

Editors Notes
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For over 100 years college unions have provided a way for members of the campus community to come together to socialize, learn, and relax. Porter Butts (1971) defined the college union idea through a historical journey that highlighted the growth and challenges faced by professionals working on college campuses. The college union has been established as the “living room of the college campus” (“Role of The College Union,” 2009) and the “community center of the college, for all members of the college family- students, faculty, administration, alumni, and guests” (Packwood, 1977, p. 180). This gathering place on campus serves as a laboratory of democracy where students learn to honor the past and respond to current trends as the union profession adapts to the societal context in which it is operating while consistently looking to the future.

The significance of the 100th anniversary of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) is critical to both the history of the college union profession and its connection with Indiana University. As one of the seven founding institutions for the association, Indiana University has been a part of the history and evolution of both the association and the college union profession. In 1964, the Association of College Unions (ACU) celebrated its 50th anniversary at Indiana University (Berry, 1964). Past campus administrators, faculty and staff of Indiana University have held leadership positions within the association, contributed to the published literature within the association, and current graduate students hold internship positions with the central office annually. Since 1981, the Association of College Unions International Central Office has been an external agency of the Indiana University community with its offices housed in Bloomington, IN.

This project was the culmination of scholarly work that was completed as part of a semester course that explored auxiliary services and the college union. The course was comprised of master’s students in the Indiana University Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program, who truly do represent the future of the student affairs profession. The goal of the project was to provide practitioners and scholars with a historical understanding and reference about the college union profession. A limited number of scholarly resources exist for graduate students or scholars who are interested in researching the college union within the higher education environment. Currently, handbooks associated with the student affairs profession provide minimal reference to the college union (Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011; Zhang, 2011). The hope is that this text will fill a gap within higher education literature and will address the contributions, role and significance of the college union profession. The college union provides a unique opportunity to examine an area of student affairs that encompasses the business, education, and town-gown aspects of the college campus.

The following chapters examine the evolution of the college union and provide an analysis of the external and internal factors that influenced the current state of the college union within higher education. It takes a detailed look at each to enable the reader to better understand the impact of the Union on the total education of the student in the context of the times and the evolution of both the Union and ACUI. In short it provides the reader with a source book to inform current and future practitioners and encourage research to extend the work that this book has begun.