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Participation and Decentralization: Historical Tendencies in Governance at the University of the Pacific

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PARTICIPATION AND DECENTRALIZATION:

Historical Tendencies in Governance at the University of the Pacific

Discussions of College and University governance and of the College of the Pacific Charter in particular, have already generated a substantial number of words on our campus. I venture to add to these words because I believe that it will be good for us to change slightly the direction in which our discussions have been moving. The committee that prepared the Charter and the majority of the College of the Pacific faculty who voted for it have a clear understanding of the purpose of the Charter and of our aims in College governance. Our responsibility now is to relate our plans to those of the University as a whole. For that reason, I believe we should direct our efforts toward understanding the work of the President's Committee on University Governance. Until the report of this committee is complete I advise us to set aside formal implementation of the Charter for a reasonable time as suggested by President McCaffrey. I further recommend that we continue our internal operations as we have done for the past year. In order to explain fully the new direction in which I think our discussions should proceed, I need to say a word or two about the College of the Pacific Charter and the historical process of which I believe it to be a part. I also intend to comment on some of the specific criticisms of the Charter.

Before seeking to place the Charter in its historical context, let me express one or two personal sentiments. I feel a particular responsibility for the Charter. I urged the College of the Pacific Council and the Charter Committee to complete this long pending task. I expected that our affairs would become more orderly as a result of completing this job but we have apparently produced both order and disorder by our efforts. I also want publicly to acknowledge the work of the Charter Committee. The group worked conscientiously and intelligently, first under the chairmanship of Walt Raitt and then under the leadership of Janine Kreiter. The approval of the work of this committee by the majority of the faculty of the College demonstrates to me how much we are in what I see as the main stream of development here and at the University of the Pacific.

Basically the Charter sets forth in a coherent fashion the practices which are now habitual in the College. Behind these habitual practices, however, lies an important historical development within the College and the University. The Charter maintains the long established tradition in the College of the Pacific and in the University of wide participation in decision making. The Charter seeks to facilitate decision making by clearly establishing responsibility for decisions. The forms of participation and responsibility embodied in the Charter of the College of the Pacific have roots deep in our history. Governance in the University of the Pacific during the last thirteen years has had two principal characteristics: 1) Widened faculty participation in policy making; and 2) Decentralization.

Widened participation by faculty in policy making is not a new tendency but a revitalization of the practices of the College when it was first established in Stockton in 1924. Then, under the leadership of President Knoles, the faculty as

a whole met weekly to discuss all policy issues. Over the years such decision making was delegated to representative bodies, first to the Coordinating Council then to the Faculty Council, and now the Academic Council. The Coordinating Council consisted only of the chairmen of the various divisions. The faculty as a whole did not meet regularly after the establishment of the Coordinating Council and faculty meetings were called by President Knoles. The Faculty Council which succeeded the Coordinating Council consisted of all full professors and department chairmen from each school and college. Senior faculty also served on the Academic Policy Committee from 1938 onwards. In both of these bodies the faculty were represented only by senior faculty members. With the growth of the faculty and the consequent increase in the number of assistant and associate professors, this system of representation became less satisfactory because young faculty members felt themselves excluded from important academic decisions.

In 1956 and 1957 as a result of the study made under the auspices of the Methodist Board of Education in Nashville, the Executive Policy Committee was formed and the old Academic Policy Committee suppressed. At that time, a clear distinction was made between committees with administrative responsibility and those with academic responsibilities. Certain duties performed by the Academic Policy Committee were delegated to the Faculty Council and others to the Executive Policy Committee which was constituted as we know it now except for the addition of the chairperson of the Academic Council and the chairperson of ASUOP. This division of administrative and faculty responsibilities was criticized as early as 1965 when a proposal was made to consolidate the Faculty Council and Executive Policy Committee. This proposal apparently had the support of neither the faculty nor of President Burns. In 1957 a chairman of the faculty began to be elected annually, but at first the meetings continued to be called by President Burns who opened the meetings and then turned the meeting over to the faculty chairman. Since 1967 the chairman of the Academic Council has presided over University-wide faculty meetings. The final separation of faculty and administration did not come until the creation of the Academic Council for the Deans of the various schools and colleges generally serve on the Faculty Council as well as the Executive Policy Committee since they held faculty appointments.

