

**FACULTY ENGAGEMENT AT THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY:
A CASE STUDY IN INSTITUTIONAL DECISION-MAKING**

by

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Abstract

Decision-making models and governance structures in Canadian higher education institutions have remained relatively unchanged over the past four decades, despite significant changes in the social, economic, and political environments, in conjunction with significant increases in size and complexity of the institutions themselves. Together these issues create tensions in the institutions to meet the contemporary demands for greater responsiveness and accountability, while satisfying the traditional academic desires for collegial or collaborative decision-making and governance.

Issues surrounding faculty engagement in institutional decision-making and governance are highly contextual. It is necessary to explore and understand the perceptions and underlying frames of reference of the participants. For this reason, a mixed methods research design was selected to leverage the qualitative and quantitative instruments that were appropriate and available at a specific institution. This study is situated at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, during a specific window of time (2008 and winter of 2009). The study relies primarily on a qualitative design, utilizing document searches, key informant interviews, and focus group interviews across three employee constituencies. This study also references four British Columbia Institute of Technology Employee Opinion Surveys, which serve to augment the qualitative data and serve as a source for triangulation.

The literature review demonstrated a paucity of research on the subject of faculty engagement in higher education governance and decision-making generally and within Canada in particular. It is hoped this study will add to the literature while illuminating the practice of decision-making at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, with the goal of identifying opportunities to enhance the practice of decision-making at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, particularly as it relates to engaging the Institute's faculty.

Keywords: Faculty engagement; higher education; governance; decision-making; collegial; shared governance

*To my loving and supportive family:
my devoted wife Sue; and
our two inspiring sons, Braden and Connor.*

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List of Abbreviations

AAC	Association of American Colleges
AAUP	American Association of University Professors
ACE	American Council on Education
AD	Associate Dean
Admin	Administrators
AGB	Association of Governing Boards
ANOVA	analysis of variance
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
BC	British Columbia
BCGEU	Government Employee's Union (BC)
BCIT	British Columbia Institute of Technology
CAUT	Canadian Association of University Teachers
CHEPA	Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis
Edco	Education Council
FSA	Faculty and Staff Association
ITA	Industry Training Authority
PEC	President's Executive Council
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TAFEs	Technical and Further Education Institutes
TVTAA	<i>Technical Vocational Training Assistance Act</i>
UBC	University of British Columbia
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VP	Vice President
WWII	World War II

CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

This dissertation is a study of faculty engagement at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT or Institute). It explores how faculty members participate in institutional decision-making. The first chapter provides an overview of the dissertation and presents the reader with the general background of the study, the personal and professional significance of the study, a summary of the methodology used to reach the findings, the limitations and key definitions implicit in the study, and concludes with an overview of how the dissertation is organized.

1.2. General Research Question

What are the institutional decision-making structures and processes currently employed at BCIT and how effective are they at addressing faculty engagement?

1.3. General Context for the Study

BCIT is one of the largest post-secondary institutions in the province of British Columbia (BC), with over 48,000 students enrolled in full and part-time programs and an annual operating budget of approximately \$250 million. BCIT opened in 1964 and has evolved into a unique component of British Columbia's (BC's) higher education system; it is recognized within BC's provincial legislation as having a unique polytechnic mandate (*College and Institute Amendment Act*, 2004). Accordingly, BCIT has a unique mission that reflects its close alignment to the province's industry and economic well-being.

BCIT is a multi-campus institution with five distinct campuses located across BC's lower mainland region, with the main campus located in Burnaby, a suburb of Vancouver. BCIT is organized into six schools, each with a specific industry orientation, led by a Dean. They include the schools of Business; Computing and Academic Studies; Construction and the Environment; Manufacturing, Electronics, and Industrial Processes; Health Sciences; and Transportation. This amalgam of schools satisfies BCIT's new mission, announced in February 2009 as: "The Mission of BCIT is to serve the success of learners and employers: by providing technical and professional education and training that supports our graduates as practitioners and as citizens, and; by advancing the state of practice" (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009a, p. 12).

BCIT has three certified bargaining units: The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA), represents faculty and staff engaged in technology programs; the British Columbia Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) Instructional bargaining unit, which represents the Institute's trade and vocational faculty; and the BCGEU Support Staff bargaining unit, which represents the Institute's administrative support staff. Each of these bargaining units is certified under the Labour Relations Board of British Columbia (Labour Relations Board, 2009), and is governed by their own collective agreement with BCIT. All three of these bargaining units have the right to strike. In addition to the three bargaining units, BCIT has a management group which has no union affiliation and is comprised of managers, directors, associate deans, deans, vice-presidents, and the President. These employees are governed by the Institute's management terms and conditions (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2002).

For the purposes of context, this study was conducted at BCIT during 2008 and the winter of 2009. BCIT appointed a new President effective March 1, 2008. This appointment followed a period where approximately 60 administrative managers were dismissed in the preceding 3 years. Like all public higher education institutions in BC, BCIT was under financial pressure because government grants did not keep pace with the costs of providing expected services. For example government grants to BCIT dropped from 53% of revenue in 2003, to 48% in 2008 (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2008a). The impact of this decline in base funding was compounded by an increasingly competitive higher education market, which saw the provincial government increase public higher education capacity by 36,700 seats and reposition five regional

colleges, university-colleges, and institutes as regional universities (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2009a). Furthermore, the provincial government relaxed restrictions on private post-secondary providers, effectively increasing the level of competition to the sector. These events were exacerbated by the fact that the provincial economy was enjoying record prosperity, thereby enticing a proportion of student candidates to postpone their applications for higher education.

1.4. Personal Interest

My interest in conducting this study traces first to my experience transitioning from a corporate management career in the private sector to the organizational environment of an academic higher education institution. In that transition I discovered a relative scarcity of research and literature that might assist the transition from corporate to academic organizational cultures. As a result, I determined there was an opportunity to inform and possibly improve the practice of institutional decision-making at BCIT, add to the literature, and advance the understanding of the leadership challenges facing administrators in academic institutions.

