An Analysis of the University as an Organisation

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INTRODUCTION

Olaf Helmer believes (and he is not alone among students of organisations) that "the trouble with organisation theory to date is its continuous non-existence." It is Helmer's view that the two basic requirements of a theory are as yet absent:

First he denies the existence of a unified and adequate conceptual framework within which can be formulated, without misunderstanding, any meaningful statement about the particular organisation be it a hospital, a bank, joint stock company or a university. It is his view that even the basic concept of an organisation, which should after all serve to demarcate the subject matter of the supposed theory, is extremely vague.

The goal of any scientific theory is both to explain and to predict the phenomena under study. Here, he believes secondly, that the situation is even worse, for progress in the study of organisations has turned out to be more intuitive than systematic. And so Fayol, of the Structural or Classic School, claims "the foregoing principles are those to which I have most often had recourse." Also Barnard of the Behavioural School offers us: "an . . . exposition in very general terms of the functions processes, essential problems of the executive or of leadership of organisations, and of the management of co-operative systems . . . based primarily upon personal experiences and observation."

Organisation theory has, it is charged, failed to achieve a level of generalisation enabling it to systematize and explain organisation phenomena in different fields, be it, as stated above, a hospital, a bank, a joint stock company or a university. There is, it is alleged, no generic process. It would appear that there are no universal aspects of organisation, only special types of organisation. "I would like to point out," says Millett, "that there is very little empirical evidence to sustain the thesis or hypothesis that organisational forms are similar."

However, there are other theorists who disagree with Millett. "There is," Litchfield believes, "abundant evidence to demonstrate that there

is much that is common in administration.” And he adds: “If current thought fails to generalize the constants or universals in administration it may also be criticized for its failure to accord a broad role to the variables in the administrative process.” Administration and the administrative process,” he declares occur in substantially the same generalized form in industrial, commercial, civil, educational, military and hospital organisations.”

Millett carries the attack still further: “I wish to assert . . . that much of the thinking about organisation has been extracted from the organisational context of business and the public service.” And so he believes that a university has little if any resemblance to the generalized conceptions of organisation which may be applicable to certain types of business entities. “(Universities) are”, he tells us, “different in institutional setting, in purpose, in operation, and hence in internal organisation.”

What then, we may well ask, is an organisation? Indeed is it possible to answer this question? “A formal organisation is, ‘Barnard tells us, “That kind of co-operation among men that is conscious, deliberate and purposeful.” Proceeding with some caution he offers us a description of an organisation rather than a careful definition:

“The more important of them are associations of co-operative efforts to which it is possible and customary to give definite names, that have officers or recognised loaders, that have reasons for existence that may be approximately stated . . .”

Strother admits that a search for definitions fails to reveal any system based on principles of classification, but asserts that usage suggests that the following characteristics are assumed in treatments of organisations:

“Organisations are groups of two or more people in some kind of co-operative relationship to one another. This co-operation implies some kind of collective goal(s) or output(s). The groups exhibit some kind of differentiation of function and maintain some kind of more or less stable and explicit hierarchial structure.”

and he concludes by drawing our attention to the fact that organisations exist in a total field, something neglected by the Classical theorists.

It can be said with some confidence that a university has in common with other groups of human beings, the characteristics outlined by both Barnard and Strother. It exists to accomplish something; it has goals or purposes. People are willing to serve (in Barnard’s language) “to contribute efforts to the co-operative system” in pursuit of certain common purposes. The university’s reasons for existence can be approximately stated. It is—again in Barnard’s language—“an association of co-operative efforts to which it is possible to give a definite name” viz. a “university”. It is also an organisation which exhibits a kind of differentiation of functions, for example faculty in many various and differing disciplines, administrators, students and many ancillary categories of staff. Finally it can (and will) be shown that the university does maintain a stable (though complex) hierarchial structure. We will observe “that information is communicated through formal channels, responsibility is fixed in formally designated positions, interaction is arranged in relations between superiors and subordinates, and decisions are based on written rules.”

WHAT THEN ARE THE PURPOSES OF A UNIVERSITY?

Assuming that, as Robbins said, “there is room for at least a speck of each purpose in all the various types of higher educational institutions” the purpose in principle are

“. . . the preservation of eternal truths, the creation of new knowledge, the improvement and service, wherever truth and knowledge of high order may serve the needs of man.”

What this quotation acknowledges is the complexity of purpose. We also must acknowledge the plurality of aims.

First, there is the instruction of students. Recognising these students as a vast reservoir of human abilities and skills upon which our social, technical, and economic institutions depend” a university should, as Robbins states, “provide instruction in skills suitable to play a part

in the general division of labour." However the Robbins Report qualified this when it postulated that

"What is taught should be taught in such a way as to promote the general powers of the mind. The aim should be to produce not mere specialists but cultivated men and women. It is the distinguishing characteristic of a healthy higher education that even where it is concerned with practical techniques, it imparts them on a plane of generality that makes possible their application to many problems . . ." 18

Nor can the specialist live in a vacuum. "He must also be a responsible citizen of his time, his country and his intellectual community." 19 Following on from the school and along with the family the university has a role to play in "the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship." 20

In a sense the objectives or purposes just considered are on one side of the coin. On the other side is the equally important purpose: the advancement of learning. It is research which seeks constantly to enlarge the horizons of man's knowledge. It is within a university that "investigation into the nature of things can be pursued in the spirit that knowledge is good for its own sake regardless of where it leads." 21 It must also be acknowledged that "a university has the advantage of containing within its walls both a community of men who know and a comprehensive compendium of what man knows." 22

No doubt general consensus can be reached on the thesis that the university's province is the realm of knowledge. However it must also be recognised that there is a wide variety of opinion on what a university should do and be. Neither Bacon, Newman, Flexner nor Veblen settled the issue. The debate continues. Consensus is complicated by the wide range of activities pursued within its walls, by the relative independence of many of these activities and the degree of specialism required to pursue them.

The faculty is the primary element in the academic process. "There is" Millett states, "no other justification for the existence . . . of a university except to enable the faculty to carry on its instructional and research activities." 23 The characteristics of the faculty therefore constitute an

18. Ibid.
essential part of the organisational context of the university. Increasingly the faculty member is a specialist. “What has happened” Corson tells us, “is that the average faculty member has become, during the past 100 years oriented more to his discipline than to his institution.”

Indeed he may and probably does share a discipline, for example history, but because his particular interest is, say, Irish history of the nineteenth century he may have only tenuous ties of scholarship with other historians both within and without his institution, whose special interests differ from his. For our Irish historian his closest professional relationships probably occur across university boundary lines to other Irish historians interested in the same period.

One corollary of this lack of an institutional perspective is a wide dispersion of authority within the institution. To a large degree a faculty member believes that he has final authority over the substance of his teaching and over his research. He expects freedom in which to pursue his “expertness”. It is in this context that Corson asks “whether it still makes sense to pretend that the faculty of a multi-purpose university is one body.”

This is not, of course, to deny that a faculty member’s professional endeavour and welfare is bound up with his institution. If pressed even the most committed and obturate of faculty will admit that in addition to his individual role he has a collegial role. As a member of the established academic staff of his institution he has certain duties to perform. These duties generally begin within his department and at this level are less easily avoided.

The province of the university is therefore the realm of knowledge. It exists to preserve, transmit and to advance knowledge. It is this “peculiar” objective of a university which conditions both its organisation structure and the operation of its individual units. The fundamental question is, of course, that given this plurality of purpose within the overall objective can organic unity be achieved? Corson puts the same question, but in another way, “Can the university, on the one hand, develop a systematic organisation to co-ordinate all its members in achieving its purpose while, on the other hand, stimulating and facilitating the enterprise of each member?”

It is Burton Clark’s belief that “a tightly knit structure could not be established around these goals . . . rather that the structure accommodates to ambiguity of goals with its own ambiguity, overlap and discontinuity.”

Further, as the university is a dynamic organisation it, like other organisations, depends for its survival upon “the maintenance of an equilibrium of complex character in a continuously fluctuating environment . . . which calls for adjustment processes internal to the organis-

These adjustment processes are no more or no less than organisation processes.

