

POWER IN THE B.C. COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE 1980S*

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IN 1977, DR. PATRICK MCGEER, the British Columbia Minister of Education in the Social Credit government, rose in the B.C. legislature to introduce the College and Institute Act (1977) and significantly alter the course of post-secondary education in the province. Opposition MLA Dennis Cocke (NDP) noted during legislative debate that the Act was a passageway to the office of the minister.¹ Cocke's observations were prescient, underlining the pending transformation of B.C. colleges from organizations established for local communities to institutional instruments of government political and economic agendas. The Act heralded a change in the structure of influence for the colleges of British Columbia that would guide them into the 1980s.

By the early 1980s, the alteration of the colleges was dramatic. Corresponding to a prevailing politicization in the province itself between the left and the right, the functioning condition of the colleges was adversarial. Further legislative changes to the College and Institute Act (1984), a government funding restraint programme for the public sector, college employee lay-offs, college programme reductions and elimination, union militancy, and government ministry policy directives left the colleges by 1986 in a sorry state. Not surprisingly, during the 1983-87 period, labour relations soured, with corresponding labour-management disputes as manifestations of this friction.² Furthermore, the large majority of college presidents from 1983 had resigned or were removed by 1987.

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¹ J. Calder, "Lessons from the Death of a Quango: The British Columbia System of Lay-Councils, 1977-1983," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* XIV, 2 (1984): 83-89.

² College-Institute Educators' Association, "Issues in the College and Institute System in B.C." (unpublished report, College-Institute Educators' Association, Vancouver, B.C., 1985); and J. Waters, E. Lavalley, and J. Finnbogason, *Strengthening C.I.E.A.: Options for Change* (Vancouver, 1985).

It was clear that by 1987, ten years after the enactment of the College and Institute Act (1977), decision-making and management had changed dramatically in the colleges of B.C.: on the one hand, from local control by individual colleges and their boards toward provincial control by government, the government minister, and the ministry; on the other hand, from administration of college operations through employee participation to direction-setting and control by an executive level of administrators. The colleges were no longer autonomous centres for community education; they were instead educational and training units in a provincial system of post-secondary education, training, and technology. The colleges no longer reflected collegiality; they were instead bureaucratic, sometimes autocratic, functioning along the lines of an industrial model, focusing upon growth, survival, and productivity, and served by workers and managers. With college boards solely appointed by government, the selection of chief executive officers for the colleges (a responsibility of the boards) could reasonably be assumed to be compatible with government preferences. Thus proximity to government for colleges was ensured, and centralized control could be maintained through local control by boards and chief executive officers. Internal influence in and control over individual colleges were the playing fields for chief executive officers and boards. This was a legacy of the 1977 actions of government.

In 1988, as if in an act of repentance, the government through its ministry established a Provincial Access Committee to review educational participation in and accessibility to post-secondary education in the province.³ In a statement which set a context for the review, the *Report of the Provincial Access Committee* noted the lamentable condition of the colleges and institutes as a result of government policy and funding behaviours:

In British Columbia, larger classes, increased teaching and administrative workloads, decrease of student services, reduced facility maintenance and other effects of reduced capital and operating expenditures over several years have taken a real . . . toll which has put the quality of our advanced education and job training system at risk.⁴

Whereas in a two-year period (1982-84) government decreased college operating funds by 8 per cent, in the year following the *Report of the*

³ *Report of the Provincial Access Committee, Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia* (Victoria, B.C., 1988).

⁴ *Report of the Provincial Access Committee*, 8.

Provincial Access Committee (1988), government increased funding by 8.7 per cent.⁵ Nonetheless, funding, or lack of it, has not been the sole source of the transformed condition of the colleges.

Indeed, funding seems to be, and has been, a vehicle for achieving and maintaining control. Dr. John Dennison, scholar and long-time observer of B.C. college development, has noted that colleges were selected as targets of restraint in 1983 to fulfil the political agenda of the government of the day.⁶ Dennison argues that government made an error in selecting the colleges because the assumptions of government that colleges did not contribute to economic growth and that student demand for higher education had diminished do not bear the weight of analysis. Dennison does not go so far as to suggest what could suffice as ample explanation for government action: that the goal of control itself was motive enough for government to act against the colleges. That same government, under different leadership in 1989, used an increase in funding, rather than a decrease, to exert its influence. It is almost a truism to state that the first priority of government is to remain as government, to maintain if not increase its political power. By adding to the operating budgets of colleges, government gained from the public acceptability of its actions. The act of repentance, then, was but an illusion: government actions were motivated by the requirements of politics, to maintain or increase its position of political power. The subsequent establishment of "university-colleges" in British Columbia in 1989, a recommendation of the *Report of the Provincial Access Committee*,⁷ was a consequence of government providing additional funds, and promises of future funding, to three colleges (Cariboo, Malaspina, and Okanagan). This was an inexpensive way for government to improve access to university education in the province, an improvement supported by public opinion. Funding for the colleges was a lever, a control device for compelling elements in the structure to act in accordance with the goals and directions of government, including the goal of government to remain as government.

For the colleges of British Columbia in the 1980s and early 1990s, power is exercised by the Minister of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology, delegated to the college boards, and further delegated to the chief executive officers as authorized by the College and

⁵ Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, *Post-Secondary Education in British Columbia* (Victoria, 1990).