My career reflects a balance of executive-level experience in the private sector and middle-management experience in academia. On September 1, 2009 I moved into a new role at BCIT, as Director of Program Planning and Review within the Vice President Education, Research, and International Office. However, for the purposes of this study, it is important to note that the knowledge and perspective reflected in this study traces primarily to my previous role, where I was the Associate Dean of Marketing Management for BCIT. Previous to joining BCIT, my career in the private sector included positions in marketing, sales, finance, and general management, up to the senior vice-presidential level. This experience spanned executive responsibilities in organizations with revenues ranging from \$100 million to \$2.5 billion, and ownership ranging from a single entrepreneur to multinational conglomerates, based in Milano Italy, Vancouver BC, and Toronto Ontario, Canada.

While my accomplishments in the private sector were gratifying, I found my values and ethics to be occasionally in conflict with the ownership of the enterprises I

was leading. I desired a more altruistic role and sought a position in an organization that performed what I perceived to be a more meaningful and virtuous role in society. My days of working for the benefit of enterprises whose values did not align with my own were over. I desired eudaimonia, the pursuit of happiness through living a good life (Aristotle, 325BC/1925). I had done well by the private sector, and now I wanted to “do well, by doing good” (G. Madoc-Jones, personal communication, November 28, 2006).

In accepting the position of Associate Dean at BCIT in 2002, I was advised that the transition from industry to the higher education sector would test all of my leadership and interpersonal skills. Initially I struggled with the collegial environment, specifically with the difficulty in making collegial decisions in a timely manner, a matter that was compounded by the lack of meaningful faculty engagement on important decisions. I worked hard to understand and embrace BCIT’s style of collegiality, to the point of criticism by some faculty for being too collegial, a criticism possibly traced to my efforts to take the time to ensure faculty had the opportunity to participate, discuss, and be satisfied they were heard on significant initiatives prior to decisions being made. It seemed to me that the concept of collegial decision-making was not being practiced as well as it could be and as a result it was not serving the faculty or the organization as well as it should.

Prior to undertaking this study, my impression of collegiality at BCIT was that it was a term not clearly understood, nor consistently applied. I believed there was an opportunity for both administrators and faculty to share a more complete understanding of issues and to align on a common set of values and expectations towards collegial governance and decision-making. I had extensive previous experience with decision-making in the corporate sector and I now had front-line experience with decision-making in the higher education sector. I appreciated the collaborative, reflective, and consultative nature of collegial governance, but believed there were opportunities to strengthen the existing structures and processes for decision-making employed by BCIT, so that they could better balance the culture of participative decision-making with the institution’s needs for responsiveness and accountability.

I hoped that by engaging both BCIT faculty and administrators in this study that insights would emerge as to the issues and opportunities experienced with the existing

institutional decision-making structures and processes and that an informed perspective could be determined as to the preferred and most effective role of faculty in institutional decision-making at BCIT. Ultimately my goal was to better understand the role of faculty in governance and decision-making at BCIT and determine if it could and should be strengthened thereby enhancing both the organization's decision-making effectiveness and collegial spirit. On a personal level, this study had potential to make my leadership at BCIT more productive and satisfying.

1.5. Professional and Academic Significance

This study is of professional significance from several perspectives. First and foremost it seeks to understand and report on what the institutional decision-making structures and processes are at BCIT and how effective they are at addressing faculty engagement. It is hoped that the study's findings will illuminate the practice of decision-making at BCIT and accord opportunities to enhance the practice of decision-making at BCIT, particularly as it relates to engaging the Institute's faculty. This study is significant to the scholarship of governance in higher education as the literature search for this study indicated that there was a paucity of research on the subject of faculty engagement in higher education governance generally and within the Canadian context specifically [Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA), 2003; Dennison, 1995; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Powell, 2008]. There is an opportunity to add Canadian context and perspective to the literature by providing a study of higher education institutional governance located in a Canadian context. There are polarized views and tensions related to the effectiveness of collegial governance and decision-making in higher education. Authors such as Birnbaum (2004), Clark (2001), Dearlove (1995), Hellowell and Hancock (2001), Lapworth (2004), and Shattock (2002) argue that while it is no surprise given the unprecedented change and increasing size and complexity of higher education institutions that collegial governance and decision-making has become challenged. These authors suggest that faculty voice in decision-making is still important and that to reduce that voice would have negative consequences for higher education. Conversely, authors such as Askling (2001), Bess and Goldman (2001), Buchbinder (1993), Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT, 2004), Duderstadt (2004), Harris (2005), Meyer (2007), Simplicio (2006), and Toma (2007)

generally concede reduced collegial influence is inevitable given the new challenges facing higher education institutions. Given the apparent controversy over the value of collegial decision-making in higher education institutions, an in-depth study, situated within a Canadian higher education institution can provide further illumination.

1.6. Overview of the Methodology

An extensive discussion of the research methodology is found in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, however a brief overview is provided in this introductory chapter to help frame this study for the reader.

In many research projects in the social sciences and education, there is an overarching choice to be made between quantitative and qualitative designs. Qualitative research is consistent with the constructivist epistemological stance (Carr, 2006; Darlaston-Jones, 2007; Morgan & Smircich, 1980), in that it provides an inductive approach to explaining reality, in contrast to quantitative methods which tend to examine correlational or causal relationships.

A mixed methods approach was selected for this study to take advantage of both qualitative and quantitative research instruments that were accessible and ideally suited to the specific requirements of this study. The issues surrounding governance and decision-making in such a specific setting are highly contextual making it necessary to explore and understand the perceptions and underlying frames of reference of the participants. Accordingly, this study relies primarily on a qualitative design to explore and leverage an interactive approach to the research so that the contextual nuances of BCIT's institutional decision-making are illuminated. It was important that the study take place in as close to a natural setting as possible, a condition which reinforces the practitioner-researcher approach as a well established tradition in qualitative methods. Within this tradition there are a range of research tools available such that a great deal of customization is possible to meet the needs of the researcher (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007).