Growth either in student numbers of in graduate students vis-a-vis undergraduates or in the number of departments or in any combination undoubtedly accentuates the problem of developing a systematic organisation to co-ordinate all the participants whilst at the same "stimulating and facilitating the enterprise of each of them." Consequently in recent years, when there has been great pressure to expand student undergraduate places in particular, much adjustment and readjustment of organisational processes within the universities has been called for. The most obvious examples of such adjustments has been the growth of academic, administrative and ancillary staffs and of committees be they permanent or ad hoc in nature. The use of consultants brought in with increasing frequency to look at various aspects of university organisation leads, of course, to further adjustments.

Most people refer, as has been done here, to the university as an institution. This is done in the belief that the university is comparable at least in concept to the family, the church, and the government as institutions of our society. Corson believes that the idea that an institution is a government, in the sense that it is authorised to make rules that govern the conduct of individuals, is especially useful in the analysis of a functioning of a university. For him the term "governance" has to do with the process of deciding and of seeing to it that the decisions made are executed to the end that the purposes of the institutions are achieved.

When we use the word institution we are generally referring to "an organisation for the promotion of some public object". It is interesting that we rarely use the word "management" in respect of institutions. Does this follow from the fact that "administration" is concerned to facilitate the accomplishment of some public object? The task of administration is to "facilitate" not to "manage".

THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES OF A UNIVERSITY

(a) THE ORGANS OF GOVERNMENT

Most universities in the United Kingdom exercise their rights and functions by virtue of royal charters (conferred in conjunction with Act of Parliament) or simply by Acts of Parliament defining their constitutions in broad outline. These constitutions deal with major questions. Subordinate matters are regulated by the universities' own

statutes which are approved by the Queen in Council and which in some cases must be laid before Parliament. The universities themselves promulgate ordinances, decrees, graces, and regulations which are subsidiary to their charter and statutes.

If the Universities of London and Wales are each treated as one institution, there are altogether some 45 university institutions in the United Kingdom.* (Including the constituent colleges of London and Wales there are altogether some 64 institutions). In respect of the civic universities in England and Wales and the New University of Ulster (some 34 institutions), their constitutions, as those elsewhere in the United Kingdom provide for certain statutory organs of government. (See Diagram I, page 9). In general these organs of government—from the top of the organisation chart going down—at Level I the Court, at Level II the Council (in Scotland and at both London and Durham the Court, and at Belfast the Senate), at Level III the Senate (in Scotland the Senate Academicus, and at Belfast the Academic Council), and at Level IV the Faculties. There is also, at all except two institutions, a Level V; at some 27 institutions it is made up of Departments, at Bradford, Sussex and Warwick of Schools of Studies and at Kent of Boards of Studies.

* In this analysis the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have been ignored.
THE ORGANS OF GOVERNANCE OF UNITED KINGDOM UNIVERSITIES

LEVEL I
- THE COURT

LEVEL II
- THE COUNCIL
- THE COURT
- THE SENATE

LEVEL III
- THE SENATE
- THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS
- THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
- THE BOARD OF STUDIES

LEVEL IV
- THE FACULTIES OR SCHOOLS OR BOARDS
- THE FACULTIES
- THE FACULTIES

LEVEL V
- DEPARTMENTS
- DEPARTMENTS
- DEPARTMENTS

THE CIVIC UNIVERSITIES IN ENGLAND,

THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES AND

THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

SCOTLAND

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
Level I: The Court

“There shall be a Court of the University . . ., which subject to the provisions of this our Charter and to the Statutes of the University shall be the supreme governing body of the University”. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Kent, Statute 13.

“There shall be a Court of the University . . . which shall receive an annual report on the working of the University from the Vice-Chancellor, which may discuss any matter relating to the University and which may express its views to the Council and to the Senate”. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Essex, Article II.

“The Court shall have the powers to make Statutes either on its own initiative or on the proposal of the Council”. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Southampton, Second Schedule, Section 14.

“There shall be a Court of the University which, subject to the Statutes, shall appoint the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellors, other than the Senior Pro-Chancellor, and the Treasurer and shall have the right to receive reports on the working of the University”. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Sussex, Ordinance 10 (1).

The Court is, as stated in the Kent Statute above, the supreme governing body of all except three of the civic universities in England and Wales. The exceptions are the Universities of London, Durham and Aston. There is no equivalent to the Court in Scotland or at Queen’s University, Belfast. Although in theory the Court is the supreme governing body, in practice its authority is agreed to be limited. This can be said despite the fact that at some of the older civic universities the Court has the power to amend or add to the Statutes. The limited authority of the Court is especially true in respect of academic matters where its authority is limited to formalities. It meets once or twice a year. Its membership can be as large as 600 members and as low as 100 members. In most universities professional members are ex-officio and non-professional members are elected. However there are considerably more outside members than representatives of the university staff. For example at Nottingham the graduates of the University, public authorities contributing regularly to the general funds of the University, the Churches, Members of Parliament, learned societies and professional bodies, among others are represented.

The most important function that a Court performs is probably that, as the Robbins Report acknowledged, it provides a convenient opportunity for the University to report formally to the public on the progress of university work and to receive in return public comment and criticism.

The official head of a university is the Chancellor. He is elected for
life by one of the statutory bodies, in the English civic universities by the Court:

“There shall be a Chancellor of the University who shall be the Chief Officer of the University and shall preside over meetings of its Court . . . He shall be appointed by the Court on the nomination of the Council after consultation with the Senate.”

In Scotland he is elected by the General Council and is its President. Elsewhere he is elected by Convocation. Generally his functions are ceremonial and advisory rather than administrative or executive. Many universities provide for the election of one or more pro-Chancellors, at Belfast there are two but there is a provision for three. The Pro-Chancellor or the senior Pro-Chancellor, if there is more than one, deputises for the Chancellor in his absence (except in the matter of conferring degrees, which is then a function of the Vice-Chancellor). Normally the Chancellor is also chairman of the Council; the LEVEL II body, although in Scotland this role falls to the Rector.

Level II: The Council

“There shall be a Council of the University which subject to the Statutes of the University and to the control of the Court as provided by the Statutes shall be the governing body and executive of the University and shall have the custody and use of the Common Seal, the management and administration of the whole revenue and property of the University and the conduct of all the affairs of the University, including the appointment of such fees as may be demanded by and be payable to the University”. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Nottingham, page 9, Statute 13.

“The principal powers of the University Court are to administer and manage the whole revenue and property of the University to appoint members of staff and examiners, and to review all decisions of the Senatus, including on representation by one of its members or appeal by a member of the Senatus, decisions in the regulation and superintendence of teaching, and, in cases of discipline, on appeal by a member of the University directly affected”. University of Edinburgh: Report of The Joint Court-Senatus Committee on the Constitution and Structure of the University, January 1966.

“The Senate, subject to the provisions of the Irish Universities Act, 1908, of this our Charter, and of the Statutes, shall have power to regulate and determine all matters concerning the University, shall

31. The University of Canterbury, The Charter of Incorporation of the University of Kent at Canterbury. Page 4, para. 5 and page 10, para. IV.
exercise all the powers and discretions of the University, and shall
direct the form, custody and use of the common seal". Queen's
University Belfast, The Charter of the University, Statute DC.

In England and Wales the Council is the “executive governing body”
as distinct from the Court which is generally referred to as “the supreme
governing body”. In Scotland and at Belfast, as there is no equivalent to
the Court, this distinction does not exist. Subject to the powers of the
academic body at Level III (in England and Wales the Senate, in Scot-
land the Senatus Academicus, and at Belfast the Academic Council),
from which it can call for reports in order to review the work of the
University, the Council (and its equivalents) may take such steps as it
thinks fit for the purpose of advancing the interests of the University,
maintaining its efficiency, making provision for and encouraging teach-
ing, the pursuit of learning and the prosecution of research. As such
therefore it is responsible for all policy decisions.

