A STUDY OF THE FACULTY GOVERNANCE SYSTEM AND FACULTY CONTROL OF THE CURRICULUM AT SELECTED STATE-SUPPORTED UNIVERSITIES

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

ABSTRACT ix

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION 1
A. Problem Statement 3
B. Relevance of the Study 5
C. Guiding Research Questions 5
D. Study Propositions 6
E. Summary 9

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 10
A. Historical Perspective 10
B. Development of Faculty Governance 18
C. Curriculum Control at Institutions 22
D. Applied Curriculum Procedures at Three Institutions 24
E. Challenges to Faculty Control of the Curriculum 31
F. Implementing Change in Faculty Governance 42
G. Summary 46

CHAPTER III. METHOD 48
A. Guiding Research Questions 50
B. Subjects 51
1.

Per

mission to Conduct Research 51

2. Selecti

on of Institutions 51
3. Selection of Individuals....53
C. Materials....54
D. Procedures....55
1. The Preinterview Routine....55
2. The Interview Process....58
E. Design and Data Analysis....60
1. Triangulation of Data....63
F. The Data Collector....63
G. Summary of Research Process....64

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS....65
A. Central State University....68
1. Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process....70
2. Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process....72
3. Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process....75
4. Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process....78
B. North State University....80

1. Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process 82
2. Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process 83
3. Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process 86
4. Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process.....88
C. East State University 90
1. Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process 91
2. Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process 93
3. Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process 95
4. Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process.....97
D. West State University.....99
1. Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process 101
2. Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process.....105
3. Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process 106
4. Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process.....109
E. Question 1: Organization of the Process 111
1. Conclusion.....116
F. Question 2: Evolution of the Curriculum Approval Process.....118
1. Conclusion.....122
G. Question 3: Faculty Concerns About the Curriculum Approval Process 123
1. Conclusion.....128
H. Question 4: External Influences on the Curriculum.....128
1. Conclusion.....134
I. Summary.....134

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION 136
A. Findings and Implications 136
1. Question 1: How is the curriculum approval process organized at four selected regional institutions? 137
a. Implications 139
2. Question 2: How has the curriculum approval process evolved at these four institutions over the past 10 years? 140
a. Implications 141
3. Question 3: Are there faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process at these four institutions? 141

a. Implications 143
4. Question 4: Has the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these four institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns? 143
a. Implications 146
5. Question Summaries 147
B. Limitations of the Study 148
C. Recommendations for Further Research 148
D. Summary 149

REFERENCES 151

APPENDIXES 160

LIST OF TABLES

Table *Page*

1. Interviewee Identification Table.....67

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure *Page*

1. New course approval process at Central State University.....73
2. New course approval process at North State University 84
3. New course approval process at East State University.....94
4. New course approval process at West State University 103
5. Generic new course approval process.....113

ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE FACULTY GOVERNANCE SYSTEM AND FACULTY CONTROL OF THE CURRICULUM AT SELECTED STATE-SUPPORTED UNIVERSITIES

Robert Earl Shaw, Sr.

The topic of change in higher education, specifically the curriculum approval process, was investigated. Interviews were conducted with faculty and administrators at 4 Carnegie Colleges and Universities I institutions. From these interviews, within-case and cross-case study analyses were developed.

Only minor changes to the approval process were documented as being implemented during the past 10 years although numerous faculty concerns were voiced. Although not impacting the approval process, several influences external to the university were identified that impacted the curriculum process.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Former president of the University of California, Clark Kerr, likens changing the curriculum to trying to move a cemetery (Tucker & Bryan, 1991). This characterization of the difficulty in bringing change to higher education is perhaps an extension of President Elihuh Nott=s feeling concerning faculty meetings when he replied AI remember having one once, some 36 years ago, but I never wish to have another@ (Dwight, 1903, p. 110). Although President Kerr served at the University of California from 1958-1967 and President Nott served at Union College from 1804 until 1866, many of today=s university presidents and academic leaders may feel similarly when dealing with the institution=s shared governance organization, particularly when implementing changes to the curriculum.

Autonomy has always been at the heart of American higher education. While some intervention in procedural matters has been accepted as necessary, controls over purchasing, general personnel rules, construction projects, etc., do not compromise the essence of academe. The real safeguard of academic autonomy is ensuring that the essential elements of autonomy are widely understood and accepted. Ashby (1966) identifies the following essential

elements that must be understood and respected by the public, politicians, and civil servants to maintain the autonomy of academe:

1. The freedom to select staff and students and to determine the conditions under which they remain at the university.
2. The freedom of universities to determine curriculum content and degree standards.
3. The freedom to allocate funds across different categories of expenditures.

Faculty first became involved in governance of the academy in the Middle Ages when Papal Bulls provided to them the rights to be the sole qualifiers and disqualifiers of their members (Clark, 1987). This privilege has been preserved throughout the ages by a growing tradition. Often the privilege has strengthened through default. For example, today the institutional boards of control formally confer tenure upon members of the faculty. This step is largely ceremonial as the decisions about tenure are largely made by the faculty (Millett, 1978). Similarly, early attempts at unionization were viewed as threats to faculty governance. The strong beliefs motivating the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), however, devolve from the conviction that since the faculty has the primary responsibility for teaching and research at the institution, the voice of the faculty should be given the highest weight in matters relating to that area (American Association of University Professors, 1994).

Problem Statement

During much of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, the president of the institution displayed great power over the material taught at the institution (Dykes, 1968). One must recall that the institutions were very small and largely operated as extensions of various religious organizations (Rudolph, 1977). However, the growing complexity of the topics and specialization within the disciplines and the increase in size of institutions led to a reduction of the role of the president in this area of curriculum control. This vacuum of power fostered a faculty with increased control (Birnbaum, 1989; Millett, 1978).

Since the late 1970s, there have been numerous changes on campus with regard to the faculty. Just as increasing specialization wrested control from the presidents, further specialization and fragmentation of decision making authority is making it more difficult to reach a consensus on institution-wide matters (Birnbaum, 1988). The topic of the graying of the professoriate is described in many readings. The increasing age of the faculty and its influence on the institution overall has been well documented (Magner, 1999b; Twale & Shannon, 1996). The number of part-time instructional staff has risen to more than 42% in just a few years (Balch, 1999; Leatherman, 2000; Schuster, 1998). The combination of these factors, with the growing importance of research (Scott, 1997), has led to decreased participation in faculty governance. One of the most noticeable and best documented findings of Dykes= (1968) investigation of the topic is the existence of a pervasive ambivalence in faculty attitudes toward participation in decision making. Although they overwhelmingly

indicate that they should have strong, active, and influential roles in decision

making, they do not desire to devote the necessary time.

There have also been dynamic changes in factors external to the university that impact the role of the faculty in making decisions about the curriculum. Governance boards have become much more active in the area of controlling the types of programs offered at universities. At institutions receiving state funds, the role of elected officials has also had an influence on the curriculum (Birnbaum, 1988; Kerr, 1991). The widespread growth of accrediting agencies has led to standardization of curriculum in the specific field being accredited (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982). Has the development of this standardization come at the expense of a reduction in the role of faculty in the control of the curriculum? The role major contributors take when specifying how their donations may be used also influences areas of curricular growth on campus (Birnbaum, 1988).

These documented internal and external changes at institutions of higher education are important in examining the process of change in the curriculum-approval process. The procedures used by the faculty to control the curriculum have largely remained unchanged. Rogers (1968) provides an overview of the difficulties of implementing change at the university when he observes that the large university has gradually evolved from a small beginning. To implement academic change, Hefferlin (1972), in his classic work, notes that few institutions change spontaneously and emphasizes that the most important factor influencing change is the market conditions under which the institution operates. More recently, Tucker and Bryan (1991) emphasize that another impediment to

change is the numerous steps in an institution=s governance hierarchy. Adopting a shared approach toward the development and implementation of curriculum is also emphasized by Stark and Lattuca (1997).

Relevance of the Study

The role of the faculty in determining curriculum content and degree standards is one of the three essentials of academic autonomy identified by Berdahl, Altbach, and Gumport (1999). There is a history of faculty control of these aspects of the curriculum in higher education. Currently, there are several internal and external challenges to faculty control. The Academic Affairs Division of The University of West Florida (UWF) stated its intention to review the curriculum change process as part of its annual plan for academic year 2000-2001 (Dimsdale, 2000).

This paper will specifically examine the recent evolution of the curriculum review process at four state-supported regional universities located in the southeastern United States. Particular emphasis will be placed not only on documented changes to the process, but also on failed attempts and faculty concerns about changing the process.

Guiding Research Questions

Piantanida and Garman (1999) suggest that case studies should be developed using guiding research questions that frame the conceptual structure of the entire inquiry. In this study, the concept of change in the curriculum

governance process at four selected institutions will be explored using the following guiding research questions:

1. How is the curriculum approval process organized?
2. How has the curriculum approval process evolved over the past 10 years?
3. Are there faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process?
4. Has the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns?

Study Propositions

Both Yin (1994) and Piantanida and Garman (1999) emphasize the need for study propositions. Such propositions provide an initial direction in which the study proceeds and considers important theoretical issues. They reflect the review of the literature and the researcher=s experiences. The following study propositions correlate to the guiding research questions:

1. The curricular review process likely was organized along traditional lines where an individual submitted the proposal to the department and then to the college. Following college approval, it would have been reviewed by the faculty governance body and submitted for final approval by the provost or president of the institution (McConnell & Mortimer, 1971; Sullivan, Bevins, Ravelli, & Duff, 1999; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State

University, 2001b).

2. Rogers (1968) provides an overview of the difficulties of implementing change at the university when he observes that the large university has gradually evolved from a small beginning. He also indicates that the advantage goes to the side that opposes innovations. Hefferlin (1972) notes that change may need to be less dramatic than desired, or be attempted on a trial basis for a specified time to gain approval. Stark and Lattuca (1997) warn that some procedures may reinforce resistance to change. Tucker and Bryan (1991) emphasize that another impediment to change is the numerous steps in an institution=s governance hierarchy. Additionally, the slowly changing trend toward increased research and publication records and away from teaching and service cited by Schuster (1998) also may have been mentioned as reasons for a decreasing interest in faculty involvement, and thereby declining faculty enthusiasm toward participation in faculty governance. While there may be an important impetus to change, Floyd (1985) argues that although a substantial portion of the faculty agree that the curriculum needs to change, the faculty is the prime barrier due to disciplinary orientation, internal divisions, and the veto power. Therefore, it was anticipated that changes made to the curriculum review process would be at the margins; that is, new formatting of the document, with changes to committee names and perhaps committee structure, rather than a

revision of the process.

3. Tucker and Bryan (1991) observe that whenever a new idea is presented to a faculty committee for the first time, the reaction is generally negative. Further complicating the matter after this initial rejection is the difficulty in persuading the committee to reconsider the item. When it is vetoed, in most cases the proposal is returned to the originator and never revisited or reviewed by others. It was anticipated that there would have been suggestions made by faculty members at these institutions that were not approved or were not submitted because of the amount of consensus building required to gain approval or because of fear of rejection after laboring to develop the process.
4. Mortimer and McConnell (1978) and Schuster (1989) believe that the transfer of power from campus to outside agencies is the greatest change to take place in recent years and that this trend continues. These external factors affecting the curriculum may have been viewed differently depending on the department or college to which individual faculty members were assigned. Faculty members in business colleges, in teacher education programs, and in other programs with extensive accreditation requirements, would have had less enthusiasm for the curriculum approval process than faculty members assigned to departments that were not impacted by specific accreditation agency concerns. Other external influences, such as the governing boards, would have been felt equally throughout the university.

> The faculty=s loss of ability to exert local influence may have led to a reduced sense of campus responsibility and accountability (Birnbaum, 1988; Zusman, 1999).

Summary

In this study, I will provide a review of the pertinent literature to provide (a) an historical perspective of the development of faculty control of the curriculum, (b) development of modern day curriculum control, (c) a perspective of this control in the mid 1960s, (d) a contemporary review of the process at three institutions, (e) current challenges to the maintenance of this control, and (f) the difficulty of changing existing processes at modern universities. The curriculum approval processes at four state-supported institutions located in the southeastern United States classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) were examined to determine (a) the structure of the review process, (b) the recent evolution of the process, (c) the concerns of the faculty about the process, and (d) external influences on the curriculum. This was done to investigate the overarching question of change in the curriculum approval process. This examination was conducted using within-case and cross-case study analyses. Findings and recommendations are then provided.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the body of literature relevant to governance in higher education, particularly as it relates to faculty control of the curriculum including the offering of new programs and courses. Reviews are presented in the following major areas: (a) historical perspective, (b) development of faculty governance, (c) role of the faculty in governance, (d) curriculum control at institutions, (e) faculty governance process as relates to course and curriculum modifications at State University System of Florida institutions, (f) challenges to faculty governance, and (g) implementing change in faculty governance.

Historical Perspective

History provides a unique perspective from which to review the origins of higher education in the United States. The governance of American postsecondary education developed in a manner based upon the English system as the original American universities were chartered by the British crown. By the middle of the 19th century, differences were beginning to be identified. The

combination of contract law and lack of action by university administrators gave rise to the concept of shared governance by the beginning of the 20th century. This concept is one in which the power to govern the institution is shared between the administration of the institution and the faculty. Participation in this role by faculty may be either direct or representative, that is a body such as a faculty senate represents the interests of all faculty members. The determination of what constitutes a degree program is one the major areas within the domain of the faculty (Millett, 1978).

University teaching in the High Middle Ages was an extremely privileged occupation. Secular rulers issued special decrees to ensure the physical safety of professors and students attracted to nearby universities. Through Papal Bulls and other Apostolic decisions, professors gained the right (a) to be the sole qualifiers and disqualifiers of their members, (b) to enforce regulations, (c) to select spokesmen, and (d) to operate an academic court at which scholars could be tried and convicted. The Reformation brought about a limited separation of church and state. In England, however, the intractable relationship between the Crown and the Church often placed the universities in conflict with the two. Later, during the Elizabethan era, the colleges became centers of instruction and administrative control was reaffirmed by the Crown through its granting of charters to individual institutions of higher learning (Clark, 1987).

This practice continued in the North American British colonies when the Crown chartered Harvard College in 1650; the College of William and Mary was chartered a few decades later in 1693. The charter of each college contained a

provision creating a board to provide oversight. In the case of Harvard it was the Board of Overseers that had to approve of the actions of the corporation before the action could take effect. A Board of Visitors that provided an ill-defined supervisory role was created at William and Mary (Metzger, 1989).

What made these institutions unique from their European predecessors was that the institutions themselves were incorporated rather than the time-entrenched tradition of incorporating the faculty of each institution. Even more than Harvard and William and Mary, Yale became the governance model for American higher education. The 10 ministers who organized the college arranged to hold full control in their own hands. The charter granted to Yale recognized the president and the original organizers as a legal corporation. In 1819, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the independence of the corporate board that held the college property and exercised ultimate control. This decision was rendered when a former president went to the Legislature of the State of Connecticut to have the college rechartered as a state university with him in control. The state complied, which led to the court ruling. With this conclusion, control of the college was firmly fixed in the hands of the Board of Trustees. Many of the public-supported institutions also provided corporate power to the trustees and some of the public institutions were given constitutional power as well (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982).

The curriculum at these early colleges was largely a copy of that found in European institutions at the time. The founders of these early colleges held large sway in the determination of curriculum at their institutions. Even the

Renaissance American, Thomas Jefferson, dictated the form, structure, and curriculum of his university, the University of Virginia. Change to the curriculum did not come easily since the intentions of institutions of higher learning were to preserve and transmit what had survived (Rudolph, 1977).

During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, colleges were operated as part of locally established churches, political orders, and social conventions. These pre-Jacksonian colleges were somewhat similar to today=s secondary schools. They did not employ a faculty of scholars and there were only a few professorships in specialized subjects. In fact, most faculty members taught most subjects. An upright clergyman usually served as president and hired a few other men to assist in the teaching. Often these tutors were recent graduates of the institution and were planning careers as clergy. The president was normally selected for an unlimited term by the trustees and ordinarily served as their executive agent in addition to being the principal teacher at the college (Hofstadter & Smith, 1961; Jencks & Riesman, 1977).

The tutors were responsible for both the pedagogical and pastoral care of the enrolled students. They saw their students nearly every hour of the day and slept in the same room with some of them in the evening. Because of the religious training of the tutors and their ultimate goal to enter the pastorate, their tenure at the college was generally short. Frequently, the tutor did not see a class complete 4 years (Carrell, 1968).

It was not until the turn of the 19th century that the instructional career began to take shape with the creation of a small core of permanent professors.

As a result of philanthropic bequests, permanent professors appeared at Harvard. Professors differed from the tutors in that they did not take charge of a class from the time of matriculation until graduation. Rather, they were appointed in a particular subject area and engaged in the supervision of instruction in these areas. Additionally, they were older than the tutors. However, the majority of the professors, like the tutors, came from the higher socioeconomic strata and were likely to be clergy. Thus, the appearance of two separate and distinct types of collegiate instructors began to appear: the transient tutor and the permanent professor. On rare occasions, tutors were subsequently employed as professors at the same institution. More frequently, individuals served as tutors at one institution and then moved to a second institution as professors (Finkelstein, 1996).

The Jacksonian Period (1830s) marked a significant expansion of higher education in the nation. Instead of trying to transform existing institutions, influential persons created new institutions. Until this point, only a few institutions were chartered by the states and they received only minimal funding from the state (Jencks & Riesman, 1977). During the antebellum period until the end of the 19th century, there was substantial growth in the number of state universities. These institutions were handsomely financed and supported by local, state, and federal funds. Unlike their European counterparts, they were not directly controlled by the state and faculty members were not considered state employees. Rather, there was an on-site governing board with administrative deputies (Metzger, 1989).

Well before the Civil War, the discipline-oriented American professoriate displayed an increasing incidence of specialized training, publication activity, associational involvement, and career commitment. With the increase in numbers of faculty with discipline-related credentials, a greater proportion of the faculty embarked on an academic career immediately after their graduate training. Following the Civil War, new roles as instructor and assistant professor were established and a career track was formalized. It would be several more decades before the concept of moving from assistant professor through the ranks to full professor developed (Beecher, 1987; Finkelstein, 1996).

This specialization of scholarship among faculty members also led to the growth in importance of the department in university governance. Academic departments became the key organizational unit to discuss faculty qualifications and to decide questions relative to instructional objectives. By 1893, the University of Chicago had 26 departments. During this same period, Harvard had organized into 12 divisions, each of which included at least one department. A corresponding decline was noted in the number of decisions in these areas made at the university level. Rather, university decision makers merely affirmed the recommendations made in the departments. Thus, specialization of the departments and their increasing control over a complex curriculum further diminished the role of the institutional president in making decisions concerning the curriculum (Birnbaum, 1989; Millett, 1978).

During this same period, questions were being raised in various quarters about the need for standardization in higher education. In New England and the

north-central region of the United States, this initiative came from the secondary schools. While in the south and middle atlantic regions, the impetus for standardization was found among the colleges themselves. The turn of the century saw increasing power wielded by regional accrediting agencies. The North Central and Middle States Associations were leaders in raising academic standards (Seldon, 1960).

The development of a larger administrative core began near the end of the 19th century. First, librarians were appointed followed by registrars. Deans became common in the 1890s and a few universities appointed their first vice presidents. The role of the president also changed from being primarily a teacher to being primarily an administrator. Arthur Twining Hadley observed that in the 1880s, he often found the president of Yale reading in his study; while in the 1890s the president would be found in his office reading balance sheets (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982).

The importance of the establishment of an on-site governing board and the evolution of the faculty can not be overemphasized as it caused a significant change in the governance of American colleges and universities compared with European colleges and universities. The failure of the academicians to gain control of college governance, however, was due in part to strategic retreats by governing boards and administrators, including their warm embrace of academic freedom and acceptance of academic tenure, plus their development of hybrid roles such as the professor-administrator and the faculty senator. These role

changes and the legal standing of the corporate form effectively blocked the academic takeover of the universities in the early 20th century (Metzger, 1989).

There have been numerous attempts by faculty members to gain representation on the institutional governing board. As early as 1721, two Harvard tutors attempted to establish their rights as ex-officio members of the Corporation. Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson led the fight to preclude faculty representation on the board of the College of William and Mary in 1765. This legal barrier to control did not prevent the faculty from acquiring the dominant share in the management of postsecondary institutions. This resulted from the view that the action of the united faculty would carry more weight with the community of students. This concept was expressed first at Yale in the 1830s, and the notion spread quickly since, until the beginning of the 20th century, Yale produced a larger share of college presidents than any other institution (Cowley, 1980).

Although faculty organizations were not unusual in the 18th and early 19th century, they would blossom after the Civil War. Land Grant institutions that developed following the Land Grant College Act of 1862, and private institutions like Johns Hopkins, Catholic University, and Stanford (founded later in the century), organized faculty governing bodies soon after their founding (Cowley, 1980).

It is argued, from the Colonial Period and the first lay boards of governance, that faculty were entrusted with (a) the determination of what constitutes a degree program, (b) the establishment of graduation requirements,

(c) the development of academic courses to meet these requirements, and (d) the evaluation of student learning. The scope of the faculty control increased to include other areas such as selection of members of the faculty and decisions concerning promotion and tenure. While these decisions may nominally appear to be those of a governing board, the decisions of the faculty were usually ratified as a matter of routine. The board=s role was not that of a manager, but rather that of a liaison between the world of learning and the world of social interest in learning, including providing necessary resources (Millett, 1978).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were serious questions raised relative to the role of faculty in institutional affairs. During the student unrest of those years, the lines between academic affairs and institutional affairs became much less precise. Faculty members argued that their advice was needed in order to restore campus order (Millett, 1978).

Development of Faculty Governance

From its founding days, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), has been an advocate of faculty governance in the university. Of particular concern to the Association have been two items. These are the rights and freedoms of individual faculty members and the role of the faculty in institutional governance (American Association of University Professors, 1994). In 1916, the AAUP founded its Committee on the Place and Function of Faculties in University Governance and Administration. The title of the committee evolved to the Committee on College and University Government

and became known in 1960 as Committee T. The 1966 Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities provides the foundation of governance principles. This statement, developed collectively with the American Council on Education (ACE), delineates the principles of the division of rights and responsibilities among the faculty, president, and trustees (Schuster, 1991).

The strong beliefs motivating the AAUP devolve from the conviction that since the faculty has the primary responsibility for teaching and research at the institution, the voice of the faculty should be given the highest weight in matters relating to that area. Therefore, the administration should Aconcur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons, which should be stated in detail" (American Association of University Professors, 1994, p. 47).

Recent movements on campus reflect an increase in the inclusion of the faculty in decision making. This is due in part to recent private sector attention to Ateaming,@ employee empowerment, and similar quality measures which value participatory decision making. Fiscal accountability measures also have had the unintended outcome of increasing faculty involvement in governance (Miller, McCormack, Maddox, & Seagren, 1996).

