**History of the Association of College Unions International**
**Matthew Jordan & Cameron Vakilian**

*This chapter will explore how ACUI has evolved over the last 100 years and the significance of the association for professionals working in the college union. Nuss (1993) recognizes that the development of professional associations within student affairs in the early 1900's was a response to the increased size and specialization of the field. The establishment of ACUI serves as a pivotal point in the establishment of the college union profession. The members of ACUI have influenced the development of the association, and the role of the college union within the field of student affairs and higher education.*

In 2014 the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) will celebrate its 100-year anniversary. Founded in 1914, the association carries with it a rich history of growth and evolution that is important to understand for college union professionals and those interested in the field. This document of history will take the reader on a journey through time and reflect on the major advancements of ACUI as it responded to the progress of college unions. First the period of time is important as the early 1900s is when changes come toHigher Education: including the emergence of Student Affairs, and the birth of ACUI. Then an overview is provided on the ways in which the association expanded its services and memberships over the years. This is followed by a discussion of changing times through social movements and the technological boom. The chapter concludes with ACUI's role in viewing college union professionals as educators committed to the intentionality of student learning.

**Expansion of Higher Education and the Emergence of Professional Associations**

As old as ACUI is, higher education associations in general actually outdate the association. As noted numerous changes were happening in the world of education in the 1900's and many associations were established during this time such as the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the American Council on Education (ACE) (Nuss, 1993). The advancement of these associations and others was pivotal to the development of Student Affairs as a fieldWith a continually growing enrollment of students during this time, the discussion for serving the needs of students was in the early stages of conceptualization. The concept of *in loco parentis,* meaning in lieu of parents, was coined as a term that identified the role of colleges in providing for the care of students (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Deans of Men and Deans of Women were employed to serve in place of the parents and were identified as some of the first Student Affairs professionals. Campus life was changing at the turn of the century as a result of the curriculum broadening and the social milieu shifting. Because of this, "students found a mix of peers through which they could develop associations lasting a lifetime" (Cohen & Kisker, 2010, p. 133). This shift in how students viewed the collegiate experience not only created the conditions for the development of the student affairs profession, but the

specific functional areas that we see today. The Student Personnel Point of View of 1937, published by the ACE, is one of the earliest foundational documents for the field of Student Affairs. The document addressed student personnel services, philosophies, and coordination between other higher education practices (American Council on Education, 1937).

**College Unions and the Birth of ACUI**

College unions originated in Europe in the early 19th century at Oxford and Cambridge. Union debates were among the earliest of activities "teaching young men how to get on with their fellows" (Butts, 1971, p.1). The European union model inspired Harvard to be the first American university to imitate the idea of a "comprehensive club." The Harvard Union was founded in 1880 as a hope for a "general Society" (more than a debating society) to form as it did in Oxford and Cambridge (Butts, 1971, p.9). At the turn of the 20th century, the union idea expanded across the nation and other institutions began to create areas of common spaces for men to gather for social association. It should be noted that the college union movement was centered around creating men only clubs on campus. Houston Hall at the University of Pennsylvania was the first official union building in the United States. It redefined campus facilities by including a swimming pool, billiards and chess table, bowling center, gymnasium, dining rooms, and meeting spaces (McMillan & Davis, 1989). Providing a facility that brings students together for recreation and scholarly debate provided the opportunity for students to organize themselves into teams and discussion groups.

In 1914, students came together representing nine Midwestern institutions in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Michigan to form the National Association of Student Unions. These student officers met with the intention to exchange ideas and form a constitution and bylaws. The union was defined to unify the student body, increase college spirit, and promote democracy. The early conferences gave delegates the chance to learn from each other about the effectiveness of different organizational structures and how they developed school spirit (McMillan & Davis, 1989). The association remained available only to young white males even though women's unions were in existence and two thirds of the nations colleges at that time contained both male and female students (McMillan & Davis, 1989; Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The association was truly in its infancy and did not continue to meet from 1917-1918 because of World War I. When it was revived in 1919, the association came back strong and a whole new era of growth, industry, and innovation was born.

**Growth and Expansion of ACUI**

With the end of nation's first world war came a turning point for American higher education. The National Association of Student Unions took on the new name in 1920 as the Association of College and University Unions with a total of 21 institutions in membership. More college unions were being built around the US, especially memorial student unions as the result of student deaths in World War I. American higher education was yet again changing and the association expanded to meet these demands. Many

factors including the stock market crash of 1929, World War II, and the industrial era had an effect on college unions and their stakeholders.

**The Conditions After World War I**

Between 1890 and 1925 enrollment was growing faster than the US population. The university movement created remarkable physical growth with nearly half of higher education investment going to building and grounds (Rudolph, 1990). The invention of the automobile and radio made the world a smaller place improving the ability for students to travel and communicate. Intercollegiate sports were sweeping the nation and major stadiums were being built. Football in particular was a huge part of the university, contributing to its great wealth in the 1920's (Rudolph, 1990).

College unions became increasingly important in the hard times of the great depression. No longer could students afford the luxury of dances and other expensive hobbies. Now the students gathered for more conventional purposes such as discussions, games, recreation, and outdoor sports. There was a "shifting of energies away from the unions social and educational functions to economic functions and problems" (Butts, 1971, p.27). It was clear that professionals were embracing a new movement to serve students in the co-curriculum and unions could serve as a home of learning that fostered programs in social life and leisure hours according the objectives of the Wisconsin Union as cited in Butts (1971). "Society was eager to embrace a movement which spoke to the areas of leisure and recreation" (Brattain, 1981, p. 9).

After the war, America was also rejecting the old German rooted notion that college existed only to serve the intellect and promoted the idea of the non-intellectual layer of a student's career (Brubacher & Rudy, 1978). This along with the growing needs of students contributed to a rise in the student personnel movement. Other professional associations started to come into the picture including the National Association of College Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in 1919 and the Association of College Student Personnel (ACPA) in 1923 (McMillan & Davis, 1989; Nuss, 1993).