On the recommendation of the academic body at Level III the
Council may institute or discontinue Faculties, Schools, Boards of
Studies, or Departments. It has powers to authorise or control the
establishment and disestablishment of all posts necessary to the function-
ing of the University (except for offices created by the Statutes) and is
responsible for determining the method of appointment, conditions of
appointment and service and remuneration of all staff of the University
and of others working for and in the University. The Statutes, particu-
larly of post-Robbins university institutions, enable the Council to make
provision for schemes of insurance, superannuation, pensions, or retire-
ment benefits for all salaried staff, and so far as the Council may think
fit for other employees of the University or their dependents. The
Statutes of some institutions expressly require the Council to provide
for the recreation and welfare of staff as well as students.

The Council administers the finances and properties of the University.
It is responsible for the provision of buildings, premises, furniture, and
equipment and other means required for carrying on the work of the
institution and also for maintaining its efficiency. Its powers of managing
the finances of the institution include those of investing its monies,
the buying, selling, exchanging and leasing of its property, the borrowing
of monies on mortgage as it deems necessary and the determining (on
the recommendation generally of the academic body at Level III) of fees.

At some universities the final approval of the Council is required for
academic regulations proposed by the academic body at Level III. The
Council may also institute degrees on the recommendation of the
academic body and in consultation with the latter and subject to any
conditions made by the founders it may establish Fellowships, Scholar-
ships, Studentships and Prizes.

The Council, usually between 30 and 50 in number consists of represen-
tatives of the academic staff, nominees of local authorities, and of
members, usually lay members, nominated by the Court, if there is one.
There are sometimes a few co-opted members as well. The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor are usually ex officio members. In most cases there are more lay than academic representatives on the Council. Professors have more seats than non-professorial members. As a rule professorial members are elected by-and-from the purely academic body at Level III. Non-professorial representation on the Council is constitutionally assured at most universities; they are either elected by the non-professorial staff, the academic body as a whole or by the faculties. Currently at Belfast there is no provision in the constitution for the election of non-professorial staff to its equivalent of the Council, called the Senate. However the statutes at Belfast are currently under review and it is reported that the latest draft contains the proposal for two members of the academic non-professorial staff to be elected by the academic non-professorial staff. This, if it was carried out, would bring the academic representation to eight or two-thirteenths of a body of approximately fifty-two.

Of the 45 universities in the United Kingdom 22 elect the Chairman of the Council (or its equivalents). Some 8 universities, including Belfast but excluding all in Scotland, rely upon the Chancellor to chair the Council and another 8 rely upon a Pro-Chancellor. In Scotland 4 Courts are chaired by Rectors and 1 (Dundee) by the Principal.

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief academic and administrative officer in most United Kingdom universities. As such he has "a general responsibility for maintaining and promoting the efficiency and good order of the University." 32 In Scotland the official title of the administrative head is Principal, although the holder of the office has invariably been nominated Vice-Chancellor by the Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor holds a permanent appointment at most universities; Oxford, Cambridge, London and Wales are exceptions to this rule; there the tenure is limited and is usually for two or three years. At Wales the office of Vice-Chancellor is held in rotation by the Principals of each of the constituent colleges; the Vice-Chancellor holds office for a period of two years. At London the Senate (the academic body at Level III) elects each year a person, who may or may not be a member of the Senate, to be Vice-Chancellor. Although the latter holds office for one year, he is eligible for re-election:

"He may take such action on behalf of the University as he may deem to be expedient, after consultation with the Principal, (the chief administrative officer of the University), in any matter being in his opinion either urgent (but not of sufficient importance to justify a special meeting of the Senate) or non contentious." 33

The duties of a Vice-Chancellor of a Scottish University are rigidly confined to the conferring of degrees in the absence of the Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor in his capacity as the chief academic officer of the

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32. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Nottingham, p. 32.
33. The University of London, Charter and Statutes, Statute 14.
university is normally President of the academic body at Level III; in his capacity as the chief administrative officer he may, and usually does, delegate certain of his functions.

In the English civic universities the Vice-Chancellor is normally appointed by the Council, although in a few places he is appointed by the Court on the nomination of the Council, for example at Canterbury. Generally speaking, however, the Council reaches its decision on who to appoint or who to recommend for appointment after consideration of a report from a joint ad hoc committee of the Council and the Senate. Implicit in this is the fact that the academic body is involved in the choice of its Vice-Chancellor. At Belfast he is elected by the Senate after it has considered a report from an ad hoc committee specially appointed for this purpose. As academic members normally are present on this ad hoc committee—four out of its nine members last time—it could be argued that the Belfast arrangement is no different in practice from that of the English civic universities. What is different, however, is the explicit formal consultation with the academic governing body expressed in the following Canterbury statute: “The Council shall make such a nomination to the Court, only after consultation with the Senate and after considering a report from a joint committee of the Council and the Senate.”

Most United Kingdom universities also provide for the appointment of one or more deputy Vice-Chancellors. Normally in the civic universities he is appointed by the Council on the nomination of the Senate. At Belfast there are two (called) Pro-Vice-Chancellors who are appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor from among the Professors of the University. The period of office of a deputy Vice-Chancellor is generally prescribed by the Council as are his other conditions of appointment. In addition to deputising for the Vice-Chancellor in his absence he may undertake such other duties as are delegated to him by the Vice-Chancellor.

Most universities provide for the appointment of a Treasurer of the University. Generally he acts in an honorary capacity. In the English civic universities he is appointed by the Court on the nomination of the Council. Typically he holds office for three years and is eligible for reappointment. At Belfast he is appointed by the Senate at its yearly meeting and is eligible for re-election. Generally he is Chairman of the Finance Committee and his receipt is sufficient for any monies or property payable or deliverable to the University. Some universities, although not Belfast, do provide for the appointment of a Deputy Treasurer.

Level III: The Senate

“There shall be a Senate of the University . . . which, subject to this Our Charter and the Statutes of the University, shall be respon-

sible for the academic work of the University, both in teaching and research, and for the regulation and superintendence of the education, living conditions and discipline of the students of the University." The Charter and Revised Statutes of The University of Lancaster, Article 13.

“There shall be a Professorial Board of the University, which shall, subject to the provisions of this Our Charter and the Statutes and to the control and approval of the Council, be responsible for advising the Council upon all academic appointments and, jointly with the General Academic Board, for the academic work of the University, both in teaching and in research, and for the regulation and superintendence of the education of the students of the University.

There shall be a General Academic Board of the University which subject to the provision of this Our Charter and the Statutes and to the control and approval of the Council, and jointly with the Professorial Board, shall be responsible for the academic work of the University, both in teaching and in research and for the regulation and superintendence of the education of the students of the University.” The Charter and Statutes of the University of York, Articles 13 and 14.

“By the Universities (Scotland) Acts 1858 to 1932 the principal power of the Senatus Academicus is “to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline of the University”. By the 1858 Act the Senatus Academicus consists of the Principal and all Professors, but its composition has since been varied by ordinance to include Readers and Lecturers who are members of a Faculty to a number not exceeding one-fourth of those who are members otherwise”. Report of The Joint Court-Senatus Committee On The Constitution and Structure of the University of Edinburgh, January 1966.

Subject to the powers of the Council (or its equivalent) at Level II the Senate (in Scotland, at Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews, the Senatus Academicus, at Belfast and Stirling the Academic Council, at U.M.I.S.T. and Wales the Academic Board, at York the General Academic Board) is the chief academic body. This is not quite true at York and Warwick where there are also Professorial Boards and at Belfast where there is also a General Board of Studies.

The Chairman of the Senate (or its equivalent(s)) is at the majority of U.K. universities—some 33 in all—the Vice-Chancellor, in Scotland and at U.M.I.S.T. the Principal and at London the Chancellor.

As the chief academic body the Senate (or its equivalent(s)) approves and co-ordinates the work of the Faculties, Schools or Boards of Studies (at Level IV) and is responsible for the teaching and discipline of students. Often it makes recommendations for appointment to Chairs
and other academic posts. (At Belfast these recommendations come direct from a committee of its Level II body, the Board of Curators. However the Academic Council is responsible for the appointment of Experimental Officers and Research Assistants).

