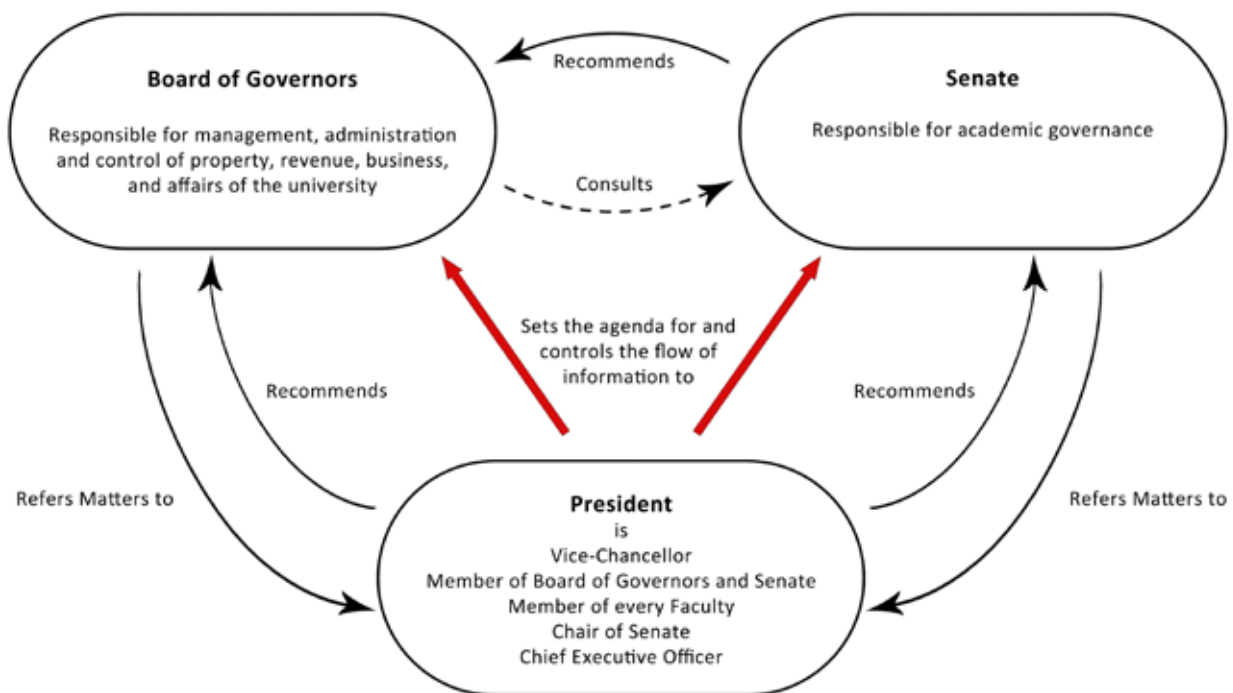


Figure 1 - The Third Power

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