The principle of faculty representation by seniority was challenged in the mid-sixties by the young faculty who were united in their opposition to the Faculty Council. In 1967, the Academic Council as we know it now was formed; it was adopted officially by a vote of the faculty in the Spring of 1967 and Dick Reynolds served as its first chairman. There are at least two significant differences between this body and the old Faculty Council which it replaced. One difference is the principle of proportional representation of schools and colleges; and the second is the distribution of membership by rank. The final report to the faculty contains the stipulation that candidates for seats on the Academic Council should come from a variety of academic ranks. As a member of the committee, I remember that there was extended debate whether or not representation from each of the ranks should be made a specific provision of the new Academic Council. The difficulties such a requirement might impose on some of the schools and colleges lead finally to the less specific requirement. The proposal for a College of the Pacific Council, also adopted in 1967, contained a specific requirement that there be rank distribution among the members. The make-up of these new bodies, the Academic Council and the College of the Pacific Council, evidence a widening participation in policy making by faculty in the lower ranks. Initially the members

of the Academic Council were elected by the University as a whole although nominated from the individual schools and colleges. In this respect, the Academic Council had a University-wide character. Now, as you know, the nominations and elections are entirely within the schools and colleges. This change in the electoral process is another indication of the decentralization which has been characteristic of the last eight or ten years.

Simultaneously with these developments in the University as a whole, the College was developing its own governance structure. At the College faculty meeting of September 27, 1966 the creation of the College of the Pacific Council was first discussed. A study group recommended to the faculty the establishment of the College of the Pacific Council in the following spring. The College of the Pacific Council, at first largely advisory to the Dean, has become the major policy making body within the College.

The question of the authority of the Council to formulate policy did not arise in 1967 because the Council was "advisory to the Dean." The authority delegated to the Dean by the President from the Board of Regents and ultimately expressed in the articles of incorporation of the University remained unchanged. The proposed Charter of 1973 endeavors to fix certain responsibilities clearly but the delegation of the authority to fulfill these responsibilities rests with the President. The determination of such authority is clearly not a matter to be decided unilaterally by the faculty of the College of the Pacific. The President's decision must, as he has written, be made in the context of a university-wide governance structure. This structure obviously must be legally correct. President McCaffrey has recently appointed me to the President's Committee on University Governance. The purpose of this group is to recommend to the President the development of an effective system of governance at this juncture in our history. Through the Committee I shall endeavor to say that governance at the University of the Pacific must continue the historically established tradition of faculty participation in decision making. Our governance structure must also be consistent with the larger intellectual and academic tradition to which we as professional men and women are committed. This professional commitment is implicit in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure prepared jointly by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors. The University of the Pacific through its faculty and the Executive Policy Committee has endorsed the 1940 Statement. The Policy Documents and Reports of AAUP, all of which derive from and build on the 1940 Statement, can help us to assess our practices in the light of those of the American Academic Community of which we are a part.

I, therefore, urge that we now devote our thought and energy to working with the President's Committee on University Governance. We have done what we can to put our house in order. Let us now coordinate our work with that of other units in the University. Faculty participation in policy making is well established on this campus, and the forms of governance are quite highly developed. We have positive experience with the forms of faculty participation in decision making. We have, however, much less experience in dealing with our second historical tendency: decentralization. This experience is recent and its forms are less tried.