Faculty participation has been accepted as intrinsically good and having positive influence. However, neither administrators nor faculty are very satisfied with patterns of participation or effectiveness (Floyd, 1985). These attitudes are confirmed by surveys conducted over the past three decades that reflect faculty

dissatisfaction with the quantity, quality, and outcomes of involvement beyond the departmental level (Lee, 1996; Twale & Shannon, 1996).

Current studies have suggested a linear relationship between participation and effective decision making and policy administration. This has led to the development of a hierarchical ladder of faculty involvement in governance. Eight categories of faculty involvement or lack of involvement are postulated including (a) manipulating, level 1; (b) releasing responsibility and administrative control as a therapeutic endeavor for both faculty and administration, level 2; (c) informing the faculty, level 3; (d) consulting the faculty, level 4; (e) placating the faculty, level 5; (f) meeting basic needs of the faculty, level 6; (g) releasing power for decision making, level 7; (h) and allowing faculty to make decisions related to policy and professional concerns, level 8. This particular model was accepted as the operating premise of the National Data Base on Faculty Involvement in Governance (Miller et al., 1996).

Three items have been identified as particularly important to faculty members= conception of governance. First, a faculty that fails to exercise its responsibility risks forfeiting to the administration policy-making prerogatives. Second, faculty and administration should share in the development of broad outlines of institutional policy. Finally, the ultimate function of faculty governance is to enhance the quality of the institution (Williams, Gore, Broches, & Lostoski, 1987).

Although there appears to be some momentum toward an increase in involvement, there are numerous obstacles to full involvement of the faculty. For

most faculty members, service on committees and senates typically receives a secondary priority or none at all. Participation requires careful, and sometimes painful, tradeoffs. Untenured members may postpone service until after their publication and teaching records have been established. At the other end of the spectrum, some prestigious members of the faculty may view service as beneath their level. Other faculty members may be limited by their teaching schedules (Williams et al., 1987).

An earlier study indicated that service in the area of faculty governance may be concentrated among activists, males with higher academic rank, and may display over representation in certain disciplines. Women were under-represented generally and when represented were typically members of less important committees (Mortimer & McConnell, 1978).

Faculty members may recognize a responsibility to participate in governance, but the lack of reward and other demands on their time lead them away from it (Floyd, 1985). Others have stated what some may consider obvious, “Most faculty are really interested in teaching and research and would just as soon leave the administration of the institution to the administrators@ (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1978, p. 75).

A recent survey identified several governance policy areas and ranked faculty preferences for increased level of desired involvement in these areas. Topics with a high ranking indicating a desire for increased involvement included (a) budget allocation, (b) number of part-time versus full-time instructional staff, (c) merit/equity pay issues, (d) decisions concerning new technology, (e)

selection of a new president, and (f) addition and deletion of programs. In the mid-range were (a) selection of a new provost or dean, (b) setting faculty workload, and (c) establishment of tenure criteria. In the lowest tier of gaining additional influence were (a) addition and deletion of courses, (b) hiring new faculty, (c) selecting department chairs, (d) approving sabbaticals, and (e) tenure decisions. It was hypothesized that the relative low priority placed on gaining more involvement in decisions concerning addition and deletion of courses, hiring new faculty, selecting department chairs, and tenure decisions resulted from the already high level of involvement in these areas (Saltzman & Grenzke, 1999).

At most institutions, faculty either control the curriculum or have the strongest influence on it. This includes the establishment of degree requirements, development of courses satisfying these requirements, and development of course objectives and course content. Although a substantial portion of faculty agrees that the curriculum needs to change, they are also the prime barrier due to disciplinary orientation, internal divisions, and the veto power (Floyd, 1985).

Curriculum Control at Institutions

Historically there have been few studies published concerning the role of faculty governance in the area of faculty involvement with course and program approval. However, in a study that reviewed the overall role of the faculty in university governance at three representative institutions, some attention was directed to the role of faculty in course approval (McConnell & Mortimer, 1971).

At the University of California at Berkeley, there was substantive central faculty review of every proposal for a course change or for a new course. Departments sent courses to a college committee for in-depth review and comment. If approved at this level, the proposal was sent to the Senate Committee on Courses, which had final authority to accept or reject the proposal. Prior to 1970, the committee routinely rejected courses that were ill planned or which represented significant overlap with existing courses. In that year, a new chairman redefined the committee=s role and attempted to consult with the proposing department to find a mutually acceptable solution. In any case, the university administration was not involved and there is no mention of any external agency.

The University of Minnesota displayed an example of strong departmental and school autonomy. Departments had their own curriculum committees, which provided the only substantive review of proposed courses. Although there were college committees, respondents indicated that the college committees effectively served only to keep the departmental committees honest. Once the college committee reviewed the course request, it was not subsequently reviewed at a higher level. Again, there was no mention of external control of courses (McConnell & Mortimer, 1971).

Fresno State University was the third institution analyzed in this review. Each school at Fresno State had a curriculum review committee. The degree of review varied greatly between the school committees. The deans passed the proposals to the Academic Vice President. The deans and the vice president

discussed proposed courses only in relation to budget and staffing decisions. The Academic Vice President, acting for the President, made the final formal decision on courses, but it was essentially a pro forma action (McConnell & Mortimer, 1971).

Applied Curriculum Procedures at Three Institutions

The previous sections of this review provide information about the history of faculty governance and the role that various segments of the university play regarding the approval of course and program changes. In this section I will examine in depth the role that faculty governance plays in the curriculum change and development process at one regional university. A brief review of the process at two similar universities will be provided to confirm that the process is not unique to a particular institution.

One of 11 institutions that comprise the State University System of Florida (SUS), The University of West Florida (UWF) is a regional university that was established in Pensacola, Florida in 1963. Within the SUS university classification plan, UWF is categorized as a *comprehensive university* that primarily provides undergraduate instruction while offering numerous master's and selected doctoral programs (Florida Board of Regents, 1998a). UWF has experienced a slow but steady growth and, in 1997, enrolled 7,855 students who equated to 4,497 full time equivalent (FTE). There were 234 ranked faculty members during that academic year (Florida Board of Regents, 1998b).

Changes to the curriculum, including (a) all new programs and courses,

(b) additional specializations within programs, (c) modifications to existing programs and courses, and (d) deletions of programs and courses, are proposed by the department using the curriculum change request (CCR) process. Each change receives a brief technical review by administrators to ensure that all university and state requirements are addressed. Following this review, the CCR is forwarded to the dean of the college that houses the proposing department. The approval process within the college is defined by that college, but at minimum includes a review by a faculty committee and the dean. The CCR is then forwarded to the Undergraduate/Graduate Programs Committee (U/GPC) of the Faculty Senate for approval. Following a positive review by the U/GPC, the committee then recommends approval of the CCR by the Faculty Senate at its next scheduled meeting. The University Provost has final approval authority (University of West Florida Faculty Senate, 1998); however, all actions involving courses must be forwarded to the Statewide Common Numbering System (SCNS) for (a) course prefix and number review; (b) confirmation of the course=s existing number, or assignment of a new number; and (c) entry or removal from the institution=s list of authorized courses. All of Florida's state-supported institutions of higher education, including universities and community colleges, are required to participate in the Statewide Common Numbering System (*Florida Administrative Code*, 1999; *Florida Statutes*, 1999).

The U/GPC of the Faculty Senate is charged with the initial Senate review of programs and courses and with development of the attendant procedures and forms (University of West Florida Faculty Senate, 1998). Having become

concerned with (a) the difficulties encountered in submitting curriculum change requests, (b) the loss of some submissions, (c) the inability to accurately track the approval process, and (d) the imminent demise of the mainframe computer-based system, the committee initiated the development of a Web-based program in 1996. Facing continuing development problems, the committee, in February 1998, requested that support for system development and maintenance be moved from the University's computer center to the Division of Enrollment Services. This change was approved by the Provost and effected immediately. A rapid prototype of the CCR system was developed and made available for initial use in April 1998.

The rapid prototype permitted departments to enter data on a Web browser, make updates as necessary, and track the progress of the approval process. Committee members were able to review the requests from any location with Internet access. The majority of the committees preferred to have meetings in rooms with projection equipment available. Department chairs were invited to attend committee meetings to participate in the scholarly discussion, and to make any necessary changes directly to the Web-based form. This action permitted the committee to approve requested changes at the meeting with no requirement for another review, even cursory, after retyping. The system also permitted the online creation of necessary paper documents to forward course and program submissions to the Provost and course information to the Statewide Common Numbering System in Tallahassee. An archive function was created to permit permanent storage of change requests once the approval process was

completed. This permitted online tracking and retrieval of request information from any location with Internet access from the time of initial submission, including the ability to retrieve completed and approved information from archived files.

While the rapid prototype met many of the requirements originally stipulated, the database organization was not optimal and implementation of the correction would require rewriting the program. With this major undertaking pending, the entire system was reviewed to identify other areas in which enhancements could be programmed. A major concern was in the area of articulation between departments. There had been several incidences of a department submitting a proposal for a course very similar to one offered by another department or college. In some instances, the proposal would be reviewed and approved without notice by, or objections from, the department or college offering the original course. This concern was addressed by the creation of an electronic mail alert. This alert is sent to the deans of all colleges and the chairs of all departments when the technical review is completed and the proposal is forwarded to the college for approval. The electronic mail alert includes the course or program title, the type of change proposed (e.g., program revision, new course) and an electronic link (hyperlink) to the proposal=s URL. Thus, an interested party may review all or part of the proposal with a click of the computer mouse. Simultaneously, as the e-mail is generated, subsequent access to make changes to the document is restricted to program administrators. This precludes changes from being made without the knowledge of all

individuals and reviewers previously involved with the request.

Another major concern was the amount of time it took to enter data that was already known including the possibility that the data would be entered incorrectly. One department chair remarked that until this process was vastly simplified, many faculty members would be willing to accept slightly inaccurate catalog course descriptions as well as other information about courses and programs. Arrangements were made with institutional computing services to create a method to access all data that were known about a course and contained on the mainframe computer. To provide the most recent information to the system, the program was designed to access the data at any time the mainframe was available. Data from the PageMaker files (used to publish the university catalog) were reviewed and formatted to permit their insertion into the request form when a change to an existing program was being initiated. This information is automatically inserted into the *current* section of the course and program form. It is duplicated in the *proposed* section of the form. This enables the user to simply cut and paste minor changes into the form and forward it for approval. Enhancements were made to the form itself, by eliminating items that were viewed as unnecessary and clarifying the type of response required. The *help* function was improved to provide more background material and rationale for items. Finally, various administrative report functions and the security access program were improved. The enhanced version of the software was made

available to faculty in August, 1999 (D. C. Wilcox, personal communications,

September 20 through November 11, 1999).

A contemporary review was made of the process of curriculum control within two other disparate institutions. One, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), is a traditional state-supported institution founded in 1872. It is identified as a Doctoral and Research Institution-Extensive category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001). The second, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), is a recently established state-supported institution that first held classes in 1997. The institution's vision statement emphasizes the use of technology in the teaching and learning process along with the use of multiyear contracts for faculty in lieu of tenure. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) FGCU in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category. Although different in many ways, the curriculum approval process at each of these institutions has been reviewed and found to be very similar to that at UWF.

Virginia Tech was founded in 1872 as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, one of two land grant colleges in Virginia. It has experienced tremendous growth since it founding enrolling over 26,000 students in nearly 200 degree programs and employing over 1,200 ranked faculty members (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001a).

Virginia Tech has had a long history of faculty involvement in the curriculum approval process. Following development of a curriculum change proposal by a faculty member, it is forwarded through the department to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC). After CCC approval, the proposal

undergoes a 15-day review period by the Provost, University Registrar and all colleges. During this review period, suggestions and comments may be directed to the initiating college. After completion of the 15-day review period, the proposal is forwarded to the Graduate Curricula Committee (GCC) or the Committee on Undergraduate Curricula (CUC) depending on the nature of the request. Following approval by CUC and/or GCC, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) or the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGSP) recommends final approval to the University Council (M. C. Foushee, personal communication, October 3, 2001;Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001b).

FGCU, located in Fort Myers, first held classes in 1997 with 2,246 students providing a full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of 1,266. There were 132 ranked faculty during the same period (Florida Board of Regents, 1998b). The enrollment is expected to grow to 10,000 by 2005. Like UWF, FGCU is categorized in the state system as a comprehensive university (Florida Board of Regents, 1998a). Since the University recently opened, a blank slate was available upon which to develop procedures for curricular approval. One of the basic philosophical guidelines adopted by this new university is that faculty autonomy is ensured in the creation and modification of curricula (Sullivan et al., 1999).

While the process of curriculum change at FGCU is still evolving, requests are originated by departmental faculty and reviewed by college or school curriculum committees. Proposals are then reviewed by the Faculty Senate=s

Undergraduate Curriculum Team (UCT) or Graduate Curriculum Team (GCT) prior to final approval of the Faculty Senate (Sullivan et al., 1999).

Faculty dominance in the control of the curriculum is strongly entrenched at each of these three universities. Virginia Tech is a major state-supported, research institution founded in 1872. UWF, a regional institution, was founded in 1963. Having taught its first classes in 1997, FGCU certainly had the benefit of history and tradition of other universities upon which to base its faculty governance systems. Yet all three institutions use a similar, traditional model of curriculum control.

Challenges to Faculty Control of the Curriculum

The strong growth of faculty governance led Kerr (1982) to declare that there has been a historical progression of institutional governance. Governing boards, in many cases heavily laden with religious leaders, provided the leadership necessary in the early era of American higher education. Presidential dominance began to rise after the Civil War. Faculty control of institutional governance began in the 1920s and persists to this day.

Although faculty control of the curriculum is widespread, its continuance is far from assured. Although no major institutions have moved to wrest control of the curriculum from the faculty, the process, along with the concept of faculty governance and shared governance, is being challenged. Part of the threat comes from within the faculty and structure of governing organizations. Other threats come from organizations and entities external to the institution. Three

researchers (Mortimer & McConnell 1978; Schuster 1989) believe that the transfer of power from campus to outside agencies is the greatest change to take place in recent years and that this trend continues.

One of the causes of this phenomenon is that the faculty governance body is not changing with the times. For the past several years, the graying of the professorate has been widely reported (Magner, 1999b; Twale & Shannon, 1996). One third of the professorate is over age 55, while nearly half is over age 50. The number of faculty members less than 45 years of age has fallen from 41% in 1989 to 34% in 1999. These statistics show a dramatic increase in average age over the past decade. Additionally, movement to hire a more ethnically diverse faculty is making little progress. In fact, during this 10 year period, the percentage of white professors has increased slightly (Finnegan, Webster, & Gamson, 1996; Magner, 1999b). Since the faculty governance body generally reflects the tenured and tenure-track faculty, the aging white faculty and its representative body bears less resemblance to the student body that it teaches, or in the case of public institutions, the taxpayers who underwrite the institutions (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998).

There is also a growing difference between the composition of the tenured and tenure-track faculty and, by extraction, the constitution of the representative faculty senate and the composition of the individuals who teach in the classroom. In the past 30 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of nontenure-track faculty. In 1970-71, part-time faculty comprised 22% of the instructional staff. In 1988-1989, the percentage had grown to 33%. In 1997, the

percentage had increased again to 42.5%. These nontenure-track instructors are generally not eligible to serve in faculty governance organizations. In cases where they are permitted to serve, it may be argued that their compensation is not great enough to motivate them to serve (Balch, 1999; Leatherman, 2000; Schuster, 1998).

The faculty member, in most cases, recognizes the professional responsibility to serve on governance bodies created to protect faculty initiatives. ASubstantial amounts of faculty time and effort are required for these activities, which are not mere busywork but an essential part of the task of making institutions more manageable@ (Bowen & Schuster, 1986, p. 22). In many cases the rewards for the amount of involvement required do not adequately reflect the degree of activity.

The aging professorate previously discussed plus the increasing number of part-time instructional staff have led to a very limited number of tenure-track positions on the job market subsequently creating a buyer=s market in the world of academic appointments. The opportunity to hire bright newcomers with strong research and publishing records has begun to change the reward structure for promotion and tenure. Newly appointed faculty members often prize research and scholarship more than teaching and service (Schuster, 1998).

This, in turn, has motivated previously tenured members of the faculty to increase their research and publication records. This overall increase in scholarly activity has caused a shift in the expectations of untenured faculty members reducing the value of service to the community and, concomitantly, the

willingness of new faculty members to serve on campus governance committees. Therefore, faculty who are engaged in campus governance tend to be most secure in rank and salary, not new faculty members who have the most at stake in the outcome of decisions (Scott, 1997).

A related area of concern is the amount of time faculty governance groups take to make a decision. Numerous college administrators believe many decisions are made by inaction. In their views, faculty prefer to make decisions by consensus, even when resolution of the issue is urgent. Faculty members, however, believe that administrators are willing to sacrifice discussion and deliberation for speed. Questions are also being raised about the need to consult with students and individuals outside the academic community who have a stake in decisions concerning the curriculum. Among others, these outsiders would include potential employers (Miller, 1998).

These generational differences are reflected in recent research. While the total percentage of time allocated to teaching and research combined is nearly identical between senior faculty and new faculty, the split is very different. New faculty prefer to spend more time in research activities than senior faculty members who prefer to spend more time in teaching-related activities (Finkelstein et al., 1998).

Another internal threat to faculty control of institutional governance is increased institutional size and complexity. While the specialization by faculty members within disciplines was previously cited as one of the items that led to the current era of faculty governance, the continued movement of faculty into

different departments, divisions, and other units prevents the development of a holistic faculty perspective. The growth and specialization have tended to split, rather than unify the faculty (Birnbaum, 1988).

Internal management initiatives also have served to reduce the role of the faculty in decision making. The phenomenon of total quality management is one example of these management initiatives. Workers, whether faculty or administrators, are encouraged to work together in small groups to improve processes. Such initiatives tend to undermine traditional structures such as faculty senates and similar bodies (Scott, 1997).

A final area of concern is that recommendations of the governance body are not valued or do not appear to be valued. In situations where the faculty input is valued and utilized, the governance process is much more attractive to potential members. This implies that major decisions in areas of faculty expertise must be left to the faculty. In the rare cases where this may not be possible, the previously displayed trust and respect may preserve the enthusiasm for faculty governance. This implies that the faculty is ready to take the responsibility for decisions made (Miller & Seagren, 1993).

Closely related to this is the need to accurately and widely report the outcomes of faculty governance activities. There are reported instances of discrepancies between actual decisions made and implemented and what the faculty believed had occurred (Dykes, 1968). If the faculty believes that their advice and decisions are not of value, it becomes increasingly difficult to have

true faculty governance.

There are many internal threats to faculty governance. Changes in the composition of the faculty resulting from different demographics, whether age- or experience-related, will impact on the willingness of new faculty members to serve. In a similar vein, the value placed upon service to the university community by promotion and tenure committees and other groups, upon which it is incumbent to recognize new faculty members, in the long term will dictate whether individuals want to serve. Internal management policies that undermine the role of the faculty governance organization are also important to the future of faculty governance. Finally, accurate understanding of what has and has not occurred is essential.

In addition to internal threats to faculty governance, numerous external challenges come from agencies that are incrementally transferring decision making authority off-campus. The greatest shift of power in recent years has taken place not inside the campus, but in the transfer of authority from campus to outside agencies (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982). These external challenges may be broadly grouped in four major areas. The first is the increasing control of governing boards. A second related area, applicable to state-funded institutions, is the growing influence of state legislatures in targeted funding and accountability measures. Often, the desires of the legislature are reflected in the mandates of governing boards. Third, the growing importance of program accreditation has led to an increase in the importance of the agencies that accredit individual programs on campus. Finally,

alumni and other contributors may place demands concerning faculty composition and related academic matters as a condition of their gift.

The influence of state legislatures and state-level higher education governing boards is cited in several reports as the major external force in control of universities (Birnbaum, 1988; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982; Kerr, 1991). To gain an understanding of the status of state structures, it is helpful to understand their pervasiveness as of 1997:

1. Consolidated governing board structures had been created in 24 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In these jurisdictions, a single board governs most, if not all, public institutions. Florida was included as one of these states as it had two coordinating boards: one for community colleges and one for 4-year institutions.
2. Twenty-four states had adopted coordinating board structures. In these states, an agency of the state has been created to coordinate and direct. These boards are between the governing boards of institutions and the governor and legislature. The construction of these boards, their degree of control, and their responsibilities vary from state to state.
3. Higher education planning agencies existed in two states (Delaware and Michigan). These educational planning agencies had been vested with a limited amount of authority (Education Commission of the States, 1997).

Florida was classified by the Education Commission of the States (1997)

as having a consolidated governing board. The chief policy-making board was the State Board of Education. At the time the Education Commission of the States report was published, this constitutionally defined board had responsibility for all public education in the state. Additionally, it had statutory responsibility for general budgetary review and making consolidated budget recommendations. The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) served as a citizen board to coordinate the efforts of postsecondary institutions and provide policy analysis to the State Board and the legislature. Under the jurisdiction of the State Board were the Board of Regents of the State University System and the State Board of Community Colleges. The Board of Regents had statutory responsibility for planning, institutional budget review, legislative budget request, and program approval for all public senior institutions (Education Commission of the States, 1997).

In many cases, both Florida's and other states' boards exercise increased influence over matters that have in the past been the domain of each campus administration or shared governance activity. These boards, or other state departments, have become involved in program review, administrative operations, budgeting, and planning. The increased need for public scrutiny and accountability is often cited as the rationale for this increased attention and control. This loss of ability to exert local influence leads to a reduced sense of campus responsibility and accountability (Birnbaum, 1988; Zusman, 1999).

A battle has recently been raised in Virginia that pits the faculty against

the governing board at George Mason University. One question deals with the amount of credit to be awarded to Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) classes. A second area of disagreement is the fate of the New Century College and its set of interdisciplinary programs. A third area of disagreement deals with the composition of the general education curriculum. The authority to award credit to courses, to establish and terminate programs, and to determine graduation requirements have long been controlled by the faculty. Now, faculty leaders say the Board of Visitors has no place for shared governance. They accuse the Board of Visitors of micromanaging and rushing to judgment on academic issues. Board members see the Faculty Senate as an organization skilled in the art of delay (Magner, 1999a). The Board of Visitors recently revised and implemented changes to the general studies requirements. As a result of this action, the Faculty Senate voted to censure the Board of Visitors. It is interesting to note that of the 61 member Senate, only 30 senators voted on the issue while one abstained (Magner, 2000).

Within the states of Virginia and Wisconsin, the legislatures have mandated program evaluations for many areas of the universities. However, since academic programs and course content have been considered too close to the heart of academe, program reviews in these areas have not been mandated. Berdahl and McConnell (1999) warn that if the institutions of higher learning or their governing boards do not conduct program appraisals, external agencies will assume this function.

While the governing board issue may be seen as somewhat of an internal

issue, especially in a state institution where the board controls a significant amount of the funds directed to the university, the area of specialized accreditation is an example of a national accreditation agency that is invited to the campus. Originally, these organizations were established on a national basis to provide educational standards, primarily in the fields of public health and safety. Since then they have grown to encompass groups as diverse as the National Association of Schools of Music to the American Library Association. The issue is not whether professional programs should meet high academic standards; rather, the questions are how detailed are the standards, how are they enforced, and do these specialized programs fit in the larger educational purposes of the institution? There is a concern that these accreditations will be used to gain leverage in the competition for limited resources (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982).