This study references quantitative data from all four BCIT Employee Opinion Surveys (2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009). These data are considered to be of a secondary

nature given I did not have a role in the design, or methodology of any of these surveys, with the exception of recommending one additional question for inclusion in the 2009 version, which was incorporated. This survey and the role it plays in this study is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3. In addition to the Employee Opinion Surveys, this study utilized document review, semi-structured 1:1 key informant interviews, and focus group interviews. All of these information sources will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

This study recognized and accepted that there are no perfect research designs and that there will always be tradeoffs (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This study was conducted primarily from the qualitative research perspective, specifically through the constructivist lens of inductive inquiry. The results of this study are based on a contextual snapshot, which will have diminishing applicability and relevance as the organization and its context evolves. Similarly, the findings from a single study such as this cannot be generalized to other organizations without further research to corroborate the appropriateness of such generalizations (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Creswell, et al., 2007). It is not possible to generalize or extrapolate these findings to other institutions, or contexts, however it is hoped that this study provides sufficient detail and value to warrant further research. The benefits of detailed, contextual data gathered from multiple data sources were considered sufficient to offset this limitation (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Darlaston-Jones, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Moreover, Brewerton and Millward (2001) confirm that qualitative research can be pursued in a highly applied, yet scientific manner.

An additional limitation of this study relates to the notion that it is bounded (Cousin, 2005; Creswell, et al., 2007; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Accordingly, this study will limit its focus to decision-making at the institutional level of BCIT, between faculty and administration, within the (2008-2009) timeframe. It will not examine governance or faculty engagement at more micro levels within the organization (for example at the course or program level), nor will it concern itself with board or student levels of

engagement in governance and decision-making or with historical descriptions of decision-making in the past.

The practitioner-researcher approach also has limitations that must be considered, specifically: issues of researcher credibility associated with transitioning from familiar colleague to objective researcher; issues of role influence and bias; and the ethical and political dilemmas of uncovering sensitive or damaging facts. All of these can be limiting factors that can compromise and challenge researchers and their research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms are interspersed throughout the study; accordingly, the following definitions are provided for precision and convenience.

1.8.1. Governance

Birnbaum (1988) offers the following definition of governance: The structure and processes through which institutional participants interact with and influence each other and communicate with the larger environment. It answers the question: Who is in charge?

A key factor is the degree that administrators, faculty, students, and boards share power. This will be discussed further in Chapter 2 where the history, traditions, and evolution of higher education governance and decision-making, including the three most prevalent models are discussed more thoroughly.

1.8.2. Faculty and Staff Association: Instructional

This is the collective bargaining unit for BCIT's technology program instructors (for example diploma and degree programs in business, health, engineering, computer science, etcetera). Approximately 550 members belong to the Association.

1.8.3. *British Columbia Government Employees Union: Instructional*

This is the collective bargaining unit for BCIT's vocational program instructors (for example apprenticeship and regulated certificate programs in trades such as carpentry, pipe-fitting, air-craft maintenance, marine watchman, etcetera). The Union has approximately 250 members.

1.8.4. *Administration*

For the purposes of this study, administration will be defined as the management group for BCIT: President, Vice-Presidents, Deans, Directors, Associate Deans, and Managers. There are approximately 150 members in this category.

1.8.5. *Senior Leadership Team*

The body represents the senior executive team for BCIT and is comprised of the President, Vice-presidents, and Deans; a group comprised of 15 members. For clarity, some participant quotes refer to this decision-making body as the PEC, or President's Executive Council, which is how it was known under the previous President.

1.8.6. *Key Informants*

For the purposes of this study, key informants were BCIT faculty and staff purposefully recruited to participate in semi-structured, 1:1 interviews because of their positions within the organization and their knowledge and expertise related to the study's subject of faculty's role in institutional decision-making. The key informants for this study held the following positions at the time of the research: President, (Acting) VP Education, VP Human Resources, Chair BCIT Education Council, (Acting) President BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, Chair BCGEU Instructional bargaining unit, Chair BCIT Employee Opinion Survey committee.

1.8.7. Polytechnic

Being a polytechnic means that we provide a broad range of applied, hands-on and pragmatic education that is employer-driven, based in technology, and that leads to high quality employment for our graduates. It means that we conduct research that addresses commercial needs, and solves problems. (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009d)

1.8.8. Higher Education

Higher education became a popular term in the second half of the 20th Century, representing the most demanding stage of pre-career education. It is undertaken upon completion of primary and secondary education, and usually precedes full-time employment. It is comparable to terms such as post-secondary, tertiary, and third-level education (Teichler, 2001).

1.9. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters to guide the reader through a logical progression of Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, and concludes with a Summary and Discussion of Results. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study, including the background for the study and the personal and professional significance of the study. It has provided a concise overview of the research methodology and the limitations of the study, both of which will be covered in much more detail in Chapter 3 (the methodological discussion). This chapter has defined key terms used in the study and concludes by outlining the subsequent chapters, as follows:

Chapter 2 presents the literature review that forms the foundation for this study. It provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature that is germane to this study. It begins with an outline of the search parameters and discusses the various governance models. It then traces the development of higher education in Canada and British Columbia, including the forces, challenges, and prospects associated with faculty engagement in higher education decision-making. The chapter concludes with a distillation of the literature reviewed for this study into six key concepts. These concepts serve to inform the research design, which is reviewed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 will introduce the underlying investigative paradigm behind this study. It describes the general research question and introduces seven research sub-questions arising from the literature review. The research context, site and participants are described in sufficient detail to give the reader a clear view of the context for the study. The chapter discusses the specific research approaches employed for the study, the procedures followed, including those for data analysis and triangulation of results. The chapter culminates in a summary statement that connects the research methodology back to the research question.