The Senate (or its equivalent(s)) is an exclusively academic body made up of a university's professors, a limited number of non-professorial staff, and often the registrar, wardens of halls of residence and the university librarian. Although the current statute at Belfast provides for an Academic Council consisting of the Vice-Chancellor and the Professors of the university together with such lecturers (normally 12) as may be co-opted by the Vice-Chancellor and the Professors, there is a proposal, currently under consideration, to increase the non-professorial representation to one-quarter of the professorial representation and to remove the word "co-option".

Also at Level III at Belfast there is a body composed of all full-time academic staff called the General Board of Studies. All matters which come before the Senate in reference to University studies and the courses for the various examinations held by the University are referred to and reported on by this body. In addition it advises the Senate upon the means best adapted to promote advanced study and research among the graduates of the University. In respect of any matter referred to it by the Senate the Board is required to consult the Faculty or Faculties concerned in such a matter and to embody in its report to the Senate such information and advice as it may have received from the Faculty or Faculties. The Board has the power to regulate its own procedures and to appoint its own Secretary.

It would appear that the Board of Studies at Belfast is responsible for subject matter delegated normally to the Senate of an English civic university. In Scotland the tradition is to have Boards of Studies as committees of the Senatus Academicus but based on one or two departments; however recommendations generally are made through the relevant faculty.

Level IV: The Faculties

Powers of the Boards of Faculties

"Subject to the Statutes and Ordinances the Board of each Faculty shall have the following powers: - (1) to regulate subject to review by the Senate the teaching and study of the subjects assigned to the Faculty. (2) to recommend to the Senate the examiners for appointment. (3) to report to the Senate on Ordinances and Regulations dealing with courses of study for degrees and other distinctions and on any questions relating to the work of the Faculty. (4) to make recommendations for the award of degrees (other than Honorary Degrees), Diplomas, Certificates, Fellowships, Studentships, Scholarships, and Prizes within the Faculty. (5) to discuss
any matters relating to the Faculty and express its opinion to the Senate thereon. (6) to deal with any matter referred or delegated to it by the Senate.” The Charter and Statutes of Nottingham University, Section 23.

**Schools and Boards of Schools**

(1) The scope of any School of Studies shall be prescribed by the Senate. (2) There shall be a Board of each School of Studies . . . (6) The Board of each School of Studies shall have the following duties: - (a) To advise and report to the Senate on all matters relating to the organisation of education, teaching and research in the subjects of the School including curricula and examinations; (b) To consider the progress and conduct of students in the School and to report to the Senate thereon; (c) To recommend to the Senate examiners for appointments; (d) To deal with any matter which may be referred to it by the Senate.” The Charter and Statutes of The University of East Anglia, Second Schedule, Statute 21.

**Boards of Studies**

“(4) Subject to the powers of the Senate, the Boards of Studies shall have the following functions: (A) To regulate, subject to the Statutes and the Ordinances and Regulations and to review by the Senate, the teaching, curricula and examinations in the subjects prescribed for the Board by the Senate, and to report to the Senate on the promotion of research in the fields dealt with by the Board: (B) To recommend examiners for appointment by the Senate; (C) To make recommendations to the Senate for the award of Degrees (other than Honorary Degrees) Diplomas, Certificates and other awards in the subjects prescribed for the Board; (D) To recommend to the Senate the constitution of the Schools of Studies; (E) To delegate to any of the Schools of Studies within the Board such of the powers and functions of the Board as the Board shall think fit; (F) To discharge such other functions as the Senate may from time to time determine; (G) To discuss any matters relating to that Board and any matter referred to it by the Senate, and to convey its views thereon to the Senate.” The Charter and Statutes of The University of Bradford, Statute 23 (4).

Subject to the control of the Senate (or its equivalent(s)) at Level III the Faculties (22 universities), Schools (at Bath, East Anglia, Essex, Loughborough, the New University of Ulster) or Boards of Studies (at Bradford, Lancaster, Surrey, Warwick and York) at Level IV regulate the teaching and study of their respective groups of subjects. Although the Charter and Statutes of the University of Sussex provide for faculties
at Level IV, as the annual report of the University on its “organisation” points out, “the Charter and Statutes of the University were drafted and approved before many of the ideas upon which the University is now based had been formulated, so that they are now no longer entirely appropriate to its organisation as it has developed.”

Thus it would appear that the University organisation at Level IV is “based upon the devolution of initiative and responsibility to four ‘areas’ within the general framework of policies determined by the University: - Arts and Social Studies, Science, Social Policy and General and not faculties. (This change is important for the University’s “Committees are based upon ‘areas’ . . . and not upon ‘topics’ (e.g. catering, Library”).

The basic decisions which are made at Level IV have to do with the general scope of the curriculum, its required duration and its subjects. Another primary concern will be budgeting for teaching, research and other personnel, and plant and equipment. Faculties report to the Senate upon ordinances and regulations, discuss questions referred to them by the Senate and sometimes recommend staff for appointment. In some universities the exercise of these functions is delegated to Boards of Faculties. Membership at this level varies from all permanent full-time academic staff to a proportion and meetings normally take place monthly during term.

Each faculty, Board of Studies or School of Studies is concerned with the affairs of a group of related fields of study; the Faculty of Science, for example at Belfast, the School of Physical Science at Essex, and the Board of Studies in the Physical Sciences at Bradford cover similar principal fields of study. Some fields of study are occasionally included in more than one Faculty, Board or School of Studies. The number of Faculties, Boards and Schools of Studies and the way in which subjects are grouped vary from one university to another; in most there are four to eight. At Belfast there are nine faculties: Arts, Law, Economics, Agriculture, Pure Science, Applied Science, Medicine, Education and Theology. At Essex there are schools of Comparative Studies, Social Studies, Mathematical Studies, and Physical Sciences. At Bradford there are Boards of Studies in Engineering, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences.

At Lancaster and Warwick the chairman of the Boards of Studies is the Vice-Chancellor. At Sussex the chairmen of the Arts and Social Studies Area and of the Science Area—the two academic areas—are called Chairmen. However at the majority of United Kingdom universities, some 25 in all, the chairman of the Level IV body is called a Dean. (At Bradford there is the somewhat unique arrangement whereby “each Board of Studies shall elect a Chairman of the Board who shall not be the Dean of the Board”).

36. Ibid.
37. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Bradford, Statute 24, (1).
"The Dean shall be the chairman of the Board of the Faculty, shall summon the members of the Board, prepare business for it and be responsible for the minutes of the Board. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Faculty, shall present candidates for the degrees in the subjects of the Faculty and advise students of the Faculty with reference to their courses of study." 38

Generally speaking Deans are appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Faculty or Faculty Board. There are variations of this, for example at Canterbury and East Anglia, Deans are appointed by the Council on the recommendation of the Senate, the Dean having been chosen from the members of his Faculty. At Sussex the Chairmen of the two academic areas are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor after consultation with the Deans of the relevant Schools (at Level V). Traditionally it would seem that Deans have been appointed from among the Professors of a Faculty. This is certainly true at Belfast; however the latter institution, in its most recent re-chaff of its statutes—currently under consideration—provides for Deans to be elected "from among the Professors, Readers and Senior Lecturers . . . of the Faculty". 39 The length of time a Dean may hold office and the conditions of his re-appointment is generally prescribed by Ordinance. The office of Dean at most United Kingdom universities is not a full-time post; he is expected to maintain his academic interests. The Report of The Joint Court-Senatus Committee on the Constitution and Structure of the University of Edinburgh concluded that:

"The existing system whereby a Dean holds office for only a limited period has the dual advantage of ensuring that, as far as the Faculty is concerned a fresh mind is brought to bear on its problems at fairly regular intervals, and, as far as the Dean's own Department is concerned that it is not deprived of his full attention for too long a period." 40

The same committee spoke of recognising "the growth in the importance of Deans both as leaders of and spokesmen for their Faculties and as administrative officers of the University." 41 Harland Cleveland refers to the role as "academic middle management." 42 Myron F. Wicko speaks of Deans as "Men in the Middle." 43 Millett offers the following clarification