Although the purpose of accrediting associations is to improve the quality of higher education, some of their demands, from the standpoint of faculty governance, have a significant impact. Not only do accrediting agencies levy requirements concerning courses in a program, but also some agencies dictate requirements about full-time and part-time teaching faculty and faculty with terminal degrees (Berdahl, 1989).

External accrediting agencies and other professional associations affect institutional operations directly, including (a) curricular patterns, (b) faculty, (c) degrees offered, (d) teaching methods, (e) support staff patterns, and (f) capital outlay decisions. Teaching loads are closely examined by these agencies.

Decisions to hire new faculty may be made to satisfy the agency. Likewise, decisions concerning library allocations may be heavily influenced by agency requirements. Although accreditation by these organizations is voluntary, in reality it is nearly mandatory since both state and federal government mandates require that certain programs be accredited in order that graduates may be employed (Harcleroad, 1999).

This centralization of authority at levels above the campus has affected the distribution of influence on campus. Some institutions have become more administratively centralized to provide consolidated budget formats, to implement required programs, and to speak with a single strong voice to these external agencies. On other campuses, increased faculty specialization and decreased administrative authority have led to decentralized decisions, leading to further faculty specialization and continued reduction of administrative authority. At some institutions, this leads to schools and departments becoming the center of the decision making. In either case, the faculty members retreat into smaller subunits where they feel a sense of camaraderie and from which they can defend their influence and status (Birnbaum, 1988).

Another sphere of influence outside the academic community comes from contributors. In many instances, organizations will make sizeable contributions to a university. To obtain this financial support, the institution is required to abide by specific requirements. In recent years, the President of Georgetown University opted to return to Muammar al Qaddafi and the government of Libya a sizable contribution that was originally provided to the University to fund a chair

of Middle Eastern studies, when it became obvious that a member of the Jewish faith could not hold this position. This is not the only example of a university having to confront the issue of wealthy donors and the directions in which they want a university to move. There are numerous instances of alumni wanting to be involved in the selection and payment of athletic coaches (Berdahl, 1989). A similar incident occurred at Yale University when influential alumnus, Lee Bass, provided a gift to establish the Bass Program of Common Studies in Western Civilization. When the University failed to provide Bass with approval authority over professors appointed to the program, he withdrew the $20,000,000 gift (Srinivasan, 1995).

An area of control that has recently appeared is the influence of the judicial branch of the government. Numerous court decisions, at both the federal and state levels, have had significant impact on higher education institutions. Faculty members have sued over dismissal, appointment, and tenure, Students have sued over access to personal records and admissions standards. To date, the judiciary has played only a peripheral role affecting the curriculum (Berdahl & McConnell, 1999).

Implementing Change in Faculty Governance

The difficulty in changing a university curriculum is illustrated by the analogy attributed to former President of the University of California, Clark Kerr. He likens changing the curriculum as similar to trying to move a cemetery (Tucker & Bryan, 1991). Considerable literature about change in academe was

published in the late 1960s and early 1970s when demands for change were coming as a result of the campus unrest of that period. The recent literature references and reinforces those early works.

Although a great deal of innovation occurs at institutions of higher learning, it is almost never conscious innovation relating to the establishment itself. It is rare to find an institution that has an office devoted to bringing change to the structure or processes of the institution (Gardner, 1963).

One of the most noticeable and best documented findings in the research of faculty attitudes (Dykes, 1968) is the existence of a pervasive ambivalence in faculty attitudes toward participation in decision making. Although they overwhelmingly indicate that they should have a strong, active, and influential role in decision making, they do not desire to devote the necessary time. They want it the way it was, that is, town meetings at which all faculty actively participate. However, with the growth in size and complexity of the institutions, direct democracy is no longer a viable concept. Dyke's research reflects the tendency of faculty members to measure the present situation of academic governance against a model of doubtful validity when they assume that in the past faculties had much greater influence in and control over institutional affairs than they do now. They forget that until the early 1900s college presidents had almost royal status. Dykes= study also suggests a common conviction among faculty members that any increase in administrative power necessarily results in a reduction of their own power.

Rogers (1968) provides an overview of the difficulties of implementing

change at the university when he observes that the large university has gradually evolved from a small beginning. The model of the large university, however, remains that of the small college of its origin. Thus, the model of change used at the ever increasingly complex institution continues to be the one that was developed early in the university=s history. In an attempt to explain the difficulties of implementing change in the curriculum, Rogers states that the modern institution is a social system in equilibrium. If an individual modifies one part, consequences are felt throughout the organization. A method to prevent such outcomes is to institutionalize functions by creating routine procedures. Therefore, the advantage goes to the side that opposes innovations; the side with the veto. Additionally, because of the very nature of the social structure and specialization along discipline lines, there is very little movement between departments and divisions that would mitigate some of the disciplinary structure.

To implement academic change, Hefferlin (1972), in his classic work, notes that few institutions change spontaneously and emphasizes that the most important factor influencing change is the market conditions under which the institution operates. That is, departments must attract students and faculty. Failure to do this will result in elimination, or at best, mediocrity. Another important factor is the institution=s orientation toward change. A final factor, in Hefferlin=s opinion, is the institutional structure--a large bureaucracy that must be navigated to implement change. He then identifies five techniques that may be employed to implement change. The administrator must (a) determine the obstacles, (b) provide reassurance, (c) build on existing concerns, (d) avoid

rejection, and (e) respect the past. In determining the obstacles, administrators must be aware not only of known obstacles, but also of perceived and even irrational ones. Individuals concerned must be kept apprised of what is happening. Nothing is to be gained from secrecy. Hefferlin suggests that to implement change, one must build on the highest priority concerns of the group and not attempt to write policy for an entire category. He finds it essential that the proposal not be rejected outright. The change may need to be less dramatic than desired or attempted, on a trial basis, for a specified time to gain approval. Finally, an administrator must be as traditional as possible and appear conservative. Faculty will not likely respond to a liberal who wants to change everything.

More recently, Tucker and Bryan (1991) reemphasize the basics of Hefferlin=s suggestions. They note that another impediment to change is the numerous steps in an institution=s governance hierarchy. In this hierarchy, any faculty committee or administrator may veto an idea as it travels from the originator to the dean=s office, to the faculty senate, and to the president=s office. When it is vetoed, in most cases the proposal is returned to the originator and never revisited or reviewed by others. They observe that whenever a new idea is presented to a faculty committee for the first time, the reaction is generally negative. Further complicating the matter after this initial rejection is the difficulty in persuading the committee to reconsider the item. The authors propose that there are three basic motivators for faculty members to adopt change. The first is a desire for competence and need to achieve. These individuals are interested

in job mastery and professional growth. A second group is motivated by the possibility of tangible rewards. Only the negative ramifications of not changing motivate the third segment of the population.

Adopting a shared approach toward the development and implementation of curriculum is emphasized by Stark and Lattuca (1997). In this model every member of an institution's staff maintains some responsibility for the curriculum. This concept ensures that all related matters are considered including (a) level, (b) purpose, (c) content, (d) sequence, (e) available faculty, and (f) budget. The authors also warn that some procedures may reinforce resistance to change. They cite a university governance structure requiring that a simple change to a course title be originated by an individual in the department, then be approved by (a) the department, (b) the college, (c) the University Council, (d) the University Senate, and (e) the University Governing Board. They find that this is not only cumbersome but also contributes to the inertia that is characteristic of curricular change in institutions of higher learning.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the body of research in the area of faculty governance of curriculum in higher education. This review has been limited to specific areas that were considered germane to the study. The historical review provided the background of American higher education from which faculty governance of the curriculum developed. From the earliest days of higher education in the United States, the faculty has controlled the curriculum.

This control was formalized by the American Association of University Professors. The lack of interest by some groups of faculty members was discussed. The application of faculty governance of the curriculum at three State University System of Florida institutions was discussed. Threats external to the university community, such as those posed by governing boards and accrediting agencies, were identified. Finally, literature concerning the implementation of change in faculty governance was reviewed.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine the curriculum approval process to investigate the overarching question of change in the curriculum approval process. The study was conducted at four state-supported institutions located in the southeastern United States and classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) The study specifically sought to determine (a) the structure of the review process, (b) the recent evolution of the process, (c) the concerns of the faculty about the process, and (d) the external influences on the curriculum at each institution.

Over the past three decades, several authors have chronicled this slow pace of change at universities. Rogers (1968) provided an overview of the difficulties of implementing change at the university when he observed that the large university has evolved gradually from a small beginning. He indicated that once a procedure is established it is very difficult to change, even if it is inefficient. Hefferlin (1972) noted that for change to occur, the proposal might need to be less dramatic than desired or attempted on a trial basis for a specified

time to gain approval. Stark and Lattuca (1997) warned that some procedures might reinforce resistance to change. Tucker and Bryan (1991) emphasized the numerous steps in the governance hierarchy of an institution create another impediment to change.

Schuster (1998) indicated that the slowly changing trend toward increased research and publication records and away from teaching and service may be cited as reasons for a decreasing interest in faculty involvement, thereby declining faculty enthusiasm toward participation in faculty governance. While there may be an important impetus to change, Floyd (1985) argued that although a substantial portion of the faculty may agree that the curriculum needs to change, the faculty is the prime barrier due to disciplinary orientation, internal divisions, and the veto power. Tucker and Bryan (1991) observed that whenever a new idea is presented to a faculty committee for the first time, the reaction is generally negative.

Mortimer and McConnell (1978) and Schuster (1989) believe that the transfer of power from campus to outside agencies is the greatest change to take place in recent years and that this trend continues. The loss of ability by the faculty to exert local influence leads to a reduced sense of campus responsibility and accountability (Birnbaum, 1988; Zusman, 1999).

Lee (1996) argues that only through case studies can a researcher assess the dynamics of the faculty governance system. Yin (1994) defines a case study as Aan empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and

context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Merriam (1998) describes the case study as particularistic, meaning that it focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon.

This chapter contains (a) a description of the purposeful selection of the subjects in the study, including both the institutions and the individuals; (b) the structured interview guide and the open-ended questions; (c) the procedures used before, during, and after the interviews; and, finally, (d) the methodology employed in the design and data analysis. Insight is also provided into the current role of the investigator.

Guiding Research Questions

Piantanida and Garman (1999) suggest that case studies should be developed using guiding research questions that frame the conceptual structure of the entire inquiry. In this study, the concept of change in the curriculum governance process was explored at four institutions using the following guiding research questions:

1. How is the curriculum approval process organized?
2. How has the curriculum approval process evolved over the past 10 years?
3. Are there faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process?
4. Has the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these four institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns?

Subjects

Merriam (1998) discusses the boundedness of a case study by asking how finite the data collection should be, since only if there are a finite number of participants, can the study be bounded enough to qualify as a case study. In this instance the finite boundary is the faculty and administration.

The question then becomes how to reduce this quantifiable population to a reasonable sample. Merriam (1998) argues that since this is a qualitative study, purposeful sampling is appropriate. A purposeful sampling selects information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance. Thus, a purposeful selection of institutions and of individuals at those institutions was conducted.

Permission to Conduct Research

Permission to conduct this research was granted by The University of West Florida (UWF) on July 23, 1999 (see Appendix A). Procedures relating to obtaining permission to conduct the research on each of the four campuses are described in the Preinterview section of this chapter.

Selection of Institutions

Four institutions were selected. The initial goal was to select institutions that resembled UWF, particularly in the area of state governance model. Early in the selection process, it became apparent that broadening the field somewhat

would increase the richness of the sample since one of the guiding research questions dealt with the influence of external organizations on the curriculum. Thus, two schools were selected that were considered peer institutions by the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Research Evaluation at UWF. These schools were similar in size and served regional statewide or national interests. A state board, similar to the former Florida Board of Regents, closely controlled both. The third institution selected was somewhat larger than UWF and was governed by a model similar to that recently introduced at UWF; one that had recently transitioned from governance by a state board of control to one composed of a more-limited state board with local trustees. The final school selected was twice the size of UWF and experienced limited control by a state board and direct control by a university system board. All four institutions were state supported and classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001).

The researcher initially had wanted to use the name of the institutions while creating pseudonyms for the individuals interviewed. Use of the institutional names, however, was not considered essential to the research, and pseudonyms would be used if any of the institutions requested anonymity. One institution requested anonymity; therefore, pseudonyms are used throughout the study. The institutional names selected (Central State University, North State University, East State University, and West State University) depict the relative location of the schools to each other. They do not refer to the geographical

section of the state in which the schools are located. Further descriptive information about each school is provided in Chapter 4 along with the findings.

Selection of Individuals

Identifying subjects to participate in the interviews concerning the structure of the curriculum review process was straightforward. In addition to the faculty members, department heads or chairpersons, and deans, individuals tasked with supporting the process, such as the secretary to the faculty governance body and the registrar were interviewed. Based upon the responses to the structured questions, other participants were identified with some subsequently interviewed if scheduling could be arranged.

Participants selected for inclusion in the interview process were selected using the following guidelines:

1. Vice President for Academic Affairs or Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. Department chairpersons or heads from several disciplines. It was essential to interview individuals from disciplines with rigorous accrediting processes such as those in business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and those in teacher education accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as well as those from departments that did not hold national accreditation.
3. Chairperson of the university-wide curriculum review committee.

4. Others who might have unique knowledge of the process on the campus.

This purposeful sampling permitted the researcher to concentrate on individuals who had experience in using the curriculum approval process at various levels.

Materials

The researcher used an interview guide containing structured questions to develop and confirm demographic data for each interviewee. This information included determining whether the interviewee had been on the faculty at other institutions, whether the individual had served on committees involved in the curriculum approval process, and how recently the faculty member had submitted a curriculum change request. Once basic demographic data were developed, open-ended questions that Lee (1996) argues are the only true means to assess the dynamics of the faculty governance system, were posed to elicit the responses.

To ensure the best use of time during the meetings and to provide a systematic and standardized approach to the questioning, an interview guide was used. The guide, contained in Appendix B, was developed using the concepts discussed by Patton (1990). Using this guide, the interviewer developed the conversation and spontaneously revised the questions. The guide merely helped

to maintain the focus on the subject and provided a standardized format across all interviews.

To ensure that the guide was logically developed and the questions were open ended, an experienced researcher who is a faculty member at UWF reviewed it. Following this review, the guide was used in a practice interview with an administrator familiar with the curriculum approval process at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Subsequently the guide was used in all interviews.

Procedures

To ensure standardization in dealing with each of the participating institutions, the same procedures were utilized. The standardization included not only formal and e-mail correspondence, but also the same structured interview guide.

The Preinterview Routine

It was considered essential to obtain the permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs or Provost at each of the institutions since the research would involve reviewing records at the university and interviewing faculty and others on campus. After the name and title of the individual was confirmed, a letter of introduction and request was mailed (see Appendix C). The first institution responded in approximately 6 weeks with a request for specific additional information (see Appendix D). The information contained in Appendix E was provided in response. The same information formed the basis for a follow-up inquiry to the other institutions.

Contained in the letter of introduction was a request for a point of contact with whom to correspond to facilitate the on-campus visit and interviews. One of the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs served as the primary contact, while the others appointed their Associate Vice President or Curriculum Coordinator. An e-mail exchange was commenced with the Vice President or designee to determine a suitable date for the campus visit and potential persons to interview. An example of this initial e-mail is contained in Appendix F.

This approach ensured that the individuals interviewed would have the requisite experience and knowledge to respond to the questions. There was some concern that an administrator might not provide the names of individuals who were unsupportive of either the current curriculum review process or the current administration. To counter this possibility, each interviewee was asked whether there were others on campus who might provide extensive knowledge

about the process. In most cases the interviewees cited individuals who were on the university-provided list. When a referred name was mentioned more than once, an attempt was made to interview that person. At most of the schools, at least one or two of the individuals interviewed either believed that there was a way to improve the curriculum approval process or did not support the current process. Additionally, records of the faculty governance body and other documentation were reviewed to confirm statements about the process.

After establishing a 3-4 day period that was mutually acceptable to the designated university representative and the interviewer, an e-mail (see Appendix G) was sent to each of the potential interviewees. This correspondence was designed to introduce the researcher, briefly describe the study and research procedure, and request their participation.

Several of the recipients immediately responded by e-mail indicating their willingness to participate, suggesting a time for the interview. Some of the responses included information about the curriculum approval process at the school, or Web addresses for that information. Potential interviewees for whom appointments were not made by e-mail were contacted personally by telephone within 72 hours of sending the e-mail. All but one individual who was nominated by their university agreed to the interview. That individual cited unavailability due to the visit being at the beginning of the student advisement period. However, all others at that institution evidenced no concern about reducing their availability during the advising period. In fact, two interviewees remarked that they appreciated the break from answering student questions. One individual agreed

to the interview, but indicated that he did not want the interview taped. At one of the institutions, the Curriculum Coordinator scheduled the appointments for the researcher. At that institution, a modified introductory e-mail message was sent to confirm the appointment.

A follow-up e-mail (see Appendix H) was sent approximately 2 days prior to the meeting. It was designed (a) to remind the interviewees of the appointment, (b) to provide further information about the interview format and focus, and (c) to state again the intention of the investigator to record the interview. Several of the interviewees remarked that the e-mail had the desired effect and caused them to think about the process at their school before the arrival of the investigator. Some had even pulled files and notes to confirm the process at their school or to serve as examples of concerns.

Prior to the first interview, a search of the institution's Web site was made to locate information about the curriculum review process, faculty governance system, and individuals to be interviewed. This provided the interviewer with basic information about the university and the processes followed there. The information gathered during the interviews was then confirmatory and the interviewer was able to ask questions that were more directly related to the system at that particular institution.

The Interview Process

Using structured questions in an interview guide, developed using the concepts discussed by Patton (1990) and contained in Appendix B, the

researcher developed the conversation spontaneously revising the questions. Once basic demographic data were developed, open-ended questions that Lee (1996) argues are the only true means to assess the dynamics of the faculty governance system were posed to elicit the responses. The guide helped to maintain the focus on the subject and provided a standardized format across all interviews.

Stake (1995) indicated that keeping a record is part of the artistry of a successful interview. He suggested that a written record that captures the key ideas and episodes should be immediately created after the event. It was emphasized that recording the exact words of the respondent was not important, but understanding and conveying the key ideas were critical. Even though each interview was recorded, an exact transcription was not created. In many instances, however, exact transcription of the interviewee's comments were made and indicated in quotation marks. Following Stake's recommendation, a copy of the interview was provided to the participant to review. The methodology and the desire for additional comments and corrections were discussed at the end of the interview. An e-mail, with the interview notes attached, was forwarded within 48 hours after the interview. The correspondence, contained in Appendix I, thanked the individuals for their assistance and requested a final review of the comments made during the interview.

In some cases, special note of a particular topic was made in the e-mail with a request for further explanation. Many of the individuals responded, some with minor corrections and a few with a great deal more information. Of course,

others replied that it looked fine or did not respond. This review ensured that the researcher accurately described the responses made during the interview and gave the individuals the opportunity to revise or add additional thoughts. Huberman and Miles (1998) suggested that such a review of the written record serves also to reduce the researcher effects.

Following the review of the input received from the various individuals interviewed, a comprehensive analysis of the material was conducted. Initially, statements made by participants were reviewed to ensure consistency with the printed and online material at each institution. In this area, only minor discrepancies were identified that generally dealt with the amount of time that elapsed since changes had been made.

Design and Data Analysis

As previously discussed, Lee (1996) argues that only through case studies can a researcher assess the dynamics of the faculty governance system. Yin (1994) defines a case study as Aan empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13).

In exploring the guiding research questions, two different methods were used. First, a review was conducted of existing records including the guidelines for submission of curriculum change proposals, as well as minutes of the faculty governance body relating to the curriculum change process and other written resources. Second, personal structured interviews with faculty and staff

members were conducted. These interviews, with individuals who were directly and peripherally involved, were structured to discover undocumented attitudes and occurrences and to corroborate the written record. In addition to utilizing the two different methods, the review was conducted at four different regional institutions that were classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001).

Each interview was separated into distinct phrases or concepts to create what Yin (1994) describes as a case study database, which assists in the analysis, provides a formal database, and markedly increases the reliability of the entire case study. Yin argues that this "formal, presentable database should exist so that other investigators can review the evidence directly and not be limited to the written reports" (p. 95). Patton (1990) advocates a similar methodology calling it a case record, which "pulls together and organizes the voluminous case data into a comprehensive primary resource package" (pp. 386-387).

The database for this research was created and maintained as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Each response or distinct segment of a response was coded with several factors. These factors included

1. Institutional pseudonym.
2. Individual's self-selected pseudonym.
3. Current academic position (faculty, administrator, etc.).
4. Number of institutions at which an individual had served.
5. Whether the individual had served on the current institution's faculty governance body.

6. Whether the individual had served on one of the current institution's curriculum approval committees.
7. Whether the most recent experience was positive or negative.
8. Departmental affiliation. (This was Included for administrators if they previously served in a department at that institution.)
9. Whether that department was nationally accredited.
10. General topic to which the comment related. (In most cases, this was the interview guide question.)

An excerpt of the North State University (NSU) database is contained in Appendix J. The spreadsheet methodology permitted the researcher to rapidly sort and resort the material in several layers to facilitate analysis.

The case study database was then used to construct the case study, which Patton (1990) describes as a "readable, descriptive picture of a person or program making accessible to the reader all the information necessary to understand that person or program" (p. 388). The case study is presented either chronologically or thematically. The nature of this study has led the researcher to present each institution's case study thematically utilizing the general flow of the original interview guide (Appendix B).

Merriam (1998) suggests, "in a multiple case study analysis, there are two stages of analysis--the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis" (p. 194). This permits the researcher to learn as much as possible about the contextual variables. The data from institutional case studies were analyzed on a cross-case basis to respond to the original research questions. In doing this, the

researcher followed the recommendation of Miles and Huberman (1994) "to look carefully at the complex configuration of processes within each case and to understand the local dynamics" (pp. 205-206). The within-case analysis consisted of reviewing and analyzing the interviews conducted and materials gathered at each institution. The findings at each institution are discussed in chapter 4. The cross-case analysis furthered the within-case analysis by comparing the findings at each of the institutions to respond to the four guiding research questions.

Triangulation of Data

The necessity to triangulate is emphasized by many researchers (Denzin, 1978; Huberman & Miles, 1998; Janesick, 1998; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1998; Yin, 1994). Two types of triangulation were used in this study--data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation is the use of a variety of data sources in the study, while methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990). Both methods were accomplished by interviewing multiple sources at four different regional universities and by reviewing records and documents on those campuses.

