

V. PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

A. Planning for the Future

As the College moves toward its goal of becoming a technological university, its planning and decision-making processes are evolving to meet the challenge of growth and diversification. The College has had a tradition of strong central administration, particularly focused in the President. In the last decade, in common with many other institutions, a concerted effort has been made to involve faculty and students more effectively in the decision-making process. Many structural and procedural changes have been made on the initiative of faculty, administrators, and students. The following pages outline the present decision-making process, with particular attention to the innovations of recent years. An attempt is made to project future patterns.

The College's development as a technological university must take place within the context of public higher education in New Jersey, in a period where centralized state planning is becoming increasingly important. This section will conclude with an examination of the College's relationship with the other public institutions and with the New Jersey Department of Higher Education.

B. The Decision-Making Structure

The College's decision-making structure is not untypical of the pattern in many colleges. It involves an extensive collection of faculty, administration, and student committees, with various avenues of communication, formal and informal. Several groups central to the decision-making structure are described briefly in the following paragraphs.

1. The Executive Committee

Chaired by the President, this committee meets monthly to consider matters

of general academic administration. These concerns may range from academic personnel policies to the annual equipment budget. Membership consists of the department chairmen and the academic deans. This committee has played a central role in the administration of the College for many years.

2. The Committee on Curriculum

Charged with overseeing the undergraduate and graduate curriculums, this committee meets at least monthly. The department chairmen, two students, and the academic deans are members. The Dean of Engineering is chairman. Although this committee is authorized to reach decisions on a variety of curriculum matters, it must report to the Executive Committee on major policy questions.

3. The Faculty Council

Established in 1966, the Council is elected by the Faculty on a representative basis. It was established with the full support of administration and faculty to "communicate, investigate, deliberate, and initiate." Intended as an advisory group, it may recommend actions to "the Faculty, the Staff, the President, the Board of Trustees, or any person or duly constituted committee or academic body of the College." The group, which meets at least bi-weekly and has several sub-committees, has undertaken a broad range of activities, particularly concerning faculty personnel matters. It plays a central role as a representative voice of the faculty.

4. The Professional Staff Association

A further development in faculty organization took place as a result of the enactment of Chapter 303, New Jersey Public Laws, 1968, called the New Jersey Public Employee Negotiations Law. This law provides for negotiation procedures for all public employees in the State of New Jersey on all issues affecting

conditions of employment.

The employee group may elect a representative through whom all discussions with the employer on all negotiable subjects take place. The NCE staff decided to organize its own association to represent it. In April, 1970, the Professional Staff Association was officially recognized by NCE's Board of Trustees as the bargaining agent on terms and conditions of employment.

5. The Student Senate and Other Bodies

Representing the students, the Senate has broad responsibilities for student affairs. It frequently interacts with the above groups, with the Dean of Students, and with the President on matters of student interest.

Other significant groups are the Administrative Council, which deals with non-academic administrative matters, the Committee on Academic Standing, and the Committee on Student-Faculty Relations.

C. Planning of Academic Programs

The Committee on Curriculum coordinates the development of new undergraduate and graduate courses and programs. Proposals for new courses typically come to the Committee after thorough review by the faculty of the proposing department. After a consideration of questions relating to need, costs, and priorities, the Committee may give final approval for offering the course. Where questions of possible use by other departments or duplication with existing courses arise, the proposal may be referred to various departments for comment before final action. Major revisions of an existing curriculum are referred to the Executive Committee and to the Faculty for approval, where appropriate.

New degree programs receive extensive consideration. Initial proposals for new degree programs often develop within the Committee, although they may come from departments or individual faculty and students. Typically, after an initial

discussion the Committee appoints a faculty sub-committee to review the need for a new program and to develop a formal proposal. Chairmen are asked to review such proposals with their department faculties and modifications may be made on the basis of these discussions. If the proposal still looks promising, the Committee will recommend its approval to the Executive Committee. An open hearing may be held for general faculty comment. The proposal then is submitted for Faculty action, Board of Trustees approval, and final authorization by the State Board of Higher Education. At any point it may be rejected or referred back for modification.

Involvement of the faculty in academic planning has increased in recent years. Departmental chairmen have been encouraged to make special efforts to discuss all pending curriculum matters with their respective faculties. The Committee on Curriculum, in further encouragement of this trend, is placing greater reliance on sub-committees, made up of representative faculty members, to examine questions of curriculum development.

In spite of continuing efforts to inform and involve interested faculty, the academic decision-making process is not without problems. To be effectively involved, all faculty must keep current with the complex national trends in engineering education. Some faculty feel that they are not sufficiently informed or involved -- that someone else is making decisions for them. This is also a problem with effective student participation in academic planning.