The process of decentralization begun in 1961 in the "Pioneer or Perish" speech

by President Burns. The process is now rather advanced but we are not much more skilled in dealing with conflict among the units than we were in 1965. In the spring of that year a conflict arose over the differences between the sabbatical program for the Raymond faculty and the other members of the faculty of the University. At that time there was no satisfactory means of adjudicating this difference. We must have an instrument by which all programs in the University can be reviewed and approved by the University so as to assure conformity with overall University educational and financial policy. This instrument will have to be shaped by the President's Committee on Governance. The recommendations of the committee must, it seems to me, take into account our history and one rather recent change in University governance. Under President McCaffrey's leadership, students have increasingly been included on University committees and non-academic personnel have been, for the first time, consistently included on such committees. The College has, of course, included students on committees for the last several years and the Charter provides for student representation on College committees. This tendency toward a wider sharing of responsibility in decision making seems to me wise for two reasons: one, we draw upon the knowledge and experience of more people, and, two, we create a stronger sense of community as we work together on important issues. Through shared responsibility we can create the trust and cooperation which are necessary to achieve the goals of the University. I spoke of the importance of this trust in February and May of last year when Bob Anderson and I presented College financial and enrollment data to the faculty. On both occasions I said that we in the College feel a responsibility to the University. In May, Bob and I proposed a model by which we can analyze the financial interdependency of the various units of the University.

This is our history as I see it. The faculty have always participated in policy making on this campus, but the procedures for providing faculty representation have varied. The second important historical tendency is the move toward decentralization. We have less experience to guide us in finding a model for decentralized decision making. As a member of the President's Committee on Governance, I shall work to create a model which localizes responsibility but maintains the values of the University.

Let me conclude this capsule history of governance at the University and turn now to the specific criticisms which have been brought against the charter.

- 1) The responsibility of the Dean has been unwisely weakened.
- 2) The College seeks to function independently of the University.
- 3) The rotation of the department chairmen will be destructive of curriculum planning and faculty development.

I shall discuss these points in the reverse order in which I have presented them. Initially I opposed any basic alteration of our existing practices in the proposed College of the Pacific Charter. My first objective was to describe as clearly and as accurately as possible the procedures developed over the last few years. As the discussion of the Charter proceeded, however, I became persuaded of the value of the proposed election of department chairmen. The idea is, after all, not a new one in the College. It was discussed in the winter of 1966 and 1967 when the

College of the Pacific Council was being designed. The proposed plan cannot be applied uniformly to all departments of the College. There are obvious instances in which it is not feasible to institute rotating chairmanships, but I believe that the provisions of the charter provide the faculty and the Dean with ways of dealing with these cases. Finally, I supported the proposal because I became convinced that rotation will contribute to the vitality of the departments and to the professional growth of all the members of the faculty of the College of the Pacific. I have already observed this effect during the tenure in office of several acting chairmen. They have brought new ideas and new energies to the departments of the College. I have also seen the energy, enthusiasm, and intelligence which Larry Walker has devoted to his new responsibilities. I saw Bob Anderson introduce improved practices in administering the Introductory Year Program which had never occurred to me. These observations have convinced me that terms of office and rotation will benefit us.

The second criticism, that the charter encourages us to separatism or withdrawal from the University, ignores another faculty action taken last spring. The faculty of the College accepted the Charter, and endorsed three major educational aims of the College at the same time. The faculty affirmed the following:

- 1) A commitment to liberal education for students earning the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees in the College;
- 2) A responsibility to serve degree programs in every school or College of the University; and
- 3) A commitment to the specialized or major programs based in either one or several departments of the College.

In other words, we are committed to liberal education, service education, and specialized education. The impression of our intransigence may be owing to one sentence in the Charter which states that the College faculty has full and final authority for the educational programs of the College. A program of which our faculty do not approve or are not competent to offer could not and should not be offered in the College, but the statement does not take into account the interdependent relationship of the College with the rest of the University. Surely the statement can be modified to be truer and less truculent. Our commitment to the University as a whole is profound. Last September at our opening faculty meeting I said I could not imagine a strong College of the Pacific apart from the University or a strong University without a vital College of the Pacific at its heart. My one year of experience has confirmed me in the opinion that the destiny of the College and of the University is one.