"In a sense the Dean does stand in the middle of the process by which scarce resources are allocated to the instructional parts of a university. The Dean is expected to be the spokesman of the faculty to the administration of a university, and at the same time the outpost of the administration in conveying an understanding of the general university points of view."\textsuperscript{44}

At Belfast a Dean acts as spokesman of his Faculty on the Committee of Deans. Although no terms of reference for this committee exist it is in effect the "standing committee" of the Level III body, that is the Academic Council and as such, it is a very powerful committee indeed. Given that this committee recommends such matters as budgeting for staff, promotions, leave of absence, personal questions and allocation of accommodation a Faculty is obviously dependent upon its Dean to adequately present its case. At the same time the institution, relies upon each Dean to effectively articulate its "whole" point of view to his Faculty. The role of a Dean is, one suspects, much more of a key role than is perhaps assumed. Also by its very "man-in-the-middle" nature it is a complex role. That Faculties treat their deanships as jobs to be held in turn by professors regardless of their administrative skills and leadership abilities is no doubt true. However, such behaviour may be more costly than is thought. Sussex explicitly and forcefully recognises the importance of the role of chairmen at this level: it is

"... to co-ordinate on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and the Planning Committee the overall planning of the teaching and research activities in the ... area; to take the lead in developing these activities and policies in respect of them; to control overall expenditure in the ... area."\textsuperscript{45}

With such "delegated" authority does this mean that the role of a Chairman of an area at Sussex is less than "a man-in-the-middle" in nature?

Level V: Departments

"The Departments
(1) There shall be such Departments, containing as members such officers of the University, as the Senate may from time to time determine, and each Department shall, at least three times in each academic year, arrange a meeting of all these members to discuss its work. (2) Each Department shall establish, in a manner to be approved by the Senate, an adequate method of consultation between its members and students taking courses in the Department. (3)

\textsuperscript{44} Millett, Op. Cit., p. 92.
Each Department shall have a Head, to be chosen in a manner to be approved and for a period to be determined by the Senate." The Charter and Statutes of the University of Lancaster, Revised Statute 16.

"Schools of Studies
(1) After considering the recommendations of the Board of Studies within which the School is to be established, the Senate may establish Schools of Studies whose object shall be to organise such undergraduate and postgraduate studies or research as the Senate may from time to time determine.
(2) After considering the recommendations of the appropriate Board of Studies, the Senate shall determine the members of the academic staff who shall constitute the academic staff for each School of Studies, provided that each member of the academic staff shall be in at least one School of Studies.
(3) The Senate shall appoint the Chairman of each School of Studies after considering the recommendations of the appropriate Board of Studies.
(4) The Chairman of each School of Studies shall be responsible, subject to the powers of the appropriate Board of Studies and of the Senate:
   (A) For the general conduct and organisation of the School of Studies.
   (B) For reporting to the Senate through the appropriate Board of Studies on the progress of students in the School of Studies.
   (C) For reporting to the appropriate Board of Studies every resolution of the members of the academic staff of the School of Studies on any subject concerned with the work of the School.
(5) Meetings of the academic staff of each School of Studies shall be called by the Chairman at such intervals as shall be prescribed by the appropriate Board of Studies. The Chairman may call meetings of the academic staff of the School whenever he may think fit and shall do so when requested by a majority of members of its academic staff.
(6) The meetings of the academic staff of a School shall have the following functions:
   (A) To advise and report to the appropriate Board of Studies on all matters relating to the organisation and teaching
in the subjects of the School including curricula and examinations.
(B) To consider the attendance, progress and conduct of students in the School and to report thereon through the appropriate Board of Studies to the Senate.
(C) To deal with any matter which may be referred to them by the appropriate Board of Studies.

(7) Each member of the academic staff of a School of Studies shall have the right to request the appropriate Board of Studies or the Senate to consider a memorandum on the work of the School of Studies". The Charter and Statutes of the University of Bradford, Statute 26.

Each Faculty, School or Board of Studies is, as stated above, concerned with the affairs of a group of related fields, or in the majority of instances—to put it another way—of related "Departments" (at Level V). Some 35 institutions have Departments, three—Bradford, Sussex and Warwick—have Schools of Studies, and Kent has Boards of Studies. At East Anglia and York there is nothing at this level.

The Charters and Statutes of Bradford, Sussex and Warwick contain references explanatory to the work of Schools of Studies. Only those of the City University, Essex, Lancaster and Heriot-Watt contain references explanatory to the role of Departments. (The proposed, revised—and still under discussion—statutes of Belfast also contain such a reference).

The situation at this level at Sussex is described in the University Handbook for 1967/68:

"From the start the sponsors of the University have believed in a new approach to university studies. The curriculum is designed to provide undergraduates with the combined benefits of specialised and general education. To this end, the University is organised not in Departments but in Schools of Studies, each with a Dean as Chairman. In each School undergraduates specialise in some particular discipline—their major subject—but they also share certain common courses with undergraduates majoring in other subjects. This study of common or contextual subjects is designed to acquaint undergraduates with different approached to learning, to show how different subjects are related to each other, and to reveal how they are applied in the modern world."16

There are now nine such Schools at Sussex, the School of African and Asian Studies, the School of Applied Sciences, the School of Biological Sciences, the School of Educational Studies, the School of English and American Studies, the School of European Studies, the School of

46. The University of Sussex Handbook 1967/68, p. 29.
Mathematical and Physical Sciences, the School of Molecular Sciences and the School of Social Studies. The University is at pains to point out that

"The Schools are in no sense super-departments, for the same subject may be studied as a major subject in more than one School and many of the contextual courses are common to more than one School. In these ways different students can pursue a particular discipline in a variety of contexts, while, on the other hand, there are strong ties between Schools as well as between disciplines."  

In addition to Schools there are, at a lower level again, Subject Meetings in recognised subjects with the further provision of the appointment of Subject Chairmen for a period of three years, not immediately renewable, by the appropriate Area Committee after having been nominated by the full-time Professors and Readers (if any) in the Subject from among their own number.

Elsewhere Departments are typically determined by, at Level II, the Council (in Scotland and at London and Durham the Court, at Belfast the Senate) on the recommendation of, at Level III, the Senate (in Scotland, at five institutions, the Senatus Academicus and elsewhere some form of Academic Board or Council). Generally each Head of Department is appointed by the respective Level II body on the recommendation of the Level III body (at Belfast, by a committee of the Level II body, the Board of Curators).

The Charter and Statutes of the University of Bradford clarify—see above extract—the role of Heads of Schools and that of Essex the role of Heads of Departments:

"A Chairman of Department shall be responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for maintaining and promoting the efficiency and good order of the Department in accordance with the policies and procedures laid down in the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University, or determined from time to time by resolutions of the Council and the Senate."

Less formally it can be said that the Head of Department is responsible for the organisation and co-ordination of the activities of his Department. Each academic post is assigned to a particular Department by the Level II body, that is the Council or its equivalents, on the recommendation of the academic body at Level III. Each Department has a departmental board or committee comprising of the members of the Department. The Head of the Department is chairman of the Departmental Board or Committee which Board or Committee is advisory to him.

At Belfast the academic body at Level III, viz. the Academic Council,

48. The Charter and Statutes of the University of Essex, Ordinance 11, 8.
at a special meeting on 16th January 1970, set up, in response to a memorandum presented by the Students Representative Council of the Students Union (S.R.C.S.U.), a working party on “student representation”. The Working Party discussed at some length departmental committees, its main difficulty being to resolve the conflict between the executive or advisory status of these committees. The S.R.C.S.U. was perfectly clear-cut in its argument: “(We) strongly urge the Working Party to adopt the policy that Departmental Boards shall be the governing bodies of departments and will comprise staff and students in equal proportion.” See Diagram 2 page 29. The students also argued for student representatives as full partners on the Departmental Boards. They requested 50% representation in the belief that it is “the correct figure to ensure full and equal participation, confidence in the institution and cross fertilisation of ideas.” In their submissions the students were in no doubt that the Departmental Boards should be “executive” and not “advisory”.