D. Academic Personnel Decisions

The College's policies and procedures regarding academic personnel have been substantially altered in recent years. Many of the changes were initially proposed by the Faculty Council; others were initiated by the Executive Committee; some simply evolved on the basis of experience. In several cases, the two groups worked together to develop a proposal for Faculty consideration. Most of the

changes ultimately required Board of Trustee approval.

For several years, faculty appointments, promotions, and tenure have been reviewed by department and College-wide committees. The departmental committees, which consist of tenured full professors, make initial recommendations for appointments, promotions, or tenure. Promotion and tenure recommendations are reviewed by a College-wide committee (consisting of three faculty and three administrators), for final recommendation to the President. The system has greatly increased faculty involvement, compared to the earlier system, where a department chairman alone made recommendations directly to the President. It has also increased the complexity of the process, thereby creating some confusion and uneasiness among younger faculty.

The Executive Committee and the Faculty Council worked closely together for two years on an extensive revision of the criteria for promotion and for tenure. After a study extending over two years, the revised criteria were submitted for Faculty approval with the endorsement of both groups, thereby facilitating prompt favorable Faculty action.

The procedure for appointing department chairmen has undergone a gradual evolution in the last several years. It is the prerogative of the President to appoint chairmen; and, with the assistance of the Dean of Engineering, he has moved toward formalizing faculty involvement in the selection. At present, when a vacancy occurs in a chairmanship, an advisory committee on selection is elected by the department faculty. The committee meets with the Dean of Engineering to identify and screen candidates and make a recommendation to the President. During the screening process, all department staff have an opportunity to comment on the candidates.

More recently, the Faculty Council has proposed formalizing the selection procedure and also developing a periodic evaluation procedure for chairmen, with a specific term of office.

There are also formal procedures for faculty involvement in selection of a President and Deans.

E. Student Involvement in Decision-Making

In keeping with national patterns in the last few years, students have become more involved in the decision-making process at the College. As a commuter institution, with most students and faculty living far from campus, NCE has a special challenge in maintaining effective student-faculty-administrative communication. Student involvement greatly increased in the mid-60's when new facilities permitted a substantial increase in extracurricular activities.

In the early days, students were assigned a position in the College organization which was defined by the first President of the College, Dr. Allan R. Cullimore:

"A student of an engineering college especially will readily perceive the professional aspects which should be common to undergraduate life and to the days when the classroom assignments are but a memory. The place of the employer is taken by the College. Its administration and faculty establish the policies under which the student is expected to work and prescribe the immediate objectives of his labors."*

In keeping with the relative quiescence of the 1950's and with this interpretation of the "professional aspects," the student government concerned itself primarily with those matters relegated to the area of student activities and rarely either represented student interests, rights, and privileges, or became involved with academic and administrative matters. There were no students assigned to faculty committees. However, it was a common practice for departmental administrators to seek student opinion regarding curriculum revision

* Engineering - A Discipline, Newark College of Engineering, Allan R. Cullimore

through the professional and honor societies. One committee, the Committee on Student Morale, met several times annually and invited students to meet and express views, complaints and suggestions. This was the extent of the formal, structured means of feedback and communication. The most effective kind of student exchange with faculty and administration depended upon the presence of a given person when there was a matter to be aired.

During the 1962-63 school year, a required student activity fee was established. The expenditure of the income from this source, dedicated to the student activity and athletic programs, was made the responsibility of the Student Council. Because the increased income generated decided increases in activities and athletics, the student government metamorphosed from a lethargic to an animated stage.

Student enrollment was rising during the period and this factor, combined with the Council's newly acquired responsibilities, resulted in a revitalized and eventually enlarged student government organized on the basis of functional representation. Following 1963, the Student Council began to concern itself with all matters affecting NCE students and gradually became involved in administrative and academic affairs on an informal basis. It was not until 1964-65 that students were appointed to faculty committees with full membership status. During that year, students joined the Athletic Policy Board, the Committee on Student Life and Open House Committee, the Committee on Professional Conduct, and the Student Life Fund Review Board. In 1965-66, the Student-Faculty Relations Committee was established; this represented an important step toward involving students with policy making.

By the 1967-68 school year, the Student Council had begun to take an active and obvious interest in all phases of college governance that affected students. Student representatives began to meet with officers of the Faculty Council, and by 1969-70 students were permitted to attend faculty meetings and meetings of the

College Board of Trustees. The President of the College meets at least once each month with student representatives for lunch, and the Deans have feedback meetings almost daily. Many recent policy changes have been made because of the efforts of NCE students working through their Class Councils and the Student Senate.