⁶ J. Dennison, "Restraint and Reality — The Case for British Columbia's Community Colleges" (unpublished manuscript, Vancouver, 1987).

⁷ *Report of the Provincial Access Committee*.

Institute Act. Mintzberg⁸ defines power in organizations simply as "the capacity to effect (or affect) organizational outcomes." In the context of B.C. colleges, power is an interactive process whereby key actors or groups influence and in some cases control decisions and subsequently determine organizational outcomes. The authority structure for the B.C. colleges embedded in the College and Institute Act identifies those key actors or groups: the minister, the college boards, and college chief executive officers. Other stakeholders of B.C. colleges, such as administrators, faculty, support staff, students, and the public, occupy a relational position in this interactive process: they are the recipients of and reactors to decisions and outcomes carried through by the key actors or groups. Thus there are two categories of stakeholders⁹ in the B.C. colleges — prime stakeholders (those who are largely in control of decisions) and secondary stakeholders (those who are largely reactors to decisions). The more forceful and influential the secondary stakeholders, the greater their influence upon outcomes of decisions. In the context of the government decision to embark upon a fiscal restraint programme for the public sector for the period 1982-87,¹⁰ college faculty unions as secondary stakeholders reacted by protests and by militancy in collective bargaining. But protests and militancy were reactions to decisions and to outcomes of these decisions, having little effect upon decisions already made. During the 1982-84 period of fiscal restraint, the total college faculty population diminished by some 9 per cent,¹¹ an outcome which not only solved funding shortfalls but also sobered (and removed a percentage of) the opposition to government initiatives.

But more overt signs of unrest among faculty and adversarial relations in the colleges followed the initial years of fiscal restraint. The College of New Caledonia, Cariboo College, Okanagan College, Kwantlen College, and Northwest College were environments of severe stress and some strife.¹² Notorious among the prime stakeholders in B.C. colleges were those college presidents who adopted

⁸ H. Mintzberg, *Power In and Around Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1983), p. 4.

⁹ The term "stakeholders" is a commonly used descriptor in the literature on organizations, referring to those who have either influence or considerable interest in organizations or institutions. See I. Mitroff, *Stakeholders of the Mind* (San Francisco, 1984).

¹⁰ W. Day, "B.C. Colleges and Institutes and the 1982-87 Restraint Program" (unpublished manuscript, New Westminster, B.C., 1987).

¹¹ College-Institute Educators' Association, 1985.

¹² Author's interviews with college faculty during 1986 and 1987. For the purpose of preserving the anonymity of those who agreed to speak to the author on delicate and disputatious matters, names of sources are withheld. The names of college presidents are not given in order to preserve their anonymity as well.

autocratic styles of management (or highly personal approaches to decision-making). A president at an interior B.C. college attempted to intimidate faculty to the extent (it is reported by faculty) that he posted a list of his faculty enemies on his office wall. When these individuals would meet with him he taunted them by pointing to their names on his list. At another interior college in 1985, the president attempted to muzzle the verbal exaggerations of an instructor. When the instructor refused to comply with the restraining order from the president, the instructor was fired. At a Lower Mainland college, the president reverted to a bunker mentality, making himself inaccessible to faculty while conveying orders to his senior administrators to starve the academic area of his college and nourish the technologies. A slightly different pattern of behaviour can be attributed to the president of another B.C. college, where the chief executive officer behaved not so much as an autocrat but as a philosopher-king with personally generated ethical standards. In personal control of the college budget, the president sponsored a world conference of considerable magnitude and, with excessive costs for such a venture, ran the college into a major deficit for 1985.¹³ Whereas the first three presidents were the purveyors of tensions at their colleges, the latter of the four presidents through a fiscal blunder brought his college to a demoralized state as he was generally liked and respected by college constituents. Although none of these four presidents continue to occupy presidential positions in the colleges of B.C., their legacy remains: while presidents they effected major changes in their institutions, and their colleges in the 1990s are considerably different environments as a consequence of their actions.

On one side of the power structure for B.C. colleges is government in the form of the minister, whose authority is entrenched in the College and Institute Act. On the other side of the structure are the chief executive officers of the colleges, who during the decade of the 1980s sought and maintained power over actions of their institutions in rather individualistic ways. Between these two are the college boards, whose membership from 1983 to 1995 was selected by government to fulfil the minister's policies. As prime stakeholders formally positioned between the minister and the chief executive officers of the colleges, boards are generally perceived on the one hand as promoters of government policy and on the other hand as supporters and maintainers of presidential control over the colleges. As appointees of government, board members are accountable to the minister; as the

¹³ Author's interviews with college board members at Malaspina College, 1988.

appointers of chief executive officers, boards have an obligation, perhaps in their own self-interest, to ensure presidential success in management of the colleges.