In Chapter 4, the data and findings of the study are reported. The findings are organized and discussed according to the seven research sub-questions derived from the literature review. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the dissertation and a discussion of the results. It links the research questions with the data and interprets the findings of the study, including how they compare with existing literature and previous research, and what the possible implications are for practice. The chapter concludes with recommendations for BCIT to consider.

CHAPTER 2.

Review of the Literature

2.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a synthesis of the scholarship on institutional decision-making in higher education. It begins with the study's general research question, which orients the literature search and provides perspective for the objectives of the study. Section 2.3 describes the search process and the delimitations of the literature review. Section 2.4 discusses the three major models of governance found in higher education. Section 2.5 outlines the development of higher education in Canada and British Columbia. Section 2.6 reviews the forces affecting higher education, with a focus on the period of the 1960s to present. These forces are viewed from the global, Canadian, and British Columbian contexts respectively. Section 2.7 examines the subject of faculty engagement in higher education decision-making, examining both the challenges and the prospects to elevate faculty's role. Section 2.8 distils this literature search into six key concepts, which both summarize the literature and inform the methodology for the study as discussed in Chapter 3. Section 2.9 summarizes the chapter.

2.2. General Research Question

What are the institutional decision-making structures and processes currently employed at BCIT and how effective are they at addressing faculty engagement?

2.3. Delimitation of the Literature Review

This literature review examines the broad concept of governance and decision-making in institutions of higher education. It has two primary foci: the context and

development of governance and decision-making in higher education; and the role of faculty engagement in higher education governance and decision-making. The review is limited to scholarship and commentary concerned with higher education in nations that might be characterized as Western in character, specifically Australia, Canada, New Zealand, those of Western Europe and the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA).

The review of literature begins with a macro review of governance in higher education and progressively narrows in scope to the topics of institutional decision-making, faculty engagement, and collegiality; becoming localized to Canada, British Columbia, and ultimately specifically to the governance of the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

The review draws on a combination of published books and online journal articles, however, some reports and archival materials were also sourced to provide a more complete picture where other sources were limited. The online journal articles were sourced primarily through the Simon Fraser University Library collection of online journals, with specific emphasis on education, social sciences, leadership, and business subject areas. Key word searches included governance, decision-making, faculty engagement, employee participation, collegial, shared governance, managerial decision-making, higher education, post-secondary education, university, Canadian university governance, reforms, globalization, neo-liberal, marketization, leadership, power, organizational culture, ethics, trust, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Canada, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, USA, UK, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. In aggregate, an estimated 350 articles and books were reviewed and considered for this study, with approximately 200 sources reviewed in detail. The articles and books relied on for the study are detailed in the study's reference list.

It should be noted this review confirmed the observation by the Center for Higher Education and Policy Analysis that there is limited empirical or theoretical work on governance systems and specifically the role of faculty within those systems (CHEPA, 2003). Within Canada, the scarcity of literature on this subject was even more pronounced (Dennison, 1995; Powell, 2008). Accordingly, the Canadian and British

Columbia contexts reviewed higher education governance in general. Furthermore, materials specific to BCIT were found primarily in the form of internal documents such as governance manuals, Education Council policies, and internal or unpublished documents, including the contents of the BCIT website. For the most part these documents were considered as part of the primary research for this study and comprise a data source for the findings reported in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

Before reviewing the literature on higher education governance, it should be noted that the history of governance for community colleges and technical institutes is distinct from traditional universities. Technical institutes and community colleges in the Canadian context for the most part emerged in the 1960s and subsequently in response to labour market needs (Dennison, 1992; Levin, 2001). As such, the preliminary governance structures for these institutions often had strong linkages to the local community and secondary education systems (Dennison, 1992). A pertinent example would be the first senior executive with responsibility for BCIT, Cecil Roper, carried the title of Principal upon appointment to that position in 1962 (Magee, 2004).

In the current 2009 British Columbia context, technical institutes and community colleges have evolved into a bicameral system, such that the issues of faculty engagement are relevant when viewed through the broader higher education lens.

A final delimitation relates to the difficulty associated with sourcing the original historical documents, including acts and statutes from the 1970s and earlier. This study relied on authors such as Jones, Shanahan, and Goyan (2001, 2004) and Dennison (1992, 1995) in Canada; and Hamilton (2002, 2006) and Tierney (1998, 2004) in the United States, but notes that they have not always referenced the original works in their references. While the level of detail required to achieve such fidelity was beyond the scope of this study, it does represent a limitation that should be understood by the reader.

2.4. Models of Higher Education Governance

Birnbaum (1988) suggests that governance is one of the truly distinguishing characteristics of higher education. Institutional governance in higher education is

difficult to generalize given the diversity of models, traditions, politics, cultures, and environments that influence and shape each institution's approach and culture (Birnbaum, 1988; CHEPA, 2003; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Minor & Tierney, 2005). A key factor in determining which governance model a higher education institution employs is the degree to which administrators, faculty, students, and boards share power. Furthermore, the context must be a key consideration for which type of governance model is best. A model suited for one context (for example a severe financial crisis), is not likely ideal for another.

While the literature describes an extensive range of models, this study focused on the three that are most relevant to the study's context and most representative of the literature on governance in Western higher education. The three models described range from the collegial model where power is dispersed across multiple stakeholders to the managerial model where power is centralized within the administrative group. The middle-ground is appropriately named the shared governance model. Each of these three archetypes is discussed briefly below.