The working party was made up of all members of the Committee of Deans, three members of the Senate, (the Level II body), three representatives of the non-professorial staff, three representatives of the Association of University Teachers and twelve students. The working party will no doubt have been faced with the impracticability of devising machinery and laying down rules of procedure for the wide range, scope and nature of departments and is therefore likely to proffer for consideration “minimum” guidelines. At this stage it would seem likely that in framing these guidelines the working party will accept the reserved areas—outlined below—which were agreed upon in the discussions between the Vice-Chancellors and Principals Committee and the N.U.S. and as emphasised by the Privy Council. If this is so the “advisory” nature of Departmental Boards will probably be upheld and will be accompanied by some proposal for a formalised Staff-Student Committee of an advisory nature and for some form of appeals procedure for both bodies against the decisions of the Head of Department.

At many universities the appointment of the Head of a Department is for life or until the individual resigns. In the majority of instances he is a Professor. There are, however, exceptions, for example at Essex:

“A Chairman of the Department shall be appointed by the Senate who shall receive a nomination from the members of the full-time academic staff (excluding Fellows) holding posts allocated to the Department of a full-time Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer holding a post allocated to the Department”.

49. Memorandum on Student Representation, Students Representative Council Queen’s University Belfast, January 1970 (Quoted with permission).
50. Proposals for Departmental Staff and Student Committees, Students Representative Council of the Students Union, Queen’s University Belfast, February 1970 (Quoted with permission).
A Chairman's period of tenure at Essex is, as at Sussex, limited to three years, although he shall be eligible for re-appointment for two further consecutive periods of office.

At Belfast Departmental Boards have, as stated, been under discussion. The questions that have been asked with respect of the Headship of Departments include the following: (a) should Heads of Department be nominated by members of the Department? (b) should senior non-professorial members of a Department be eligible for nomination? (c) should the appointment to a Headship be subject to regular review after a defined period? (d) what appeals procedure, if any, is required against a decision of the Head of a Department?

The Robbins Committee stated that “faculties . . . are responsible for the day-to-day conduct of academic matters.”\(^{52}\) Is this true in practice? Does not the faculty member relate more to his Department and to his Head of Department in respect of the conduct of day-to-day academic matters? The Report of the Joint Court-Senatus Committee on the Constitution and Structure of the University of Edinburgh was convinced that “it is the efficiency and organisation of Departments

which lie at the root of the University’s structure and organisation”, (for the Department is) “the basic unit of administration in the University.” Corson tells us, “departments have the power to initiate most actions that affect the basic functions of the institution . . . At the same time they form the basic units which ultimately carry out . . . the policies of the institution”. Where autonomous departmental organisation exists, as it does in most of the British universities, it is apparent that it has grown as an organisational aspect of the increase of human knowledge. (It was the opinion of the Joint Court-Senatus Committee—already referred to above— that departments are established and recognised almost invariably on purely academic grounds). What this diversity of specialisations has created for us is an organisation of “expanding decentralisation” “with a consequent autonomy among its constituent units, viz. departments”. However among the post-Robbins institutions there are some institutions—Bradford, East Anglia, Kent, Sussex, Warwick and York—which have self-consciously decided to build their basic unit of organisation around inter-disciplinary course structures and not decentralise formally into departments:

“The work of the University (of Bradford) both in teaching and research is organised in four Boards of Studies, those of Engineering, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences. Each Board comprises a number of Schools of Studies, which may be undergraduate or postgraduate in character. A School of Studies comprises all members of the University whatever their specialist academic discipline who collaborate on a given teaching course or research project”.

Sussex with its Subject Meetings and Subject Chairmen has recognised that despite its desire for “the combined benefits of specialised and general education” some form of departmental organisation, regardless of name, is required.

Thus in the majority of institutions in the United Kingdom the department is the customary and perhaps “natural”, first grouping of faculty members. It is the department which ordinarily determines what courses shall be provided to its students and the number and sequence of courses required by the student to graduate. Granted such regulations are generally referred to faculties and from there at Belfast to the General Board of Studies for approval but normally this is simply a matter of course. It

53. Report of the Joint Court-Senatus Committee on the Constitution and Structure of the University of Edinburgh, p. 22.
56. Undergraduate Honours Course in Applied Biology, University of Bradford, p. 3.
is the department which generally determines all examination matters and recommendations for scholarships. Included in the "reserved areas" agreed upon in the discussions between the Vice-Chancellors' and Principals' Committee and the National Union of Students (already referred to) and emphasised by the Privy Council are the following matters (in addition to those already mentioned) upon which departmental boards advise their heads of department: (a) priorities on applications to Faculties for Regular Recurrent Expenditure (b) applications for equipment grants, (c) applications for Departmental Assistance Grants (d) allocations of duties of technicians and other ancillary staff, (e) recommendations for appointments of part-time demonstrators etc., (f) recommendations on appointments of external examiners, (g) allocations of research funds, (h) supervisors of research students, (i) applications to Research Councils etc., (j) applications to Buildings Committee for alterations and additions to buildings and services, (k) reports on progress of individual students, arrangements for post-experience courses, (l) allocations of rooms etc., (m) collaboration with industry and commerce, and advisory services. To some departments some of these matters do not apply, in others there are many more.

As to the departmental head his position is undoubtedly a key one in the scalar (academic) organisation

"He holds substantial personal authority because of his influence over personnel policies and instructional assignments and his position in the formal communication between faculty members and administration".  

Millett offers us a summary of the head of department role which is as applicable in the United Kingdom as in the United States:

"He must guide his colleagues in their decision making. He must settle or adjust disputes among departmental members. He must place departmental objectives above those of any individual member. He must serve as a link between the department and the university. He must build for long-term growth and eminence in departmental reputation among other ... universities".

As the powers of departmental boards are advisory and not executive and department heads are appointed, in the majority of instances, from above and not elected from below, democratic analogies are inappropriate in their application to the role of the department head. By definition he can have a decisive influence on planning, staffing, departmental

58. Staff-Student Collaboration in University Departments. Note by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. F. A. Vick, The Queen's University of Belfast, Section 2, June 1970 revised September 1970.
budgeting, reporting, directing research and doing outside work. As heads of departments are normally professors, in larger departments senior professors, who are appointed with scholarship as the main criteria, the strong formal position of a headship is considerably validated by his abilities as a scholar. However it is generally agreed that the head of a department requires administrative skills in addition to his qualifications of excellence.

From the viewpoint of an ordinary member of a department the position of his head of department, although not autocratic in the strictly defined sense of that word, is strong indeed. The formal role of the head of department is backed up by powerful sanctions. In addition to being consulted on appointments and recommending promotions his opinion will probably count if a member of his department applies for an academic post in another university. Therefore, although in most institutions his decision on a particular matter can be appealed against at least informally—there are few formal grievance procedures for academic staff in British universities—and he can be removed given "good cause", for example "failure or inability to perform the duties of his office" members of his department will generally pursue an advisory role, the limits of which in practice the head of department will probably define.

(b) COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

So much for the principal organs of university government . . . The statutes of universities generally provide for certain committees to aid the Council especially and to a lesser extent the Senate. The Council certainly rarely formulates policy by discussion at its own meetings; rather it relies on its committee structure: the principal committees at Belfast are pretty typical; these are

1. The Standing Committee: in the University's present statutes it is the key non-financial Senate Committee. Its duties include considering and reporting to the next meeting of the Senate upon all reports made to the Senate by the Academic Council, the General Board of Studies, Convocation, and such Boards and Committees as the Senate may direct and to refer any matter to any Authority, Board or Committee for report or further consideration. (The Secretary to the Committee is the Secretary of the University).

2. The Finance Committee: to this committee is delegated by the Senate the responsibility for general supervision over all matters relating to the finances and accounts of the university, the investment of its funds, the receipt of its income and the expenditure thereof and the management of trust funds vested in the university.

(The Secretary to the Finance Committee is the Bursar of the University).

3. The Buildings Committee is appointed to manage and supervise all the buildings, furniture and grounds belonging to the University and to undertake and supervise the erection or removal of buildings under schemes approved by the Senate. (The Secretary to the Building Committee is the Secretary of the University).