Whereas the limelight in B.C. colleges usually falls upon the minister, the ministry, and chief executive officers, college boards nonetheless have considerable influence in directing the colleges and in affecting outcomes. The very process which leads to board appointment gives rise to the use of political levers of board members to influence government. Formally, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province appoints board members, on the recommendation of the minister. In practice from 1983 to 1995 members of the legislative assembly, the provincial politicians, have selected personal preferences and convinced the minister of the appropriateness of their preferences. Generally, these choices were personally acquainted with the minister, and it is conceded by many board members that more than 80 per cent of them had some political affiliation with the Social Credit government (or party) during the 1983-1991 period.¹⁴ Active participation in local politics as a member of the Social Credit party characterized several board members at numerous colleges. Indeed, the president of a party in the 1980s was a member of the Vancouver Community College board. Because of their political ties, board members have direct routes to government influence.

As a personal friend of B.C. Premier Bill Bennett during the 1980s, a college board member of an interior college was successful in convincing the premier of the need for additional government funding for his college and perhaps as well of the political repercussions which could flow from proposed funding allocations during the fiscal restraint programme.¹⁵ What later became known as the multi-campus factor in funding began when this interior college received funds over and above their prescribed allocation because the college operated out of more than one campus, separated by a large distance: such operations, it was argued, required greater funds than those for a college with a single campus or colleges with several campuses in close proximity to each other. Thus, this interior college with several campuses received a subsidy whereas Vancouver Community College, with three campuses in the Greater Vancouver District, did not.

But boards and members exert influence not only through government but also through chief executive officers of the colleges. Board

¹⁴ Author's interviews with college board members and administrators at Malaspina College, Douglas College, and Capilano College, 1988.

¹⁵ Author's interview with a UBC professor, 1986. Name of the source is withheld to preserve anonymity.

members with personal agendas or even vendettas have exercised their power to accomplish personal goals.¹⁶ The role of the board chairperson of an interior college in the censoring and subsequent firing of an instructor is a matter of public record. As a target of the instructor's verbal attacks, the college board chairperson reacted by insisting to the college president that the instructor had to be stopped. Boards also have been supportive of the autocratic behaviours of chief executive officers either wittingly or by remaining aloof and ignorant. The longevity of a president at another interior college can be attributed in part to the majority vote by the board on several occasions to reappoint the president — it is reported that the majority was a one-vote margin on at least two occasions. Indeed, the actions of this president to erode university transfer educational services and to create an environment of tension and fear at this college could not within reason have been accomplished without the complicity of the college board. And the president who led his college into debt could not have exercised control over the college budget without the board relinquishing its budget responsibilities. As behind-the-scenes players, board members can wield influence in the colleges while being protected by anonymity, as only the board as an entity, not individual board members, has formal responsibilities and accountability.

The secondary stakeholders, administrators, faculty, support staff, and the public have influence, largely as reactors to the decisions and actions of the prime stakeholders. The public, whether as the local community or the larger public of the province, does compel prime stakeholders to give some attention to opinions, interpreted by the prime stakeholders, especially by government, as informal referenda. The government fiscal restraint programme of the 1980s was such an interpretation, with government assuming that the public wanted conservative fiscal restraint policies and wage controls over public sector employees. But the public is largely amorphous and unfocused as a player in the power structure of the colleges of B.C.

Groups such as individual faculty unions and the College-Institute Educators' Association (a federation of college and institute faculty unions) have exercised the most influence in the college among the secondary stakeholders. Individual college administrators, while contributing to college education locally and provincially in the form of educational programming and human resource management, became

¹⁶ Author's interviews with faculty and with College-Institute Educators' Association officials, 1987; C. Kilian, "Choose grease or grief," *The Province* (Vancouver, 14 January 1986); M. Chertkow, "Investigator's Report," Labour Grievance of Allan McKinnon (Kamloops, B.C., 30 November 1985).

in the 1982-87 period either appendages or cautious and very private critics of chief executive officers.¹⁷ No collective of administrative personnel emerged to provide leadership distinct from that provided by the ministry or by college presidents during the 1982-87 period. At two colleges, at least, small groups of administrators worked to replace the chief executive officer.¹⁸ As employees subordinate to the chief executive officers, administrators are dependent upon the chief executive officer for their continued employment and for their working conditions: thus conformity to higher authority is almost guaranteed. Students as a collective, in one form as the Canadian Federation of Students, offered the predictable public outcry over funding reductions, especially those affecting student aid. But with the revitalization of student aid in the later 1980s, government quieted student voices. The public at the local community level did not even serve as an opposition to government legislative changes in 1983. It was more at the provincial level, seen in the 1983 Solidarity Strike,¹⁹ that public reaction to restraint and to government behaviour was prevalent.

The College-Institute Educators' Association (CIEA) has developed into the only major opposition and alternative voice to the prime stakeholders (government, chief executive officers, and college boards). Particularly since the amendments to the College and Institute Act (1984), CIEA has exercised its influence in reaction to government policy, to government funding behaviours, to college lay-off of faculty and reductions in educational services, to college actions against individual faculty, and to patterns of collective bargaining by colleges. As an initiator rather than as a reactor, CIEA has made rather modest gains — for example, in providing professional development activities for provincial faculty and in giving attention and focus to the status of women in the colleges. Because it is not a partner in post-secondary education decision-making, CIEA is only able to make its way forcefully at the bargaining table of the colleges and the faculty unions. It is in the arena of collective bargaining that CIEA has had its greatest impact, more so in the post-1987 period when the grip of restraint was loosened and when there was some relief and recovery from the series of lay-offs and reductions from 1982 to 1986.