**The Association Reaction and Rebirth**

In 1920, 33 student officers and staff members convened in the Michigan Union to study the union purpose and revitalize the association (Berry, 1964). Before the depression, the association went international by including the University of Toronto, which was especially exciting with the opening of their new influential Hart House, which expressively shaped the role of the college union (McMillan & Davis, 1989; Berry, 1971). By the 1930's the Association of College and University Unions had changed its name to the Association of College Unions (ACU) and new beginnings were emerging. "Despite the hard times, ACU increased its membership services" (McMillan & Davis, p. 23). By 1935, professional and staff members exceeded the number of student members and the first women delegates were attending the national conferences. ACU also housed a pioneer comprehensive study and questionnaire for unions and the services they provide. It published the first bulletin to replace newsletters and expanded membership to many more western states with a record

of 130 delegates attending the convention in 1937 (McMillan & Davis, 1989). Optimism for a growing college union movement replaced the overwhelming financial hardships. But war clouds were yet again looming outside the nation and the union movement would enter a completely new shift.

### World War II and its Aftermath

The nation's Second World War had a profound effect on college unions and the students they served. Many students and staff members were enlisted in the draft for military services. The Mountain Union at Bowdoin College, for example, had to ship most of its secondhand library collection to enlisted services (Berry, 1964). More than 50 unions became involved in training programs for the armed services. Women were also stepping into the director roles as men were away at war (McMillan & Davis, 1989). ACU continued to hold their conventions and provide services despite the war distraction. The bulletins were often used to report the status of union staff members that were in battle. Unions continued to be the center for social interaction, including dances and live music. Women played an increasingly important role because more and more unions were becoming coed and programming for the college union was experiencing a "feminine factor" (McMillan & Davis, 1989).

Nothing came as more of a shake-up for higher education than the introduction of the GI Bill after the war. Educators were unprepared, but quickly had to meet the demand of students who were now entering college at soaring rates. More unique services and veteran affairs were needed and the union evolved to foster it. Suddenly, the building boom had arrived in the US. More than 60 new union developments as a memorial for war deaths were under way (Butts, 1948). ACU provided services to its members during this era of construction through the consultation of architects. ACU was experiencing tremendous growth in its membership from post war well into the 60's. Now the association had institutional membership of nearly 100 colleges and universities (History of ACUI, 2009). By this time, ACU was holding its first conference off campus at the Hotel Roanoke in 1948. Participation became so strong that by 1950 thirteen regional conferences were being held (Association History, 1998).

It was clear that the association was being highly utilized by its members in a transitional era from war hardship to prosperity. The mid-century was an interesting time of economic triumph and conservative agendas as the Cold War reached its climax. However, as we discuss later on, new liberal ideas were developing and higher education became the stage for protest right around the association's 50th birthday.

### The Golden Anniversary

In 1964, the Association of College Unions celebrated its 50th anniversary and took on the new name of the Association of College Unions-International. As prefaced earlier, the association continued to have an interest in international relations and by this time "the union field was becoming more influential in Taiwan, England, Japan, and Australia" (McMillan & Davis, 1989). New beginnings and ideas paved the way for innovation in the college

union movement. The Role of the College Union, first adopted in 1956 was further reinforced when Chester Berry challenged the union field to think of unions as more than just a place of service and programs, but a place of spontaneity connecting the academics to life outside the classroom (Berry, 1964). By this time, programming and student activities had a huge presence in higher education. In fact, the National Association for Campus Activities was founded in 1960 to "help increase the buying power of campus programming dollars" (NACA, 2012).

### Social Activism and Diversity

Over the course of its history, college unions have undergone many changes. One of the biggest changes involves the shift in demographics of the students being served, and there are many different factors that have led to this changing population. These factors include social movements such as women's suffrage and civil rights, affirmative action, and federal statutes like Titles VI and IX. College unions have also been affected by social activism movements.

### Social Activism and Diversity in College Unions

The history of unions started as white male debating societies (Berry, 1989). With these privileged simple beginnings, higher education and college unions had a long way to go to become more accessible to a broader range of students. The focus on white males can be seen in the prayer of the founders of Hart House, one of the original college unions in the United States (Carlson, 1989a). In the prayer, it is stated that "members of Hart House may discover within its walls the true education that is

to be found in good fellowship, in friendly disputation and debate, [and] in the conversation of wise and earnest men" (Butts, 1971, p. 15). From this history, unions began to develop and change as the needs of students shifted in the early 20th century. The women's suffrage movement brought about legislative change in 1920 when the nineteenth amendment was enacted, granting women the right to vote. This landmark legislation caused college unions to start considering ways in which they could be more inclusive. In the 1920s, most college unions tended to be male oriented, but there were a few unions that were fully coeducational and other unions served women through separate facilities (Carlson, 1989a). At that time, professionals within the field were also male dominated. By the time of World War II, unions started to shift and change their reputation as social clubs for men. New buildings and facilities that were being built were starting to have a coeducational focus and game room and lounges were starting to be opened to women on a limited basis (Ketter, 1989). There were also all-women unions being operated. These facilities began to notice that as women started to show up, more men were also attending. As was mentioned earlier, women were also starting to be hired to work as professionals in unions, even in directorships (Ketter, 1989).

The institution of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill) also caused significant changes in higher education and college unions. An influx of GIs, both traditional and non-traditional aged, left unions scrambling for more staff members, larger facilities, and more programs for these students to engage in. This influx also forced college union professionals

to consider the needs of non-traditional-aged students for the first time.

As tensions grew between the United States and the USSR in the 1950s, protests became more common across college campuses. Civil rights protests were steadily gaining traction and students began joining together and openly expressing their dissatisfaction with higher education and with the country (Gentry Smith, 1989). These protests began occurring frequently in college unions across the country. At first, the protests were more educational in nature, aiming to create social change, but over time in the 1960s, the protests became "acts subversive to the academic process and purposes of the institution" (Union Views Student Unrest, 1965, p. 8). As protests became more turbulent and dangerous, college union professionals tried to find ways to encourage students to engage in constructive activism (Butts, et al., 2012).