The Data Collector

The researcher is employed by UWF as an administrator in the Division of Enrollment Services. Among other responsibilities, he led the team that developed the Web-based system for submission and processing of curriculum change requests in support of Faculty Senate guidelines. Although not a member, he routinely attends meetings of the Academic Council, a committee of the Faculty Senate that reviews all proposals involving program and course changes, to ensure that sufficient support is being provided to the committee and to answer technical questions concerning the requirements of the Florida Statewide Common Numbering System and the Florida Articulation Agreement. The researcher also provides technical assistance in these areas to members of the academic departments and their clerical staff. He works closely with the Faculty Senate Office concerning curricular matters and student academic policy.

Summary of Research Process

A purposeful selection identified four regional institutions located in three states at which to conduct research. After obtaining permission to conduct research on campus, appointments were made with six to ten individuals who were identified by the chief academic officer or designee. Pertinent written material about the curriculum approval process was reviewed and personal structured interviews with faculty and administrators were conducted. The data obtained from the review of records and structured interviews were used to create a case study database. The database was then used to facilitate a within-

case analysis and a cross-case analysis to respond to the four guiding research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Historically, the faculty has been in control of the curriculum at the university. This control has not only been traditional, but the American Association of University Professors also has affirmed this as a desirable, but not binding policy on several occasions (American Association of University Professors, 1994; Schuster, 1991). The literature review revealed that there have been dynamic changes in the factors external to the university that may impact the role of the faculty in making decisions about the curriculum. These include (a) the growing influence of governing boards and elected officials, (b) the widespread growth of national accrediting agencies, and (c) the importance of obtaining funding from donors. Additionally, a variety of factors have led to a continuing ambivalence in faculty attitudes toward participation in decision making and faculty governance.

The purpose of this study was to identify how the curriculum approval process has been affected by these trends. Specifically, has there been an alteration in the manner in which curriculum changes are processed; and is there

any growing sentiment to change the traditional approval process? The four guiding research questions were

1. How is the curriculum approval process organized at these four selected regional institutions?
2. How has the curriculum approval process evolved at these four institutions over the past 10 years?
3. Are there faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process at these four institutions?
4. Has the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these four institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns?

To explore these guiding research questions, case studies were conducted at four state-supported institutions classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001). To provide the anonymity requested by some of the universities, each is identified by a pseudonym: Central State University (CSU), North State University (NSU), East State University (ESU), and West State University (WSU). Interviews were conducted with a variety of faculty members, department chairpersons or heads, deans, provosts, and administrators involved

in the curriculum approval process. Each individual interviewed was asked to select a pseudonym to provide anonymity. A large database was developed based on the information revealed during the interviews.

This database was used to create a within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis to respond to the four guiding research questions. The results of the within-case analysis are presented sequentially by institution. Following the demographic information about the institution is the within-case analysis for that institution organized in a manner following the flow of the questions used during the personal structured interviews. The cross-case analysis follows the within-case analyses of the institutions. It is organized following the format of the four guiding research questions. A summary of the interviewee names, institutions, status (administrator or faculty), and departmental accreditation is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Interviewee Identification Table

School	Pseudonym	Position[a]	Nationally accredited[b]
Central State University	Ace	Administrator	Yes
	Emerson	Faculty	No
	Erny	Administrator	Yes
	Goby	Faculty	No
	Hilbert	Faculty	Yes
	Phred	Faculty	Yes
	Reggie	Administrator	No
	Schaless	Faculty	Yes

School	Pseudonym	Position[a]	Nationally accredited[b]
North State University	Art	Faculty	No
	Conrad	Administrator	No
	Dimas	Faculty	Yes
	George	Faculty	No
	Lamporte	Faculty	No
	LeDosen	Faculty	No
	Mazeroski	Faculty	Yes

(table continues)

East State University	Del'Lario	Faculty	Both
	Educator	Administrator	Both
	Effess	Administrator	No
	Pat	Administrator	Yes
	River	Faculty	Yes
	Robert	Faculty	Yes
	Smith	Faculty	Yes
West State University	Almoz	Faculty	Yes
	Boomer	Faculty	Yes
	Doer	Administrator	Yes
	Lorenzo	Faculty	No
	Lyndon	Administrator	Yes
	Maroon	Administrator	Both
	Molly	Faculty	Yes
	Petrarch	Faculty	No
	Simonides	Administrator	Both
	Zaman	Faculty	Yes

Note. [a]For the purposes of this table, department chairpersons are considered as faculty, although at Central State University, department heads are considered by many to be administrators. Deans are considered to be administrators. [b]For

administrators, *Yes/No* coding is based on the national accrediting status of the department with which they are most closely associated. *Both* indicates that some of the programs in the department are accredited while others are not.

Central State University

Central State University (CSU) was founded early in the 20th century as a normal school. It was subsequently designated a women's college in the 1920s, a coeducational institution in the 1950s, and a regional university in the early 1990s. CSU enrolled nearly 8,800 students (6,500 Full Time Equivalent students) during the fall semester 2000. Of these, approximately 15% were graduate students. Over 85% of the student body comes from within the state. CSU is located in a city of 50,000 in the southeastern United States. The faculty is proud of the designation as a regional university and is required to link any new programs and courses to enhancement of the region that it serves.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) classifies CSU in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category. CSU offers undergraduate work leading to the following degrees: Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts in over 10 major programs, Bachelor of Science in nearly 10 major programs, Bachelor of General Studies, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Health Fitness, Bachelor of Science in Education in over 10 major programs, Bachelor of Business Administration in several major programs, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Music. Graduate degrees offered include Master of Education in over 10 major

programs, Master of Arts with majors in two areas, Master of Science in three areas, Master of Public Administration, Master of Business Administration, Master of Accountancy, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Music Education, Master of Social Work, Education Specialist, and Doctor of Education.

A 15-member statewide board governs CSU along with nearly 40 other institutions of higher education. The Education Commission of the States (1997) identified the governance system in this state as having a single consolidated governing board for all higher education. This board has constitutional responsibility for planning and coordination, institutional budget review, and program approval. The recently instituted data-driven program review structure mandated by the state board is indicative of the level of control maintained in this state. Along with all other state institutions, the state board required the university to transition from the quarter to the semester format several years ago. This transition exercised the curriculum approval process. Departments now are beginning to refine their programs after this major transition.

The President of CSU is required by state law to serve, ex officio, as President of the Faculty Senate. The Vice President for Academic Affairs serves, ex-officio, as the Vice President of the Faculty Senate and as Chairperson of the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate. Additionally, all vice presidents, deans, and the university librarian are ex-officio members of the Faculty Senate. One faculty member noted that it should really be called the University Senate instead of a Faculty Senate. Departments are led by department heads who are

appointed by the administration and who are viewed as part of the administration by most faculty members.

Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process

Changes to the curriculum originate in the department. The genesis of the idea usually begins with one faculty member wanting to change a particular aspect of a course. The faculty member may further discuss the concept with a few colleagues before beginning any formal documentation. Once the decision is made to proceed with the change request, the documentation must be completed before the request leaves the department. Individual departments have different procedures relating to internal processing of the request, although there is some method to notify or gain the approval of all members of the department. Once the departmental requirements have been completed, the department head forwards the request to the appropriate college dean. The proposal is reviewed next by the dean of the college and the college executive committee. The executive committee is composed of the dean and department heads. Following formal approval by the dean, the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate reviews the proposal. This committee is chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and includes six members of the Faculty Senate. The faculty members of the various colleges elect another 12 members. The recommendations of the Academic Committee are then forwarded to the Faculty Senate for approval. Courses and programs affecting the teacher education and

graduate curricula must receive additional review. The Teacher Education Council must approve programs and courses affecting teacher education after being approved at the department and before being approved by the college. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Executive Council must approve graduate courses and programs after being approved by the originating college and before approval by the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate. Approved courses are forwarded to the Registrar and catalog editor for inclusion in the appropriate files and the catalog, respectively. New programs and changes to existing programs are forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who then forwards them to the state board. The state board must approve new programs. This approval process is graphically represented in Figure 1.

Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process

To assist in addressing the guiding research question regarding faculty concerns with the curriculum approval process, each individual interviewed was queried about the strengths and weaknesses of the current approval process. Most of the responses were positive and addressed the strengths of the system. In describing the strengths, most respondents believed that the current system provided an opportunity for faculty involvement at multiple levels, thereby discovering and resolving potential weaknesses before the course or program was implemented. Phred indicated that the process provided a good number of viewpoints and opinions on the proposed changes. He found this to be quite

helpful when the proposal may have unintended collateral impact on other departments. Reggie, Cosmo, and Erny all indicated that the multiple levels of review enhanced the accuracy of the material when it was approved. Emerson remarked that paperwork, something foreign to faculty, is the biggest disadvantage. He also indicated that the process served to enlighten new faculty members not only to the concept of collegiality and shared governance,

but also to enable the person to meet others in the department and the college. He also indicated that the process was valuable to the new department head since it forced the individual to see beyond the individual department's concerns. One interviewee, Goby, responded to the question about strengths of the process in one word--none.

In examining the weaknesses, virtually all respondents cited the unwieldy and time-consuming nature of the system. Ace indicated that this was the price one had to pay if there were to be shared governance in the curricular process. Phred and Schaless complained that many of the reviewers have no true knowledge of the program or course being reviewed. Schaless found it "ludicrous that your department may have a collective 200 plus years experience in the field, yet people in other departments are going to rule on whether your program is approved." Even compelling data compiled from other institutions and consultants may be ignored. This echoed the feelings of Goby who said there were no strengths. It should be noted that the departments represented by Goby and Schaless both had proposals returned for further work earlier in the semester. Ace peripherally concurred with these comments by saying, "some faculty members believe they know more about a topic than they do." While there were several specific statements that voiced serious concern, the overall sentiment seemed to weigh in favor of the strengths of the system in preserving a solidly reviewed academic program.

Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process

The question of change was approached peripherally. First, the interviewer inquired about changes that had occurred in the past 10 years. The last true change that any could recall occurred when the Faculty Senate was established in the early 1990s. The Senate was established in response to a concern that there was no formal method for shared governance at the university. One of the long-time participants in the process, Schaless said that prior to the establishment of the Senate, the Academic Council, which was composed of administrators, reviewed the curriculum change proposals. He believed that the faculty really did have a role in the curriculum approval process now. Ace interpreted this change by saying that all the Faculty Senate did was to add another layer to the approval process. Phred made the same statement. Although a few other interviewees mentioned the formation of the Senate during the conversation and acknowledged it as an important step in formally establishing shared governance, its impact on the curriculum approval process appeared to be minimal. Phred summarized the consensus by saying that there wasn't a real change, just the incorporation of the Academic Council into the Senate structure. Several faculty members emphasized that the Faculty Senate rarely debated any curriculum matter that was recommended for approval by the Academic Committee.

Although there was agreement that there were no formal changes to the process since then, several individuals indicated that there had been subtle changes. Cosmo stated that the college executive committees seemed to play a

greater role in recent years and that this had led to a reduction in the role of the university curriculum committee. He added that only rarely, less than once a year, did the Faculty Senate really ask any questions about the proposals that had been approved by the process. Emerson noted that although the routing had remained the same there had been a subtle shift in the language and focus of inquiry. There was greater attention paid by the committees to topics of assessment and benchmarks. Additionally, some of the committees focused on the relationship of the curriculum change to the geographic region supported by the university. Erny concurred with Emerson's assessment in stating that committees are much more concerned with concepts such as identifying and assessing the goals and learning outcomes. Hilbert indicated that although the questions and responses were similar to those of the past, there was a new writing style that had to be adopted. One must remember that during the past 10 years the university transitioned from the quarter system to the semester system and each course and degree program was revised and reviewed. When questioned about this, the general response was that each committee member just had to work a lot harder that year to ensure that the process was completed. It may be concluded that at CSU, there were both significant structural changes, that is, the addition of the Faculty Senate and attendant process changes, and subtle changes to the interpretation and review of materials submitted. There appeared to be consensus that none of these changes had substantive impact on the approval process.

The interviewees were then asked what changes they or their colleagues would like to see to the system. Generally, there were no proposals advanced to alter the existing system. While some reiterated concerns about the amount of time it took to obtain approval and the concomitant committee work required, those individuals indicated satisfaction with the current process. Goby and Schaless expressed their desires to have increased attention paid to departmental recommendations, especially when backed by data. They did not offer, however, any revisions to the current process. Alternatively, Cosmo expressed satisfaction that the individual faculty member and the department were the primary source of curriculum change.

A confirmatory follow-up question asked the interviewees how they would envision the ideal curriculum approval process. Reggie summarized the feeling of the individuals when she said that the current system worked well and that the ideal system would maintain faculty involvement but would move the material more quickly. Phred, Schaless, and Goby again wanted greater attention paid to departmental recommendations since the departments are more familiar with what is happening in the field and at other institutions. Hilbert said that he thought the current system was fine, but his department head would want greater consideration given to the input from the department. Phred indicated that an ideal process would retain much of the current structure but should permit an expedited approval process for minor change and should provide some method to give greater weight to departmental input. He said that some members of review committees found the process boring when they did not understand fully

the curriculum of another department. The other interviewees were unable to offer any suggestions, ideas, or concepts to change the current process to provide this additional influence.

Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process

The interview topics moved from the theoretical back to the present as the focus turned toward the role of external agencies and the influence that they have on the curriculum. All of the respondents indicated that the national accrediting agencies had considerable influence on what was taught and, to a lesser degree, how it was taught. Ace summarized the overarching role of the national agencies as one of "working to increase professionalism" in the field of concern. Because of the professional certification that is a part of earning the master's degree in his program, Schaless believes that his national accrediting agency plays a significant role in the development of the program, especially the clinical experiences. Cosmo believed that the agency provided guidelines within which the department could craft their own program. He viewed the guidelines in a positive manner saying, "We have to do something because of an accrediting agency requirement rather than the converse–we can't do something because of the guideline." Phred indicated that his accrediting agency was moving from being fairly prescriptive in dictating how the curriculum should appear to being one that is more outcome based. As a long time faculty member in the field, he cautioned that this was cyclical. A desire to obtain standardization, while being fair, caused the agency to create a "cookie-cutter" set of guidelines. Concerns of

institutions then drove the agency to make the process more thoughtful. Currently the system is moving toward liberalization. He anticipates, however, that when programs become varied, depending on the clientele of the institutions, there will be a move back to standardization. Schaless had a similar observation stating that while the role of the agency is significant, it doesn't play as large a role in the specific courses offered; rather, it concentrates on the content of the program. Hilbert interjected that his department had opted not to pursue national accreditation. He opined that only minimal changes would be needed in the area of the curriculum, but that items related to faculty work rules would need considerable change to permit more time for research and writing. Both Ace and Phred noted that departments with national accrediting agencies would use a statement indicating that a specific item is required by the accrediting agency. Phred commented "even the normal questioners are quiet when you say our accrediting agency requires this or that. They will back off from their line of questioning." When asked whether he had ever used that tactic, he readily admitted that he had and commented that no one knows your accrediting requirements better than you do.

Participants were also asked to identify other external influences on the curriculum. Each interviewee at CSU noted the strong influence of the state board. This response may be due in part to a board requirement issued a few weeks before the interviews that required each state university to undertake a program review that in the first years of the process would concentrate on justifying programs graduating fewer that 10 students per year. Although not an

external influence, CSU has an extensive program evaluation system that uses feedback from employers of recent graduates, graduate feedback data, and quantitative and qualitative data obtained in capstone courses. Each department uses this information to evaluate and improve programs.

North State University

North State University (NSU) is a coeducational, residential, liberal arts institution located in a town of less that 20,000 within a 1-hour drive of a major metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. NSU originated as an agricultural school in the early 1900s. In the 1950s it was authorized to confer the bachelor's degree. Enrolling less than a 1,000 students in 1950, this rapidly growing institution had over 9,000 students (6,600 Full Time Equivalent students) on campus during fall semester 2000. Ninety percent of the students come from nearby counties. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) classifies the University in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category.

NSU offers undergraduate work leading to the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts in almost 20 major programs, Bachelor of Science in nearly 10 major programs, Bachelor of Science in Education in seven major programs, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Business Administration in eight major programs, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Music. Graduate degrees offered include Master of Education in over 10 major programs, Master of Arts with majors in five areas, Master of Science in three areas, Master of Public

Administration, Master of Business Administration, Master of Professional Accountancy, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Music, Education Specialist, and Doctor of Education.

A 15-member statewide board governs NSU along with nearly 40 other institutions of higher education. The Education Commission of the States (1997) identified the governance system in this state as having a single consolidated governing board for all higher education. This board has constitutional responsibility for planning and coordination, institutional budget review, and program approval. The board's recently instituted data-driven program review structure is indicative of the level of control. Along with all other state institutions, the state board required the university to transition from the quarter to the semester format several years ago. This transition exercised the curriculum approval process. Departments now are beginning to refine their programs after this major transition.

The President of NSU is required by state law to serve, ex officio, as President of the Faculty Senate. Lamporte indicated that the current president has been very willing to let the faculty express itself during these meetings. He expressed concern, however, that this openness to discussion was really at the discretion of the president and that a successor may not be as willing to listen and tolerate the debate and criticism. He summarized his comments saying that the faculty governance system at NSU is quite dependent on the senior academic officials of the university. Departments are lead by department chairpersons elected by the faculty within the department.

Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process

Revisions of the curriculum originate within the department. Specific procedures may vary from department to department. Generally, a faculty member identifies the need for a change or new course and discusses the proposal with a few colleagues before meeting with the department chairperson. At that time, the initiator obtains the most recent version of the curriculum change form from a Web site maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After completing the form, the individual forwards the documentation to the chairperson who then obtains the approval of the departmental faculty before signing and forwarding the package to the dean. The college curriculum committee reviews the proposal. Each college has a slightly different process and committee composition. Following college committee approval, the document is signed by the dean and forwarded to the appropriate university committee. Undergraduate matters are sent to the University Academic Programs Committee, which is chaired by a member of the Faculty Senate and is composed of some Faculty Senate members and other faculty members elected by their peers. An expedited process was initiated 3 years ago that permits a simplified approval routing for some course changes. Based on the decision of the committee chairperson, a course change may be designated as minor. Unless a member raises an objection, a minor curriculum change is approved and sent to the Senate for information. The Faculty Senate then formally approves the proposals. Proposals affecting graduate curriculum are forwarded to the Committee on Graduate Studies. This committee is comprised of the

directors of the various graduate programs and a representative from each of the colleges. There is no expedited process for graduate curriculum proposals. Upon approval by the Committee on Graduate Studies, proposals are forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for review, who forwards them to the President for final approval. The state board must explicitly approve all new undergraduate or graduate programs. This approval process is graphically represented in Figure 2.

Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process

The strengths of the curriculum approval process mentioned by the interviewees generally dealt with the fact that the faculty controlled the process. Conrad stated that this is evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of the proposals are initiated by a faculty member who believes that a change to a course will improve it or that a new course will enhance the overall program of the department. Lamporte said, “the culture is so much that the faculty and their departments control their curriculum." He added that in his college the dean has generally stayed out of the process as far as initiating or controlling the process. Dimas emphasized the role of the initiator and department by saying "if the department does it well on paper--90% of the battle is done." The implication was that if the initial concepts were well presented on the form, there would be few questions and the proposal would be readily accepted. Hesubsequently cautioned that, if it were not done correctly, frustration would set in and individuals in the approval process would ask a variety of questions. A senior

administrator concurred in this view by saying that most of the problems encountered in the review stemmed from not answering the question or from using an outdated form with somewhat different questions.

The interviews then proceeded to examine the perceived weaknesses of the system. Although the process at NSU takes an average amount of time compared to other institutions in this study, there were very few comments about it taking too long. Both Dimas and George commented on the time- consuming nature of the process from the standpoint of the members of the various review committees. Dimas said that faculty members were busy individuals who often did not want to devote the necessary time to committee work and that some viewed it as wasted time. He found this to be a serious weakness in the process since there were many individuals who were not as diligent in the committee work as they were in all of their other endeavors. George echoed these sentiments by saying that the process of reviewing proposals took an incredible amount of time to do it right. He was concerned that there really was not that much faculty interest in devoting the necessary time. George said, “the faculty want to have it, but they don’t want to spend the time. But, if you told them they couldn’t do it, they would be upset." Lamporte mentioned that it was a very tedious process where the submitter has to produce a lot of papers and forms. He also expressed concern that frequently a significant course or program revision is passed without the full understanding of why it is being proposed or what the effect will be on the remainder of the university. Mazeroski reflected

similar sentiments by saying, "if there is a weakness, it is a tendency to rubber stamp things."

Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process

The topic of change was initially explored by reviewing how the process had evolved over the past 10 years. Individuals interviewed generally commented that the course of review had not really changed in this period. Conrad said that a recent concern for procedure has developed in that more folks across the university community are raising points of order. Lamporte mentioned that the questions asked on the forms had changed in response to regional accreditation concerns and in response to information requested by the state board. Mazeroski concurred that there had been only small changes and opined that making small changes incrementally may develop into significant ones. Dimas, however, viewed the addition of an expedited route that speeded approval of proposals that involved only minor changes as significant and positive. This process revision permits the chairperson of the College Curriculum Committee to move course revisions to a fast track process if the chairperson deems it a minor change. He indicated that it had taken 3 years to gain approval for the change. When queried about why it took so long to gain approval, Dimas responded that it takes a long time to overcome inertia. Other faculty said that a subcommittee was established to deal with statewide lower division core that was implemented as part of the transition from quarters to semesters. When asked about the difficulty in obtaining approval for the addition of such a committee,

George responded that there was no opposition to the concept when the Vice President for Academic Affairs initially discussed the need. The requirement to review the core curriculum was obvious to all, and it was merely a decision as to whether the University Academic Program Committee would accept the responsibility to complete it or create a subcommittee to accomplish the work. Additionally, the state board recently reemphasized rules concerning the university-wide review of teacher education programs and requested that NSU explain why it was not in compliance with this requirement. This action has led to considerable discussion on campus regarding where to place the Teacher Education Committee in the approval process, especially for courses offered outside the College of Education.

This theme was often carried forward into the next stage of the interview as faculty were asked what changes they would like to see made to the process. Conrad immediately replied that the Teacher Education Committee had to be inserted into the process. Mazeroski concurred by stating that the untenable situation with the Teacher Education Committee had to be resolved. He also indicated a desire for a mechanism by which well thought out proposals would be approved expeditiously, while those not done as well should be questioned. Lamporte thought that the only major change would be to expect departments and then units (colleges) to state more clearly the objectives of changes. Both Dimas and George mentioned a desire to move to a Web-based submission and approval system. Dimas cited the need to produce nearly 50 copies of the request document if a course was to be listed at both the undergraduate and

graduate level. If revisions are made during the process, it is the responsibility of the originating department to correct and redistribute the revised document. In addition to wasting a lot of paper, it was very time consuming. He opined that with advances in Web technology, it should not be that difficult to create a Web-based system. George indicated a similar concern and said that there was an impetus in the Faculty Senate to move to putting committee agendas and other documentation on the Web. Both Dimas and George stated that the only problem is identifying who will accomplish it and who will pay for it. Dimas indicated that a 3% merit raise, should it be granted for such a project, did not warrant the necessary time that it would take to develop such a process. Conrad summarized the general satisfaction with the major tenets of the current process by saying, "I don't know how it gets any better than having curriculum and changes originate in the departments."

Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process

The final stage of the interview process at NSU concentrated on the role of external influences. The topic of state board influence was mentioned frequently in response to questions about the changes made to the process and the ideal curriculum approval process. These comments dealt with the strong influence of the state board in mandating the statewide lower division core framework and in reemphasizing the need for the Teacher Education Committee to review and resolve issues between the colleges that related to courses in

teacher education programs. LeDosen and Mazeroski both reiterated the influence of the state board at NSU. Mazeroski, whose department is nationally accredited, opined that the national accrediting agencies played too large a role in the curriculum process and that they were leading to a national "homogenization" of many programs. He expressed concern that instead of looking at how good the output is, the national accrediting agencies looked at the structure of programs. Dimas said that the programs with national accreditation generally used a different style in their curriculum change proposals. He admitted that his department often justified a change by stating that the national association required it and that, at times, it might be overused. Dimas did not find any reluctance among his colleagues to use the curriculum change process at NSU because it was viewed as redundant to the accrediting agency requirements. Lamporte noted that the Colleges of Education and Business often cited NCATE and AACSB requirements, respectively. He illustrated the influence of AACSB on the business curriculum with a personal example. His department was asked to teach two courses--one at the upper division for 2 hours and one at the lower division for 2 hours-- resulting from AACSB rules concerning the balance between divisions and between colleges. The department would normally have taught the course at the 3000 level for 3 hours. He also stated that departments in the College of Arts and Sciences with national accreditation had been strongly influenced by their respective agencies. He did believe that national accreditation helped the small departments in the college when it came time for asset allocation, especially library resources, laboratory

space, and faculty time allocation requirements. LeDosen commented that national accreditation requirements played a strong role in the curriculum development process in some departments and colleges. She also said that in her experience at NSU and previous institutions she had never seen anyone challenge a statement that something was required by an accrediting agency.

East State University

East State University (ESU) was founded in the 1970s and is a comprehensive, state supported, urban institution located in a major metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. Initially enrolling about 2,000 students, it has grown rapidly to 13,000 students (7,500 Full Time Equivalent students) during fall semester 2000. Of these, approximately 15% are graduate students. A large percentage of the student body comes from within the state. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) classifies the university in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category.

The University offers undergraduate work leading to the Associate of Arts and baccalaureate degrees in nearly 50 majors with over 100 concentrations. It offers 25 master's degree programs with 50 areas of concentration. Additionally, the Education Specialist and the Doctor of Education degrees have been offered for over a decade.

As a result of recent state legislation, governance of institutions of higher education in this state is undergoing significant change. Until 2001, a strong state board governed all state-supported, 4-year institutions while a separate

board governed the community college system. The new structure adopted by the legislature creates a single board that governs all education from kindergarten through graduate programs (K-20). A board of trustees was created for each state university to provide local oversight. The powers of the boards of trustees are in the process of being resolved. A similar system already existed within the community college program. In creating this change, the legislature often cited as a model the system in effect in North Carolina. Both the former structure in this state and the current structure in North Carolina are classified as consolidated governing boards by the Education Commission of the States (1997).

Faculty governance at ESU involves all full-time, tenure-track faculty members in the Faculty Assembly. The association, composed of over 400 faculty members, meets monthly. According to Del'Lario, attendance generally ranges from 100 to 150. With this large assembly, committees and subcommittees complete much of the work. Chairpersons who are elected by the members of the department lead departments.

Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process

Proposals to alter the curriculum generally originate with an individual faculty member who then discusses the idea with colleagues. Once the concept is refined, the department chairperson is approached and the curriculum approval process begins. Although the process varies in each department and

college, it generally consists of a review within the department, sometimes by a designated curriculum committee or by all members of the department. Following departmental faculty approval, the department chairperson approves the proposal and forwards it to the college. There are additional routing procedures for courses included in teacher education programs, for courses that fulfill university general education requirements, and for courses that meet specified state-mandated requirements. An elected curriculum committee in the college reviews and approves the proposal before it is forwarded to the dean's office for final college approval. According to Effess, the dean approves all program changes and modifications, while the associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences approves all course changes and modifications. The College of Business has a similar structure but a general meeting of the college faculty is convened to approve curriculum changes before the proposal is forwarded to the dean. Although faculty members elect colleagues to departmental and college committees, Effess commented that there generally is no competition to serve and the elections are more an affirmation than a true contested election. The proposal is then sent to the Faculty Assembly Office where the secretary ensures that the necessary forms are complete and distributes the copies to members of the University Academic Programs Committee. Following approval by this committee, the curriculum proposals are placed on the agenda of the Faculty Assembly. After approval by the Faculty Assembly, the proposals are forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Course proposals are then forwarded to the state board for assignment of course number and prefix based on well-

defined taxonomy before inclusion in the catalog. Revisions to programs are approved and forwarded to the registrar to be included in the next catalog revision. Requests for new programs at the master's and bachelor's level are forwarded to the ESU Board of Trustees. Requests for specialist and doctoral degrees are forwarded to the state board. This process is graphically depicted in Figure 3.

Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process

Interviews with faculty and administrators revealed that the strengths of the system related to the thoroughness of the review. Del'Lario commented that the process caused the proposer to think through the request in order to be able to justify it. He also noted that the college committees tended to be very complete in their review. Robert noted that, theoretically, when a lot of eyes look at the change, the result should be better. In the interview he placed special emphasis on " theoretically." River found that the process has a lot of checks and balances and multiple layers of approval, that protect the curriculum. He also noted that this could easily be considered a weakness.

In discussing the weaknesses of the current system, most commented on the length of time required and the amount of work involved to gain approval. Effess found "committees do a lot of reading of tedious stuff, with only a few substantive issues raised." He continued by saying, "It’s just that we don’t know which ones will be problematic until we review them." Smith expressed total

frustration with the system. When asked about the strengths, he responded that there were none and proceeded to identify multiple weaknesses. He found

it most frustrating that faculty who had no understanding of his technical curriculum were conducting the review. He said that this increased the bureaucratic approach since the committee was more interested in ensuring that the proposal incorporated the standard phraseology used in other proposals and did not examine the merits of the proposal. His final comment was, "Faculty are interesting people. They are very talented, very smart, and very analytical in many regards. Therefore, they will delve into anything. They will bore around on trivia." However, Educator had a contrary point of view in that he believed there was a tendency to attach too much deference to the individual proposing the change, for example, “it is not my area of expertise so I will defer.” Robert commented that the process ran counter to current theory of quality management where you have one person who is responsible. The frustration with the current system at ESU was evident in the majority of the interviews.

Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process

There was unanimity when asked whether there had been any recent changes to the system. All indicated that while there had been no substantive change, there had been procedural changes which added to the time taken to process a request. Both Robert and Educator cited a presentation at a recent retreat attended by all chairpersons. Two recently appointed chairs produced a dialog about the need for a campus-wide paperwork reduction directive. There was general concurrence that this was something that the administration could do until the topic of curriculum change proposals was mentioned. Both

interviewees mentioned that when they began to discuss the curriculum approval process, the chairs concluded that it was one area that was driven by the faculty governance process. The faculty had truly done it to themselves. Educator commented that the administration couldn't tell the faculty what to do in this area. Rather, it takes a lot of patience, leadership, and time to bring about the desired results. He likened it "to the fine art of herding cats."

When asked to describe the ideal curriculum process, Smith took a very straightforward view and said that the faculty should create the proposal and obtain the approval of the chairperson. The process should be handled by the deans who are paid to administer. The dean of the college proposing it should review it and, after resolving any overlaps with counterparts in the other colleges, forward it to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Robert commented that from a business flow perspective he "knows what we are doing is not necessarily the right way." However, other than expressing a desire for speedier processing of minor changes, he was unable to describe an ideal process. Del'Lario noted that while he had been a higher education faculty member for over 30 years, his wife, who works in industry, “thinks we are the biggest fools on the face of the earth. She just looks at me and says ‘no wonder things haven’t changed in 2,000 years’." He believes that the ideal system would consider that committees don’t always make the best decisions and that each time the curriculum committee turns over, all that knowledge is lost and must be relearned by the new members. He also commented that some of the problems and frustration at ESU came from the size of the committee. He opined that with a Faculty Assembly consisting of

all faculty members, some of the committees are as large as Faculty Senates at other institutions. Effess was an advocate of maintaining the current structure, but one that reduced the amount of paperwork. Educator commented that it becomes more and more difficult to say no to a proposal as it progresses through the approval process and that, when you are dealing with institutional culture, it is much more difficult to alter. He did note that with the rising number of retirements, there might be a short window for change in the next few years.

Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process

The final topic to be addressed in discussions at ESU was the role of external influences on the curriculum. Educator identified the accrediting agencies and the state rules as the primary external influences. He also cited radical changes resulting from the new media including online and distance education. With the influence of these methods of delivery, he also indicated that new delivery systems had enhanced the growth of for-profit institutions. Finally, Educator reminded that these institutions were growing in large part from changes in national trends and that the traditional state university must also be responsive to change. Effess indicated that a sustained 5-10% growth in the number of students over the past several years has influenced ESU. The numbers and change in academic preparation had significant impact on the curriculum.

Not surprisingly at this institution, which has traditionally had very stringent state control, several faculty members mentioned the role of the state in influencing the curriculum. Several years ago, the legislature mandated that all undergraduate programs be limited to 120 semester hours unless a waiver was requested from and granted by the state board. Effess also indicated that the state mandated the design of the lower division general education program and created common prerequisites that must be honored by all state universities. As stated earlier, the state structure was recently changed by the legislature and resulted in the elimination of the Board of Regents. Most of the laws relating to the curriculum that were passed by the legislature, however, remain in force. Educator commented that the impact of the new governance structure will be significant and that accountability will be a major item with the ESU Board of Trustees and with the state governing body.

All interviewees pointed to the role of the national accrediting agencies including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The interviewees from the disciplines represented by each of these agencies indicated that there had been a shift in the focus of the accrediting body from one of looking for specific courses and structure to one that emphasized required areas of instruction and outcomes. Smith said that his national accrediting agency has put together a "process where you think top down flow and where you place objectives and measure against outcomes." He believed that the guidelines

established by his agency had more influence on the construct of the faculty than the content of the curriculum. Interviewees whose departments are not accredited by national agencies still reported that they could not understand the requirements levied by the agencies. For example, Effess reported that as soon as a committee hears the words “the accrediting agency requires it,” they back off without further question. This is reflective of an attitude that who am I to tell someone else’s accrediting agency that they are doing something wrong. Roberts also recalled a recent committee meeting when a department chairperson said that ”we are going for accreditation this year and it is required by the XXX Agency." Del'Lario said that when you are defending a program, it is easy to say that the XXX requires you to have 78 hours in the major. While this may appear in conflict with comments made earlier by Smith when he objected to his program being evaluated by someone unfamiliar with the field, one must also recall that his concern was that it caused the committee members to look at the verbiage used, rather than the content of the program.

West State University

West State University (WSU) is a co-educational, residential institution located in a town of 35,000 residents within a 1-hour drive of two major metropolitan areas. The University was founded in the late 1890s as a normal school to prepare public school teachers for this region of the state. Since all activities of the school were subordinate to teacher preparation, the other current colleges within the University originally followed this emphasis. Thus the College

of Business began with teacher preparation in business skills. The institution was granted college status in the early 1920s and university status in the mid 1930s when the first master's degrees were awarded. WSU enrolled nearly 22,000 students (18,500 Full Time Equivalent students) during the fall semester 2000. Over half the student body comes from within 100 miles of the campus. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) classifies the WSU in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category.

The University offers undergraduate work leading to the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts in over 20 fields, Bachelor of Science in 9 major fields, and a variety of specific baccalaureate degrees in over 20 fields including the Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Business, etc. Additionally, WSU offers professional curricula in several fields to prepare students to transfer to other universities in the state for engineering, medical, dental, etc., programs. Graduate degrees offered include the Master of Arts in over 30 fields, the Master of Science in nearly 10 specializations, the Master of Education in 10 areas, and several specific master's programs, for example, Master of Public Administration, Master of Social Work, Master of Healthcare Administration, etc. WSU offers the Doctor of Philosophy in two concentrations and is preparing to offer additional doctoral programs.

Governance is provided by a nine-member board responsible for WSU and seven other institutions. Originally comprised of institutions sharing a common bond as teachers colleges, the eight institutions today offer a broad range of traditional programs with differing specialized degree offerings. A state

higher education coordinating board serves as the statutory coordinating agency for public postsecondary education. This state board has statutory responsibility for approving or disapproving all degree programs and develops formulas for apportionment of funds by the governor and legislature. The Education Commission of the States (1997) categorizes this governance structure as a statewide coordinating board with a subordinate regulatory board. Six other states have similar structures.

The Faculty Senate is composed of 15 members. The membership is proportional to the number of faculty within each college. At a minimum, each college has one representative. Tenure-track faculty members, from the college represented, elect the membership of the Senate. Senators must have the academic rank of at least assistant professor and may not be department chairpersons or other quasi-administrators as determined by the Senate. Since the Faculty Senate is relatively small, numerous committees are composed of Senate members, other faculty and, in some instances, administrators. There is no requirement that a Senate member be included on a specific committee, although the various committees are arranged in groups according to responsibilities. A Senate member chairs each of the groups.

Structure of the Curriculum Approval Process

A faculty member interested in creating a new course or revising an existing course usually approaches several colleagues and, in most instances, the department chairperson, to gain further information and support. Once the

proposal is formally initiated, it is reviewed within the department. The departmental review may be formal with a departmental committee that reviews it or informal with a department chairperson gaining a consensus of the faculty in the department or specialization area. In all colleges, the department chairperson forwards the proposal for college level review. Again, the actual format of the review varies by college. For example, one college council is composed of the department chairpersons and chaired by the dean. In another college, a college curriculum committee, composed of elected faculty members from each department, reviews the proposal. In all cases the college dean forwards the proposals to the University Curriculum Coordinator who formally sends the proposal the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate. The membership of this committee is selected by the Faculty Senate, but does not necessarily include a Senator. Once approved the proposal is forwarded to the Faculty Senate for approval and subsequent action by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Thence, the University Council and the university system Board of Regents review the proposal. This process is graphically represented in Figure 4.

The Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate, as composed at the time of the campus visit, did not include any members of the Senate. The chairperson attended each Senate meeting to formally present the information and answer questions. Petrach, the current chairperson, noted that over the years, there was a core of faculty members who remained on the committee or kept returning to it after an absence of a few years. The longevity of member

service on the committee at WSU was in contrast to that observed at the other institutions. Asked why he thought the members desired to remain on the committee, Petrarch responded that there might be several reasons that applied variously to long-time members. He felt that some on the committee realized how important it was to have consistency. This consistency permitted the committee to codify the requirements, if not in writing, then by interpretation. On a more pragmatic approach, he indicated that it often served departments well to have someone on the committee. Petrach also stated that the committee really did not review the course content. The department and college committees were relied upon to do this since they were far more knowledgeable of the topic and need in the field. He indicated that the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate very seldom stopped a proposal unless it involved a major expense or unless there was a conflict between departments. Doer also noted that once courses reached the university level that the committee generally approved them.

Zaman, however, said that the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate was the only group that examined the proposal closely. It should be noted that the chairpersons and dean conducted the college level review in Zaman's college, while a curriculum committee reviewed proposals from Petrarch's college. Simonides indicated that on some occasions, deans did not forward material to their chairs for comments and this failure to apprise departments had led to some real disagreements on the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate. He also said that many times the committee had not

intervened to prevent course duplication between departments and colleges when they probably should have.

Concerns With the Curriculum Approval Process

In response to questions concerning the strengths of the current approval process, the responses revolved around the involvement of the parties concerned. Almoz and Zaman cited the faculty participation as a very positive aspect, while Lorenzo stated that it was a very open process with multiple points of contact. Boomer indicated that the process was deliberative at a number of different levels and ensured that the proposals were reviewed from a variety of perspectives. Petrarch said that the system provided for uniformity in formatting material. Lyndon took a much broader view when he said that the process assures the university, and thus the colleges and departments, that there is a substantiated curriculum based on standards beyond faculty preference.

When questioned about the weaknesses, one interviewee stated that the members of the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate were more academicians, while the members of the Senate were more politicians; this difference tended to reflect the general perspective of the review conducted by each group. In a similar vein, Lorenzo wished that there were a more cooperative and collaborative attitude that would make every course and program stronger. Simonides indicated that occasionally there might be an individual or two on the curriculum committee who is really strong in conviction and opposes something. In an attempt to reconcile such a situation with a small

minority, the committee often defers to conducting one more study. This further slows a long process and often works to the detriment of the university. Even with the reduction of processing time from 24 months to 15 months, Almoz, Boomer, and Lyndon all commented on the length of time it takes to get a proposal approved. Petrarch wondered about the function of the committee. He indicated that oftentimes the committee seemed to be going through the process simply because it was expected and that a final report to the Senate was required.

Changes to the Curriculum Approval Process

Nearly all interviewees indicated that there had been significant recent changes to the curriculum approval process. Almoz, Lorenzo, Lyndon, and Zaman cited that the curriculum approval process had been reduced from 24 months to 15 months. Maroon and Lyndon said that over the past several years the locus of control had been moved closer to the faculty. Although faculty members were relied upon to submit the proposals, the approval process was previously done at a higher level by a University Council. Over 10 years ago, this committee had been eliminated and much of the review was moved to the college committees and Faculty Senate.

The reduced processing time was attributed largely to the efforts of the curriculum coordinator, an administrator who works directly for the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Doer and Lyndon indicated the there was also increased collaboration between the initiator and the curriculum coordinator, especially for

new and revised programs. This increased collaboration, along with recently updated policy memoranda, has significantly increased the faculty understanding of the process. When asked what had precipitated the changes, Zaman replied that several individuals had complained about the process and that the recently appointed curriculum coordinator had reviewed the state board and university requirements. This review and reduced review times resulted from administrative actions. The time reduction was accomplished by reducing the time available for deans to make comments and for committee processing.

The interviewees were then asked what changes they or their colleagues would like implemented in the process. Most of the interviewees thought that the process was generally satisfactory, but that a further reduction in processing time was necessary. Zaman specifically mentioned that the processing time should be further reduced to be responsive to advisory group and accrediting agency suggestions. Boomer, however, summarized the majority of the responses when he said that everyone must be reasonably satisfied since there was no discussion among his colleagues about changing the process. Petrarch echoed these feelings by saying he hadn't heard a word in the department and that, in reality, the faculty in his department spend very little time in meetings discussing curriculum change. Molly indicated that she didn't think the Faculty Senate at WSU represents the faculty as a whole and that there has been some movement to expand the number of members on the Faculty Senate. Maroon indicated that he thought the faculty was generally pleased with the curriculum approval process, but some members of the faculty were pushing broader governance

committees. Molly also expressed frustration with the “nitpicky” paperwork and wished that the process could be moved online and the review time reduced. Although Lyndon indicated satisfaction with the process, he felt that it was necessary to reeducate faculty and chairs so that they better understand what students are learning in the course rather than what we as faculty want them to learn.

A confirmatory question asked interviewees to describe the ideal curriculum process. Most responses were similar to those expressed earlier. Some responses, however, dealt with the codification and construct of the process. Petrarch said that when he, along with another long time member, stepped down from the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate a lot of collective knowledge would depart. He wondered whether the cohesiveness of the review process was driven more by the individuals involved rather than procedures. He noted that the procedures were very broadly written. Molly echoed these concerns by saying that it was important to develop task statements for each of the committees. Simonides expressed some concern about the timing of the curricular review by the department chairpersons and deans. He indicated that most presidents and vice presidents for academic affairs like to say that they leave the curriculum in the hands of the faculty. The Faculty Senate, however, is an advisory body. This point was recently reemphasized when the Faculty Senate at WSU decided not to support previous committee recommendations and declined to approve a new program. The administration, in this case, overruled the Senate and forwarded the proposal to

the state governing board recommending approval. Thus, Simonides wondered aloud whether the reviews should be conducted simultaneously and input provided to the administration. At that point, the administration could review the recommendations from the various groups before forwarding the proposal to the system and state boards.

Role of External Agencies on the Curriculum Approval Process

Once again, the interview topic moved from the ideal back to reality as the focus turned to the role of external agencies on the curriculum. Maroon indicated that while there is a great deal of variability across the spectrum of national accrediting agencies, WSU has taken the view that the first question to be asked when considering new or continuing accreditation is, “Does the accrediting association help us to have better programs?" He also indicated that some agencies drive the curriculum, but if they have consensus in the field, is that bad? Molly also saw accrediting agencies in a positive light when she said requirements of the agencies force us to look at our curriculum systematically, on a routine basis, through the eyes of our students and the organizations that hire them. Simonides, however, cautioned that one needs to be careful with these agencies, otherwise they will become the proverbial tail wagging the dog. He also confirmed the position expressed by Maroon when he said the new attitude at WSU was that one should subscribe to all the agencies that are affordable and that add value to the program. Lyndon noted that his college had dropped their national accreditation when it became virtually impossible to meet the demands

levied by the state certification authority and the accrediting agency. He also observed that it was becoming more difficult for students to enroll in some programs because some accrediting agencies impose misplaced class size limits or student-to-faculty ratios. Zaman provided many examples of how the national accrediting agency recently impacted the operation of his department and course offerings. The agency imposed clear limitations on the number of sections faculty could teach along with corresponding limitations to the number of class preparations that could be required. In addition to this, the visiting team interviewed students to determine whether courses had enough rigor to be considered part of the major. The outcome of the visit was that two courses could no longer be counted toward meeting degree requirements for students majoring in the field. Almoz, Doer, Lorenzo, Lyndon, Molly, and Petrarch indicated that administration and faculty perceive course and program modifications differently if the program is nationally accredited. According to Molly, institutional review committees tend to approve such requests without question when accreditation requires the modification. In his many years of service on curriculum committees, Petrarch had never asked a department to verify an accreditation requirement. Lorenzo indicated that, although his department did not have an accrediting agency, accrediting agencies did help gain resources both in faculty and in facilities.

Participants were also asked to identify other external influences on the curriculum. Virtually all interviewees immediately mentioned the influence of the state board. The board must approve all program changes. There are two basic

categories for programs--substantive and non-substantive. The division is largely determined by the 5-year cost. If a program will cost $50,000 or more during the period, it is considered substantive. As Doer mentioned, it is difficult to hire a faculty member in the last year of the 5-year period and not cross the $50,000 threshold. Lorenzo indicated that the state board had been quite helpful and willing to provide advice when his department was developing a significant, and expensive, new program. Boomer, Doer, Molly, and Zaman also cited the role that their advisory committees played in the development of the curriculum. Members of these committees are generally drawn from the local community and from organizations that employ graduates of the program. Doer also mentioned that, in many cases, the originator and curriculum coordinator often confer with one of the university's development officers to ensure that new program costs consider potential monetary or in-kind contributions by donors that would reduce the cost of new or revised programs. The state board, when reviewing program requests, readily considers such contributions.