2.4.1. *The Collegial Model*

2.4.1.1. Origins

In examining the scholarship on traditional forms of higher education governance and decision-making, it is evident that institutions and programs of advanced learning have existed in various countries for over 1,000 years. Collegiality traces its origins back to the medieval university of the Middle Ages (1150-1500) where the University of Paris (Sorbonne) had a system of faculty governance which influenced the collegial cultures of Oxford and Cambridge and resembled the endowed collegial system of the modern university (Scott, 2006). These original universities served the social elite in their pursuit of knowledge and specialized training for high service (Dearlove, 2002; Duff & Berdahl, 1966; Harris, 2005; Lapworth, 2004; Mora, 2001; Scott, 2006; Wolter, 2004). Small institutional size and mutual dependence supported a collegial approach to decision-making.

2.4.1.2. Defined

Birnbaum (1988) proposes the following characteristics as salient features of the collegial model of governance: faculty, administrators, and students work collaboratively; decision-making is by consensus; power and responsibilities are shared; the collegium works toward common goals; leadership is consultative; participation is encouraged; and status and role distinctions are deemphasized. All of these features support the notion of a community of colleagues. Birnbaum (2004) adds that collegial decision-making has two overarching objectives: to make good decisions; and to achieve acceptance of those decisions by those affected.

2.4.1.3. Discussion

The Carnegie Council for Policy Studies in Higher Education (1980) observed that universities have been remarkable for their resilience and continuity, citing 66 academic institutions that existed in 1530 were still in existence in 1980. They noted that these institutions had survived revolutions, world wars, economic chaos, industrial and technological transformations, and emerged less affected than most other segments of society. In 1980 the Carnegie Council concluded that it would expect this same characteristic to be retained in the future (as cited in Engwall, 2007). However today there is mounting pressure on higher education institutions to evolve their decision-making processes or risk failure (Collis, 2004).

The quantity and complexity of resources required by today's higher education institutions cannot easily or adequately be managed by a collegial organization (Duderstadt, 2004; Keller, 2004; Mora, 2001). Higher education governance has become disjointed as the institutions have expanded and become more complex (Mallon, 2004). Marginson (2004) suggests that over the past 20 years globalization has shaped the economic, political, cultural, and societal influences on higher education and overwhelmed the traditional collaborative structures of governance and decision-making. Collis (2004) opines that collegial models of governance in higher education are less able to make crucial strategic decisions in times of dramatic change. This has created tensions between the desire for collaborative decision-making and the need for effective and responsive decision-making.

The tensions between the desire for collaborative decision-making in higher education and the need for faster, more responsive decision-making manifest themselves in the clash between managerial and collegial decision-making models. Neither model is ideally suited for the modern higher education institution. Some writers claim that collegial models fail to meet the complex external demands whereas the managerial model fails to meet the traditional internal needs of the academic culture (Dearlove 1995; Lapworth, 2004). Among the challenges of collegial governance are allegations that it is slow, conservative, influenced by partisanship and self-interest, indifferent to external realities, and biased toward the status quo (Clark, 2001; Dearlove, 1995; Dearlove, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

Birnbaum (1989) argues that faculty voice is an indispensable part of higher education's collegial culture. Proponents of collegial governance argue that it enhances organizational support for decisions while providing faculty with the opportunity to democratically engage and have their ideas and views considered. Through this process, issues are more thoroughly vetted and creative alternatives are often introduced by faculty who may possess disciplinary expertise or additional perspectives relative to the decision (Kezar, 2004b). Furthermore, faculty participation lends itself to congruence on organizational values and direction and serves as a mechanism to bring the academy together, given faculty are characterized as loosely coupled autonomous professionals, who otherwise prize their independence (Bess & Goldman, 2001; Birnbaum, 1988; Clark, 2004; Dearlove 1995; Tierney, 2004). Buchbinder (1993) describes collegiality as the way in which autonomy is organized, providing a means of linking an organization's autonomous units. Collegial decision-making, done well, increases trust and invests ownership and responsibility for institutional decisions more broadly across the organization (Birnbaum, 1988; Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

Shattock (2002) asserts that institutions enjoy more success when governance is a partnership between all constituents and where there is a sense of common purpose that informs the balance of the relationship. He points to the UK league tables for evidence, suggesting "...universities which generally occupy the top 10 positions in the league tables seem to emphasize collegiality in their management styles rather than any form of executive dominance" (p. 241).

History and tradition play significant roles in an organization's culture and the majority of modern western higher education institutions have some measure of collegiality in their organizational cultures (Owen, 1995; Eckel, 1999). How much collegiality depends on many factors, not the least of which is how much influence the pressures and reforms of the past decades had upon the organization (Buchbinder, 1993; Dearlove, 2002; Lapworth, 2004; Wolter, 2004). The strength of the role played by collegiality in today's higher education institutions is a function of how much their members believe they are engaged in organizations of consent. The concept of collegiality remains a key element of higher education culture and continues to influence the governance of higher education (Clark, 2004; Dearlove 1995; Dearlove, 2002; Hellowell & Hancock, 2001; Lapworth, 2004).

2.4.2. *The Shared Governance Model*

2.4.2.1. *Origins*

At the beginning of the 20th Century, there was concern in the USA that some industrialists on the governing boards of universities sought to control professorial speech. This concern motivated the formation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1915. The AAUP's 1915 General Declaration of Principles is considered the foundational statement defining the American concept of academic freedom (Hamilton, 2002). Years later (1940), the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges (AAC) issued a joint Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, a document that is still in force. Among other things, it stated that institutions of higher education exist to serve the common good and not to further the self interest of either the institution, or individual faculty members (Braskamp & Wergin, 1998).

The shared governance model traces its roots and name to the USA, where in 1966 the AAUP statement, known as the Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, directly addressed the practice of shared governance. The statement was jointly formulated by the AAUP, The American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) for Universities and Colleges, all of which sought to clarify roles in campus governance (Hamilton, 2002). For the first time, the

statement formally articulated and legitimized the faculty role in USA academic governance (Birnbaum, 2004; Hamilton, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

2.4.2.2. Defined

The shared governance model is a blend of the collaborative and participatory benefits of the collegial model, with the efficiency and responsiveness of the managerial model. According to the model, decision-making occurs throughout the organization, depending on the various constituents' areas of expertise and interest. For example, trustees are concerned with responsiveness, administration with efficiency, and faculty with academic values (Birnbaum, 2004; Toma, 2007).