Student appointments to college committees provide a productive and valued input to decision-making. Currently, students serve on nearly all of the College committees, including those for Curriculum and Academic Standing. The initiation of departmental feedback committees by the Electrical Engineering Department in 1964 also represented an important contribution to the improvement of student-faculty communications. The procedure was so successful that the Student-Faculty Relations Committee encouraged the establishment of similar committees by all of the Departments, and they have been functioning with varying degrees of success since 1966.

In conclusion, it appears that the older concept of "professional relationships" has gradually been replaced by a newer view of the value of student opinion as it applies to the exercise of the responsibilities borne by the administrators and the members of the faculty.

F. College Governance in the Future

The direction college governance will take at Newark College of Engineering in the years immediately ahead is not entirely clear. The Faculty Council and some administrators have expressed concern that many of the policies and traditions of the College are not fully documented and indexed, and that there are undesirable gaps in the system. There are some members of the faculty who feel that the faculty should have the dominant role in the setting of all College policies. There are others who feel that the various constituencies of the College should share responsibility and authority according to their share of accountability. Somewhere between these extremes probably lies an optimum plan of governance.

G. Long-Range Planning

Shortly after assuming the Presidency in the late 40's, Dr. Robert W. Van Houten began the development of a long-range plan for the College. The procedure that followed was not a formal one, but it did involve the Trustees, the President, the Vice President, and certain key faculty and administrators. With the help of consultants, a long-range development for the physical facilities of the College was drafted in the mid-50's. This became the basic guide for the ensuing campus development.

Concurrently, the Executive Committee and the Curriculum Committee began a long-range revision of the curriculums, the educational philosophy, and the procedural regulations of the College. There were many sub-committees, ad hoc committees, and individual assignments, but no formal planning structure. The President and the administrative staff gave similar attention to the administrative organization and gradually made changes, always hopefully, in advance of each need.

With the change in Presidency in 1970, and the current apparent stabilization of physical and enrollment growth, all coupled with changing demands on the College for services, a more formalized structure for planning is being developed. A group has been established to handle the development, approval, and implementation of requested minor-to-major changes in physical facilities.

Within each department there has been organized a long-range planning committee, each of which submitted initial reports at the end of the 1970-'71 year. Under the chairmanship of a faculty member, representatives from each of these committees are meeting to develop a College-wide long-range planning committee and procedures for it to follow. The recommendations that come from this committee will be directed to the proper faculty committees, administrators, or to ad hoc committees set up to further develop or implement the recommendation.

A computerized accounting system that will distribute and accumulate costs and provide budget control and ongoing space studies through a computerized system

developed by the State Department of Higher Education will assist in the long-range planning process. Studies of faculty loading and productivity are also in process.

H. The State System

Planning for the future of Newark College of Engineering must be done within the context of a developing public system of higher education in New Jersey. The Department of Higher Education, established in 1967, has been charged with preparing a comprehensive master plan for higher education in the State. The master plan is presently under development, and has already been the subject of considerable controversy between the Department and the individual institutions.

Prior to the establishment of the new department, higher education was administered by the Department of Education, responsible for all levels of education in the State. Preoccupied with the manifold problems of public primary and secondary education, and lacking sufficient staff, the department provided a minimum of coordination of higher education and required only a limited accountability from the public colleges and universities.

Now, with the establishment of the new Department of Higher Education, some college administrators are concerned about its growing bureaucratic tendencies which, they feel, are infringing upon institutional autonomies and hindering, rather than helping, needed development. The Department of Higher Education, on the other hand, points to its responsibility for coordination and the development of a greater degree of accountability, especially in the fiscal area.

A rather remarkable exchange of these opposing viewpoints appeared recently in The Record, one of New Jersey's major newspapers. The quotations that follow are both revealing and quite accurate in describing the present "frame of mind" of higher education in the State.

Dr. Mason Gross, the then retiring President of Rutgers - The State University, made the following remarks in an address to legislators from other states at a meeting in Florida:

"I have yet to discover any state university president who is happy with the system under which he now exists. I am not happy with it as it exists now, and I am apprehensive as to what may come about in the future . . .

"(Rutgers' budget) requests are revised and reduced by the Chancellor's office, then resubmitted to the state budget office as if they were the school's original requests. In sending the Rutgers estimate of fiscal needs to the budget office, the State Board of Higher Education relies on the decisions of the Chancellor's office, and doesn't get to see itself the university's own requests.

"This we find a terribly frustrating situation . . . A department of higher education such as we have in New Jersey is able to attract a number of very able, even brilliant young people, most of whom stay only a short time. They are people whose connections with the actual working of universities on campus are probably confined to their own undergraduate experiences.