Question 1: Organization of the Process

The first guiding research question asked how the curriculum approval process was organized at four selected institutions. This question was designed to develop the framework for the other three questions. During the individual interviews, each person was asked to describe the curriculum approval process at their respective university. This information was confirmed with the written guidelines at each institution. Each of the four universities followed a traditional

approval process. Individual faculty members originated curriculum changes in the departments. Following a departmental review, a college level committee and dean evaluated them. Finally, a university-wide committee reviewed them before approval by the faculty governance body. This process is graphically depicted in Figure 5. There are, however, subtle differences in the process particularly relating to the composition of the review committees.

At CSU, after the proposal is initiated, the department head must first approve it. One must recall that the leaders of the departments at CSU are called department heads since they are appointed by the administration, not elected by the departmental faculty. Following departmental approval, the dean of the college and the college executive committee next evaluate the request. The executive committee is composed of all the department heads and the dean of the college. Following this approval, if the change relates to the graduate program, the Graduate Executive Council must approve it. This committee is comprised of the directors of each graduate program. The Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate must next approve the proposal. This committee is chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and includes six members of the Faculty Senate along with 12 other faculty members elected by the faculty of the various colleges. Finally, the proposal is approved by the Faculty Senate, which is chaired by the president of the university. Approval by the Faculty Senate is normally pro forma and there is only occasional discussion of an item. The state board must approve all new undergraduate or graduate programs.

The overall process at NSU varies little from that at CSU. After origination in the department and approval by the departmental faculty and chairperson, the college curriculum committee reviews the proposal. Although the committees in each of the colleges are formulated differently, each is heavily reliant on faculty members and not chairpersons or other academic administrators. Undergraduate matters are sent to the University Academic Programs Committee, which is chaired by a Faculty Senate member and is composed of some Faculty Senate members along with other faculty members elected by their peers. An expedited process is available for proposals with only minor changes. Following approval by this committee, the Faculty Senate then formally approves the proposal, generally without discussion. Proposals affecting the graduate programs are reviewed by the Committee on Graduate Studies, which is composed of the directors of the various graduate programs. Graduate proposals then are forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and subsequently approved by the President of the University. The state board must approve all new undergraduate or graduate programs.

Faculty members at ESU follow a similar process in submission of curriculum change proposals. Following approval at the departmental level, a college curriculum committee, which is comprised of faculty members elected by their peers, reviews the change. The number of members on the respective college committees varies with the rules established by each college. Some of the colleges also require approval by the entire faculty of the college following approval of the college committee. Then the proposal is reviewed

administratively in the Faculty Assembly Office to ensure there are no technical issues. The University Academic Programs Committee then reviews the proposal before being placed on the Faculty Assembly agenda. The Faculty Assembly, composed of all tenured and tenure-track faculty members, approves the proposal, generally without discussion. Proposals are forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who formally approves them. Course proposals are sent to the state board for assignment of a course prefix and number in accordance with a statewide taxonomy. Requests for new programs at the bachelors and masters level must be approved by the ESU Board of Trustees, while new programs at the specialist and doctoral level must be approved by the state board.

At WSU, approvals of new and revised curricular requests are handled similarly. An individual faculty member, or small group of faculty, discusses the concept with other members of the department before formally proposing the change to the department chairperson. Depending on the size and governance of the department, the proposal is reviewed before the chairperson formally forwards the written proposal to the dean. Some large departments have a curriculum committee composed of elected faculty members. Governance requirements in other departments require approval by all members. In some departments, the chairperson informally obtains approval from the faculty. The procedure for obtaining college level approval again is varied and ranges from a committee composed of all the departmental chairpersons headed by the dean to a formal curriculum committee composed entirely of faculty members elected by

their peers which reports to the dean. Following college level approval, the proposal is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate and subsequently by the Faculty Senate. The recommendation of the Faculty Senate is advisory only and is not binding on the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Conclusion

This process of having reviews at the department, college, and university levels is consistent at Central, North, East, and West State Universities. While the composition of the group reviewing the proposals at the department and college levels at each institution may vary according to departmental and college governance rules, the review by a subcommittee of the faculty governance body and approval by the entire faculty governance body is very similar at all four institutions. This process had been in existence for some time at ESU. The other three institutions moved to this process when faculty governance bodies were formally established in the 1980s. McConnell and Mortimer (1971) found similar processes at the University of California at Berkeley and at California State University at Fresno. Only at the University of Minnesota did the authors find a slightly different process. Minnesota had long displayed strong departmental and school autonomy and, as a result, course and program approvals were not reviewed beyond the college level. In a contemporary review of the curriculum approval process at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), UWF, and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), this

author found processes similar to those at Central, North, East, and West State Universities.

Although the basic structure of the approval process at each of the institutions studied is similar, differences were noted in the composition of the review committees. The differences were most obvious at the departmental and college levels. In some departments, the chairperson only reported gaining faculty consensus while in other departments formal committees were composed of elected faculty members. Likewise, a committee generally conducted college level reviews prior to formal approval and forwarding by the dean. The composition of this review committee took two general forms. In some instances, the council of chairs reviewed the proposals as the curriculum committee. In other instances, there was a formal curriculum committee consisting of faculty members elected by their peers. Both formats were found at each of the four institutions. It appears the format is more dependant on department and college procedures than university-wide policy. Although the proposals are reviewed by a university-wide committee at each institution before being approved by the faculty governance body, it must be remembered that the composition and structure is different. For example, at CSU the Vice President for Academic Affairs chairs the subcommittee. At both CSU and NSU, the presiding officer of the faculty governance body is the President of the university. This, combined with a strong presence of department heads, may imply a somewhat different review than that at ESU where the review committee is

comprised entirely of faculty members and the faculty governance body consists of all faculty members.

Question 2: Evolution of the Curriculum Approval Process

The second guiding research question asked how the curriculum approval process evolved at these four institutions over the past 10 years. This question identifies the changes that have occurred to the process and explores the rationale and process that led to the change. Each interviewee was asked to identify any changes to the curriculum approval process during the past 10 years. Dependant upon the responses, follow-up questions explored the reason for the change and the difficulty in making the change. Some change to the process was experienced at each of the institutions.

CSU experienced a significant change with the establishment of the Faculty Senate in 1991. Although there was a curriculum approval process that involved faculty prior to the establishment of a Faculty Senate, many issues relating to the role of the Senate had to be resolved. Both Phred and Schaless experienced this change as faculty members from the former Academic Council to the Faculty Senate. Schaless opined that it really did bring faculty governance to CSU. Ace concurred that there was more shared governance under the current system. Erny, Goby, and Schaless each commented that there had been very little change to the curriculum approval process since the procedures established concomitant with the creation of the Faculty Senate. When asked whether there were any alterations to the process related to massive number of

curricular changes resulting from the quarter to semester conversion, interviewees indicated that while the process did not change, meetings were certainly longer. While concurring in this overall assessment, Emerson cited that a different focus of attention had evolved in the approval process. The focus was now centered on benchmarks and assessment rather than merely looking at the course content. Emerson indicated that the impetus for the changes resulted from faculty concerns and, somewhat, in response to requirements levied by the regional accrediting association, as outcome assessment became a more significant review item. Cosmo indicated that more of the review responsibility had migrated from the Senate to the executive committees of the colleges. She indicated that, for the most part, items just sailed through the Senate. When asked to elaborate on the items that were really discussed in the Senate, she said that perhaps once a year there was debate on the Senate floor about an item involving curriculum change.

The actual approval process at NSU has remained fairly constant over the past 10 years. Lamporte indicated that while the process, per se, had not changed, the questions asked on the submission forms had changed somewhat over the years. Conrad concurred with this assessment and added that the changes had resulted from an “assessment push.” Most interviewees were quick to mention the recent addition of a subcommittee responsible for reviewing and approving any changes to the core. When asked whether any difficulties were encountered in creating the committee, George responded that the Vice President for Academic Affairs had raised the issue of a need for such a

committee and left it to the Faculty Senate to determine the composition and reporting lines. At the time of the campus visit, the faculty and administration were dealing with state board mandates about the role and placement of the Teacher Education Committee. LeDosen commented that both of these changes had been precipitated by action outside the university community, specifically, by the state board. Dimas described in detail the 3-year process involved in gaining approval for the implementation of an expedited process in the Undergraduate Committee. He cited inertia as the most significant reason for lack of change and delay in implementing change. He indicated a desire to see a similar change in the graduate process and conversion to a Web-based curriculum approval process. He noted, however, that if there were a cost involved in the change, it would become a significant issue since neither the Faculty Senate nor the curriculum approval process has a budget to support such an undertaking. When asked about the impact of the quarter to semester conversion, interviewees who were present at that time said that there were no procedural adjustments made to handle the increased number of change requests.

At ESU, the approval process has, likewise, remained very stable as far as the review committee structure and process. Del'Lario, an experienced faculty member who had served at several institutions, said, "Every place that I have been there were a series of committees--most of the time starting at the college level, and then a university committee, and then the Senate. The names may be different, but the process is the same." River indicated that, over his years at ESU, the number of forms had increased and the process had become

more bureaucratic. Robert concurred with the increased paperwork requirement and added that there has been some movement to change the paperwork, but he had heard no comments about changing the process. Effess commented that a checklist had been developed to help the submitter ensure forms had been correctly completed. This checklist, designed to assist the faculty, was cited by River and Smith as an example of the increased paperwork required. When asked how difficult it was to include this checklist in the process, the response was that it was within the purview of the committee and Faculty Assembly. River and Educator cited a presentation at a chairs retreat that discussed reducing paperwork on campus. The attendees concluded that changing the requirements associated with the curriculum approval process was totally within the purview of the faculty governance process and that the administration was powerless to initiate change. Educator emphasized the need for administrators to continue to walk a fine line between what is desirable for the university and Academic Affairs while still keeping the faculty in control of the curriculum approval process.

Consistent with NSU and ESU, the basic process at WSU has remained very constant over the past 20 years according to Lyndon and Simonides. There has been some recent streamlining of the process recently by the curriculum coordinator. One significant item, cited by Almoz, Lyndon, and Zamen, was the reduction of the process time from 2 years to 15 months. Discussions with Doer indicate, that, because of processing windows at the state board, it would be virtually impossible to reduce the time further. Almoz and Lyndon also remarked that policy memoranda have been developed, that provide a step-by-step

explanation of the process with detailed instructions concerning completion of the various required forms. Lorenzo indicated that the curriculum coordinator provides an informal review of material for chairpersons who desire it. This informal review provides feedback from one of the persons most knowledgeable of the state requirements before the formal approval process begins. This makes the formal approval process much more efficient. Lyndon confirmed this by saying chairs now receive more help early in the process. Although there were consistent statements made by administrators and faculty that control of the curriculum belongs to the faculty, it appeared that a mid-level administrator, the curriculum coordinator, had instituted the most dramatic changes at WSU. No faculty member interviewed expressed the slightest concern over these actions. In fact, Molly, Lorenzo, Lyndon, and Zamen all praised the improvements that had been made and openly credited the curriculum coordinator.

Conclusion

Based on the four institutions visited, their curriculum processes appear to have changed only at the margins over the past 10 years. At CSU and NSU, the change in the process was primarily in the area of emphasis. In recent years, greater attention has been paid to outcomes, which may be reflective of influences external to the universities. At NSU an expedited process for minor changes in the undergraduate curriculum was implemented after considerable discussion. At ESU, additional paperwork is now required, but the process

remains essentially the same. While the process remains the same at WSU, most interviewees praised changes that reduced the processing time and provided more detailed information to the users.

Question 3: Faculty Concerns About the Curriculum Approval Process

The third guiding research question asked whether there were faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process. This question was designed to explore internal pressures for change in the curriculum approval process. To evoke responses in this area, interviewees were asked (a) to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, (b) to express their personal feelings toward the process, (c) to describe any strong desires for change expressed by colleagues, and (d) to envision an ideal system.

In response to the question concerning the strengths of the current system, most interviewees cited two general areas. First and foremost, it is a process controlled by the faculty. Changes or additions to the existing curriculum are proposed by an individual faculty member who is most familiar with the material. Del'Lario (ESU) stated that when the faculty member knows that the proposal is going to be thoroughly reviewed by many peers, it forces the individual to thoroughly think it through. Lamporte (NSU) expressed the feelings of many of his peers by saying that it has "proven to be a genuinely faculty-driven process." He continued by saying that the dean and other administrators have stayed out of it. One might recall that this was confirmed at the ESU Dean and Chairs Retreat when the discussion turned to reducing paperwork on

campus. The response was that the curriculum approval process was totally controlled by the faculty. A second area of strength is the multiple levels of review which, as a result of the deliberative nature, adds to the quality of the proposal. Reggie (CSU) indicated that these reviews ensure that the information is correct and accurate. Phred (CSU) said the multiple perspectives represented by the various reviewers prevent what the originator perceives as a positive change from having collateral damage on other programs or courses. Molly (WSU) also found the deliberative process good in that it prevents rapid change, which might have a detrimental effect on individual students. Somewhat pragmatically, Robert (ESU) commented "theoretically, you have a lot of eyes looking at the change; therefore, the better the result theoretically should be." Goby (CSU) and Smith (ESU), however, indicated that there were no strengths in the system.

The immediate weakness identified by interviewees was that the process takes too long. This was mentioned at CSU by Hilbert who said the process probably takes 3 months or so once the proposal leaves the department and at WSU where several respondents, while praising the processing time reduction, which decreased the time from 2 years to 18 months, still complained about the length of time. While the immediate concern expressed dealt with the amount of time it took to process a change, most other concerns related to the process itself. Ace (CSU) said that this tediousness is the price you pay for shared governance. Some of the concerns related to the personalities of the individuals on the review committees. Dimas (NSU) said that strong people, with high

credibility, would prevail. Simonides (WSU) believed that often one or two individuals, who have a strong personality or conviction, drove the committee. Educator (ESU) said that in many cases, there was a tendency to attach too much deference to the individual proposing the change. Colleagues do not want to question a fellow faculty member in an area that is not their field of expertise. Smith (ESU) continued this commentary by saying, “Faculty are interesting people. They are very talented, very smart, and very analytical in many regards. Therefore, they will delve into anything. They will bore around on trivia.” He added that, since they may not know anything about the topic, they will then deliberate about something that is common knowledge--the language and how well the proposal complies with the rules. Lyndon (WSU) remarked that often the process rules drive the outcome rather than the rationale for the change. Effess (ESU) confirmed this by saying that proposals, generally, aren’t rejected for substantive reasons. Ace (CSU) noted that some faculty members believe they know more about a specific topic than they do. Lamporte (NSU) said that because of faculty unfamiliarity with a topic, sometimes a significant course or program revision is passed without full understanding. Mazeroski (NSU) echoed a similar feeling when he said that there is a tendency to rubber stamp items that have been passed in previous committees. Robert (ESU) expressed concern, from a management standpoint, that “committee members may not look as closely at an item as they would if there were only one or two reviews. It’s far too

easy to say that the ABC committee will catch anything that I miss. Part of quality management is that you have only one person who is responsible."

Although all interviewees indicated that there were weaknesses with the current system, when asked whether they or their colleagues anticipated any change to the process, most indicated they anticipated no change. At CSU, five of those interviewed, Ace, Cosmo, Emerson, Hilbert, and Reggie, indicated general satisfaction and were unaware of any move to change the process. While expressing considerable concern with the process at CSU, Goby summarized by saying that "most of the faculty really don' t know or care about the process." Only those directly involved with the submission and review are even familiar with it. At NSU, Mazeroski summarized the general feeling when he said, "I think they just accept it." Both he and Conrad mentioned, however, that the faculty must resolve where the Teacher Education Committee will be placed in the approval process. Dimas lamented the fact that it took 3 years to gain approval for an expedited process for minor changes to undergraduate courses and wished that there was a way to implement a similar process for the graduate program. He also said that he and several others were pushing for development of a Web-based submission process since the department currently had to produce over 40 copies of any change proposal. If changes were made by committees, the department had to produce and distribute additional copies that included the changes. At ESU, several of the interviewees indicated that there were items they would like to see implemented, including a Web-based submission system, but none anticipated any change in the near term. At WSU,

both Maroon and Petrarch indicated that there was general satisfaction with the process. Zamen and Doer said that there was a proposal in process to include the Council of Chairs as a formal reviewing body in the curriculum approval process. Neither seemed to believe that the proposal would be implemented since the timeliness of the approval process was already a concern, and the chairs currently had several levels at which they could intervene. Other comments at WSU dealt with additional concerns, but none of the interviewees believed there was any substantive movement for change in the near future.

In order to confirm that the researcher had identified the majority of faculty concerns, each person was asked to describe the ideal curriculum approval process. Most respondents paused to reflect on previous comments before indicating, as Erny (CSU) did, that he was pretty much satisfied as is. Several respondents at NSU indicated that they wished they could find a system that integrated the Teacher Education Committee fairly into the current system. Several interviewees indicated that the ideal process should be Web based. Del'Lario (ESU) said that an ideal system would consider the fact that committees don't always make the best decisions. He again mentioned that his wife worked outside the academic community and she continually told him that while business has committees, someone was ultimately charged to make the decision. Smith (ESU) also raised the issue of accountability and said that with all these committees, no one was really responsible for the decision. A similar expression was made by Simonides (WSU) when he said that perhaps the best process would be to have the committees review items concurrently, present

their inputs, and have the Vice President for Academic Affairs analyze them and make a decision. He added that, after all, the committees were advisory bodies.

Conclusion

In summary, concerns were raised about the curriculum approval process at each of the institutions. When asked to identify the specifics of an ideal system, many said that the current system was generally satisfactory. None of the interviewees indicated any desire to take the control of the curriculum from the hands of the faculty. Only Simonides (WSU) proposed a change to the structure of the review process. Perhaps George (NSU) best summarized the situation when he said that the "process takes an incredible amount of time and devotion. When attempting to obtain a commitment to work on a curriculum committee, faculty members do not express much interest in the process and many will not devote the time necessary to make the system work. However, should anyone suggest that faculty be removed from the process, there would be a great uproar."

Question 4: External Influences on the Curriculum

The fourth and final guiding research question asked whether the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns at these institutions? To identify such influences, interviewees

in departments with national accreditation were asked to describe the influence of their accrediting agency on the curriculum. Those in departments not nationally accredited were asked for their observations concerning the role of accrediting bodies on departments that were, and why their department was not accredited. After the discussion of accrediting agencies, interviewees were asked whether there were any additional external influences on the curriculum.

The responses to the series of questions concerning national accrediting bodies varied from the philosophical to the practical but were surprisingly consistent. Phred, chairperson of an accredited department at CSU who has served in the department for many years, noted that the approach that accrediting agencies have taken in the evaluation process over the past 20 or so years was cyclical. He observed that the cycle included a period of very strict adherence to specific requirements. When participants complained that it limited creativity, the agency's criteria became more global and less well defined. At the peak of this cycle, participants complained there were no established criteria and that the evaluation was no longer a standard for schools and evaluators to follow. At this point, the criteria began the movement back toward specific guidelines. Maroon, a senior administrator at WSU, said "there is a great deal of variability across accrediting agencies." In determining whether a department or program should be accredited, WSU attempts to answer the question, "Does the accrediting association help us have better programs?"

When asked to specifically identify how the accrediting body affects the department and program, the responses developed along two lines, resources

and curriculum. The emphasis appears to vary by accrediting association. For example, Smith (ESU) indicated that the agency that accredits his department pays more attention to facilities and faculty than to the specifics of the curriculum. They are concerned that the laboratory facilities have the necessary research equipment. Faculty requirements deal with the degrees held, breadth of expertise in the field of the faculty as a whole, qualifications of individual faculty members, etc. The curriculum requirements consist of required topic areas, not specific courses. Phred (CSU) indicated that his accrediting agency currently took a very broad look at the curriculum but was also interested in library assets, computer resources, and building enhancements. Lamporte (NSU) said that, although his department is not currently accredited, they are in the process of seeking accreditation. He believes that the requirements levied by the accrediting agency are having a significant influence on the curriculum offered by the department. Zaman (WSU) recounted that on a recent accreditation visit, reviewers examined the syllabus for each course offered, evaluated the relative weight of various grading requirements, and interviewed students to determine whether the material was covered. After the visit, it was determined that two of the courses offered were not appropriate for majors and could only be offered as service courses. The visiting team also reviewed faculty qualifications and teaching schedules.

Mazeroski (NSU) expressed concern that the national accrediting process was leading to a homogenization of programs nationally. He opined that instead of accrediting bodies looking at how good the output is, they are looking at the

structure of the program and forcing all participants to offer programs with similar structure. Simonides (WSU), while expressing concern that one needs to be careful with these agencies otherwise they will become the proverbial tail wagging the dog, did say that they forced a review of the curriculum on a regular basis using nationally accepted guidelines. Lamporte (NSU) stated that national accreditation provides small departments with considerable leverage in resource-allocation decisions that they would not otherwise have. The use of these curriculum guidelines extends to departments that are not nationally accredited. Del'Lario (ESU) indicated that, although not accredited, the department still used the national guidelines for program review.

The role of the national accrediting agency is most apparent in the curriculum approval process. Most of the interviewees commented that if a department indicates the course or program change is required for accreditation, it is quickly approved. Effess (ESU) said that as soon as the committee hears the words "the accrediting agency requires it," they back off without further question. He explained this reaction by saying, "Who am I to tell someone else's accrediting agency that they are doing something wrong?" Dimas (NSU) indicated that while stating that something is required by an accrediting agency may be overused, nobody is going to challenge you.

The national accrediting associations appear to have considerable influence on individual departments. The impact ranges from resource allocation to curriculum. The power of the words, "the accrediting association requires it," on the curriculum review process is undeniable.

The second aspect of this question was to determine whether there were other external influences on the curriculum. Virtually all interviewees immediately responded by indicating that the state or state board had a significant influence on the curriculum. Some interviewees mentioned the influence of the state while responding to earlier questions. While the response was not surprising considering that each of the institutions is state-supported, the depth and range of the influence was not expected. At all four of the institutions, a state agency has established guidelines concerning all or part of the composition of the general education curriculum. Similarly, approval of new programs at all institutions was controlled at the state level. At ESU, there was some indication that the Board of Trustees may be able to approve new programs at the baccalaureate and masters level. At CSU and NSU, the state board had mandated program reviews over the next 5 years, but an immediate review was directed for programs with small numbers of graduates. The state legislature passed legislation limiting program length to 120 semester hours at ESU and other state-supported institutions without the explicit approval of the state board. It should again be noted that CSU and NSU are in states with a single consolidated governing board for all higher education as defined by the Education Commission of the States (1997). The Commission categorizes this governance structure for WSU as one with a statewide coordinating board and subordinate regulatory board. ESU is in a transition from a single consolidated board to a statewide coordinating board and subordinate regulatory board.