¹⁷ Author's interviews with college administrators, 1986 and 1987.

¹⁸ Author's interviews with college administrators, 1986 and 1987.

¹⁹ Operation Solidarity protest movement arose from the B.C. government fiscal restraint measures applied to public service workers, leading to the reduction of the public service workforce. In the fall of 1983, public service workers, together with sympathetic private sector unions and community groups, formed an alliance in the province to protest the actions of government. These protests were also aimed at the neo-conservative policies of the government.

While CIEA is a federation and a democratically run organization, power is usually vested in the president, especially if the president has communication and intellectual skills. Indeed, it could be seen that the presidents, not the association CIEA, are part of the power structure of B.C. colleges, particularly three presidents in the 1980s. These presidents have acted as the voice for faculty of B.C. colleges, and by challenging the prime stakeholders have exposed, if not curtailed, fiscal and educational deterioration in the colleges.²⁰ One of the 1980s presidents was a vociferous critic of government legislative changes in 1983 and of funding behaviours during the restraint period. His successor continued with this role of funding critic and as well championed a new cause: a provincial union for college and institute faculty. While a provincial union was in the minds of many who were active in faculty unions for several years, it was not until the mid-1980s that draft documents and formal discussions among CIEA members about a provincial union became public issues in the colleges.²¹ This drive toward provincial union status, although unfulfilled by 1990, led to an increasingly more active and influential role for CIEA in collective bargaining at individual colleges. In the late 1980s, provincial bargaining issues for B.C. colleges, such as working conditions and salaries for part-time faculty and faculty salary parity with school districts, began to dominate local college bargaining. CIEA had begun to develop a provincial strategy and by using its own research and information-gathering was able to provide individual colleges with information which could influence their bargaining directions. Furthermore, CIEA provided the colleges, at their request, with a CIEA bargainer to represent the local union at the table with the college. Even without provincial union status, CIEA was able to wield considerable influence in collective bargaining, and this influence increased as more unions used the services of CIEA and the colleges became more cognizant of a provincial agenda for faculty unions.

In spite of this influence, however, the power of CIEA is largely reactive, and as the Association is removed from the decision-making process of B.C. colleges, its actions have few observable or documented effects upon organizational outcomes. In matters where CIEA has assisted in the defence of faculty during labour arbitrations, the reinstatement of terminated faculty (such as the fired instructor at the interior college) would have some effects upon organizational out-

²⁰ College-Institute Educators' Association newsletters, 1983-1986.

²¹ J. Waters, E. Lavalle, and J. Finnbogason, 1985; College-Institute Educators' Association, "The Provincial Union Model" and "Supporting Rationale For Provincial Union Model" (unpublished reports, Vancouver, 1986).

comes, particularly in the future decisions or actions of colleges. But in providing direction for the colleges akin to the establishment of ministry policy on planning (three-year, five-year and ten-year) or board decision to re-organize a college, CIEA is a secondary stakeholder, a minor influencer. Only its presidents are likely to be viewed when considering the development of B.C. colleges as influencers, and this influence can be partly attributed to their articulate voices in the context of political polarization in the province.

The argument is that there are two categories of stakeholders of B.C. colleges: prime stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. Furthermore, the power structure of B.C. colleges is hierarchical, with three groups — the minister and the ministry, college chief executive officers, and college boards — occupying the places of authority and influence. The minister is certainly an external influencer, while the chief executive officers are internal influencers. College boards are placed in the middle ground, sometimes as external influencers and sometimes as internal influencers. The goals and actions of the colleges emerge largely from the combined structure of behaviours (from the power structure) of the external influencers and the internal influencers. Mintzberg²² refers to this combined structure of behaviours as power configurations.

POWER IN AND AROUND THE COLLEGES

According to Mintzberg organizations have goals; these goals are observable through the actions of the organization; and actions are consequences of the combined behaviours of external and internal influencers. Another way to say this is that those with organizational power establish goals for the organization and commit the organization to action to fulfil these goals. In the B.C. college context, many individuals or groups may have goals for colleges, but only those with power will be able to direct the colleges to achieve those goals. Mintzberg identifies six power configurations in organizations as potential structures of power. One of these configurations dominates the flow of power in an organization and directs the actions of the organization. The six configurations are named the instrument, the closed system, the autocracy, the missionary, the meritocracy, and the political arena. These six can be divided into two general categories: the first where college constituents below the presidential and senior management level are removed from decision-making; and the second

²² H. Mintzberg, 1983.

where those same college constituents are involved and influential in decision-making. Thus the instrument, the closed system, and the autocracy power configurations form one category where there is highly restricted constituent participation in decision-making and the missionary, meritocracy, and political arena power configurations form the second category where there is flexible but broad college constituent participation in decision-making. For the sake of simplicity, the first category can be referred to as a hierarchical power structure and the second category can be referred to as a democratic power structure. While this categorization may simplify the description of power behaviours in B.C. colleges, it does help to clarify reasons for outcomes in those colleges, based upon the conception of prime stakeholders and secondary stakeholders.

The hierarchical power structure of B.C. colleges involves a strong external influencer (government in the form of the minister and the ministry), a generally strong internal influencer (chief executive officers), and a somewhat moderate internal/external influencer (college boards). The goals of this hierarchical power structure can be identified from the actions of the colleges of B.C.