During this time, college union professionals were also starting to take an interest in international students and college unions. Porter Butts took an extended trip overseas to study international unions and to get a better understanding of the needs of their students. Up to this point, college unions were focused solely on domestic issues and this step to start thinking internationally was an important one to diversify the college union philosophy (Butts, 1967). Colleges and universities were also instituting affirmative action policies to encourage more diversity in higher education (Butts, et al., 2012). With increased diversity, college unions had to start finding ways to program towards different populations of students.

Federal legislation also played a role in the changing dynamics of higher education in the 20th century. The Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 both forced institutions of higher education to look at their policies and open access to minority groups that had not previously received it (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). With all the different changes happening in student affairs over the 20th century, college union professionals were constantly changing and developing to react to the social activism and incoming diversity. They needed guidance and assistance from their Association, and ACUI played a role in taking action.

**Social Activism and Diversity in ACUI**

As previously mentioned, ACUI began with students from nine different colleges and universities getting together to discuss union ideas. As college unions began as white male debating societies, ACUI did not start out particularly diverse. Coeducational unions started to become more prevalent in the 1930s and in 1935 the first women delegates attended the ACUI conference (The History of ACUI, 2013). It wasn't until 37 years later in 1972 that ACUI elected its first woman president, Shirley Bird Perry from the University of Texas-Austin. Four years later, Bird Perry was also the first woman to receive the Butts-Whiting Award (The History of ACUI, 2013). Following this in the 1980s, ACUI helped to educate college union professionals on "the Glass Ceiling," in regards to the invisible cap placed on women in the workplace (Butts, et al., 2012). Lack of comparable pay or opportunity to advance existed as concerns in the college union and student activities field and these concerns were identified and discussed

by professionals at the ACUI conference and in the *Bulletin* (Butts, et al., 2012). Fighting against this "Glass Ceiling," in 1994, Marsha Herman-Betzen became the first woman executive director of ACUI and still holds this title today.

ACUI has also taken on issues of race. As the Civil Rights Movement gained in strength, ACUI put articles in the *Bulletin* and held important discussions at conferences on how to support protesting students while still achieving their educational mission. This was a difficult balance to achieve because some students were destroying union property and forcefully occupying union facilities (Butts, et al., 2012). During Porter Butts' trip overseas, he took note of the different kinds of student activism and used this information to help inform college union professionals and also to support constructive forms of activism in the United States (Butts, 1967). In the 1980s, ACUI helped to challenge college union professionals to take multicultural programming more seriously. At the 1981 conference, Patrice Coleman, in a lecture called "Multicultural Programming: Teaching A New Meaning For Life" stated, "multicultural programming, as part of this educational process, is a means by which we, as student development specialists, can provide diverse experiences that will facilitate growth in those we teach" (Coleman, 1981). In 1984, LeNorman Strong from Cornell University became ACUI's first president who is a person of color. Strong then went on to be the first person of color to receive the Butts-Whiting Award in 1988 (The History of ACUI, 2013). In 1989, ACUI became educational partners with the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge by providing volunteer support to the College Bowl program for historically black colleges and universities (The History of ACUI, 2013).

More recently, ACUI has instituted Communities of Practice. These communities are meant for a group of professionals that have something in common, a set of common issues to discuss, and a commitment to develop best practices in order to help other community members (Communities of Practice, 2013). Three particular communities of practice meant to promote diversity include the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender community, the Multi-Ethnic Professionals and Allies community, and the Women's Leadership community. ACUI also provides the constant opportunity for a community of professionals to start a new community to fit their needs (Communities of Practice, 2013). Many of these steps are small, but ACUI has shown an interest in making sure that college union and student activities professionals are thinking about diversity and social activism in their work. ACUI has also made an effort to model the way by promoting diversity in the Association and in its hiring practices.

### Technology and its Transformative Role

Technology and its modern uses have no doubt changed the direction of higher education and the role of the college union. The birth of the personal computer and World Wide Web created a wave of innovation for education and human interaction. In this contemporary era of education, "students' behaviors changed in response to advances in computing technology, and attitudes and expectations of college became more

individualistic" (Cohen & Kisker, 2010, p.464). This section will explore the impact of technology on college unions and how ACUI responded and evolved to this paradigm shift. The response was remarkable as ACUI added technology as one of the 11 core competencies and continue to promote its importance to the association and college unions everywhere.

### Technology and the College Union

Talk of technology was being introduced to the college union idea as early as the 1980's. The college union remained a place for building community, but this purpose was extended broadly to include man-machine communication. "Unions have an important role in preparing students to live and work in a future filled with high technology" (Cannon, 1984). Although computers could be portrayed as dehumanizing and decreases the need for human interaction, union administrators during this time saw the computer as an ally for the quality of education and service (Rouzer, 1985). Computers that were once a rare luxury became a more accessible in the 1990's to individuals and affordable to college unions and auxiliary services. Distance educations, as a result of these new technologies, are seen frequently as a part of many higher education institutions. This created a challenge for the college union for potential revenue loss because of the decrease in student presence on the physical campus space (Sherwood & Pittman, 2009).

Even more modern uses of technology revolutionized the operations and programming of college unions. In what could be called a post millennium digital boom, campus cards are now a standard for student identification. These cards allow union administrators to assess the attendance of programs by scanning student ID cards. Campus cards can also do much more than provide identification. They now provide an array of uses and services. For example, Georgia Tech's BuzzCard is an innovative tool that can serve as a roadmap for other college unions. The card allows faculty, student, and staff to maneuver around campus quickly and efficiently. BuzzCard not only provides identification but allows for digital transactions of meal plans, cash, and parking (Moore & Pete, 2011). Digital trackers can now be placed at college union entrances to measure the flow of visitors to better measure what services are needed.

