

In the Belly of the Beast

by Richard Warts

Do not attempt to adjust your set. They are in control of bureaucracy. They control the passage of red tape and it's proliferation. If logic and intelligence demand shortcuts, blink again. You are now entering the outer limits of university officialdom...Doooooo-WEEEEEE. Oooooooo.....

Enough shit. This university is an institution split with a capital I and like any institution it has an administration governing its own functions and direction. The administration here at the U of A is a convoluted mess of committees, council meetings and bureaucracy. However there is an underlying semblance of order. First, right at the very top of the hierarchy we have the President Myer Horowitz. The President is accountable to the Board of Governors for overall policy and is in charge of managing the human, financial and physical resources of the university. He does a lot of delegating authority. The two decision making heavyweights here at the U of A are the Board of Governors and the General Faculties Council. The Board of Governors is responsible for general management of the university, its revenues, properties, and business affairs. The General Faculties Council is responsible for the academic affairs.

There is also a university Senate. The Senate does not actually make decisions but acts in a kind of advisory role to the Board of Governors and the General Faculties Council.

Within the individual faculties are the various faculty councils which implement the decisions handed down by the Board of Governors and the General Faculties Council.

There also exists the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association. Although guaranteed input at all levels of administrative decision making, students' influence is less than awesome and borders on the barely irksome. The Students' Union exists autonomously from the university administration. It is subject to the over-riding control of the Board of Governors.

Last but definitely worth mentioning is the Provincial Government, Peter and the boys. They provide the operating grants, that is, the MONEY. This makes them God.

Individually and collectively these institutions have spawned all kinds of



Two aspects of U of A government; on the right, University President Myer Horowitz; on the left, Students Council.

committees, departments, and associations. Thinking about them all committee-ing around, leaving little piles of red tape on the living room rug hurts my head; it would probably kill yours. So I'll ignore them and concentrate on the biggies in the administration: the Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council, the Senate and the Students' Union.

Starting at the bottom and working our way up leaving the Students' Union for last we begin at the Senate.

THE SENATE

Basically the Senate is a device for getting outside influence into the administration of the university, since universities tend to exist as small isolated communities unto themselves. The ex-

pressions 'ivory tower' and 'cloistered existence' are attempts to describe this condition. The Senate's function and membership is an attempt to ensure that the U of A is not only responsive to the outside world but also aware of its existence.

The main function of the Senate is to "inquire into enhancing the usefulness of the university". This is accomplished by setting up various committees to examine specific issues, before making recommendations to the Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council and the Provincial Government. In examining the usefulness of the university, these committees have looked at native students, student aid, proposed new buildings and examined the problems faced by disabled students.

The membership of the Senate also reflects the need for outside influence; thirty of its sixty-two members come from the general public. The Board of Governors and the General Faculties Council appoint two and eight. This ensures that all branches of the university administration know what the others are up to. The Students' Union appoints four and the Graduate Students' Association one. The alumni appoint four members to ensure a sense of continuity I suppose, and the Government appoints eight members because they want to.

The Senate also has the power to confer honorary degrees as part of its duties in acting as a bridge between the outside world and the university.

The Senate gets together only five times a year in meetings open to the public.

This brings us one step the ladder of administrative power to the General Faculties Council.

GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL

The General Faculties Council represents a kind of parliament in which decisions are made with input from all areas of the university. But unlike the House of Commons the real decisions are not made here; they are passed on higher up to the Board of Governors.

The president of the university chairs the General Faculties Council, and the three vice presidents sit as members. Also representing the administration are the twenty deans, the registrar and the head librarian. The teaching staff elects fifty

members.

Students are also represented on the General Faculties Council accounting for about forty per cent of the membership. There are three statutory appointments by students to the General Faculties Council: the Students' Union president, the Vice-President Academic, the Graduate Students' Association president. There are in addition thirty-nine undergraduate and eight graduate students elected.

However, don't go getting the idea that students are treated to their full forty per cent's worth of the decision making. One limitation is the General Faculties Council's attendant and influential committees in which student representation is much less than forty per cent.

One such committee is the University Planning Committee which makes recommendations to General Faculties Council on budget allocations, the establishment of new departments and chairs and the axing of old ones. This committee has thirteen members of which three are students.

Another limitation to the student influence on the General Faculties Council is the students themselves. Most of us really don't give a shit about the administration of the university. Many of the student positions are never even filled and attendance at the monthly meetings tends to be erratic.

However, even if we were not an apathetic bunch it would not make too much of a difference since the real power in the administration exists one step up the ladder with the Board of Governors.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

These guys are the king pins, the head honchos, the lord-on-high-mucky-mucks themselves.

The nineteen members of the board of Governors make the most important decisions in the administration of the university. These decisions tend to be general in nature as the various faculties and departments are left to implement them.

The Board of Governors has nineteen members. The Chairman (John Schlosser)

continued

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