ACTIONS OF B.C. COLLEGES

What are the most significant actions of B.C. colleges during the 1980s? Who directed these and what were their outcomes? The amendments in 1983 to the College and Institute Act (1984) suggest that the colleges of B.C. were going to be more accountable to the minister responsible for the colleges, more clearly directed by the minister, and more co-ordinated under the ministry as a grouping of individual institutions. Furthermore, the amendments indicated a close connection between the minister and those directly responsible for the affairs of individual colleges, the board. These amendments of 1983, fashioned by government through the minister, Jack Heinrich, and with assistance from ministry officials, were consistent with the pattern established in 1977 with the introduction of the College and Institute Act, which was movement of the colleges away from local control toward control by the provincial government. The 1983 amendments furthered this control. The minister who establishes and guides policy for the colleges would work with government-appointed boards, which would manage the affairs of the institution in accordance with these policies. Both the minister and the board would be unencumbered by any intermediary bodies. These intermediary bodies

(called councils under 1977 legislation) worked as semi-autonomous advisors and arbiters within the B.C. college structure and were placed between the minister and the boards of colleges. These councils were abolished in the 1983 legislative amendments, and government assumed possession of the responsibilities of these bodies (which prior to 1977 were responsibilities carried out by local boards).

Two other related actions initiated by government and coupled with the 1983 legislated amendments were, in the early 1980s, major government initiatives to direct the functioning of the colleges of B.C. These were the government fiscal restraint programme, initiated in 1982, and the ministry imposition of formula funding, begun in 1983. Fiscal restraint was a government venture to reduce public spending over a multi-year period. Applied to the colleges, the intent was to reduce expenditures from 1982/83 to 1985/86 by 12.5 per cent.²³ Fiscal restraint would lead to programme size reductions and programme eliminations resulting in the diminishment of salary expenditures, a consequence of lay-off of college employees. It is estimated that colleges lost between 12 and 15 per cent of their full-time employees between 1982/83 and 1985/86.

The funding formula was less of a unilateral imposition by the ministry than a reaction by the ministry to the concerns raised by the colleges and institutes to the previous approaches taken by government to resource allocation.²⁴ It seems that the formula funding approach was initiated to deal with overall fiscal restraint as applied to the colleges. But the formula for funding was a rationalization of how funds were allocated and in practice encouraged productivity — retention of service with reductions in funding. In effect, individual colleges negotiated with the ministry on how they would apply their allocations. Successful negotiations were dependent upon colleges selecting those programmes which were held in a favourable light by government (emphasizing job training and economic development) and those programmes which were productive (efficient use of resources). College five-year plans, required under the College and Institute Act (1977), updated annually, would be the blueprint for funding requests.

As a trio of initiatives, the 1983 amendments to the College and Institute Act (1984), public sector fiscal restraint, and formula funding were major actions by government to affect organizational outcomes

²³ W. Day, 1987.

²⁴ W. Day, 1987.

of the colleges. The College-Institute Educators' Association asserted in 1985 that ministerial power which directed funding reductions led to deterioration of the colleges, particularly in the areas of educational service and labour relations.²⁵ CIEA attributed the 1984 lockout of faculty at Okanagan College to workload concessions demanded by the college of the faculty in reaction to funding shortfalls. Others concur that these actions resulted in significant changes to the colleges, such as substantial productivity increases and a decrease in service to students.²⁶ Clearly, government was successful in reducing expenditures for the colleges, and it is likely that efficiency increased. However, the trade-offs for this success include not only what the Report of the Provincial Access Committee²⁷ notes — larger class sizes, increased workloads for faculty and administrators, decrease of student services, and reduced facility maintenance — but also, as Day²⁸ notes, the undermining of working relationships in the colleges and the sapping of the energy and confidence of college employees. Quantitative deterioration can be remedied, as the *Report of the Provincial Access Committee*²⁹ recommends, but that other condition where relationships are without trust and where individual enthusiasm and commitment are seriously diminished is not so easily reversed.

The development of B.C. colleges from 1983 to 1987 can be characterized as not only a centralizing of power under the minister but also as a consolidation of power within individual colleges under chief executive officers and senior administrators, supported by individual college boards. Clearly, colleges became less collegial in governance and administration, more managerial and presidential in decision-making, and more formal in employer-employee relations. A number of actions contributed to these shifts. First, the trio of government initiatives (legislative amendments to the Act, funding restraint, and formula funding) was closely followed by faculty union behaviours of protest and protection, resulting in resistance to college initiatives. Ultimately, more adversarial and more formal relations developed between individual faculty unions and individual colleges.

In order to manage in accord with government directives (such as those outlined in five-year planning documents issued by the ministry

²⁵ College-Institute Educators' Association, 1985.

²⁶ J. Dennison, 1987; W. Day, 1987.

²⁷ Report of the Provincial Access Committee, 1988.

²⁸ W. Day, 1987.