The Internet has provided a virtual space and online community for students and the union has certainly taken advantage of this phenomena. Social networking is especially important for educators to be familiar with. They have proven useful for much advancement in union programming. Millions of students in the millennia generation (often referring to those born from 1981 to 2000) log on to these social media sites every day and sites like Facebook and Twitter are mostly being used to publicize organizations and programs (Wandel, 2009). Levine & Dean (2012) argue these social networking outlets are being criticized by educators for not promoting the value of person-to-person interaction in the role of building community for the modern generation. However, these technological means are being welcomed by union professionals and ACUI has been a leading advocate for this trend.

### ACUI's Response

Since the launch of ACUI's first website in 1996 to promote the 67th annual conference, ACUI has welcomed the presence of technology into the college union and the services the association provides. Bulletins became publically available online and new communication tools opened the door for new growth and national attention. In 2000, the Strategic Core Process Team developed a report to provide strategic directions for the association. Recommendations were made and the team assessed many areas of services including finance, governance, membership, programs, and work force (Hammond & Shindell, 2000). It was evident in this report that ACUI was responding to the changing times of electronic communication. The report not only provided recommendations, but also included a future vision of ACUI. This vision highlighted "quick and easy access to resources" and an "increase in communication via the Internet, video conferencing, etc., but continued need for face-to-face meetings, workshops, etc." (Hammond & Shindell, 2000, p. 4).

Conference services have been a huge force in promoting the benefits of technology. ACUI began implementing tech demos into the annual conferences, which allowed members to understand how to use progressive software, programs, and other tools to better serve their role as union educators and administrators. These resources are increasingly being promoted in educational sessions ever since the adoption of the 11 core competencies, which includes technology. For example, ACUI Procure, launched in 2001, provides an online group-buying program to save members time and money on many products like furniture and other union supplies (History of

ACUI, 2009). Social networking has especially taken flight at the annual conferences. Twitter has especially had a strong presence in communication and sharing. Members at the annual conferences can now view and create their entire schedule online or on their smartphones. With computing programs and online activity present in almost every aspect of ACUI, it is apparent the association is encouraging technology as a necessity for college unions.

### College Union Professionals as Educators

Long before Facebook graced the student affairs field with its presence, practitioners engaged in "student personnel work" in the early 20th century were still trying to figure out exactly what their role was in the greater context of higher education. As extracurricular activities grew with the building of dormitories and college unions, enrollments grew across the country, and funded, regulated student activities became more widespread, the need for employees in the student personnel field increased dramatically (Nuss, 2003). With the student personnel movement burgeoning, a need quickly grew for some intentionality and consistency in the practice of these professionals, as well as an understanding of the nature and extent of what student personnel work entailed. The American Council on Education (ACE) met this need in 1937 by publishing a report called *The Student Personnel Point of View*.

### The Foundation is Set

*The Student Personnel Point of View* is the first foundational document of student affairs to articulate the importance of the field by reestablishing the need to focus on the "development of

the student as a person rather than upon his[/her] intellectual training alone" (ACE, 2012, p. 9). By publishing *The Student Personnel Point of View*, ACE was able to establish a consistent vision for the field and, more importantly, to definitively tab student affairs professionals as educators (Torres, DeSawal, & Hernandez, 2012). In 1949 another ACE committee revised *The Student Personnel Point of View* to address a more holistic view of the development of students, including physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development (ACE, 1949). The 1949 *Student Personnel Point of View* also stressed the importance of research and assessment, stating "we stress the ever-improving quality of personnel work achieved by…evaluative methods of science. Without such a stress upon critical and experimental self-study, student personnel work will deteriorate into ritual observance which yields little assistance to growing students" (ACE, 1949, p. 12). *The Student Personnel Point of View* of both 1937 and 1949 made it very clear that student personnel workers needed to hold themselves to higher standards as educators, and make improvements in the field accordingly.

As a result, college union professionals and their association, ACUI, were starting to mature and realize their greater purpose as educators in the field. This realization took some time, because most early college union professionals came into the field with no knowledge of college unions or experience running them (Carlson, 1989a). In order to better understand their jobs, these professionals formed an informal network of communication in the 1920s in which they shared knowledge and ideas with each other and

with newcomers about the union field (Carlson, 1989a). This sharing of knowledge led to a new conceptualization of what the role of the college union should be in the university setting. In his 1929-1930 annual report as director of the Wisconsin Union, Porter Butts listed four basic learning objectives college union professionals should be striving towards. These objectives included "The Union exists to… convert the University from a house of learning into a home of learning"; "The Union can provide… a comprehensive and well-considered program for the social life of the University"; "The Union makes a signal contribution to the scope and objectives of the educational approach"; and "The Union is a genuine student cooperative enterprise, aiming to give students experience in managing their own affairs" (Butts, 1971, p. 23-24).

As professionals started to put a greater emphasis on learning, so too did ACUI. In order to help college union professionals share ideas with one another, ACUI started to produce a publication called the *Bulletin* in 1930 (Berry, 1964). The initial publications of the *Bulletin* were mostly used as a "compilation of clippings and local notes supplied sporadically by the membership" (Berry, 1964, p. 23). In 1936, ACUI recruited Porter Butts to become Editor of the *Bulletin*, and the publication took off from there, becoming a publication filled with news about what was happening in unions across the country and giving voice to the developing philosophy of college unions (Berry, 1964). Around this same time, ACUI helped publish Edith Ouzts Humphrey's *College Unions, Handbook of Campus Community Centers*, one of the first comprehensive volumes to look

at the brief history of college unions and what progress they had made in the field of informal education (Berry, 1964).

## Changing Education for Changing Times

Despite these early strides, the place and function of the college union was questioned continuously by faculty, students, and business partners. In response, some of the leaders in the field, such as Butts and Nelson B. Jones of Brown University, wrote articles for magazines and newspapers articulating the importance of college unions to the university setting (Rion, 1989). As the country slipped deeper into the Great Depression and then into World War II, economic hardship fell on unions and caused them to change their offerings to students (Berry, 1965). College union professionals stuck to their values and continued to make unions a comfortable place that would support the development of the whole student (Rion, 1989).