Several faculty members indicated the strong role of their respective departmental or college advisory boards. These boards are generally composed of regional leaders and employers in the field who provide information concerning their perceptions of what knowledge and skills graduates from the program should possess. Simonides (WSU) said that informal feedback from alumni who are employed in the field also provides valuable insights that may be incorporated into the curriculum. At CSU, Emerson expressed the strong emphasis on serving the needs of the region as a factor in the development of new programs and courses. The curriculum committees at CSU closely examine requests for new curriculum to ensure that they are in support of the regional needs. Goby expressed some concern that by tying program expansion at CSU to regional needs limited the ability to offer a broadly based program that would have national appeal. Doer (WSU) was the only one to mention the influence of external contributions when he said that the development officer was involved in the development of proposals for new programs since the state board was positively influenced by the possibility that an external donor may make a significant contribution in support of a new program.

When examining the role of external influences at these four institutions, the state educational structure certainly has considerable influence, even for WSU, which has the less direct of the two basic governance structures present at the institutions studied. External advisory boards also may play a significant role. There appears to be only minimal influence generated by external contributors.

Conclusion

External influences have a significant impact on the curriculum approval process. The influence of the national accrediting agency is most apparent. Most of the interviewees commented that if a department indicates the course or program change is required for accreditation, it is quickly approved. Only on rare occasions are those who propose a change asked questions about their interpretation of the national accrediting agency guidelines. College and department advisory boards likewise influence the curriculum and peripherally the approval process since statements made by these organizations are not challenged by individuals unfamiliar with the topic. Similarly, state legislative and board requirements affect the curriculum. This, however, is more subtle since department chairs and deans are familiar with the guidelines that generally impact all programs. External contributors do not appear to have a significant influence on either the curriculum or the review process at these universities.

Summary

Four case studies were conducted to explore the guiding research questions. This chapter summarized the case studies conducted at four state-supported institutions. The subsequent cross-case analyses led to the following conclusions to the guiding research questions. Each of the four institutions followed a traditional process whereby faculty members originate the proposal, which is then reviewed by the department, college, and university-wide committees, before final approval by the faculty governance body. The curriculum approval process at the four institutions has experienced only minimal

changes. Changes that were implemented were at the margins and did not impact on the steps of the approval process. Although several of the faculty members interviewed raised concerns about the process, many considered the present system satisfactory. None of the interviewees suggested that the control of the curriculum should be removed from the direct purview of the faculty. External influences, especially national accrediting agencies and state governance boards were viewed as having significant influence on the curriculum approval process.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the curriculum approval process at four institutions classified as Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) to determine (a) the structure of the review process, (b) the recent evolution of the process, (c) the concerns of the faculty about the process, and (d) external influences on the curriculum. This was done to investigate the overarching question of change in the curriculum approval process.

The findings of this study are discussed in this chapter. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is a review of the findings and implications using the four guiding research questions as a basis. A discussion of the limitations of the research follows in the second section. Recommendations for further research are proposed in the third section, while a summary is proposed in the fourth section.

Findings and Implications

The findings and implications were developed from four case studies followed by cross-case analyses that were conducted to explore the guiding research questions. The findings and implications are organized using the guiding research questions, which served as the basis for the inquiry.

Question 1. How is the curriculum approval process organized at four selected regional institutions?

This process of having independent reviews at the department, college, and university levels was consistent at Central (CSU), North (NSU), East (ESU), and West (WSU) State Universities. While the composition of the groups reviewing the proposals at the department and college levels at each institution varied according to departmental and college governance rules, the review by a subcommittee of the faculty governance body and approval by the entire faculty governance body was very similar at all four institutions. The process had been in existence for some time at East State University (ESU). The other three institutions moved to this process when the current faculty governance bodies were formally established in the 1980s. McConnell and Mortimer (1971) found similar processes at the University of California at Berkeley and at California State University at Fresno. Only at the University of Minnesota did the authors find a slightly different process. Minnesota had long displayed strong departmental and school autonomy and, as a result, course and program approvals were not reviewed beyond the college level. In a contemporary review

of the curriculum approval process at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), The University of West Florida (UWF), and at FGCU, this author found processes similar to those at Central, North, East, and West State Universities.

Although the basic structure of the approval process at each of the institutions studied is similar, differences were noted in the composition of the review committees. These differences were most obvious at the departmental and college levels. In some departments, the chairperson only reported gaining faculty consensus while in other departments formal committees were composed of elected faculty members. Likewise, a committee generally conducted college level reviews prior to formal approval and forwarding by the dean. The composition of this review committee took two general forms. In some instances, the council of chairs reviewed the proposals as the curriculum committee. In other instances, there was a formal curriculum committee consisting of faculty members elected by their peers. Both formats were found at each of the four institutions. It appears the format is more dependent on department and college procedures rather than university-wide policy. Although the proposals are reviewed by a university-wide committee at each institution before being approved by the faculty governance body, it must be remembered that the composition and structure of the university level committee may also vary. For example, at Central State University (CSU) the Vice President for Academic Affairs chairs the subcommittee. At both CSU and North State University (NSU),

the presiding officer of the faculty governance body is the President of the university. This, combined with a strong presence of department heads may imply a somewhat different review than that at ESU and West State University (WSU) where the review committee is comprised entirely of faculty members and the faculty governance body consists of all faculty members.

Implications. Although the review processes may appear to be similar, one must look at the composition of the committee membership at each level of review. A committee of teaching faculty selected by peers may have different motivations than a committee comprised of department heads who are appointed by the dean and vice president for academic affairs and serve on a committee chaired by their dean. While faculty members may be more attuned to student needs and recent changes in their specific discipline, more time may be consumed in reaching decisions. Conversely, administrators may pay more attention to potential program costs and cross-discipline controversies while being able to reach decisions more expeditiously.

Secondly, consideration must be given to the need for review or approval external to the institution. For example, at CSU and NSU there are no external reviews for courses that have been approved by the faculty and vice president for academic affairs. At ESU, course proposals must be forwarded to the state board for assignment of course prefix and number. While adding time to the process, the state board cannot disapprove action. The situation is different at WSU where the university system board of regents holds final approval for courses.

Question 2. How has the curriculum approval process evolved at these four institutions over the past 10 years?

The curriculum process described above appears to have changed only at the margins over the past 10 years at the four institutions visited. At CSU and NSU, the change in the process was primarily in the area of emphasis. In recent years, greater attention has been paid to outcomes, that may be reflective of influences external to the universities. At NSU an expedited process for minor changes in the undergraduate curriculum was implemented after considerable discussion. At ESU, additional paperwork is now required, but the process remained essentially the same. While the process remained the same at WSU, most interviewees praised changes that reduced the processing time and provided more detailed information to the users.

Over the past three decades, several authors have chronicled this slow pace of change at universities. Rogers (1968) provided an overview of the difficulties of implementing change at the university when he observed that the large university has evolved gradually from a small beginning. He indicated that once a procedure is established it is very difficult to change, even if it is inefficient. Hefferlin (1972) noted that for change to occur, the proposal might need to be less dramatic than desired, or attempted on a trial basis for a specified time to gain approval. Stark and Lattuca (1997) warned that some procedures might reinforce resistance to change. Tucker and Bryan (1991)

emphasized that the numerous steps in the governance hierarchy of an institution create another impediment to change.

Implications. In all of the interviews, there were only two important changes to curriculum approval processes identified at the institutions studied. At NSU, Dimas and others discussed the 3-year process involved in implementing an expedited review process for some undergraduate course approvals. The curriculum coordinator at WSU instituted changes that reduced the processing time from 24 months to 15 months by decreasing the time available to each committee to conduct reviews. To implement academic change, Hefferlin (1972), in his classic work, identifies five techniques that may be employed to implement change. The administrator must (a) determine the obstacles, (b) provide reassurance, (c) build on existing concerns, (d) avoid rejection, and (e) respect the past. Although none of the interviewees cited the work of Hefferlin, they reported using several of the techniques to gain final approval for change.

Question 3. Are there faculty concerns about the curriculum approval process at these four institutions?

Multiple concerns were raised by the faculty about the curriculum approval process at each of the institutions. The concerns ranged from a long elapsed time from submission to approval to lack of topic understanding by the reviewers. When asked to identify the specifics of an ideal system, most indicated that the current system was generally satisfactory. None of the interviewees indicated

any desire to take the control of the curriculum from the hands of the faculty. Only Simonides, from WSU, advocated a major change to the approval structure when he suggested that the various individuals and committees in the review process should document their concerns and leave the resolution to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Perhaps George (NSU) best summarized the situation when he said that the "process takes an incredible amount of time and devotion. When attempting to obtain a commitment to work on a curriculum committee, faculty members do not express much interest in the process and many will not devote the time necessary to make the system work. However, should anyonesuggest that faculty be removed from the process, there would be a great uproar."

This statement tends to confirm earlier research by Schuster (1998) who indicated that the slowly changing trend toward increased research and publication records and away from teaching and service may be cited as reasons for a decreasing interest in faculty involvement, and thereby declining faculty enthusiasm toward participation in faculty governance. While there may be an important impetus to change, Floyd (1985) argued that although a substantial portion of the faculty may agree that the curriculum needs to change, the faculty is the prime barrier due to disciplinary orientation, internal divisions, and the veto power. Tucker and Bryan (1991) observe that whenever a new idea is presented to a faculty committee for the first time, the reaction is generally negative. Further complicating the matter after this initial rejection is the difficulty in persuading the committee to reconsider the item. When it is vetoed, in most

cases the proposal is returned to the originator and never revisited or reviewed by others.

Implications. While there may be faculty concerns with the curriculum approval process, it is rare that action is taken to resolve concerns. For example, at least one or two individuals at each institution cited a desire for some type of Web-based curriculum approval process. However, there was no action at any of the schools to create such a process. Should action be taken, the process is not quick and will likely consume several years. Dimas said that it took 3 years to implement the expedited undergraduate course approval process at NSU and that consideration was just beginning for a similar process for graduate courses. Likewise, at WSU, the changes that reduced the processing time from 24 months to 15 months by decreasing the time available to each committee took 2 years to implement.

Question 4. Has the influence of external factors (e.g., accrediting requirements, governance boards, and legislation) at these four institutions led to changes in the approval process or faculty concerns?

The role of the national accrediting agency is most apparent in the curriculum approval process. Most of the interviewees commented that if a department indicates the course or program change is required for accreditation, it is quickly approved. Effess (ESU) said that as soon as the committee hears the words “the accrediting agency requires it,” they back off without further question. He explained this reaction by saying, ”Who am I to tell someone else’s

accrediting agency that they are doing something wrong?" Dimas (NSU) indicated that while stating something is required by an accrediting agency may be overused, nobody is going to challenge you. Similar statements were made by several other interviewees. The national accrediting associations appear to have considerable influence on individual departments. The influence ranges from resource allocation to curriculum. The influence of the words, "the accrediting association requires it," is undeniable on the curriculum review process.

Several faculty members indicated the strong role of their respective departmental or college advisory boards. These boards are generally composed of regional leaders and employers in the field who provide information concerning their perceptions of what knowledge and skills graduates from the program should possess. Simonides (WSU) said that informal feedback from alumni who are employed in the field provides valuable insights that may be incorporated into the curriculum. Emerson (CSU) expressed the strong emphasis to serve the needs of the region as a factor in the development of new programs and courses. The curriculum committees at CSU closely examine requests for new curriculum to ensure that they are in support of the regional needs. Goby expressed some concern that tying program expansion at CSU to regional needs limited the ability to offer a broadly based program that would have national appeal.

Each individual interviewed cited the role of the state board in the curriculum. At both CSU and NSU, the state board had mandated program reviews and insisted on a significant role for the Teacher Education Advisory

Committee in the curriculum approval and review process. The role of the state was apparent in a 120-semester-hour limitation for programs, statewide common prerequisites, and standardized course numbering and articulation at ESU. Interviewees at WSU cited state rules as a reason the length of the curriculum approval process could not be reduced. Each of the state boards represented in this review maintained control over the creation of new programs. Only at ESU had this role recently been reduced to permit the Board of Trustees at the institution to approve new masters and baccalaureate programs.

Individual or corporate philanthropists were mentioned only one time. Doer (WSU) was the only one to cite the influence of external contributions when he said that the development officer was involved in the development of proposals for new programs since the state board was positively influenced by the possibility that an external donor may make a significant contribution in support of a new program.

When examining the role of external influences at these four institutions, the impact of the national accrediting agencies is undeniable. Additionally, the state educational structure certainly has considerable influence, even for WSU, which has the less direct of the two basic governance structures present at the institutions studied. External advisory boards also may play a significant role. There appears to be only minimal influence generated by external contributors.

These findings are confirmed in the literature related to this area. Mortimer and McConnell (1978) and Schuster (1989) believe that the transfer of

power from campus to outside agencies is the greatest change to take place in recent years and that this trend continues. The loss of ability by the faculty to exert local influence leads to a reduced sense of campus responsibility and accountability (Birnbaum, 1988; Zusman, 1999).

Implications. The influence of external factors on the curriculum is significant. National accrediting agencies impose requirements in a variety of areas including (a) faculty qualifications, (b) teaching load, (c) facilities, and (d) curriculum and course content. Familiarity with the requirements of national accrediting agencies outside the field of a particular faculty member is extremely rare. In most cases when a department states that a course or program change is required by a national accrediting agency, the requirement is not challenged. Several interviewees stated that most of the agency requirements are broad and that there is room for interpretation.

Each of the institutions included in this study is state supported. The influence of state rules and regulations was apparent in the response to questions from each interviewee even before questions relating to external influence were broached. With funding from an external agency, especially the state, comes considerable control. This control may impede the breadth of courses and programs offered. For example, submitters of course and program proposals at CSU must link them to the service region of the university. The addition of new programs is controlled at the state level for all institutions studied with one exception: baccalaureate and masters programs at ESU.

Perhaps owing to the size of the institutions and lack of major donors, none of the interviewees reported that individuals or foundations had imposed stipulations that affected the curriculum. As mentioned in the review of the literature, this was not the case at Yale University (Srinivasan, 1995).

Question Summaries

The curriculum approval process at universities included in this study is controlled by the faculty. At each institution the approval procedure follows a traditional process that includes multiple levels of review by committees composed primarily of faculty members prior to approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs or Provost.

At two of the four institutions studied, a significant, but not major change had been implemented during the past 10 years. Marginal changes had been made to the paperwork requirements and focus of the review process at each of the universities.

Faculty members at each of the institutions raised concerns about the curriculum approval process. Consistently cited concerns related to the length of the review process and the need for an electronic means of submission. Other campus-specific concerns were mentioned. However, there was no movement noted toward resolving either of these issues or any of the other issues identified at specific universities.

Although forces external to the university have not resulted in changes to the curriculum approval process, each respondent cited their influence on the

curriculum. The most obvious influences are national accrediting agencies and state government, including state boards. There was no indication of influence from major contributors on the academic programs or approval process at the institutions studied.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted at four state-supported institutions classified in the Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001) that enrolled between 10,000 and 23,000 students. The curriculum approval process may be different or more expeditious at institutions with significantly smaller or larger student populations or at institutions that market themselves as being able to respond to changes in educational needs. Similarly, the influence of outside factors may be different at private institutions or institutions that do not seek regional or national accreditation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Replicating the study at dissimilar institutions may provide different and interesting results. There are three potential areas of difference that could be explored:

1. Size of institution: The number of levels of curriculum review may vary at considerably larger research institutions or much smaller institutions

(which may grant only the baccalaureate degree or associate's degree).

2. Governance of institution: Two different forms of governance, as defined by the Education Commission of the States (1997), were represented by the schools studied. One might expect to find some variation with other models of state governance or within the same model of state governance from state to state. Similarly, significant differences may be found in the curriculum review process at private and for-profit institutions.
3. Non-traditional institutions: Included in this category would be the for-profit institutions and institutions that provide the majority of their instruction at a distance.

A second area for further research would be the topic of course and program review. Often during the interviews, the topic of curriculum review became intertwined with the research topic of the curriculum approval process. Each of the institutions visited was struggling with the development of an effective process by which courses and programs would be reviewed on a routine basis. In many cases, the primary program review was done by a national accrediting agency. In some instances programs that were not nationally accredited received only a cursory review. At both CSU and NSU, the state governing board had instituted a requirement to review programs with special attention paid to those with low graduation rates.

Summary

This study examined the overarching question of change in the curriculum approval process by reviewing the curriculum approval process at four institutions classified as Master's Colleges and Universities I category by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2001). Explored in detail were (a) the structure of the review process, (b) the recent evolution of the process, (c) the concerns of the faculty about the process, and (d) external influences on the curriculum. A summary of the findings and implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research were provided in this chapter.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

Would you describe the procedures for submitting a new or revised program or course?

What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this process?

What changes have you observed to the curriculum review process at the University?

What items would the faculty like to see changed in this process? Why?

How do you feel about the process? What concerns do the faculty have with the current process? What problems do you anticipate in the future? What actions have been taken to alleviate the problems?

What is your vision of the ideal curriculum review process?

What influence does your accrediting agency play in making determinations about the curriculum? What about other external influences?

On your campus, what groups do your think drive the curriculum change process?

Who needs to be satisfied with this process?

APPENDIX C

INITIAL REQUEST FOR RESEARCH APPROVAL

Initial Request for Research Approval

September 19, 2001

Dr. **********
Vice President for Academic Affairs
North State Univerity
College Street
University, ST

Dear Dr. *******:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bob Shaw and I currently serve as the Director of the Student Academic Support System (Degree Audit System) in the Enrollment Services Division at the University of West Florida. I also coordinate the administrative portion of the curriculum change process and support various faculty committees related to the process. Additionally, I am in the process of completing my doctoral dissertation.

The subject of my dissertation is: The Faculty and the Curriculum: A Study of the Faculty Governance System and Faculty Control of the Curriculum. The purpose of the study is to gain reliable information and data from institutions of higher education concerning the curriculum review process. The study involves reviewing the curriculum change process and conducting interviews with faculty and administrators at four institutions.

The purpose of this letter is to request your approval to include North State University in the study. I make this specific request since our Office of Institutional Research considers North State a peer institution. The interviews will be conducted on your campus in a structured format and it is estimated that each interview will take approximately 30 minutes. I would like to interview key faculty and support staff who either have been involved directly with the process, or have been impacted by it. Inclusion of your institution in the study is important and I request your approval to include North State University. At your request, I will gladly share the final results of my study with you.

If you would be so kind to grant approval to be included in the study, please return the attached approval form or letter in the self-addressed stamped envelope. If approval is granted, I will contact you, or your designee, during the next few weeks to schedule an interview time that is convenient. Participation by your staff and faculty in this study will be sincerely appreciated.

If you would like to discuss the study with me prior to considering approval to participate, I may be reached at (850) 474-3311 or by e-mail (bshaw@uwf.edu).

Sincerely,

Robert E. Shaw
2210 Inverness Drive
Pensacola, FL 32503-5024

Mr. Robert E. Shaw
2210 Inverness Drive
Pensacola, FL 32503-5024

Dear Mr. Shaw:

Approval is granted to include the North State University in your study titled The Faculty and the Curriculum: A Study of the Faculty Governance System and Faculty Control of the Curriculum and to conduct interviews with faculty and administrators.

Please feel free to contact me or _____ for any additional information.

Sincerely,

****
Vice President for Academic Affairs

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Request for Additional Information

From: ********* [mailto:****@central.edu]**Sent:** Thursday, September 20, 2001 1:50 PM**To:** bshaw@uwf.edu**Subject:** Research on Curriculum & Faculty Gov

Mr. Shaw,I have spoken with our president. We would like to cooperate in yourdoctoral research. I do have a few questions. Has you research been clearedby a human subjects committee on your campus? Would you have yourdissertation advisor write a short email to me in support of your project?Who will select the faculty and staff to be interviewed on the VSU campus?Will their participation be voluntary? Will you keep the institution's nameconfidential and protect the anonymity of the faculty/staff? I feel surethat we can work through any issues in advance. Best wishes with your study.

****** *******

**********, Ph.D.

Phone: ***/***-**** (office)VP for Academic Affairs ***/***-****

(home)Central State University FAX: ***/***-****University, ST ****

Office: State Hall Room 807USA E-mail:

****@central.edu**********

APPENDIX E

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SCHOOLS

Additional Information to Schools

From: Bob Shaw [mailto:bshaw@uwf.edu]**Sent:** Friday, September 21, 2001 11:24 AM**To:** ******@central.edu**Subject:** Dissertation Follow Up

Dr. *******,Thank you for your positive response to my letter. My committee chair, Dr. Pamela Northrup (pnorthru@uwf.edu) will be sending you an e-mail confirming the status of the IRB review and supporting my research. I would ask your (or your designee's) assistance in the selection of potential interviewees based on broad categories. For example, I would like to interview two chairpersons in departments that are accredited by external agencies such as AACSB and NCATE, and two in departments that are not nationally accredited. It would also be important to interview one or two individuals who have worked with your curriculum review process, perhaps the chairperson of the applicable faculty governance committee responsible for reviewing curriculum proposals. I would also appreciate any suggestions of others who might provide additional insight into the topic.Pseudonyms will be created for the university and for each individual interviewed. Of course a broad description of the institution and position of the interviewees will be necessary. Participation will be totally voluntary and individuals may opt out even during our meeting. I would like to tape the interviews. I will provide a written synopsis of our meeting to the interviewee to ensure that I have not misunderstood or misinterpreted any comments. Thank you again for your assistance. Bob Shaw

APPENDIX F

REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC DATES AND PARTICIPANTS

Request for Specific Dates and Participants

Subject: Dissertation Research

I would appreciate your assistance in the selection of potential interviewees based on some broad categories. I would like to interview two chairpersons in departments that are accredited by national agencies, such as NCATE and AACSB, and two others in departments that are not nationally accredited. It would also be important to interview one or two individuals who have worked with your curriculum approval process, perhaps the chairperson of the applicable faculty governance committee responsible for reviewing curriculum proposals. It would be helpful to meet with a dean or associate dean who has been involved in the process, along with any other appropriate administrator such as the Registrar. I would appreciate suggestions of others who might provide additional insight into the topic. An opportunity to interview you, if your schedule permits, would certainly be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bob Shaw

APPENDIX G

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION FROM SELECTED FACULTY MEMBERS

Request for Participation from Selected Faculty Members

Subject: Request for Assistance

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bob Shaw and I currently serve as the Director of the Student Academic Support System (DARS Degree Audit Program) in the Enrollment Services Division at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. I also coordinate the administrative portion of the curriculum change process and support various faculty committees related to the process. Additionally, I am in the process of completing my doctoral dissertation. The title of my dissertation is "The Faculty and the Curriculum: A Study of the Faculty Governance System and Faculty Control of the Curriculum."

My proposal to conduct research on your campus has been reviewed and approved by Dr. . . . . He identified you and several of your colleagues as individuals particularly well suited to discuss the topic. Prior to contacting you personally, I wanted to provide some background.

Your responses will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will be created for the university and for each individual interviewed. Of course, a broad description of the institution and interviewee will be necessary. Participation will be totally voluntary and you may opt out even during our meeting. I would like to tape the interview and will provide a written synopsis of the meeting to you to ensure that I have not misunderstood or misinterpreted any comments.

I plan to be in . . . from October 17 through October 19 and would like to meet with you for 30-45 minutes during that period. I will call you soon to arrange an appointment.