²⁹ Report of the Provincial Access Committee, 1988.

in the mid-1980s³⁰) and to cope with fiscal reductions and budgetary pressures, college administrations, under the direction of chief executive officers, with support from boards, gave priority to internal system matters including control of operations and efficiency in production. It was during the 1980s that colleges began to re-organize, re-structure, and either re-title administrative positions or add another level of administration. While in the late 1970s the common title for those reporting to chief executive officers was Dean and the chief executive officer was referred to as Principal, in the 1980s the title of Principal became President and those reporting to Presidents were referred to, increasingly, as Vice-Presidents. Whereas by 1990 Capilano College, Fraser Valley College, and Douglas College had retained the title Dean to refer to senior level administrators who report directly to the chief executive officers, Malaspina College, Camosun College, the College of New Caledonia, Kwantlen College, Okanagan College, East Kootenay Community College, and Cariboo College had opted for the term Vice-President.³¹ This change signals an alteration of governance and management in the colleges. The president and vice-presidents operate as an executive, and institutional decisions are fashioned by the executive — explained and justified to the board for formal approval on major issues, such as budgets — and put into effect by senior and mid-level administrators. Thus, college presidents and college boards, in the case of the majority of colleges, emphasized organizational control through establishing executive management, often referred to as top-down management. Differences in style, whether a team approach to management where the majority of decision-making is derived from a consensus among the executive members (articulated as the approach at Malaspina College), a presidential approach where the executive supports and develops the initiatives of the chief executive officer, or a divisional approach where specific executives have ultimate responsibility for decisions within college divisions or large areas of operation (e.g., academic, administrative, student services) may be a consequence of the particular characteristics of chief executive officers, tempered somewhat by their

³⁰ Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Post-Secondary Department, "Integrated Five Year Planning for the British Columbia College and Institute System: System Objectives 1982-87" (unpublished draft report, Victoria, 1983); Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education, *Mission, Goals, and Objectives 1986-1991* (Victoria, 1986).

³¹ Author's interviews with college administrators, 1988, 1989 and 1990; organizational charts and policy documents from B.C. colleges.

relationship with their boards.³² But differences in executive style do not alter the limitations of control experienced by college constituents and the local community, referred to earlier as secondary stakeholders.

The consequences of executive style management and governance are several, and although there are positive aspects, such as quick response time to external demands and an organizational sense of consistency in decisions, these do not outweigh the negative outcomes. Chief among these are a disenfranchisement of college constituents and the community in governance and a corresponding loss of involvement in the affairs of the colleges by these groups. While even prior to 1983, from 1977 onward, authority was vested in the college board and delegated to chief executive officers for institutional decisions, a less formal approach to governance was practised by many of the colleges. After 1983, that formal authority was practised as the rule rather than as the exception. In many cases of the potential or actual exercise of authority in the colleges, only collective agreements with faculty which contained restrictions on management and specified a faculty role in decision-making ensured some involvement of faculty.³³ Hence, collective bargaining became an arena for faculty to become involved in the exercise of power in the colleges. An outcome, therefore, of executive management was intense and often protracted collective bargaining where the faculty union, while struggling to gain salary increases, or to avoid a roll-back in salary, attempted to maintain its role in areas of hiring, budgeting, and determining and scheduling of educational services.³⁴

In 1988, the Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training in the province of B.C., Stanley Hagan, as a follow-up to two other recent government initiatives to address accessibility to advanced education and job training, established the Provincial Access Committee. This committee identified major issues in accessibility and recommended actions to improve accessibility. The committee's report, *Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia*,³⁵ led to substantial actions by government. Among these were the establishment of the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer to address the transfer of credits among the province's post-secondary institutions and the alteration of three community colleges into "university-colleges," in which upper level university courses were

³² J. Levin, "The Board-President Relationship in Three British Columbia Community Colleges" (unpublished dissertation, Vancouver, 1989).

³³ B.C. college-faculty union collective agreements, 1981-1989.

³⁴ College-Institute Educators' Association newsletters, 1983-1986.

³⁵ Report of the Provincial Access Committee, 1988.

offered under the guidance of one or more of the three public universities and where degrees would be granted, initially by a sponsoring university and eventually by the institution now called a "university-college."

The B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer was resurrection of a former body, the B.C. Post Secondary Coordinating Committee, established in 1976 and abandoned in the early 1980s. The new council, under its initial two chairpersons, worked to identify problems in institutional co-ordination for assisting student movement among the colleges, institutes, and universities and to give a more formal arena and structure to institutional articulation. The council's policies were imitative of those of the earlier body, the B.C. Post Secondary Coordinating Committee. While only in its formative years, the council restored some sense of dignity to the colleges, as they were equal players in the structure. The council moved some power away from the primary stakeholders of the B.C. colleges through its approach, for example, in achieving consensus among many stakeholders, primary and secondary, in the B.C. colleges on the suitability and desirability of establishing Associate degrees for community college programmes.³⁶ Given the broad participation permitted by the council, including university faculty and administrators and college administrators and faculty, a consensus to establish the Associate degree could not likely be ignored by the minister, and those college chief executive officers and boards who did not see this credential as in their best interests were not able to exercise their power to thwart it. Such a credential would on the one hand remove some control from individual colleges by influencing programming to match credential requirements and on the other hand remove some control from the government ministry by elevating the status of academic education (and perhaps as a consequence providing justification for a higher priority in funding for academic programmes).