In 1945, the college union's role on campus was solidified in an unexpected way when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stated "I think the idea of making the Student Union a war memorial to the students who have died in [World War II] is extremely fitting. Through the student unions so much can be done to educate young people…" (Roosevelt, 1945, p. 1). Due to this statement and the increased number of GIs flocking to college campuses as a result of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill), college unions were being built and renovated at a pace never seen before. With this came significant changes, including the rise of program departments to upgrade the quality of student life and focus on the

educational experience of students outside the classroom. Student representation on boards and committees also increased as its value as an educational experience was more fully understood (Ketter, 1989). As student organizations increased and became more complex, college union professionals began offering leadership development and group dynamics training to further educate and train students (Gentry Smith, 1989). Unions also responded to the changing demands of students and academia by providing more space and funding to support the development of the arts, with exhibits, photographic darkrooms, and performance halls increasing in number (Gentry Smith, 1989).

ACUI was also expanding its educational reach during this time. ACUI responded to the construction boom by providing consulting and education (Ketter, 1989). Experienced members of ACUI worked diligently to advise institutions on how to plan for and build new facilities, and how to operate them once they were built. They also educated members of these institutions on the different union philosophies and missions they could adopt in their newly built student unions (Ketter, 1989). ACUI also started to extend its educational reach in 1954 by hosting regional conferences with a student and individual union focus, and turning the annual conference into a professional conference (Berry, 1964). The role of the union on campus was further solidified by a speech by Dr. Virgil Hancher, president of the State University of Iowa, who remarked "I am certain that the goal toward which [college union professionals] are working… is an educational and cultural union that is the 'Hearthstone of the

University'" (Berry, 1964, p. 42). In 1956, ACUI answered Dr. Hatcher's call by publishing a four-page statement called *The Role of the College Union*, which became their official definition of the word "union" (Berry, 1964). The "Role Statement" affirmed the co-curricular mission of college unions and reinforced that union professionals were educators (Gentry Smith, 1989). Shortly thereafter, at the annual conference in 1959, ACUI came up with a statement on the "Role of the Union Director" to bring more specificity and intentionality to the functions associated with that important union position (as cited in Butts, et al., 2012, p. 109).

As social change became an increasingly important topic in the nation and on college campuses, college union professionals had to make adjustments (Berry, 1964). The Black Power, student power, and anti-war movements on campuses caused constant unrest. Students staged sit-ins at unions to protest recruitment by the Marines and CIA, and some unions were seized or "liberated" during student demonstrations (Carlson, 1989b). All this protesting forced union professionals to reevaluate their role in educating students. Union professionals tried to look past frustrations at the ways in which students were protesting, and instead looked towards bringing innovative and relevant programs to the college community (Carlson, 1989b). A focus on giving back through volunteering and channeling students' social consciousness into constructive activism became essential in college unions (Butts, et al., 2012).

ACUI supported the educational efforts of its members by examining student protests constantly in the

*Bulletin* (Carlson, 1989b). In a *Bulletin* article entitled "The Union Mission," Porter Butts (1966) stated that college union professionals needed "to give students themselves the opportunities to shape the conditions of their life together and thus learn the ways of leadership" (p. 7). This was, in part, a response to a call from the American Council on Education for colleges and universities to give students greater access to decision making in their education (Carlson, 1989b). ACUI also sought to make college unions far more responsive to the needs of minority students than they had been historically (Buckley, 1969).

ACUI was also turning its attention to international unions. As the Association was changing its name to the Association of College Unions-International in the 1960s, Porter Butts went overseas on an extended trip to learn from international unions and how they conducted business (Butts et. al., 2012). He learned and wrote about unions from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Scandinavia, Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa, Latin America, South, Southeast, and Northeast Asia (Butts, 1967). What Butts (1967) took from this journey is that "a good union can re-shape student values, enrich student social and cultural experience, strengthen the university as a viable educational community, and vastly ameliorate the conditions of student life" (p. 276).

**Campuses Become Peaceful and College Unions Strive for Excellence**

By the mid to late 1970s, college campuses were becoming less turbulent and student/staff relations in college

unions were once again gaining momentum. College union professionals began examining their role as educators more closely and having important discussions about their role in student development (Woolbright, 1989). Wellness became an important focus on college campuses in the 1980s and unions started hosting programs of all kinds to educate students on their well-being (Turner, 1989). Funds typically meant for student life were gradually shifting to academic affairs, and this began to place more emphasis on college unions as an auxiliary service. This left union professionals scrambling to find new ways to accomplish their educational mission and fulfill the Role Statement that was still very much a part of their profession (Butts, et al., 2012). Kenneth Gros Louis, Vice President of Indiana University Bloomington, called on college union professionals to "collect evidence that their programs were effective influences on student development" in a dialogue for the *Bulletin* in April of 1985, challenging union professionals to be far more intentional in their work and to start assessing their profession. This need only increased when the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), at that time known as Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs, came out with the original set of 16 functional area standards, giving student affairs professionals specific standards to aspire towards in order to achieve excellence in the field (CAS, 2010).

ACUI and its leadership were already looking towards excellence in 1980 when Richard Blackburn delivered a keynote address entitled "Breaking Away to Excellence." The Association

predicted that college union professionals needed to play a bigger role in higher education as educators (Turner, 1989). Building off earlier efforts, ACUI also started to have purposeful conversations about the need for multicultural education for the quickly diversifying population in higher education. ACUI focused discussions at the Annual Conference on how college unions could promote multicultural competence and diverse programming at their institutions in order to create opportunities for student growth. This became increasingly necessary as racial tension grew worse at predominantly white institutions and students of color faced perverse discrimination (Butts, et al., 2012). There was also discrimination of gay and lesbian students on college campuses. In 1988, led by Dick Scott, ACUI challenged college union professionals to do more to educate faculty, staff, and students on campus about the needs of the population of gay and lesbian students on campus and to enact policy change to include this population in institutional statements on discrimination (Scott, 1988).