The notion of shared governance extends from the concepts of academic freedom and peer review, whereby universities acknowledge their unique mission of creating and disseminating knowledge. Shared governance bestows the rights of academic freedom conditionally on individual professors who comply with the specified duties of professional competence and ethical conduct. The faculty, as a collegial body, commits to the duty of peer review to ensure obligations are met (Hamilton, 2002).

2.4.2.3. Discussion

The concept of shared governance is based on the premise that faculty should play a substantial role in higher education decision-making, most often through a senate, or comparable council. Such councils exist at 90% of USA 4-year colleges and universities (CHEPA, 2003). Jones et al. (2001) confirm similar statistics, specifically 92% of Canadian Universities have some form of bicameral (shared) governance in place. It is more difficult to come to a precise figure for the community college and technical institute sector within Canada. As discussed earlier, there is a paucity of research generally for Canadian higher education governance which is exacerbated for the college and institute sector. However with this limitation noted, it can be said that the majority of large provincial jurisdictions where governance information could be found, relied on variations of the bicameral system to give voice to faculty and other stakeholders in specified institutional decisions. For example British Columbia has Education Councils (*College and Institute Act*, 1996); Alberta has Academic Councils (*Post-Secondary Learning Act*, 2004); Manitoba has College Councils (*College Act*,

1991); and Ontario requires its Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to have Academic Councils, although they are not established by statute and accordingly have no formal authority (Powell, 2008).

The objective of shared governance is to align the responsibility for decision-making with the part of the organization having the most expertise in the area that is the focus of the decision-making operations (Birnbaum, 2004; Toma, 2007). However there can be grey areas where responsibilities overlap, which can create conflict, thereby slowing and complicating decision-making, and contributing to organizational tensions. Furthermore, there is little agreement as to which decisions faculty should have input to decisions on (Del Favero & Bray, 2005). The challenge of shared governance is that the culture and values of collegiality do not align with the requirements of decision-making and accountability that is required in contemporary institutions of higher education in the 21st Century (Duderstadt, 2004; Toma, 2007). Keller (2004) argues that the conditions that gave rise to shared governance and the 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities have irrevocably changed and that shared governance is no longer appropriate for modern higher education institutions.

There is general agreement that higher education has experienced unprecedented changes since the mid-1960s (Clark, 2001; Clark, 2004; Collis, 2004; Dearlove, 1995; Keller, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Toma, 2007). Since those possibly simpler times, the influences of globalization, neo-liberal reforms, and marketization, have resulted in increased pressures and expectations from a diverse and demanding set of stakeholders, leading in turn to larger, more complex institutions of higher education (Clark, 2001; Keller, 2004). Institutions must also compete among themselves for resources including funding, faculty, and students (Dearlove, 1995). There is considerable evidence that institutional decision-making in higher education has not evolved to meet the unprecedented changes that these organizations have experienced since the transition to more collegial and shared governance models during the 60s and 70s (Collis, 2004; Duderstadt, 2004; Keller, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Lapworth, 2004).

Duderstadt (2004) contends that higher education decision-making must evolve to meet modern needs. He acknowledges the importance of faculty participation, however, he believes faculty are not equipped with the broad perspective, interest, or

expertise that is necessary to contribute to the process effectively. He goes further by reasoning that faculty members' traditions of debate and consensus building through highly fractious departmental meetings or other forums is incompatible with the breadth and pace required for today's higher education environment, which he describes as high speed and high risk. He maintains that faculty values are not well aligned with those required to manage a large, complex institution.

Baldrige (1982) challenged the romantic perception of academics having friendly discussions about academic matters, suggesting this never existed in higher education. He describes true shared authority as a fable and kingdom advocated by many, but successfully implemented by few (as cited in Miller, McCormack, & Pope, 2000).

Miller (2001) conducted a survey of 23 college presidents in the USA and determined that they were not enthusiastic about shared governance. His findings suggested that they did not consider it an integral part of institutional decision-making. A revealing finding was that they felt faculty should focus more on teaching and less on institutional decision-making.

In contrast, Miller and Pope's (2002) subsequent study surveyed 20 provosts in the USA on the value of faculty engagement in governance and concluded that these academic leaders believed strongly that shared governance strengthens the democratic principles of the institution; that shared governance was a cultural norm; and that shared governance was a tool for institutional work. Through a collective case study of four USA research universities, Eckel (1999) demonstrated that shared governance is capable of facilitating challenging decisions, such as program closures. One of the major challenges of shared governance is the incongruence of faculty culture which values academic freedom, autonomy, and collegial decision-making with the managerial culture which increasingly values responsiveness, accountability, and efficiency (Gallagher, 1995; Lapworth, 2004; Toma, 2007).

Student protests were symbolic of the relatively radical nature of the 1960s and found mixed but growing public support, including that of a younger professoriate that had been hired to fill the needs of the expanding higher education system. Such protests contributed to an environment that saw faculty and staff demanding stronger voices in

institutional governance. Ultimately, this resulted in more democratic governance structures for higher education institutions, and re-establishing a degree of faculty voice in higher education governance (Duff & Berdahl, 1966; Jones et al., 2001; Schuetze & Bruneau, 2004; Shattock, 2002; Teichler, 2001; Wolter, 2004). The report, *University Government in Canada* (Duff & Berdahl, 1966) in Canada; and the 1966 AAUP *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, in the United States were influenced by the actions and sentiments of the protests of the 1960s (Jones et al., 2001; Hamilton, 2002).