Dennison³⁷ asserts that of the several initiatives of government arising from the *Report of the Provincial Access Committee*,³⁸ the

³⁶ The B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer sponsored an event unprecedented in the development of B.C. post-secondary education: in the process to establish a provincial-wide credential for colleges and institutes, commonly referred to as the Associate degree. The Council brought together representatives from colleges, institutes, and the three provincial public universities for a day-long workshop. The council also set up a committee to make recommendations on a provincial credential, and representatives from the universities and the colleges comprised this committee. Furthermore, the council solicited the views of all post-secondary educational institutions and all organizational levels at these institutions, from faculty to board members.

³⁷ J. Dennison, "The University-College Idea" (unpublished manuscript, Vancouver, 1991).

³⁸ Report of the Provincial Access Committee, 1988.

creation of "university-colleges" was the most significant. Dennison argues numerous effects are possible as a consequence of this initiative as these have a bearing upon the comprehensive community college, a characteristic of which is "that academic and vocational program options are integrated into an institutional arrangement which attempts to preserve equality of status and maximum flexibility with respect to curricular organization."³⁹ As outcomes were more speculative than observable in 1991, Dennison suggested that the development of these "university colleges" is a challenge with many pitfalls facing those in leadership positions.

Within the context of power structures and the exercise of power in B.C. colleges, the establishment and development of "university-colleges" suggest several interpretations and potentials. As creations of government, these "university-colleges" could be seen as political actions both to address the aspirations of the communities served by Cariboo College, Malaspina College, and Okanagan College and to reduce expenses to government in satisfying the public need for increased access to higher education at the Baccalaureate level. With these institutions once established, however, government control gives way to the universities as external influencers (as sponsors of credentials) and to the individual "university-colleges" (as the institutions responsible for programmes). The government, of course, maintains considerable influence, not in the character and operations of these new institutions but in their size through funding allocations (and likely in its authority to make legislative changes enabling the "university-colleges" to grant Baccalaureate credentials). The college chief executive officers and boards will determine, certainly in the short-term, how these institutions function and the internal environments that emerge out of their formative years. Decisions regarding mission, governance, labour relations, and academic climate⁴⁰ will fall upon the chief executive officer and the board. But unlike decision-making during the 1980s at the colleges where the actions of the prime stakeholders either maintained or furthered their power and thus their control, decisions and actions at the "university-colleges" may require the prime stakeholders either to delegate more power to secondary stakeholders or to elevate some of the secondary stakeholders, notably the faculty and mid-level administrators, to their level of the power structure, thus altering the hierarchical power structure of the present.

The issues of mission, governance, labour relations, and academic

³⁹ J. Dennison, 1991, 4.

⁴⁰ J. Dennison, 1991.

climate are largely pertinent to the identity of these "university-colleges," and the working out of these issues will determine whether these institutions will remain colleges under the College and Institute Act, whether they will evolve to university status and thus fall under the University Act, or whether they will become a different institution altogether and require their own legislation which prescribes governance and management. Thus chief executive officers and boards will now exercise their power to determine their future role and authority for the "university-colleges." In this case, however, the power of the secondary stakeholders has increased because the context for the institution has altered.

The inclusion of the universities and university experts in the development of "university-colleges" meant at the outset an elevated role for college faculty as they were the main developers of programmes and courses and the articulators with the universities for the acceptance of the programmes and courses of their colleges. Furthermore, as the universities demanded a role in the selection of faculty who would teach third and fourth year courses, a climate where experts, not administrators, choose colleagues was either reinforced or re-established, if lost during the 1980s. Additionally, mid-level administrative positions at the colleges would have to be filled by well-credentialed and respected administrators as these were the college administrators who would represent the college at administrative levels in the universities and publicly. In several cases, these administrators would possess academic credentials or status, or both, which exceeded those at the vice-presidential and presidential levels. Also, boards, as lay-boards, would find themselves further distanced from academic decisions, as the specificity and sophistication (even perhaps the mystique) of academic issues and curricula surpassed those required at the lower undergraduate level. No longer could college education of this type be characterized as training; and for those without a substantial higher education background (the case for many board members), decisions would have to depend upon the advice of others with such a background. Even the chief executive officers, as non-experts in many academic fields, would have to depend upon the experts. And this dependence means an erosion of personal power for chief executive officers and board members.

By definition, the existence of "university-colleges" expands the mission of B.C. colleges. For the "university-colleges," the decision either to maintain the broad mission or to revise the college mission is of course critical to the future identity of the "university-colleges."

But, the actions of the "university-colleges," in spite of mission, will be determined by decisions which lead either to the maintenance of the existing power structure or to a revised power structure. While outcomes can only be speculative, the decision to alter formal governance at the "university-colleges," more akin to governance at the public universities in British Columbia, where faculty have a prescribed role in decision-making, will be both a signal that the academic climate at the "university-colleges" has significantly altered how these institutions function and precursor to alteration of how power is exercised, a revision of the existing power structure. Dennison⁴¹ speculates that when colleges gain status as degree-granting institutions, then governance will have to change to a form more compatible with the university model.