As colleges prepared for a new millennium, union professionals were still grappling with their new role as experiential educators. Programming initiatives were starting to develop outside the college union and there was competition for the attention of students (Butts, et al., 2012). Due to these factors, there was an even greater need for union professionals to embrace their role as experiential educators. Intentional, measurable learning outcomes needed to be developed and assessed to show the worth of the co-curricular programming being done in college unions. The term co-curricular became critical, because union professionals needed to show that

their programming was in support of the university's curricular mission (Butts, et al., 2012). In 1990, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching developed *Campus Life: In Search of Community*, a report that provided student affairs practitioners with six principles to help provide a framework for day-to-day governance on college campuses. According to the 1990 report, colleges or universities are communities that are "educationally purposeful," "open," "just," "disciplined," "caring," and "celebrative" (p. 7-8).

ACUI continued to find ways to support the work college union professionals were doing. In 1990, ACUI took the progressive educational step of commissioning a task force called "Task Force 2000" to examine the changing dynamics of higher education in the next decade. Task Force 2000 also provided analysis and recommendations on certain areas, including "the changing educational environment, the college union facility of the future, funding for college unions and student activity programs, student activity and programs, professional preparation and staffing, and the arts in the college union" (ACU-I, 1990, p. 2). This report provided college union professionals with recommendations for how their operations could change and evolve to meet the future needs of higher education to keep the union as important and relevant as it needed to be.

ACUI continued to take further steps to help its members as educators. In response to the Carnegie Foundation report, Winston Shindell (1991) remarked that college union professionals and ACUI had been following those six principles since 1956

when "The Role of the College Union" was adopted. ACUI believed that the Role Statement was still providing guiding principles to the college union profession, but it had been around for a long time, so in 1996, on the 40th Anniversary of the Role Statement, it was revised to make it relevant to the changing field and reaffirmed (Butts, et al., 2012). In order to better educate members on regulatory and legislative issues in the field, ACUI became a charter member of the Consortium on Government Relations for Student Affairs in 1998 (The History of ACUI, 2009).

### A New Millennium Brings New Challenges

Colleges and universities started the new millennium worried about the infamous Y2K scare, but this was only one of many new challenges higher education would be faced with. The 2000s brought a decade of tragedies, with the September 11 attacks, the shootings at Virginia Tech, Hurricane Katrina as particular lowlights, and higher education and college union professionals had to find ways to support their students. The decentralization of programming, competition from online communities and for-profit institutions, and the lack of understanding of a college union's role on campus are all challenges that college union professionals are currently working on to find solutions for this issues (Butts, et al., 2012). With all of this increasing change happening in higher education, a need to rethink how student affairs practitioners educate students within the greater context of higher education was necessary. As a response to this need, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and

the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) collaborated to produce *Learning Reconsidered* in 2004.

*Learning Reconsidered*, much like *The Student Personnel Point of View* before it, is a foundational document that frames how student affairs professionals should be structuring learning environments for students. It asks student affairs professionals to strive towards a transformative learning experience for students; a holistic process that makes the student the central focus in the learning (NASPA & ACPA, 2004). *Learning Reconsidered* also stresses that student affairs and academia should work together to help educate student towards seven broad learning outcomes, including "cognitive complexity," "knowledge acquisition, integration, and application," "humanitarianism," "civic engagement," "interpersonal and intrapersonal competence," "practical competence," and "persistence and academic achievement" (NASPA & ACPA, 2004, p. 21-22). Closely following this important document was *Learning Reconsidered 2* in 2006, a collaborative effort between ACPA and NASPA that also included many other important professional associations within student affairs including ACUI. This document takes the concepts in *Learning Reconsidered*, and goes more in depth on how student affairs professionals can rethink learning and covers more topics (Keeling, 2006).

With these changing recommendations on how to educate students, ACUI has continued to find new ways to help this important cause. In 2005 ACUI unveiled eleven core competencies for college union and student activities professionals. The core competencies are meant to "[form a] foundation for successful professional practice in college union and student activities work" (Core Competencies, 2012). These core competencies have numerous other implications for the college union and activities field, including serving as a foundation for the education of professionals and graduate students within the field, enhancing the status of unions within higher education, advancing the profession by aligning its competencies with university mission statements and fostering collaboration with academia, bringing further definition to the work of college union professionals, building flexibility, and creating a standard knowledge base (Implications of the Core Competencies, 2012). ACUI has also ushered in new innovative educational programs to fit the needs of the millennial generation. One such program is Institute for Leadership Education and Development (I-LEAD), which was founded in 2000 (The History of ACUI, 2013). The I-LEAD program challenges students to develop in areas of leadership, community development, and driving change (The Institute for Leadership Education and Development, 2013). In 2005, ACUInfo, a benchmarking resource for college unions and activities, went live (The History of ACUI, 2013). ACUInfo allows college union professionals to compare their programming efforts against what colleagues are doing across the country, allowing them to learn from one another instantaneously (What is ACUInfo?, 2012).

Over the past one hundred years, college union professionals and their association, ACUI, have grown and developed as educators in the higher education field. As foundational

17

documents have been written and student demands have changed, ACUI and college union professionals have made adjustments to remain vital to the field as the hearthstone of the college campus. ACUI has been important to the educational mission of practitioners by providing guidance and support at conferences and through the *Bulletin*, and will continue to be important for the next hundred years.

### Association of College Unions International- The Next 100 Years

The first 100 years of ACUI has brought steady growth of the Association membership and tremendous support and guidance for the college union and student activities field. The great leaders of the Association have helped to guide college union professionals through difficult times and have helped bring intentionality to the field through the Role Statement, and have made diversity, technology, and education all important focuses. With the way the field of higher education is evolving and changing, what will the next 100 years look like for ACUI? There are a myriad of issues surrounding the field and they all lead to important questions. President Barack Obama issued a challenge to higher education in 2010 to raise graduation rates to 60% by 2020 (de Nies, 2010), but as states cut higher education funding by millions of dollars (Lederman, 2012), how will colleges and universities meet this goal? *Learning Reconsidered* and *Learning Reconsidered 2* outline a variety of outcomes student affairs professionals should be working towards to prepare for the future of higher education, but will professionals be able to meet these goals while balancing ever-increasing financial demands? As ACPA pushes

towards certification for student affairs professionals (Stoller, 2012), what will this mean for the field, including graduate students, current professionals, professional associations, etc.? These questions and issues are not meant to be exhaustive, as they are only a small portion of what higher education will face moving forward, and ACUI's role as a professional association will be to consider all these questions and more. The following trends are some that could be important over ACUI's next 100 years, and should be carefully considered.