"They are, therefore, experts on how to make a budget, or how to build a building, or whatever problems may come up, but they have no feeling whatsoever for what makes a university tick.

"This is the real essence of a bureaucracy built up around the Chancellor."

Ralph A. Dungan, Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education, later offered this rebuttal in the pages of the same newspaper, whose main points are quoted here:

"Forty-six states have created mechanisms to plan and co-ordinate higher education. The trend in recent years has been toward greater centralization, not more campus autonomy. In any event, as Dr. Gross points out, few university presidents are happy with statewide co-ordination.

"And why should they be? For the first time public agencies have been created and staffed which are able to challenge accepted practices and the authority of

those who have traditionally dominated the scene in higher education. For the first time there are those who believe we must act as well as make speeches if we are to bring about that major educational reform which will be necessary if we are to survive this decisive and austerity-ridden decade.

"Statewide co-ordination with powers of program and budget approval grew out of the increasing frustration of governors and legislators as they attempted to cope with a vastly expanded higher education establishment without directly involving themselves in university affairs . . .

"The days are gone when the authority of university presidents is sufficient to command unquestioned support of their requests or even their view of social and educational goals. In higher education there are more players in the game, and decision-making on goals and resource allocation is not the exclusive preserve of either the faculty or the educational administrator. It is this fundamental fact which is difficult for some accustomed to other traditions to accept.

"Of equal concern to those legislatures which created statewide co-ordinating and monitoring agencies like the New Jersey Board of Higher Education was the need to moderate and co-ordinate the pellmell growth and proliferation of programs, degrees, schools, etc. which marked the decade of the Sixties. Efforts at voluntary co-ordination and planning failed because of institutional ambition and log-rolling.

"Dr. Gross is absolutely correct in raising questions about possible adverse academic consequences of excessive interference in the affairs of a college or university by a statewide co-ordinator or anyone else. Unfortunately, his case is more polemical than factual. He confuses asking a question about how space is utilized -- or how many dollars are expended to educate an engineer or sociologist or why a part-time student pays more for his education than a full-time student -- with dictation about what standards should or will be . . .

"(But) one way or another public institutions and independent colleges to an

increasing degree are going to have to maintain higher and more precise standards of public accountability than they ever have in the past."

I. NCE's Role in the State System

In some respects, NCE occupies a unique position among the public institutions of higher education in New Jersey. As a special purpose institution, focusing on professional education in engineering, it has not been subjected to the severe enrollment pressures experienced by Rutgers and the eight State colleges. In the last decade, NCE has emphasized development of quality graduate programs, while experiencing a modest growth in the undergraduate enrollment. Other State institutions have grown spectacularly, and it has been pointed out that recent State emphases have had to focus strongly on providing space for additional students. This emphasis on numbers has led to what some feel is a lack of perception of the College's needs by state officials.

NCE has been caught in the turbulence of the evolving State colleges and an evolving State Board and Department of Higher Education. Over the years, NCE has developed a stability and autonomy and a reasonable clarity of mission not possessed by some other elements of the State system.

No one among the Presidents, or on the Chancellor's staff, or even on the Board of Higher Education has a developed understanding of the role each is to play in the development of the system and its master planning. The fine line that distinguishes coordination from bureaucratic interference or control is constantly being breached. This fact creates anger and frustration, and muddies the waters of understanding. It also brings great confusion to the development of responsibility, authority and accountability, as well as to local short and long-range planning.

Undoubtedly, the parts each element must play in the total system will evolve eventually; but it is to be hoped that the ensuing scar tissue will not disfigure

the elements so that their public and private image will become unacceptable to the citizens of New Jersey or to the national educational community.

New Jersey's overriding recent problem has been the accommodation of its college students in private and public institutions within the State. The number of students to be enrolled has dominated the distribution of capital and operational resources, as was pointed out earlier in this case study. This fact has already affected the excellence and needed diversity of the total educational system. Resources are limited and are becoming more so, and as a result the controls are becoming ever more stringent in Trenton.

In all fairness, the looming shadows of the State Budget Office, the Legislature, and the Governor must be recognized as exerting their own pressures on the Chancellor's office. These pressures are difficult to translate into a common language that will provide understanding within the academic system as well as within the State system of governance.

The position of NCE in all this confusion has been that of losing some of its definition. Recognized as a conservative, carefully administered professional college, with a well-defined mission and plan -- an institution which marshalls its resources most carefully -- NCE now finds itself being measured by the common yardstick of numbers, with little attention paid to its present or future significance in the total scheme of things.

NCE is presently emerging from its initial shock over the attacks on its own autonomy. To continue to retain its hard-won vitality and quality the College knows that it must work more aggressively than ever to convince all elements within the State of its value as an institution.