As for the third criticism, let me try to define briefly again the role of the Dean as I see it. I said last September that I believed in what I called teacher-administrators. When I agreed to be a candidate for the deanship I proposed a term of office as a way of assuring the vital relationship which I feel between teaching and administration. This relationship is particularly important in the College. I have insisted that administrative posts in the Office of the Deans be filled by persons holding appointments in the College. This decision restricts the panel of persons to be considered for these posts and at another time we should seek candidates from outside the College. At any time, however, I believe

that teaching experience is essential preparation for administrative responsibility in the College of the Pacific.

The Charter charges the Dean to implement the policies of the College and the University. I take these responsibilities very seriously. A clear definition of the role of the dean, however, must be concurrent with the delegation of all the responsibilities of the College. Sound educational policy has to be based in the competence and commitment of the faculty; thus it is the faculty, through the Council, who should form the educational policies of the College. The Dean, subject to University-wide academic and fiscal restraints, then implements these policies. I hope the faculty, through appropriate representative bodies, can also assume certain responsibilities for the allocation of our resources. In making this proposal I am venturing onto untried ground for this University. Also I am expressing a purely private opinion. I have endeavored to prepare the faculty for such responsibilities by the two reports given to you last year.

The dean, however, does not simply implement faculty policies. He also provides leadership particularly in long range planning. To describe this leadership I will comment on some instances of what I am doing. With the concurrence of the College of the Pacific Council, I asked Dr. McCrone to authorize a third position, that of Assistant Dean, in the Office of the Deans. I have been at some pains to explain that the position is not that of Dean of Students or "Preceptor" to use current University of the Pacific jargon. Naturally I am delighted at the opportunity to unite in the Office of the Deans, academic advising and academic planning. These processes cannot be separated. I believe we shall also realize some of the objectives recommended by the faculty in May of 1969. The Danforth Committee call for systematic gathering of information about students in the College in order to advise them wisely and to plan effectively to meet their needs. The labor of a third person in the Office of the Deans will move us a step closer to the realization of this aim.

Meeting student needs requires not short but long-range planning. I know from the experience of working with Bill Binkley for three years and with Bob Anderson for one year that two people cannot gather the information needed for serious long-range planning. Bob made a splendid beginning in gathering, analyzing, and presenting data. The data he, Wes Dunn, and Bill Brown presented to the faculty last spring is, obviously, only a beginning. We must know more about our students and about our teaching. We must try to discover whether or not we are using our human and material resources to the best advantage. I hope we can do some careful marginal costing; for example I want to know with certainty how much each additional student in Chemistry 25 costs us or how many more students we can accommodate in Physics 53 before we have to expend additional money.

The College must continue to grow and to change in ways none of us can now accurately foresee. Our movement must not be random but purposeful if we are to meet the new and changing needs of students. The Office of the Deans must help the faculty seek out the directions in which we should move. To provide such help, we shall have to see beyond the trees of daily or hourly problems. The third person in the Office of the Deans will help us gain a vantage point from which we can see a bit farther than the next semester.

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The curriculum review in which we are engaged is a further instance of the leadership I deem appropriate. Last September I outlined problems to which our attention must be given. Each of these problems is in the process of being analyzed in the program review established by the College last spring. In order to expedite one important part of this review, I appointed an ad hoc Dean's Task Force to make recommendations on liberal education in the College so that the Multi-Disciplinary Committee can work with some concrete proposals for improving the Introductory Year Program. I thought I might get some light as well as heat on I & I. The proposals of that committee will be presented to the faculty later this semester.

In addition to the actions I have described I have been creating a new Versailles on the second floor of Knoles Hall. It has already been dubbed "Parkinson's Hall" by one of my friends. And so one further deavly role can be defined - cultivation of la gloire. The temptation is to talk until time to eat and drink, or drink and eat, but even in my new character I have still some sense of elementary fairness and will gladly cede "equal time".