From Debating Societies to Union Boards
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The origins of the college union are rooted in the establishment of college student activities. The establishment of debating societies and literary clubs as evidence of students' desire to further understand their studies (Cohen & Kisker, 2010) were often conducted in the community center of the campus. One of those first community centers to host these student gatherings was the Harvard Union (Berry & Looman, 1960; Milani, Eakin, & Brattain, 1992). The relationship between the college union facility as the students' place on campus to gather for co-curricular engagement has a long history. Just before the 50 year mark of ACUI Mueller (1961) stated that the Union could be a priceless tool for teaching students a real sense of responsibility and the art of living. More recently, Taylor and Brown (2012) suggested college unions have a central role to teach citizenship, social responsibility and leadership. Butts (1971) spoke to the role the union plays in teaching leadership as it is linked to the larger mission of the college and the greater community that all students inhabit. If one wereto survey the mission statements of college unions and or college union boards one will find terms such as personal growth, creating educational outcomes and promoting the exchange of ideas. All of these ideas speak to the fact that the union while serving as the center for campus life also serves as a living and learning laboratory for all the students who are involved with its programs and services. The intent of this chapter is to document the rich history of learning that has been associated with the college union.

At many institutions college literary societies were the first student organizations that arose in the 1800's to provide opportunities for students to gather and learn outside the academic classroom. The growth of student organizations and union boards has gone through a very expansive evolution process over the past 100 years that created the student activities that we see on campus today. The growth of student organizations began creating connections between students learning in and out of the classroom. The student union in the institution of higher education today is instrumental in providing students with space to gather, facilitate learning from peers, participate in extracurricular activities that supplement their academics, and to learn how to work with others (Butts, 1951).

Prior to the development of the literary society's campus activities and academic curriculum were designed around the idea of social control (Gieser, 2010). During the 19th century college courses were disconnected from current events and the interests of students focusing more on memorizing and reciting classical languages (Gieser, 2010; Westbrook, 2002;). The curriculum of the higher education in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries was mainly designed around classical literature and the students were struggling to be engaged with materials. The academic curriculum was failing to draw connections between what the

student were learning in the classroom and what was relevant to current issues or their interests. The motivation for the students to study, however, was to "avoid ridicule and jeers from classmates that greeted a student's poor public speaking, flawed logic, or faulty Latin translations" (Thelin & Gasman, 2011, p. 5). The development of student organizations over the years created a good connection between the materials they are learning in the classroom and their outside experiences. Literary societies were in a sense early forms of student engagement which did not have official research or literature describing it until the late 1900s (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). The literary societies were created by the students for reasons that we see in student organizations today, to connect with peers who have similar interests, and to create a space, figuratively or literally, that they could call their own (Gieser, 2010).

In the years leading up to the 20th century, college union buildings were almost non-existent. Many campuses began building unions following World War I, but they were thought to only be needed on large university campuses (Butts, 1951). Before student unions were constructed, space for student gatherings and activities was less prevalent on college campuses which created difficulties for students to connect with the institution or place meaning to it other than where they went to class. Early unions were designed to accommodate the social and cultural life of campuses and were meant to respond

to a wide variety of needs. In terms of the college literary society some of them had their own physical space such as houses and buildings in which they met, but many did not and gathered in the student union to hold their gatherings (Gieser, 2010).

The development of student activities within the student union originated from students who were motivated to learn, debate current issues, and study topics that were more closely aligned with their interests. The structure of courses and curriculums were designed to shape the character of students. Other types of curriculum were non-existent and libraries contained only what was necessary for the curriculum and the study of classical works (Gieser, 2010). These organizations demonstrated a need for more than the curriculum offered and a need for engagement. This would eventually lead to the development of student activities and union boards designed to supplement student learning.

Many of the earliest unions were exclusive to men and did not start to admit women until the early 50s (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2008; The Regents of University of Michigan, 2008). Towards the end of the 19th century the literary societies began including women into the organizations in order to start supporting all students (Lyle, 1934). With institutions of higher education becoming more inclusive the exclusivity of the organizations affected student engagement negatively and

would eventually be tied to the students' sense of belonging (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). As the literary society evolved into college union boards and student activities it took a more intentional role in supporting the missions of the institutions which were beginning to promote inclusive environments.