2.4.3. The Managerial Model

2.4.3.1. Origins

Following World War II (WWII) there was a revolutionary shift in funding for higher education, whereby government funding became a dominant catalyst to growth and shaped the mission of higher education (Scott, 2006). A key force behind this initiative in Canada was the *Veterans Rehabilitation Act* of 1945, which offered wide access to higher education to thousands of returning veterans (Lemieux & Card, 2001). Many nation states responded to social, military, and political pressures and transformed higher education from an elitist system serving less than 10% of the eligible population, to a massive system where upwards of 50% of the eligible population was somehow engaged in higher education (Buchbinder, 1993; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Jones, 2004; Teichler, 2001). This fundamental shift in philosophy about higher education established the foundation for the contemporary higher education system and associated structures found in North America today.

Inevitably as institutions evolved, their size and complexity increased, as did the needs, expectations, mission, and diversity of their stakeholders. Consequently, institutions increasingly bypassed the slow and deliberative nature of participatory decision-making and moved more towards a managerial model (Birnbaum, 1988; Harris, 2005; Lapworth, 2004; Meyer, 2007; Scott, 2006).

2.4.3.2. Defined

At the other end of the faculty participation spectrum is the managerial (alternatively referred to as hierarchical, corporate, or bureaucratic) model. This model is characterized by: systemic coordination; professionally trained managers; a chain of command; rules and regulations; and followers taking directions from executive officers (Birnbaum, 1988; Jones et al., 2004). Decisions are made by a relatively small number of senior executives, whose positional authority is paramount. Emphasis is more on economic efficiency and bottom line results, rather than decision-making structures and process. Followers typically do not participate in the decision-making process and are expected to commit to decisions and to implement them (Bess & Goldman, 2001; Dearlove, 2002; Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Wolter, 2004).

2.4.3.3. Discussion

The managerial model is premised on the business model and aspires to corporate efficiency (Trakman, 2008). Lapworth (2004) observes that as higher education institutions have become less reliant on government funding and more oriented toward the market, there has been a shift toward more managerial influences, resulting in a decline in faculty participation. As faculty involvement declines, so too does faculty trust in the organization (Birnbaum, 2004), making it more difficult to effect change and make decisions effectively.

Miller and Pope (2002) determined from their survey of 20 provosts, that faculty's mindset can be negatively impacted by the imposition of managerial decision-making, suggesting they become more like employees and less like members of a community. They suggest faculty become more reliant on their unions or associations to represent them in decision-making. Similarly Morriss (1998) conducted a survey of academics who had experience both as faculty and as administrators and found that a lack of faculty participation led to faculty alienation, resistance to change, reduced alternatives to consider, and inhibited communication between faculty and administrators.

Critics contend that the managerial governance model produces short-term solutions; should only be considered for severe economic times; and leads to the commoditization of education as corporate efficiency is paramount (Trakman, 2008). On

the other hand, advocates of the managerial model believe complex higher education institutions should be managed by professionals who are trained and experienced in effective management. This model of governance aligns well with higher education's stakeholders' expectations for fiscal responsibility and accountability (Trakman, 2008).

2.5. The Development of Higher Education in Canada and British Columbia

2.5.1. *Development in Canada*

Canada is relatively unique among Western nations in that the federal government has no direct jurisdiction over education, having relinquished that responsibility to the provinces at confederation (*Constitution Acts, 1867-1982*). Accordingly, each province has autonomously developed legislation, infrastructure, and operating support for their respective higher education institutions. Additionally, each province has designated a ministry or department of government to oversee its higher education. Although there is a Council of Ministers of Education Canada which provides a forum to exchange information among provinces, each province operates independently. While the federal government has no direct role, it does exercise indirect influence and extends funding in various forms to provincial higher education institutions through general transfer payments to the provinces and a range of research grants and support programs. Federal support has recently been targeted more specifically towards the government's political priorities such as economic and skills development, certain forms of research, scholarships, student financial aid, and First Nation's people (Schuetze & Bruneau, 2004; Shanahan & Jones, 2007).

Prior to the 1960s, Canada had relatively few higher education institutions. Buchbinder (1993) characterized these earlier universities as "... narrowly focussed, elitist, ... paternalistic, patriarchal and hierarchical" (p. 334). The Flavelle Commission of 1906 recognized the importance of faculty engagement in institutional governance and clearly articulated the rationale and framework for bicameralism, a model comprising two formally recognized bodies: a senior academic body or senate that operates parallel to a governing body, typically known as a board of governors (Jones et al., 2001). This

format was initially adopted by the University of Toronto in 1906 and subsequently by Dalhousie, Queens, and McGill universities; and afterward by the universities developing in Western Canada. By the 1950s most Canadian universities had adopted the bicameral system (Jones et al., 2004). Bicameralism most closely approximates the shared governance model discussed in Section 2.4.2 above.

The post World War II era represents the most dynamic period for Canada's higher education system, with rapid expansion to meet the growth of the economy; the needs of a large number of returning veterans; infrastructure development; immigration; the baby boom; and the shift in focus from an elitist system of higher education toward one of mass access (Buchbinder, 1993; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Jones, 2004). Part of this expansion relied on the unprecedented development of non-university components of higher education, with the formation of institutes and community colleges designed for labour force training and the preparation of more vocationally-oriented graduates. Institutional names varied across the country, but community colleges and technical institutes were common descriptors for these new higher education entities. These new institutions were more closely controlled by government and more directly aligned to industry and business. Accordingly they took on more managerial styles of governance (Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Gallagher, 1995; Levin, 2001).