### Certification

College unions have long been a place where professionals of all backgrounds have come to work, many with little to no formal training in how to run a college union or an understanding of the profession (Carlson, 1989a). Although this has changed over the years and more intentionality and training has been added to the field with the help of ACUI, should college union and student activities professionals take the next step and create a certification? Would this add value to the profession and to ACUI? ACPA started this discussion with their move towards a general student affairs certification in 2004, and have more recently appointed a "Credentialing Implementation Team" to work towards this certification (Stoller, 2012). ACUI has also been considering certification and launched a "Certification Task Force" in 2010 with the goal of deciding whether or not certification would be feasible and necessary for college union and student activity professionals (Woodard, 2010). This is not the first time this conversation on certification has come up (ACPA Task Force on Certification,

2006) and the topic is not likely to go away until certification is a reality. Supporting the idea of certification are the learning outcomes outlined in *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004). In particular, the learning outcome "knowledge acquisition, integration, and application" mentions certificate programs as a good example of a developmental experience towards learning (NASPA & ACPA, p. 21). Certification is clearly the direction the field is headed in, and the role of the Association will be to decide how to react to certification as they continue to support and guide college union and student activities professionals.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is always important, but it may be of particular importance over the next 100 years. As resources dwindle (Lederman, 2012) and government expectations grow (de Nies, 2010), higher education and student affairs professionals will need to do more with less. One excellent way to do this is through better collaboration. *Learning Reconsidered 2* discusses the critical importance of collaboration and, in particular, "the integrated use of all of higher education's resources in the education and preparation of the whole student" (Steffes & Keeling, 2006, p. 69). Steffes & Keeling (2006) point out that successful collaboration can result in many positive outcomes, including making better use of available talent, but a failure to collaborate can lead to contrary outcomes such as the ineffective stewardship of the resources the public is investing in higher education.

ACUI will need to consider how to promote collaboration and support

their college union and student activities professionals in doing so. One excellent way to promote an outcome is to role model it for others. ACUI could start this process by engaging in more ventures like *Learning Reconsidered 2*, where collaboration between professional associations in higher education is publicly modeled. Professional associations collaborating and working towards better value for student affairs professionals would go a long way towards encouraging the field to break away from the silos that have long been established.

### Technology as a Learning/Educating Tool

Technology is a constant and it is changing rapidly. Technological innovations practically happen daily and this does not seem ready to slow down over the next 100 years. Kodak modeled the example of what happens when a business resists change (Finkelstein, 2012) and college unions and their professional association would do well to learn from this example. Higher education is notoriously slow to change (Butts, et al., 2012), but it does not have to be, and neither does ACUI. Staying abreast of technological changes and the ways in which students prefer to learn will be crucial to the future relevance and success of the college union field and it's Association.

The rise of online education continues to cause changes to two year and four year institutions (Lytle, 2011), and as cost-conscious students look for cheaper options, online education may continue to grow in appeal. Technological innovations such as iPads and applications like Prezi are also giving students new and innovative ways

to engage with material. Finding ways to leverage this technology to engage students in their learning will be a constant challenge for college union and student activities professionals, and ACUI will be tasked with keeping these professionals informed as these innovations arrive.

### Role Statement

Ever since its creation in 1956, *The Role of the College Union* statement has been an important tool for college union professionals to employ to establish their practice. (Butts, et al., 2012). The revision and reaffirmation of the Role Statement in 1996 reminds us that this statement needs to be constantly monitored to make sure that it is consistently relevant and practical to the professionals it is supposed to guide. The revisions in 1996 were due, in part, to complaints from college union professionals about its lack of relevance (Butts, et al., 2012) and the role of the Association will be to make sure that this does not continue to be the case. Taking a more proactive stance on revisions to the Role Statement can help make sure that it continues to serve as a

guiding statement for the field over the next 100 years.

### Conclusion

ACUI has been a strong support network for college union and student activities professionals for 100 years and will be just as important of a professional association in the future. Professional associations started based on the idea that it would be useful for professionals doing similar work to be able to gather to discuss ideas and shared concerns within their given professions, but they have taken on much larger roles throughout time (Nuss, 1993). ACUI has continually grown its membership and services throughout its history. Thefuture should be bright and ifthe Association continues to focusdiversity, technology, and student learning. ACUI will continue to help prepare and challenge its members to change with the times and to remain aware of best practices in order to most effectively serve students. Although it is difficult to predict what the future with bring for college union and activities, there is no doubt that the guiding light through these times will be its professional association.

**References**

American College Personnel Association Task Force on Certification. (2006, February). Preliminary Report.

American Council on Education. (1949). The student personnel point of view. Retrieved from http://www.naspa.org/pubs/files/StudAff_1949.pdf.

American Council on Education. (1937). The student personnel point of view. Retrieved from http://www.myacpa.org/pub/documents/1937.pdf.

American Council on Education. (2012). The student personnel point of view. In K.M. Boyle, J.W. Lowery, & J.A. Mueller (Eds.), *Reflections on the 75$^{th}$ anniversary of the student personnel point of view.* (3-22), Washington, DC: ACPA- College Student Educators International.

Association of College Unions-International. (1990). Final report: Task force 2000. *Association of College Unions-International*.

"Association History: 1914 – Present" (1998, October).

Berry, C.A. (1964). *College unions – Year fifty*. Ithaca, NY: Association of College Unions International.

Berry, C.A. (1989). The Beginnings. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Blackburn, R. (1980). Breaking away to excellence. *Proceedings of the 60$^{th}$ Annual Conference of the Association of College Unions-International,* 3-9.

Brubacher, J.S. & Rudy W. (1978). *Higher education in transition: A history of american colleges and universities, 1636-1976* (3$^{rd}$ edition). New York: Harper and Row, Publishers.