At several institutions union boards began to develop in the early 1900s and would develop into fully student-run organizations which created events and activities in the student union buildings (Dossick, 1948). As these organizations grew and gained more responsibility there became a need for staff and advisors to work with the organizations which was at first resisted but eventually became instrumental in creating opportunities for student learning and growth (Butts, 1951). The growth and evolution of literary societies began to bring to light many issues of student learning and engagement within the institution that would lead to research and intentional practice of student activities in the college unions. In this chapter, we will explore the history of literary societies and the development of union boards and student programing. We will examine the process of student unions becoming more inclusive and how this shaped what we see in the union today. Finally we will look at what this means for the future of student activities and union boards.

College Literary Societies: The First Student Organizations

The very first college literary society was Harvard Universities Spy Club created in 1722. By the nineteenth century there was some form of these organizations on nearly every college campus in the United States (Westbrook, 2002). These initial student organizations provided a way for students to come together with a common interest, an organization that allowed for critical thought and a student driven learning environment. The creation of these organizations rooted in the idea that students wanted to take control of their own intellectual development because they did not feel that curriculum was adequate for what they were interested in (Gieser, 2010). For many institutions, these literary societies were the first student organizations and some required student membership upon enrollment in courses (Miami University, 2008; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2013). Colleges and universities were beginning to recognize the positive impact that literary societies were having on student learning so some began to support the student initiative. At many institutions, these organizations become integral parts of the students' intellectual growth and involved almost the entire student populations (Westbrook, 2002). The emergence of these organizations began a shift towards a more intentional look at student learning and engagement through a lens of extracurricular activities within the college union.

The Development of the Literary Society

As we look at the development of the literary societies across many campuses, it can be seen that the students had a need to be more engaged with the materials they were learning in the classroom. The organizations served to draw the connections to current topics and the student interests that were missing from the classroom. The primary function of these college literary societies was, unintentionally, supporting the educational missions of college campuses in that they served to create a sense of community amongst the students with the goal of individual and intellectual development (Association of College Unions International, 2013).

Early college curriculum was often assessed orally rather than by written assignments. These oral assessments were often subject to immediate critical evaluation from the instructors and other undergraduate students (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). Thelin (2004) stated that the curriculum did little to facilitate intellectual gain, explaining that the only real creativity was from the students' efforts to avoid any serious studying. The earlier college curriculum was narrowly focused and consisted mainly of Greek, Latin, mathematics, some science, and moral philosophy and did not see change until the 1920s and 1930s (Gieser 2010; Westbrook 2002; Thelin, 2004). The structure of the curriculum did not support original thought and was expected to exclude personal emotion by having students take notes and recite the words of the professor and sections from their textbook verbatim from memory (Westbrook, 2002; Gieser 2010). This type of education created a void for students in their learning process which can be connected to the creation of the literary societies. There was a lack of engagement with the materials as it related to the students which can be seen in the retention rates at the time. Thelin and Gasman (2011) explain that a majority of students that started college would leave after one or two years. This was such an issue that in Virginia the governor began to offer monetary rewards for students that completed their degrees. From what we know from our research today we can link this back to the lack of space and student engagement. If a student does not feel engaged with the material they are working with in the classroom then the likelihood that they will persist will be significantly lower (Kuh, 2009; Isher & Upcraft, 2005). College unions and student activities created the space for students to utilize that allowed for the community building and student engagement that was initially missing from the college environment.

Before student unions were constructed, literary societies on various campuses filled the void in student learning and allowed for students to discuss topics that they were interested in and take active roles in their own intellectual development (Westbrook, 2002). In the beginning, literary

societies discussed information that was being taught in the classroom, but eventually started to branch of to include other topics of interest. While these organizations mainly focused on facilitating debates on specific topics related to class or current political issues they grew to value new perspectives on education and began exploring music and drama (Gieser. 2010). These types of organizations eventually became important aspects of the collegiate learning environment and were entirely governed by students, not faculty. Once the positive effects that these organizations had on the students and their intellectual development was recognized, institutions began to support these organizations and in some cases required students to become members of these organizations. The organizations were focused on promoting learning through discussion of current issues and all members were expected to participate with certain penalties, such as monetary fees, if they were not prepared or unable to debate particular topics (Westbrook, 2002). The debates challenged students to think creatively and use linguistic methods that were not allowed in the classroom, like sarcasm, humor, or emotional appeal, which created a more fun and spontaneous learning environment (Gieser, 2010). Being able to associate the materials the students were learning with fun activities opened new doors for engagement that the institution began to capitalize on. However, most institutions lacked a space for these types of activities up

until the late 19th century when student union buildings began to emerge.