4. The Library Committee has general supervision over all matters relating to the University Library and reports to the Senate through the Academic Council. (The Secretary to the Committee is the Librarian).

5. The Board of Curators: This committee exists to advise the Senate as to the appointment of professors and lecturers and "Such other classes of persons as the Senate may from time to time determine". (The Secretary to this committee is the Secretary of the University).

6. The University Development Committee is the University’s planning committee. Its function is to keep under review and to make recommendations on plans for academic developments in the University including student numbers, the distribution of numbers between faculties, the proportion of graduate students and major changes in areas of teaching and research; and in the light of these recommendations to review the capital resources involved and to make recommendations. In addition the committee prepares the submission to the University Grants Committee and the Northern Ireland Government for quinquennial block grants. The Committee reports to the Senate through the Academic Council. (The Secretary to the Committee is the Secretary of the Academic Council).

These then are the committees which are defined by statute. However they are simply an introduction to an elaborate committee structure which has evolved at Belfast—see Appendix A pages 49 and 50 for overall committee structure at Belfast as at April 1970.* In this Belfast is not an exception among the British universities for as Robbins points out

"With the growth in the size and complexity of the universities, a system of government has evolved which is based on an elaborate committee structure. In the English and Welsh institutions, Council and, to a lesser extent, Senate, rarely formulate policy by discussion at their own meetings. Instead the bulk of university business and

*For permission to publish this Diagram I am indebted to the Capital Development Office, Queen’s University Belfast.
the consideration of particular issues are dealt with by committees of the governing bodies which normally accept their recommendations without further discussion".  

Mention was made above of the functions of the University Development Committee at Belfast. Robbins confirms that academic policy making lies in the British universities in the hands of senior academic staff.

"Decisions about, for example, the size of the university and of individual faculties, are approved by Council, usually with very little discussion on the recommendations of Senate, which may in turn be advised by an ad hoc committee set up to consider expansion".  

In a generous review of Christopher Driver's recent book "The Exploding University" Professor Asa Briggs, Vice-Chancellor of Sussex University gently took Driver to task for ignoring the "different" organisational structures which had emerged at some of the newer universities. Professor Briggs should have been less humble and perhaps more objective; he should have said "at Sussex, for (one suspects) that what radical organisational changes have emerged at British universities have been at that institution. This is especially true of its committee structure. In summary the University sees itself as structured hierarchically into four main levels: at Level I, the University itself is represented by the Council, the Senate, the Planning Committee and the Vice-Chancellor, at Level II the University is then divided (as explained above) into four main planning areas: Arts and Social Studies, Sciences, Social and General; at Level III, each main area consists of units (for example, the Schools of Studies so to make up the academic areas); at Level IV, in turn there are sub-units of these units, for example subjects are sub-units of the Schools.

Implicit in this four-tier hierarchial structure at Sussex is the abandonment of the traditional committee structure be it described in terms of "topics" or "expertise", for example library or catering, and its replacement by the "area" principle. Thus explicitly the Planning Committee, although not a statutory committee, emerged in 1967-68 as the executive committee of both the Council and the Senate (and the dominant committee of the University) with the authority to deal with all aspects of planning (academic, financial, building, site etc.), academic co-ordination, financial and general matters, etc: the Finance and General Purpose Committee and the Academic Board where abolished: and the Buildings

Committee became the body to which the Planning Committee referred physical planning issues after the critical decisions had been taken. Thus the three principal sub-committees of the Planning Committee, viz. the Arts and Social Studies, Science and Social Policy Committees are responsible for all aspects of activity in their areas, including planning, finance, and physical facilities.

A number of factors would appear to have contributed to the emergence of this somewhat novel (for British universities) committee structure at Sussex. The primary factor would appear to have been the introduction by the University of systematic planning and resource allocation, for "planning mechanisms began to relate forward budgetary estimating to faculty members, to student numbers on each course of study, to building requirements," which mechanisms were constructed by the Planning Committee; the greater the commitment to planning became the more dominant became the Planning Committee. A further factor was the realisation that "the (traditional) statutory committees being all of equal status with separate reporting relationships to the Senate or the Council . . . led to considerable confusion and overlaps"; such a system, it was noted relied for its co-ordination upon the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior administrative officers. A further factor was the decision taken in 1967 that there were too many committees; "although a few major committees must accept collective responsibility and faculty must be kept informed of discussions and decisions, it is inefficient and wasteful of faculty time to have sub-committees responsible for every activity of the University;" "managers" must be encouraged "to manage".

(c) THE ADMINISTRATORS

The administrative staff of a British university is the executive instrument of the governing bodies. "In this role, it has not only to deal with matters of regularity within the lines of policy laid down by (the governing bodies at Levels II and III), but also to cope with a great number of matters of novelty or emergence until policy has been evolved." As stated above the Vice-Chancellor (or Principal) is a university's chief (academic and) administrative officer. The arrangements for the delegations of his functions vary: in the English civic universities, and indeed elsewhere, it is in the hands of the Registrar, sometimes called the Secretary (Diagram III(b) page 39); in some universities the Registrar shares these functions with the university's chief financial officer, the Bursar (Diagram III(c) page 39); and at

DIAGRAM III
ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL
ORGANIZATION CHART

(a) 
THE CHANCELLOR

PRO-CHANCELLOR(S)

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

TREASURER

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR(S)

(b) 
REGISTRAR or SECRETARY

(c) 
REGISTRAR

BURSAR

(d) 
SECRETARY

SECRETARY TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL

BURSAR
Belfast the Secretary shares these functions with the Bursar and the Secretary to the Academic Council (Diagram III(d) page 39).

Whether the delegation is to one, two or three officials, he or they, are under the Vice-Chancellor of the university. In terms of work if there is simply one official he is generally Secretary to the Court, the Council, the Senate, the Board of Faculties, the Finance Committee and to all the committees of these bodies; if three officials the division of work could be: the Registrar as Secretary to the Court and the Council, the Bursar as Secretary to the Finance Committee and a Secretary to the academic bodies. The latter is, in fact, the pattern at Belfast.

In addition to the senior administrative officer(s) to which a Vice-Chancellor delegates a large part of his work there may be other senior officers who are responsible to him. At Belfast these include the Librarian, the Capital Development Officer, the Data Processing Officer, the Appointments Officer and the Catering Officer. All the principal officers in their turn delegate large parts of their work to other officers. (For organisation charts at Belfast as at 1st March 1970 see Appendices B, C and D pages 51, 52 and 53 respectively). It is these administrators who facilitate—they do not manage—the preservation, transmission and advancement of knowledge.

Once again it is necessary to turn to Sussex for the contrast to the general picture. It should be noted that the University’s organisation is based upon (a) the devolution of initiative and responsibility to four “areas”, (b) the emergence of Planning Committee as the primary committee, and (c) the acceptance of the proposition that “the main committees match the responsibilities of individual (chairmen)”. The increasing devolution of responsibility to “area” offices and the increasing specialisation at the centre has led to seconding of Central Offices’ staff to these offices together with supporting secretarial and clerical staff, also to the strengthening of the Vice-Chancellor’s office.