Buckley, M. (1969, April). Many unions reach for racial answers. *ACU-I Bulletin, 37* (2), 1-3.

Butts, P. (1948, December). Why a union for a war memorial. *Bulletin*, *41* (4).

Butts, P. (1966, December). The union mission. *ACU-I Bulletin, 34* (5), 6-7.

Butts, P. (1967). *State of the college union around the world*. Association of College Unions-International.

Butts, P. (1971). The college union idea. Bloomington: Association of College Unions International.

Butts, P., Beltramini, E., Bourassa, M.. Connelly, P., Meyer, R., Mitchell, S., Smith, J., Willis, TJ., (2012). *The college union idea.* (2$^{nd}$ edition) Association of College Unions International.

CAS. (2010). CAS Preamble. Retrieved from http://www.cas.edu/?history=cas-preamble.

Cannon, P. (1984). "High technology and the american society." Proceedings of the 64th Annual Conference of the Association of College Unions International.

Carlson, J.M. (1989a). The '20s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Carlson, J.M. (1989b). The '60s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Carnegie Foundation. (1990). *Campus life: In search of community.* Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED320492.pdf.

Cohen, A. M. & Kisker, C. B. (2010). The shaping of american higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Coleman, P.A. (1981). Multicultural programming: Teaching a new meaning for life. Proceedings of the 61st Annual Conference of the Association of College Unions International.

Core Competencies. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.acui.org/content.aspx?menu_id=30&id=9463.

de Nies, Y. (2010, August). President Obama outlines goal to improve college graduation rate in U.S. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/WN/president-barack-obama-outlines-college-education-goal-university/story?id=11359759.

Finkelstein, S. (2012, January). Seven lessons from the demise of a great company: Kodak. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/sydneyfinkelstein/2012/01/06/seven-lessons-from-the-demise-of-a-great-company-kodak/.

Gentry Smith, J. (1989). The '50s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Gros Louis, K.R.R. (1985, April). *The Bulletin of the Association of College Unions International.*

Hammond, D. & Shindell, W. (2000). Strategic process core team: Final report. Bloomington: Association of College Unions International.

The History of ACUI. (2009). Retrieved from http://www.acui.org/content.aspx?menu_id=30&id=244.

Implications of the Core Competencies. (2012). http://www.acui.org/content.aspx?menu_id=30&id=18534.

The Institute for Leadership Education and Development. (2013). Retrieved from
http://www.acui.org/content.aspx?menu_id=106&id=1212&ekmensel=106_subm
enu_0_link_1.

Kaplin, W. and Lee, B. (2009). *A legal guide for student affairs professionals*. San
Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Keeling, R. (2006). *Learning reconsidered 2: Implementing a campus-wide focus on the
student experience*. Retrieved from
http://www.myacpa.org/pub/documents/LearningReconsidered2.pdf.

Ketter, J. (1989). The '40s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy
five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Lederman, D. (2012, January). State support slumps again. Retrieved from
http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/01/23/state-funds-higher-education-
fell-76-2011-12.

Levine, A. & Dean, D. R. (2012). Generation on a tight tope: A portrait of today's college
student. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lytle, R. (2011, November). Study: Online education continues growth. Retrieved from
http://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2011/11/11/study-
online-education-continues-growth.

Moore, M. & Pete, J. (2011, Fall). The georgia tech buzzcard turns 15: Campus card
programs are expected to do more than provide identification. *College Services,
11*(3). Retrieved from
http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/naylor/JILQ0311/index.php#/14.

National Association for Campus Activities (2012). About us. Retrieved from
http://www.naca.org/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx.

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and American College
Personnel Association. (2004). *Learning reconsidered: A campus wide focus on
the student experience*. Retrieved from
http://www.myacpa.org/pub/documents/learningreconsidered.pdf.

Nuss, E. M. (1993). The role of professional associations. In E. J. Whitt (Ed.), *College
student affairs administration* (pp. 542-552). Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Nuss, E.M. (2003). The development of student affairs. In S.R. Komives, D.B. Woodard
Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession (4th ed.),*
(65-88). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rion, W. (1989). The '30s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy
five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Rouzer, R. (1985). ACUITION Computer Applications. *The Electronic Union.*
Bloomington: Association of College Unions International.

Rudolph, F. (1990). *The american college & university: A history.* Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Scott, C.R. (1988, March). Working with gay and lesbian students. *The Bulletin of the Association of College Unions International*.

Sherwood, G. & Pittman, J. (2009, Spring). The evolution of auxiliary services: An industry is born. *College Services, 9*(1). Retrieved from http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/naylor/JILQ0109/index.php.

Shindell, W. (1991, January). The college in building. *The Bulletin of the Association of College Unions International*.

Steffes, J. and Keeling, R.P. (2006). Creating strategies for collaboration. In R. Keeling (Ed.), *Learning reconsidered 2: Implementing a campus-wide focus on the student experience.* Retrieved from http://www.myacpa.org/pub/documents/LearningReconsidered2.pdf.

Stoller, E. (2012, January). Certification for student affairs professionals. Retrieved from http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/certification-student-affairs-professionals.

Torres, V., DeSawal, D., & Hernandez, E. (2012). The importance of the student personnel point of view in honoring the past and acknowledging current perspectives. In K.M. Boyle, J.W. Lowery, & J.A. Mueller (Eds.), *Reflections on the 75th anniversary of the student personnel point of view.* (3-22), Washington, DC: ACPA- College Student Educators International.

Turner, D.E. (1989). The '80s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.

Union views student unrest. (1965, June). *ACU-I Bulletin, 33* (3), 8-9.

What is ACUInfo? (2012). Retrieved from http://www.acui.org/content.aspx?menu_id=116&id=428.

Woodard, B. (2010, December). Certification task force launched. Retrieved from http://www.acui.org/commons/index.aspx?id=14093&blogid=25838.

Woolbright, C. (1989). The '70s. In A. McMillan & N. Davis (Eds.), *College unions – Seventy five years*. Association of College Unions International.