As these organizations grew, maintaining motivation and support for debates became challenging which encouraged some faculty involvement. While the organizations were completely organized and governed by students it became important to have a faculty member who would "…suggest readings, play 'devil's advocate', and evaluate the students' performances" (Westbrook, 2002, p. 352). With the addition of mentorship, support of faculty, and later a dedicated staff member, the literary societies began to take on a more intentional and guided structure.

Physical Space of Literary Societies

In the beginning these organizations met in the houses that some of the members were living in as they did not have any physical space to utilize (Livengood, 1908). Starting out, this worked for the organizations, but as they grew in size and became more popular those that did not have substantial space had to find space on campus and many ended using various lecture halls (Livengood, 1908). The value that these societies put on student learning became evident when these organizations began developing libraries in the spaces that they had. The libraries holdings were based on the topics that they chose to debate and often better resources than that of the official university libraries which were narrowly focused only on the curriculum of the

time (Gieser, 2010; Westbrook, 2002). The creation of these libraries was a solution to the narrowness and restrictions that colleges had on their libraries. While there were many literary societies that created large libraries there were many that did not have the physical space so as student unions buildings started to develop in the early 20th century many societies began utilizing the new space to hold their debates (Butts, 1951; Harding, 1959).

The union building was a space that was created intentionally to facilitate student interactions and learning opportunities outside of the classroom which opened many doors for the growth of the literary societies. After the First World War when union buildings started to develop on many campuses they were designed to address the interests of the college population (Butts, 1951). As a space designed for the culture and life of the campus it only made sense that the literary societies use this space for debates and gatherings. Butts (1951) describes the union as being the cultural hub of campus that was designed to be a space for the activities and gathering space for all students on campus. The literary societies set the stage for learning through student activities by trying to engage students with materials that they were interested in and gave students the opportunity to take ownership of their intellectual growth.

The important take away of these organizations is that they were the beginning of extracurricular learning and student involvement but often these organizations did not have space to facilitate their activities. It was not uncommon for these organizations to have multiple meeting spaces that inconsistently changed based on when the organizations were able to meet (Livengood, 1908). The development of student unions gave space to many of these organizations that did not have it previously. The debates and other events that the literary societies held were the earliest forms of student activities linked with intentional learning and engagement. The programs helped to give meaning to the union buildings.

Creating the Union Boards

Programming boards as we know them today have undergone many iterations to become the organizations that we have come to know. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, students around the country began to recognize a need for institutions to unify the students (Butts, Beltramini, Bourassa, Connelly, Meyer, Mitchell, Smith & Willis, 2012). Popular student groups, such as debating and literary societies had given students an outlet to practice their public speaking skills and to engage in learning outside of the classroom, but also created divides among students. With the hopes of creating a large general society that all students could be a part of, groups around the country began to form. Student members chose to name these new groups unions and modeled them after the student union groups at

Cambridge and Oxford. Student unions were groups which aimed to promote unity and friendship throughout the campus. The original student unions were comprised of only male students as most campuses did not or rarely admitted women at that time. (Butts et al, 2012; Cohen & Kisker, 2010)

In the United States, one of the first student unions developed at the University of Wisconsin (Butts et al., 2012). Administration acknowledged that if the University of Wisconsin was going to provide a quality education it would need to not only create scholars, but also create men. Members of administrations hoped that the student union would be a way for students to develop skills that they could not learn in the classroom, creating a more holistic education. Following the lead of Wisconsin, student unions were developed at Brown, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio State, Illinois, Indiana, Case and Toronto (Butts et al, 2012).

In the early years of student unions, many were just groups of students and most campuses did not have a physical space where students could meet. Despite a lack of physical space, the members of many student union groups took on the responsibility of planning and promoting leisure activities on campus to give students something to do outside of the classroom, such as putting on vaudeville productions and campus plays. Examining early copies of The Bulletin, a publication from the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), revealed that the

majority of articles in the first decade of its publication, the 1930s, focused on sharing the events that union groups were hosting. Student unions also focused on serving as student leaders on campus and strove to give a central voice to students. In a student editorial during the 1920s, Porter Butts, who would go on to serve as the long-time director of the Wisconsin Union, stated that the students of the Wisconsin student union wanted to take the future of the university into their own hands (Butts et al., 2012). Additionally, as early as the 1930s, university administrators recognized the educational possibilities of student unions. An article from The Bulletin encouraged administrators to facilitate learning in the student union and stated that it would expand the academic curriculum (Association of College Unions International, 1934).