The extent of the responsibilities devolved to the “area” offices necessitated this seconding of Central Offices staff, for example the Arts and Social Studies Office is responsible for:

“Servicing the Arts & Social Studies Committee and the Arts Deans’ Committee; for work associated with the planning process; for the registration of Arts and Social Studies students; for the supervision of undergraduate student records; for undergraduate examinations; for graduate admissions, records and examinations (except that the detailed work in connection with the professional courses in the School of Educational Studies will continue to be done in the School Office); for the administrative work arising from research activity in Arts and Social Studies; for establishment work in connection with the academic and non-academic staffing

of the Arts and Social Studies Schools; for the supervision of official Arts and Social Studies publications; for the preparation of academic time-tables; for correspondence with local education authorities concerning undergraduates; for drawing up requirements in connection with new buildings or extensions or alterations to buildings; for control of accommodation and office equipment, liaison with the Bursar's Central Office on day-to-day maintenance, and supervision of portering and cleaning services in the Arts Building; for administering expenditure from funds available in the Arts and Social Studies area".69

The role of the Vice-Chancellor's Office is defined as:

“(a) to provide the Vice-Chancellor with a group of University Officers to co-ordinate the activities and plans of the "areas" of the University; (b) to develop and organise the implementation of an integrated and efficient system for forward planning, resource allocation and structured growth; (c) to organise and make recommendations on, the annual review of the government and administration of the University; (d) to review the communication process within and surrounding the University in particular to manage the flow of official information within, and on behalf of the University”.70

A Planning Officer, an Information Officer and a Research and Development Officer have in line with this defined role been appointed to this Office and are responsible to the Vice-Chancellor. Of the four “areas” already referred to the General Area is also co-ordinated by him: it includes the Registrar and Secretary, the Bursar, the Finance Officer and the Data Processing Officer.

IMPOVERISHED CRITERIA?

The description of the function and composition of the statutory bodies and of the administrative framework of universities undertaken in this analysis has been a necessary exercise to our understanding of the university as an organisation. It would, however, be wise to observe the following caution:

“Universities are no exception to the general rule that a great gulf lies between constitutions on paper and government in practice. A description of the function and composition of the statutory bodies is not necessarily an analysis of the real sources of initiative

70. The University of Sussex, The Organisation of the University, 1969-70, p. 24, para. A(3).
and power; these depend partly on the imponderables of specific circumstances and individual personalities, and are circumstances and individual personalities, and are almost impossible to determine".  

Organisation Charts (or constitutions on paper) are merely, guides to practice; even when complemented with job descriptions, as they should be, they remain guides. Logan Wilson put the same caution more bluntly: “Between the formal and informal organisation are found many incompatibles, imponderables and shams”.  

And yet this caution, perceptive as it may be, ignores what the University of Sussex realised early in its history: that the very foundation of British universities (in Royal Charters) although it “has the considerable advantage . . . of removing any external constraints upon the University’s internal methods of organisation, it (nevertheless) imposes upon universities a static and legalistic concept of government in comparison with business enterprises, or even national governing agencies”. The University of Sussex met this concept head-on by deciding in its first year that the organisational structure of the University should be reviewed annually. If therefore what emerges in the above analysis of the internal government of universities in the United Kingdom is perhaps a static, legalistic and inflexible picture, it is due in no small part to the historical nature of the university institution in this country. That is not, however, to say that change is impossible. Sussex, almost alone in this, has amply demonstrated from its very beginnings an awareness of, and commitment to, “the organisation of the University being considered in dynamic rather that static terms and to the dominance of practical over constitutional thinking”. This commitment and the evolving organisation reflects in part an acute awareness of the external environment of the institution, for example many demands upon scarce economic resources; in part the pragmatic view that the organisation would have to change as its size and nature changed; and also in part the realisation that modern management techniques, such as corporate planning, could be applied to the university organisation.  

We began by positing a tentative description of what an organisation is: (1) Organisations are groups of two or more people in some kind of co-operative relationship with one another; (2) This co-operation implies some kind of collective goal(s) or output(s) that may be approximately stated; in other words, organisations are purposive; (3) The individuals or groups exhibit some kind of differentiation of function; (4) These specialised efforts require integration; (5) Organisations

73. Lockwood, G., Institutional Management and Planning Techniques at the University of Sussex.
maintain some kind of more or less stable and explicit hierarchial structure. On the basis of the description of the function and composition of the statutory bodies and the administrative framework presented in this analysis it can, I would suggest, be argued that a university satisfies these "structural" criteria.

To the extent therefore that the university satisfies the above structural criteria I will side with Litchfield and Corson and will agree that the organisational form of the university is similar to other organisational forms which satisfy the same criteria.

Millett, of course, does have a point when he asserts that "much of the thinking about organisation has been drawn from the organisational context of business and the public service". Etzioni has shown that certain assumed propositions hold true only for certain types of organisations. He takes the following three major generalisations and he shows that they cannot be applied to the university: (1) In the ultimate analysis staff authority is subordinated to line authority. (2) Organisational units, especially the organisation as a whole, are therefore headed by managers and not by experts. (3) Organisations have one and only on ultimate centre of authority. He assumes that there is a high correlation between line and managers and between staff and experts. The role of the expert is, he suggests, to create and institutionalise knowledge, that of the manager to integrate (create or maintain) organisational systems or sub-systems from the point of view of the institutional goals and needs. Experts and managers may be differentiated not only in terms of their roles but also, he believes, in terms of their personality, background, and their orientations.

It is Etzioni's view that the study of private business as an organisation can be seen as an affirmation of the three generalisations of organisation theory presented above. However the same does not hold true for the university. Given that the major goal activity of the university is "to institutionalise knowledge and to sustain its creation", viz. the activity that is carried out by the "experts", it can be said that the latter constitute the line (major authority) structure. And as managers exist to facilitate them they constitute the staff. In other words in the university the line and staff concept, in so far as it applies at all, is reversed.

As to who heads the institution—Etzioni admits that the role presents a conflict. On the one hand the role should be in the hands of an expert in order to ensure that the orientation of the head will match the institution's goals. On the other hand the institution has functional requisites that are unrelated to their specific goal activity. Funds have to be obtained to finance the activity; personnel recruited to staff the various functions; and both funds and recruited personnel have then to be allocated. Institutional heads must therefore know how to keep

the system integrated by giving the right amount of attention and funds to the various organisational needs, including secondary ones. An expert may endanger the integration of the professional organisation by over-emphasising the major activity, neglecting secondary functions, and lacking skill in human relations. Thus the role of head of a university requires two incompatible sets of orientations, personal characteristics and aptitudes. If the role is performed by either a lay administrator or a typical expert, considerable organisational strain can be expected. The severity of the conflict is increased because of the motivational structure of typical experts. Most successful experts are not motivated to become administrators. The most widespread functional solution to this conflict is the semi-expert. The semi-expert is a person who combines an expert background and education with a managerial personality and role. Goals as well as means activities seem to be handled best when such a person is the institutional head. Thus it can be said that for the university as an organisation it cannot be generalised that "organisations are headed by managers and not by experts".

The third and final generalisation is that organisations have one and only one ultimate centre of authority where final decisions are made and conflicts can be resolved. The main authority line is directly related to the primary goal activity of the organisation and only indirectly to secondary (means) activities. In the university there is no line in such a sense. As an organisation it is monocratic only with regard to service activities. (Note the analysis above of the functions delegated by the Vice-Chancellor). There is however, no clear line in the major goal activities; to a large degree each professional is left to rely on his own judgement, that is, he has final authority over the substance of his teaching and over research. In other words the authority structure of the major goal activities is, within the university, highly dispersed.

We have noticed that as the university as an institution has grown so too has the degree of dispersion of decision making increased. The loci of decisions has moved downwards to the departments. "The environmental cause of this diffusion of responsibility lies", as Corson tells us, "in the range and depth of specialisation among the faculty". The result of this diffusion and decentralisation of decision making can be costly for example in the duplication of resources be they staff or equipment. Where such conflict arises in the business sector it can be resolved by reference to the profit motive. The Vice-Chancellor, as the chief academic and administrative officer of the university cannot turn to such a criterion as readily as can the business manager.

What this analysis suggests is that our knowledge of the university as an organisation in the United Kingdom leaves a great deal to be desired. Is the common organisation model the most effective in terms of goal accomplishment and the most efficient in terms of the use of resources? Experiments such as the Sussex experiment have much to

tell us on this question. We know insufficient about the roles of Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculties (or their equivalents) or Heads of Departments not to mention the roles of lay members or students. Much, I suggest, remains to be done.

In conclusion to establish that the university as an organisation satisfies certain structural criteria and thus to concur with the view that administration and the administrative process occurs in substantially the same generalised form in different types of organisations is only a preliminary (and indeed unsatisfactory) first step. It remains to establish at least a framework of a general theory of administration which will enable us to explain and predict administrative phenomena in different organisations including the university organisation and to do so in dynamic terms.