Sincerely,

Bob Shaw

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW REMINDER

Interview Reminder

Subject: Dissertation Research

I appreciate your agreeing to meet with me next Wednesday, November 7, at 8 AM as part of my dissertation research. My plan is to use an interview guide approach with questions designed to gain information about your experiences with and thoughts about the curriculum approval process at . . . State. I will also ask if there are any others on campus whom you think may have special insights about the process. With your permission, I will tape the interview and subsequently provide you a written synopsis of the meeting to ensure that I have not misunderstood or misinterpreted any key comments. The interview should take 30-45 minutes.

Sincerely,

Bob Shaw

APPENDIX I

POST-INTERVIEW REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Post-Interview Request for Review

Subject: My Visit to . . . - Thanks

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study of the faculty governance system and the role it plays in the curriculum approval process. I appreciate the time that you spent honestly answering my questions. My visit to campus was rewarding and I left most impressed with . . . State.

Attached are two documents - a summary of the interview and a summary of the curriculum review process. You will note that all personal references use your pseudonym and that I refer to . . . as . . . State University. I would appreciate your review of both documents to ensure that I captured the essence of your comments and the process at the University.

Sincerely,

Bob Shaw

APPENDIX J

EXCERPTS FROM NORTH STATE UNIVERSITY DATABASE

INST	POS	NAME	#	AC	FS	DEP	ACD	QUESTION	RESPONSE
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Dif in attitudes	CAS, this process is a nuisance because of the nature of the beast
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Dif in attitudes	COB, it is professional. COE is all professional
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Dif in attitudes	COB & COE are more supportive of process
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Dif in attitudes	used to doing a strength-weakness analysis, more used to writing objectives and outcomes, etc
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Inf Accred Agency	separately accredited programs in CAS, you get different input from ones that are not
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Inf Accred Agency	NCATE/AACSB Well lots of justifications -
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Inf Accred Agency	needed to meet AACSB accreditation
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Inf Accred Agency	Overused - Definitely. Nobody is going to challenge you
NSU	Chair	Dimas	3	Y	Y	A	Y	Inf Accred Agency	not seen a reluctance to use our curriculum change process at NSU because it is viewed as redundant to the accrediting agency requirements
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Strengths	supposed to be that everyone gets to have input
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Weakness	incredible amount of time involved in the process
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Weakness	not sure that there is that much interest
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Weakness	But, if you told them they couldn't do it, they would be upset
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Weakness	want to have it, but they don't want to spend the time
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Weakness	No proc. manual for committee; changes every year - we're writing one
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	What Changes	I don't know of any.
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Desired Changes	resolve the core committee process - routing question
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Difficulty in Change	No real problem creating committee; VPAA said we needed process; left it to FS to determine how
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Ideal Process	Core committee is a stand alone
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Inf Accred Agency	I think the inputs for COB are really better than the rest
NSU	ComChr	George	2	Y	Y	B	NA	Inf Accred Agency	The COE does use NCATE as the rationale a lot
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Process	Faculty Senate approval is normally pro forma
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Process	In theory the dean is involved in initial discussions and the approval is pretty much pro forma
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Strengths	proved to be a genuinely faculty driven process
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Strengths	dean has generally stayed out of the process as far as initiating or controlling the process
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Strengths	culture is so much that the faculty and their departments control their curriculum
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Weakness	very tedious process where you have to produce a lot of papers and form
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Weakness	significant course or program revision is often passed without the full understanding of why

INST	POS	NAME	#	AC	FS	DEP	ACD	QUESTION	RESPONSE
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Recent Changes	procedures in terms of what the forms say
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Recent Changes	only substantive change dealt with the core
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Recent Changes	Retention & recruitment has had some influence on the offerings in the past few years
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Concerns	Potential impact of changes in VPAA and Deans
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Concerns	We have a culture of faculty governance
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Concerns	current presiden (& Pres FS)t has been very willing to let the faculty express itself during these meetings
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Concerns	I think that there is a lot of personality and politics in this process of curriculum change
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Concerns	faculty governance system is quite dependent on the senior academic officials of the university
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Ideal Process	fairly similar to what we have
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Ideal Process	except that departments and then units (colleges) should be expected, required, to state more clearly the objectives of changes
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	Our department hopes to be nationally accredited
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	very big shaper of the curriculum
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	big influence on how they run their departments
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	COE has been very influenced by NCATE
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	AACSB influence on supporting course design
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	departments in A&S that have a national group have been strongly influenced by them
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	Since they are small programs, they often feel marginal. Acred gives them some power
NSU	Fac	Lamporte	1	Y	Y	C	IP	Inf Accred Agency	Now there is a push to get all departments that can be nationally accredited done

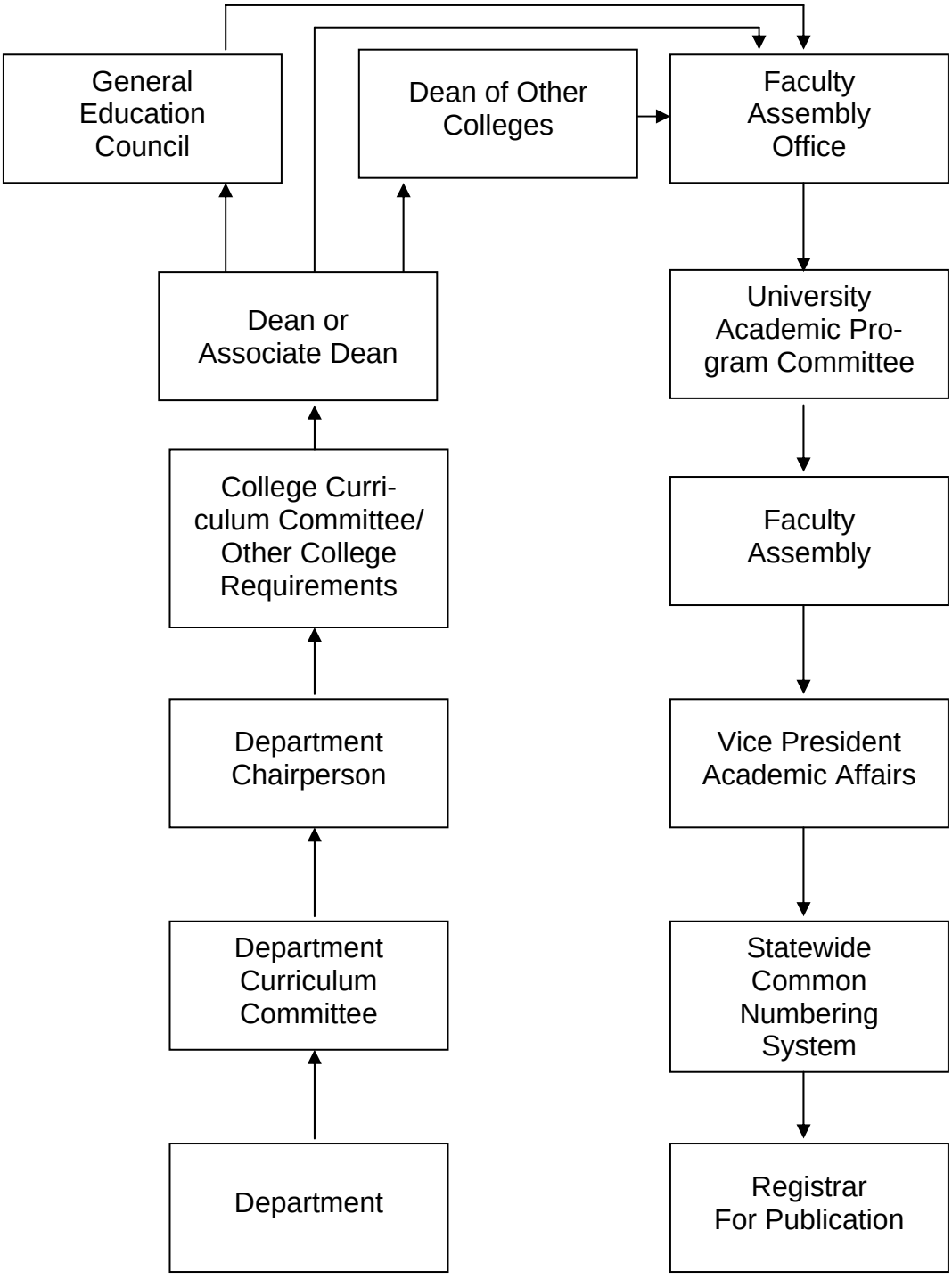

Figure 3. New course approval process at East State University.

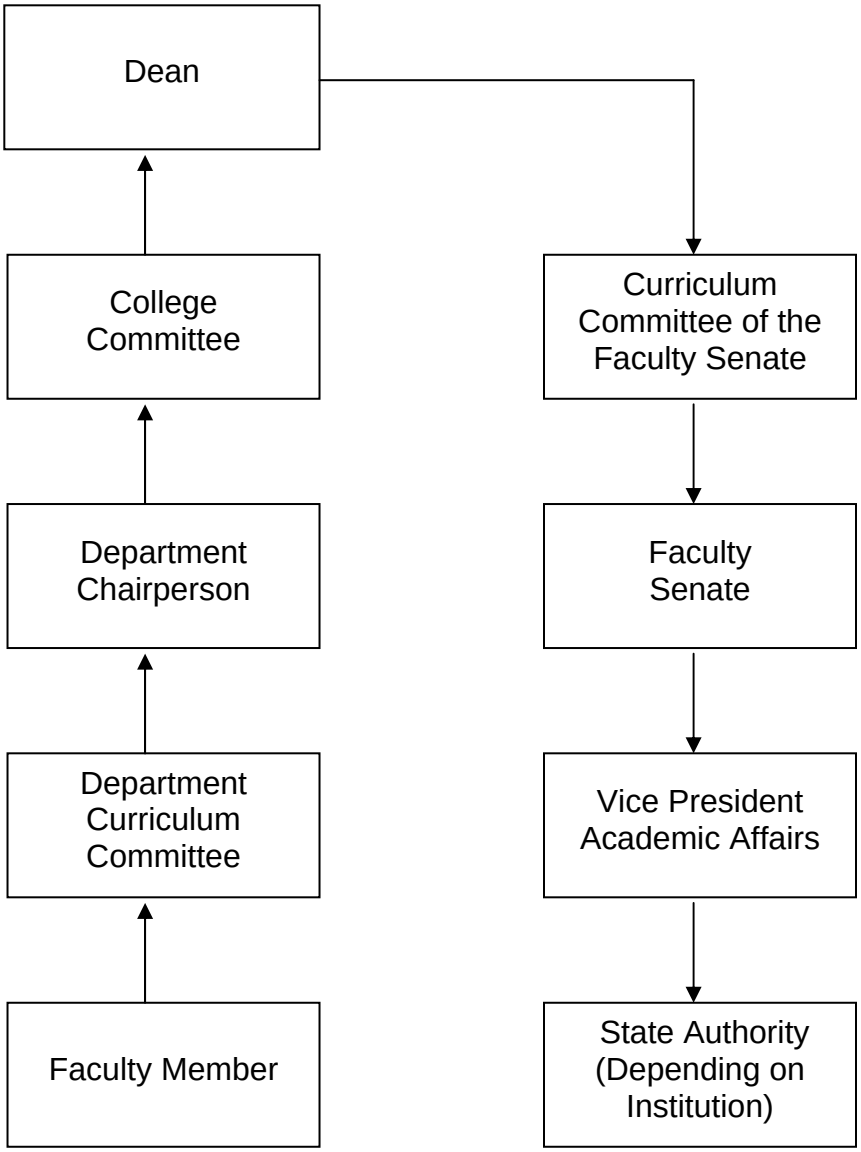

Figure 5. Generic new course approval process.

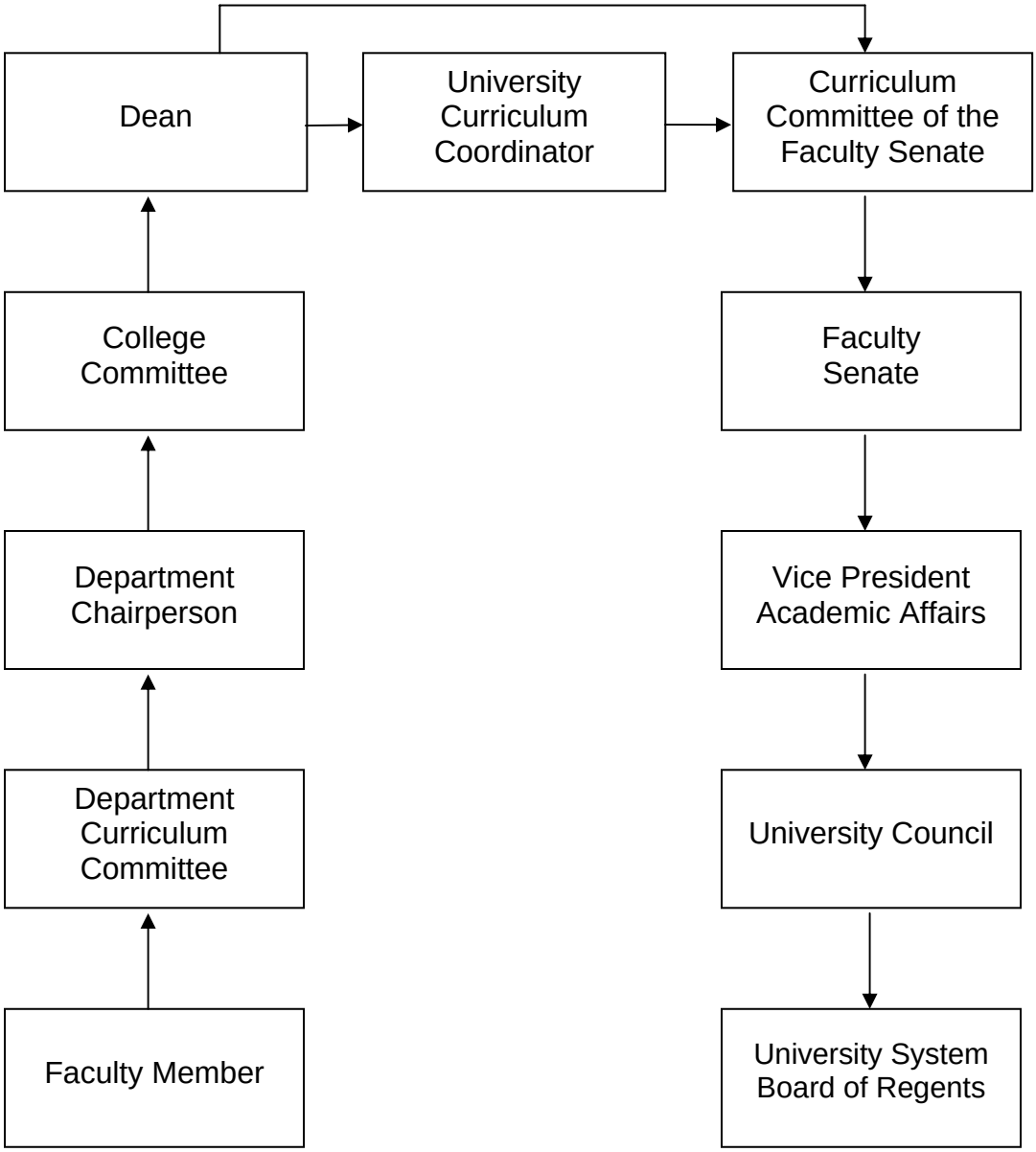

Figure 4. New course approval process at West State University.

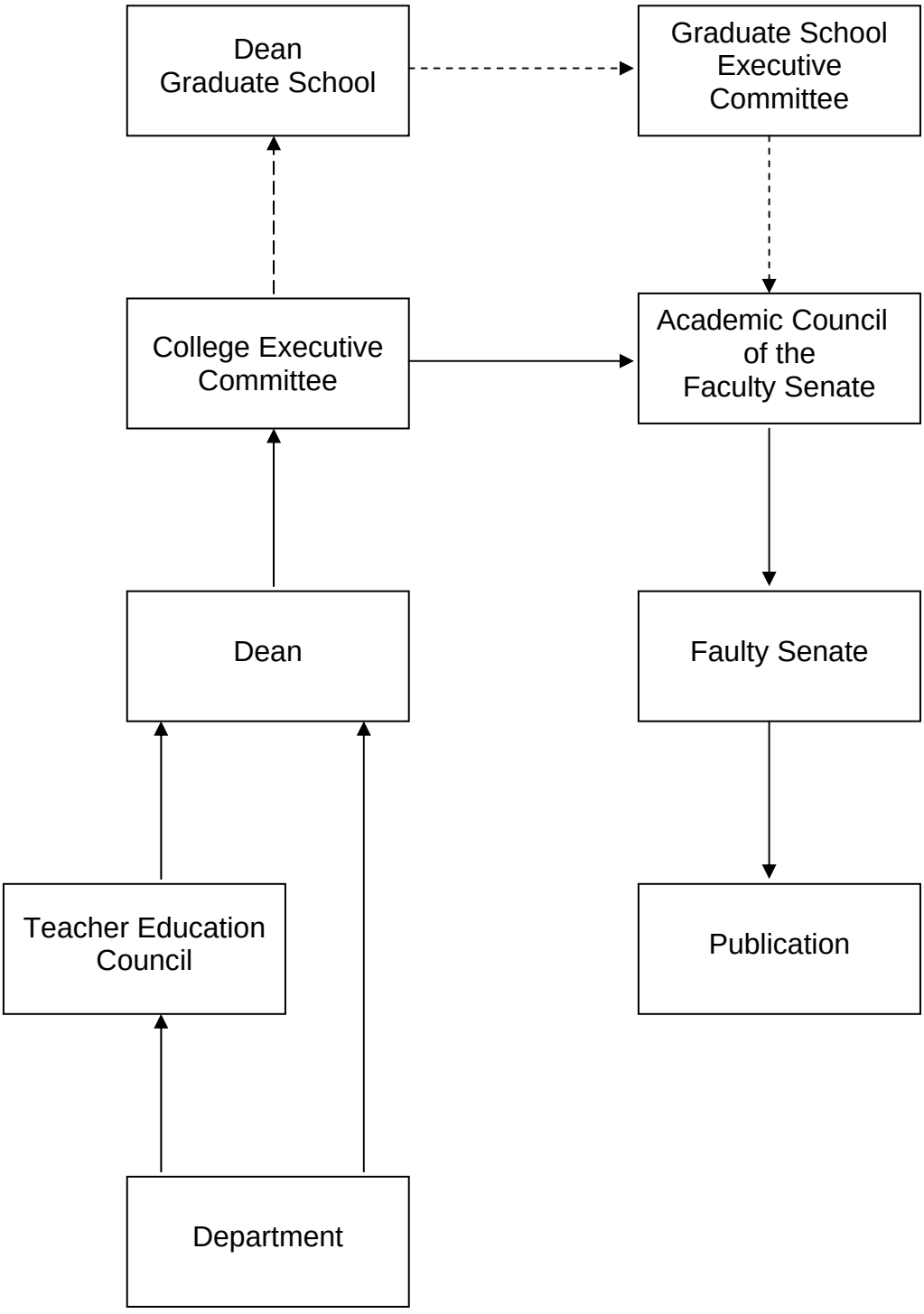

Figure 1. New course approval process at Central State University.

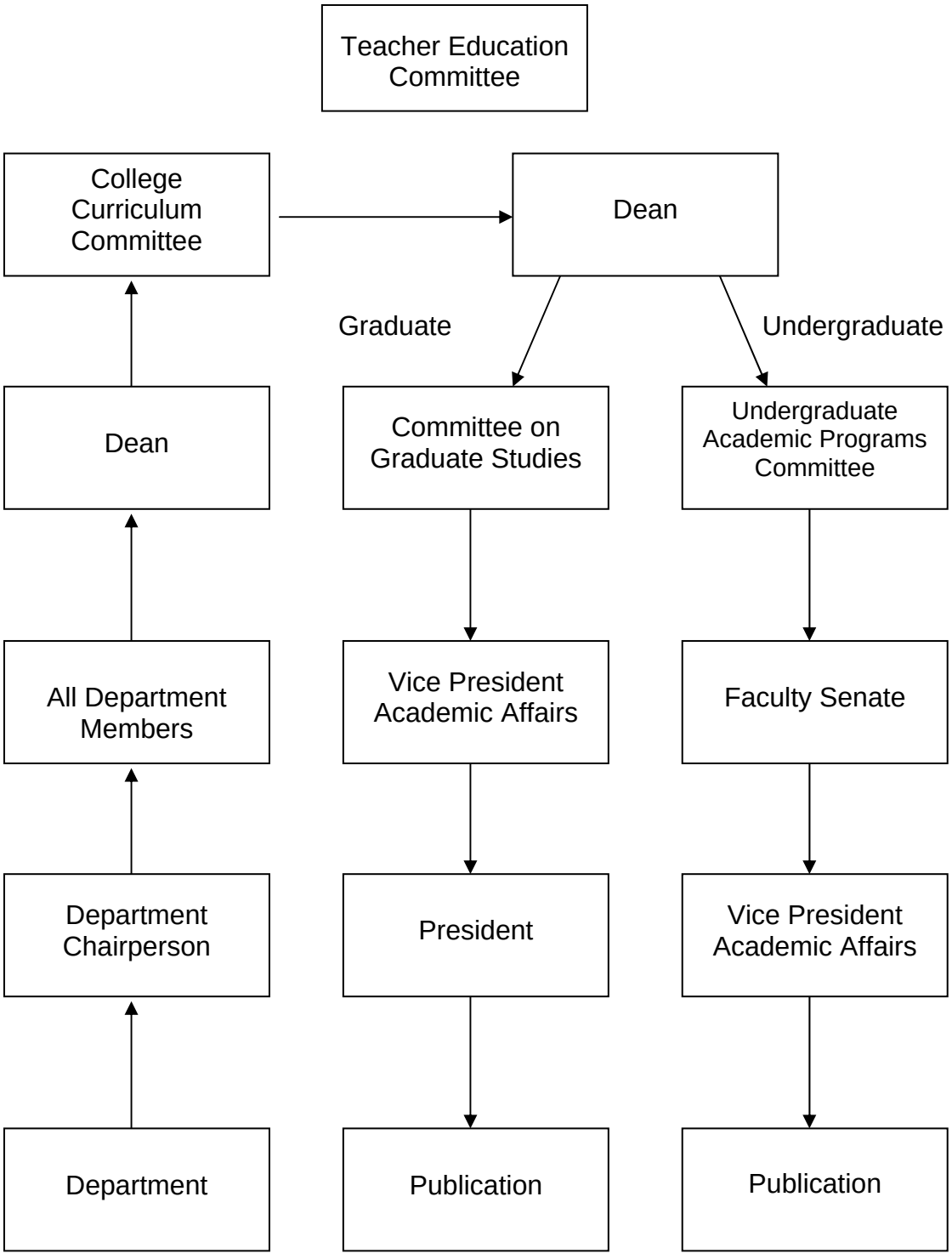

Figure 2. New course approval process at North State University. The location in the governance structure of the Teacher Education Committee had not yet been decided by the institution.