As student unions became more common on college campus and began to more actively plan events, they noticed the need to develop a physical space to bring students together (Butts et al., 2012). As the students considered the original mission of their organizations, they understood that bringing students together would require a physical space where students could meet. Between 1900 and the late 1920s, many student unions added fundraising for a student union building to the main responsibilities and duties of their student organizations. Some groups focused on raising money from current students, some put on performances and

others implemented door-to-door fundraising campaigns. Following World War I, many student unions used the money they raised to fund the construction of student union buildings in memory of student soldiers who had lost their lives in the war.

Once physical space had been established, institutions were faced with a decision of how to govern the building. At some institutions, the role of the student union groups shifted to become governing boards for the student union buildings during the 1930s. Many of these student unions groups became known as union boards. The union boards that adapted to become governing boards for their union buildings were responsible for providing policies, purposes and inspiration for the building and serving as representatives of the student body as a whole. Union boards had two main responsibilities as the government of the union. First, they focused on establishing that "freedom of action is accompanied by careful study of the total situation and by the genuine self-discipline of a university-trained mind" ("The Wisconsin's Union Director's Report 1936-1937" as cited in Butts et al., 2012). The second responsibility of union boards was to remember the union had values besides being concerned with economic success (Butts et al., 2012).

In addition to the role that students played in governing union buildings on their campuses, students were instrumental in the creation of the primary professional organization for

student unions, the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) (Hubler, D., 1975). The first meeting of ACUI was organized by students who were involved with student unions at seven different institutions. Students remained very engaged with the association and were involved in joint business meetings with staff members (ACUI, 1933).

By the 1940s, over seventeen universities had union boards or union committees, comprised of over 400 students to help oversee the union and its programming. Some areas of programming that these groups focused on were music, art, drama, films, reading, crafts, outings, public discussions, games, and social gatherings. Most committees had professional staff members serving as advisers or coaches. When compared to other organizations on college campuses, union boards were one of the most powerful and were tasked with trying to represent a larger group of students. Through this experience, students were able to learn to balance their opinions with the opinions of individuals who were older than them. The balance of opinions between students and staff members helped unions thrive during the 1940s.

In addition to balancing the opinions of the advisers and the students, union boards also had to bear in mind that they were ultimately responsible to the institution, faculty members, and governing boards. Luckily, the union created an opportunity for student

members of the union board to be taken seriously as partners of the educational process. The union boards and their advisers helped strengthen the union as part of the institution by ensuring that it remained democratic. The union was also one of the first co-curricular aspects of institutions that focused on the "social education" of students (Jones, N.B., 1935). Jones argued that the union as a physical space gave students the opportunity to gain an extra-curricular experience which contributed to a more well-grounded education. Many of the students who benefitted most from this extra-curricular education were members of the union board and union governing organizations. Like literary societies before them, the union boards also began to offer educational programs that students indicated where not covered in the academic curriculum (ACUI, 1938). Examples of things that were taught included seminars on religion, marriage, politics, and love (ACUI, 1938). Some union staff members even taught seminars on leadership (ACUI, 1937).

Following World War II and during the 1950s, the union board became a laboratory for students to practice the democracy they were learning about as they determined the course of the union. It also helped provide leadership training and instill a sense of social responsibility in students. Participation in union boards taught students to be self-directed and provided them with an opportunity to gain confidence and competence (Butts et al, 2012).

In the 1960s, institutions realized that for union boards to be successful and to truly assume responsibility, it was important for students to have a critical role in determining the direction of the union and its programs (Butts et al., 2012). When students were given a larger role, the unions gained more support from the general student body. Additionally, during this time, union administration realized that it was important to give students real authority and to spell out their authority to them to help students to take their responsibilities seriously. Union administration also had to help union boards realize that they were part of a group focused on service to the institution not part of a group entrenched in campus politics. Staff members of unions began to realize that unions would only be as successful as their student union boards (Butts et al., 2012).