It is reasonable to assume that with a change in the governance structure, to a model similar to that at the universities, where in B.C. the academic senate is embedded in the University Act, the "university-colleges" will function quite differently from other colleges where decisions and actions have, for example, no necessary link to, or basis in, academic merit. To serve the needs of the community, a key component of the community college concept, is a much different basis for decision-making than to further knowledge, a key rationale for the existence of universities.⁴² Whether their function is latent or manifest and whether they are effective or ineffective, the academic senates at four-year colleges and universities are the norm within organizational structures where the exercise of power by faculty is if not practised then at least formally legitimized.⁴³ The establishment of an academic senate at "university-colleges" would provide a potential for a change from the present hierarchical power structure to a democratic power structure. College decisions by chief executive officers and boards to direct their institutions toward autonomous baccalaureate degree-granting status, therefore, will assuredly change the locus of control of "university-colleges" in much the same way as the 1977 College and Institute Act and the 1983 amendments to the Act changed control over the colleges of B.C.

In this sense, if the speculations prove to be accurate, Dennison is correct in stating that the most significant initiative of government as a follow-up to the *Report of the Provincial Access Committee* was the

⁴¹ J. Dennison, 1991.

⁴² J. Dennison and P. Gallagher, *Canada's Community Colleges* (Vancouver, 1986).

⁴³ R. Birnbaum, "The Latent Organizational Functions of the Academic Senate," *Journal of Higher Education*, 60, 4 (1989): 423-443.

creation of “university-colleges.”⁴⁴ Ironically, this initiative may well undo the actions by government, chief executive officers, and boards since 1977 which placed this triumvirate at the apex of the power structure for B.C. colleges. For the “university-colleges” at least, the hierarchical power structure is unlikely to survive, and while influence over college actions will not return to the local community, influence will be more widely dispersed among college faculty and administrators and less concentrated in the triumvirate of government, chief executive officers, and boards. Thus, the group of prime stakeholders would be broadened, and boards themselves might have to be reconstituted to include professionals as members.

THE EXISTING AND SHIFTING POWER STRUCTURE

From one perspective, the development of B.C. colleges can be seen as a social evolution of the exercise of power. At their inception, the colleges were community-based, highly influenced by local community members (especially school trustees) and college constituents at all organizational levels, and in the main directed by energetic and innovative chief executive officers — all with little or no experience in the community college.⁴⁵ By 1977, local control officially gave way to provincial government control, which increased by 1983. During the 1983–87 period, and as one consequence of 1983 legislation, the triumvirate of government, chief executive officers, and boards comprised a hierarchical power structure.⁴⁶ This group was responsible for establishing goals and committing the colleges to specific actions. A system of B.C. colleges was a *de facto* condition, and institutional autonomy, faculty participation in decision-making, and community involvement in governance belonged to memory, or myth.

By 1988, and with the beginning of the 1990s, the entrenchment of this hierarchical power structure of the B.C. colleges appeared to be threatened by outcomes of its own actions. These included the lamentable condition of the colleges resulting from government policy and funding behaviours, a deterioration of employer-employee relations, in part, at least, resulting from the inability of colleges to cope with growth, changing external demands, and the responsibilities of authority. Furthermore, government miscalculated in the early 1980s

⁴⁴ J. Dennison, 1991.

⁴⁵ J. Dennison and P. Gallagher, 1986.

⁴⁶ It might be of note to point out that the college bursars are also designated by legislation as a party responsible for the management of the colleges. However, their role in the power structure is unclear, both in the literature and in institutional documents.

and continued to sustain the perception that the demand for university and academic education was waning. Indeed, the demand increased significantly (an enrolment rise of 21.5 per cent between 1982/83 and 1989/90 reported by the ministry⁴⁷), and pressures upon the colleges and universities have exceeded the ability of these institutions as a whole to respond appropriately. Thus, the outcomes from actions intended to restrict or downsize academic education in the colleges could be a source for the dismantling of the hierarchical power structure.

While it is reasonable to suggest that external factors such as rapidly changing social and economic conditions, and the interpretation of these conditions, are the moving forces behind actions of government and that government funding and policy behaviours are the prime instruments in motivating institutions (particularly college boards and presidents) to action, the very power structure which exists to interpret the external environment, respond to such interpretations, and initiate and control actions enables the external environment to be cast as the determinant of outcomes, if desired. Government takes credit for an increase in enrolments in the colleges and blames the provincial economy (even the world economy) for financial restraint targeted at the colleges. College boards and presidents point to the provincial ministry as responsible for funding shortages when the decrease or elimination of services are executed, but they do not accept or even at times solicit the advice of the secondary stakeholders such as faculty and mid-level administrators on the allocation of resources within the institution. As Mintzberg⁴⁸ notes, power in and around organizations focuses upon the actions that an organization takes, and actions are preceded by decisions. The structure of influence in the colleges of British Columbia, a system of authority enshrined in legislation since 1977, determines these decisions and commits these colleges to action. With a potential for change in this structure of influence, resulting from the recent actions of the colleges of B.C. (such as the establishment of "university-colleges"), it will be of interest to observe if there is an alteration in the actions of the colleges and if these actions yield significantly different outcomes from those of the past two decades.

⁴⁷ Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology, *Post-Secondary Enrolment Statistics 1989/90* (Victoria, 1990).

⁴⁸ Mintzberg, 1983, 114.