One of the largest issues affecting college and university campuses as a whole during the 1960s was the growing student unrest and political protests that were occurring on campus (Butts et al., 2012). Despite the union serving as a location for some of these protests, many union boards did not take a strong political stance. Many union boards remained silent to the political issues of the day in hopes of remaining neutral organizations representing all students. Union boards viewed their responsibility in providing programs that were not issue driven. Additionally, members of the union board were typically thought of as

extensions of the establishment of the university which meant that campus activists did not think highly of them (Butts et al., 2012).

The activists' criticism of unions continued in the 1970s. Many students, particularly students involved in the political activism movement felt that much of the union board programming during the late 1960s and early 1970s had gotten stale and was not intellectually stimulating enough for a college campus. These students wanted the union board to provide a liberal education outside of the classroom.

In addition to student criticism, a summit was held by the Association of College Unions International which brought together student members of union boards and union staff members from around the country in the 1970s (Butts et al., 2012). During this summit, a call was made for more programming. The additional programming was to be made as fun as possible and aim to help students learn how to use free time. Helping various groups learn and bringing together an assortment of groups of students from around campus were two more goals of the additional programming. Perhaps due to this call for more programming, the 1970s became known as the golden era of social programming and featured large campus concerts and an increase in the number of comedians who visited and performed in student unions. Union boards and programming boards had to work to balance these entertaining events with the educational events that

were being requested by students on their campus. Despite the increase in programming, some union boards had become groups which focused more on advising the union and administrative work (Butts et al, 2012).

Student affairs professionals also began to examine the structure of union and programming boards in the 1970s. The majority of boards at that time were creating campus-wide programs (Eldred, L. L., Courier, T. & Kaiser, B. T., 1976) making them programming boards, not just union boards. However, some boards still focused on programming in the union only. The majority of boards were funded through a combination of institutional allocations and student fees. About half of programming boards were providing some sort of financial incentive to motivate students to be involved. One of the biggest trends of the era was that programming board students wanted to be paid for their contributions. Additionally, professional staff members were beginning to take a more active role in working with programming boards and support of student programs was strongly encouraged (Eldred, L. L., Courier, T. & Kaiser, B. T., 1976).

During the 1980s, union boards, like many other aspects of college and university life struggled to counteract the typical campus culture which revolved around the increased consumption of alcohol. Some union boards discussed with administration the possibility of including a bar or pub in the union. Union boards also had to decide how to

balance alcohol during their programming. For some boards, that meant serving alcohol at events and creating a pub like atmosphere, while others focused on providing students with alternative programming that would give them something else to do besides attending parties and drinking (Butts et al., 2012).

During the 1990s, student activities fees rose dramatically and led to tighter restrictions on programming board budgets (Crouch, J.W., 1992). The 1990s were also a time when staff members focused on developing leadership of the students in programming boards and examined how the development of the student members of the programming boards were affected by their participation (Mitchell, 1993). Students were also encouraged to become involved in the professional organization for college unions, the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) again during the 1990s (Ferraro, 1992). Another trend was that programming boards and unions begin to increase education of awareness and understanding of multiculturalism (Adams, 1994).

As the new millennium began, students working as part of programming boards began to realize that the things they were learning were transferrable and should be documented (Gutowski, J., 2006). With this realization came a demand for co-curricular transcripts and documentation of the skills that students were learning. An increased focus on learning

outcomes, both for the students who are members of the programming board and for the students who are the audience of the programs, was developed during this time (Gutowski, J., 2006). Another trend of the new millennium was for boards to create civic engagement-based programming. As students became more civically engaged as a whole, programming boards began to implement programs such as voting registration drives, debates forums and debate viewing parties (Savage, K., 2007). Current trends in programming boards and student involvement in college unions will be discussed later in this chapter.

Inclusivity in the Union

For many years higher education has excluded women and racial minorities through a number of practices, from admissions to campus life and culture. According to Thelin (2004), colleges and universities had historically struggled with filling their classrooms and facilities, but as enrollment increased during the early 20th century, institutions of higher education began to implement selective admissions processes. One part of becoming more selective was the creation of College Entrance Examination, but the major exclusionary factor came from rampant intolerance, as well as religious and ethnic discrimination. Many universities, especially in the New England region (i.e. Harvard, Columbia, and the

University of Pennsylvania), used a selective admissions process to only increase the exclusivity of their institutions. With the implementation of a more selective admissions process, there was the opportunity for colleges and universities to either create an equal higher education system or create an even greater gap between marginalized and non-marginalized populations.

Despite intentions to admit students based on merit, most higher education institutions ended up contributing to the homogeneity of their campuses by excluding students of religious, racial or ethnic minority groups (Thelin, 2004). One example was the discriminatory admissions practices at both Harvard and Columbia that directly targeted students of Jewish faith. Both Abbott Lawrence Lowell, President at Harvard, and Frederick P. Keppel, Dean of Admissions at Columbia University, noticed an increase in the Jewish student population and thought that this would limit admission of students who were from reputable white Protestant families (Thelin, 2004). Due to the increase of Jewish student enrollment both universities established quotas that would cap the number of Jewish applicants able to be admitted to the institution. Practices such as these were unchallenged until 1910 when they were they were brought into question by the American public education system. The selective admissions processes of colleges and universities began to receive push back due in large part to the

efforts of the American public school system and more applicants being better prepared for collegiate rigor.

Women in the Union

Throughout their existence college unions have gone through a substantial shift in many aspects of their operations. In the period following the Civil War, as many student union groups were being founded, women were first allowed to enroll at universities and given the opportunity to acquire an advanced degree. In the 1840s and 1850s colleges like Knox University in Illinois, Wesleyan Female Seminary in Macon, Georgia, and Masonic University in Selma, Alabama began to allow women to enroll (Thelin, 2004). However, although, women were getting an education alongside men, many women were still unable to participate in the extracurricular activities that accompanied the collegiate experience.

Due to the exclusionary nature of extracurricular activities in the co-educational environment, women began to form their own, formal and informal, organizations and activities, which defied the male-dominated campus culture and the college administration. Additionally, the new women's colleges were able to have the opportunity to create their own individual structure and organizational culture for the higher education and co-curricular education of women. Eventually, around the 1920s, some of the women student union groups merged with the student union groups

for men to form more inclusive student union groups (Butts et al., 2012). For some institutions, groups did not officially merge until later in the 20th century, but they worked together on promoting the construction of student union buildings and co-programmed events (Butts et al., 2012).

Although women and men student union groups began merging and working together, there were still instances where women faced marginalization. As student union buildings were built, many included smoking or billiard lounges which were exclusive to men. Additionally, at some institutions women were required to use "women-only" entrances or were required to be escorted by men while in the union. For the fifteen years following World War II, convention photographs of the Association of College Unions International showed that unions were exclusively for the use of men (Butts, 1951). In the 1950s, many universities began opening up all areas of the building to women and doing away with restrictions that required women to be escorted by men (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2008; The Regents of University of Michigan, 2008).

Minorities in the Union

Prior to the mid-twentieth century, many unions were not inclusive of most racial and ethnic minorities as most higher education institutions did not allow members of those groups to enroll. During 1960s, African American students were being admitted into colleges and universities more frequently than in previous years, mostly as a result of litigation that forced institutions to change their admissions practices. Although African American students were finally being accepted into institutions across the United States, they were not completely accepted into the campus life or campus culture (Thelin, 2004). Within institutions, African American students were continuing to be excluded within the dormitories, dining halls, and even in classroom seating arrangements. Many of these students were made to feel like second-class citizens on campuses through being isolated, shunned, and sabotage. Further, many African American students were excluded from sports, drama productions, residence life activities, and the dining commons. It was not until the late 1960s and the 1970s that many unions became inclusive of all student groups.

At Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), union boards and other student organizations were not as prominent because fraternities and sororities dominated student life at HBCUs. Black fraternities and sororities were created due to the fact that the Greek system still lacked racial equality (Thelin, 2004). Creating their own Greek system was a means for African American students to create community amongst each other since they were not being accepted into the campus life.

Eventually student unions changed drastically and become a place

where students of all ethnicities and genders could gather, hold student organization meetings, and socialize with their peers. Student unions in the United States have seen a cultural shift which allowed a more diverse student population to participate in organizations and activities alongside the change of college admission practices. Over time racial integration became more acceptable around the country and marginalized groups of students continued to transition into the culture of the traditional college life and would eventually became included in general campus activities as well as the student unions. Currently, union boards have begun to focus on promoting diversity and social justice based programming to educate students on issues facing diverse populations ("The Ohio Union," 2013).

Implications for the Future of Union Boards

Throughout history there have been numerous changes to not just college unions, but the student organizations that function within them. Many unions and union boards have made strong efforts to become more inclusive over time, they have developed into campus programming bodies, and they have become the drivers of campus spirit and traditions. But that leads us to ask, what does this imply for the future and what changes do union boards have in store? In this chapter, we have demonstrated the transformation of literary societies to union boards and

here we will predict new trends that may be seen within these student organizations. There are three main areas that will likely determine the direction of union boards and programming: funding deficits, technology, and programming shifts based on institutional direction and vision.

Funding Deficit

One trend that can be seen with union boards is the allocation of funding and budget management issues. In recent years the entire field of higher education has seen continual reduction of funding from the state government and has had to find means of reducing budgets to help finance the institution's operations. This impact of fee allocation has impacted various functions of institutions and resulted in some programs at institutions needing to be cut. If this trend continues in the future, it could be detrimental to the functions of union and programming boards and could cause a shift in the programming model of an institution.

With increasing cost and decreasing governmental funding for higher education, institutions have been relying more on student activity fees and other means, such as subsidizing, to fund programming efforts put on by the students. In the future this may not be an option as institutions will need to strive to offer affordable education, but continue to be able to operate so that students may benefit from the

educational aspects of higher education. Some institutions have resorted to increasing student fees to compensate for the lack of allocated funding. This puts more pressure on the students, but seems to be the one of the only resolutions to manage the funding issues that many institutions face.

Technology in the Union

The usage of technology is steadily increaseing as the capabilities and possibilities of devices and computer programs grow. With the growing trend of technology integration into everyday life it is easy to see that it will become important for unions to adapt with the change. Having grown up surrounded by technology every generation of student develops a stronger technologically prowess and it is important for unions to stay up to date with technology in order to keep students engaged and appeal to new learning styles. The use of technology is becoming more and more essential in the everyday activities of students and one example of unions using technology that has become almost essential is providing the network connectivity for all types of devices. Other ways include putting gaming systems in common space or implementing more technology services in rooms to allow more flexibility and usefulness of spaces (Hatton, Farley, Cook, & Potter, 2009). It's important for union boards when creating events or programing events to consider technology as it is a trend that is exponentially increasing. Furthermore Hatton, Farley, Cook, and Potter (2009) explain that if unions and programing boards want to stay relevant they will be pressured to think of creative ways of implementing technology.

Institutional Direction and Programing Shifts

Union boards, although student-run, ultimately are guided by direction and the values of their institution. The administration at an institution can play a significant role in how a union board functions. Institutional change significantly impacts the direction of union boards and types of programs they implement. As institutions further develop over time and alter their missions, visions, and directions, union boards must adapt with the institutions objectives and make sure that they are aligning their programming with what the institution desires.

In recent years higher education has seen a shift in the direction of programming and educational efforts. Many institutions are beginning to make the shift to include more educational, diversity, community service, and sustainability programming. With the institutional shifts across the nation many programming boards will start to create programs focused on the trending topics. For example at Ohio State University, the Ohio Union Activities Board (OUAB) has been instrumental in reinvigorating educational, entertainment, and diversity

programming at the university ("The Ohio Union," 2013). With this trend seeming to continue and increase union boards will see a shift in their programming efforts, especially if the funding crisis continues on its current path.

Conclusion

College literary societies brought attention to the need for intentional student activities that facilitated learning and growth outside of the classroom which eventually lead to the development of union boards and student activities. By looking at the historical developments of student activities in the college unions, we can see the emphasis students have placed on a need for extracurricular learning. It shows us that in order for students to grow and develop the ability to think critically they need to be able to draw connections between their education and the current issues of society. It also points out the importance of the intentional space that union buildings provide for students as well as the positive effects on student learning they have. When we think about student engagement and forming a sense of belonging at a university we know from current research and can see from this historical perspective that students need to connect with their peers and be engaged in learning opportunities outside of the classroom (Isher & Upcraft, 2005; Kuh, 2009). Student unions provide the space for these connections. It is important to consider the historical development of literary and debate societies and for union boards to recognize the need students have expressed for intentional space and the positive impact activities in the union has had on student development and learning.

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