The rapid expansion and diversification of the higher education system in the early 1960s led to a gradual erosion of collaborative governance structures and processes across the country, creating demands to revisit how Canadian universities should approach governance (Jones et al., 2001). These demands resulted in the report, *University Government in Canada* (Duff & Berdahl, 1966). The Report was jointly commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and the forerunner of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). The purpose of the Report was to conduct an impartial review of the present structures and practices of university governance in Canada and to make recommendations for reform (Duff & Berdahl, 1966). The introduction to this Report sets both its objective and the tone:

... examine the charges that one so often hears today, that universities are becoming so large, so complex, and so dependent upon public funds that scholars no longer form or even influence their own policy, that a new

and rapidly growing class of administrators is assuming control, and that a gulf of misunderstanding and misapprehension is widening between the academic staff and administrative personnel, with grave damage to the functioning of both. (p. 3)

The Report was based on written submissions and the results of a cross-Canada fact-finding tour of universities by its authors, who held on-site sessions with various constituents. The Report's sweeping recommendations included: the composition, structure, and functions of Boards and Senates; the role of President; selection of senior administrators; and the roles of faculty associations and students in university governance. The Report was heralded and had considerable impact, being credited with building a consensus around the view that Canadian universities should remain autonomous from direct government control and be operated with a modified bicameral system that was more participatory and oriented towards shared governance. By the early 1970s virtually every Canadian university had reviewed and reformed its governance structure and process (Jones et al., 2001). The Duff and Berdahl (1966) report was influenced by many of the same issues that led to the 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities in the United States. Both reports sought to strengthen the faculty voice in academic affairs and generally clarify governance and decision-making roles.

2.5.2. *Development of the British Columbia System*

A narrowing of the focus of this review to British Columbia's higher education system reveals some noteworthy departures from the broader Western, North American, and even Canadian patterns. The BC higher education system was relatively late to develop, perhaps owing to the province's historical reliance on resource extraction and a corresponding lack of interest in higher education by its population during the first half of the 20th Century (Dennison, 1992). The University of British Columbia (UBC) was the province's first university, opening its doors to students in 1915. UBC remained the province's sole university and one of only a few higher education options until the mid-1960s.

Prior to World War II, aside from UBC the province's higher education options were limited to two normal schools and one vocational school. That changed with the

enrolment rush following the return of World War II veterans. UBC expanded to meet the demand; a vocational Institute was opened in 1949 in Vancouver; and a few small religious, non-public higher education institutions opened in the 1950s. In 1958 the *Public Schools Act* was amended to give school boards the authority to establish district colleges in affiliation with UBC (Dennison, 1992); however no new facilities actually opened.

In essence, very little changed until the 1960s, when two events made a lasting impact. The first was the federal *Technical Vocational Training Assistance Act* (TVTAA) of 1960, which led to the rapid construction of new vocational training facilities across the country between 1960 and 1970, including the formation of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in 1964 (Dennison, 1992). The TVTAA led to new infrastructure being established across the province during the 1960s. The second key event in the development of British Columbia's system of higher education was the report authored by UBC's president, John MacDonald, entitled *Higher Education in British Columbia* (MacDonald, 1962). This Report provided the foundation for the system of community colleges and was heralded as being the single most influential event shaping BC's higher education system (Dennison, 1992). It inspired the new *British Columbia Universities Act* of 1962, which led to the creation of two additional research universities (Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria) by 1965 and ultimately laid the groundwork for 14 community colleges by 1975 (Cowin, 2007; Dennison, 1992).

In terms of governance for the new community colleges, the MacDonald (1962) report called for local representation in order to best meet the needs of local areas. MacDonald felt each institution should have its own governing board, comprised of the following members: one representative from each local board of School Trustees; one representative appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council; one representative named by the superintendents in the local school districts; one representative named by the Academic Board; one representative named by the Grants Commission; the President of the institution (non-voting); and one representative named by the faculty of the institution. This governing body would preside over both the financial and academic affairs of the institution (MacDonald, 1962).

2.5.3. Summary

Since World War II, higher education institutions in Canada as elsewhere generally experienced accelerating change driven by a number of forces including: demands for wider access; mandates shifting to reflect economic conditions; the influence of political agendas supported by strategic funding from governments; and, increases in the size and complexity of individual institutions as well as the system as a whole.

The next section expands the discussion of the specific influences (forces) that have challenged collaborative models of governance and decision-making in higher education since the mid-1960s.

2.6. Forces Affecting Decision-Making and Governance in Higher Education

2.6.1. Global Forces

Bob Dylan's (2009) song "The Times They Are a-Changin'" was released in 1964. It was reflective of the social and political turmoil that was characteristic of the 1960s. Higher education was not immune from the impact of the social, political, and economic forces of these times. The first of the dramatic changes affecting higher education during these times was the rapid expansion of the higher education system through the 1960s in order to meet societal demands for greater and wider access to higher education. The driving force behind this expansion was the economy's need for a skilled and educated workforce combined with a political agenda seeking to maintain national competitiveness. The expansion in numbers of students and variety of programs resulted in institutions which were larger and more complex and which created a tendency for institutions of higher education to adopt models more characteristic of industrial or managerial governance and decision-making. However, there was a growing resistance to this approach, especially on the part of many young and newly appointed faculty. This laid the groundwork for yet another force, the tensions and corresponding calls for reviews and changes to higher education governance. As mentioned previously, this resulted in the report, *University Government in Canada* (Duff

& Berdahl, 1966); and in the USA it resulted in the 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (Hamilton, 2002). Both of these reports called for more participative and democratic approaches to governance in higher education in their respective nations.

If the 1960s and 1970s can be credited with bringing rapid expansion and the broad adoption of shared governance to higher education in North America; the eighties can be credited with such influences as globalization; neo-liberal politics and economics; marketization; entrepreneurial universities; calls for reform; the demise of faculty voice in institutional governance and decision-making; and the rise of managerialism (Clark, 2004; Codd, 2005; Jones, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Schuetze & Bruneau, 2004; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Toma, 2007; Wolter, 2004).

As an ideology, globalization suggests that the world is increasingly experienced as a single, borderless space, with developments, whether economic, political, societal, cultural, technological or environmental in nature, in one part of the world affecting others. In a globalized environment the power of nation states is claimed to be diminished. However policy for higher education has continued to be predominantly shaped within the respective nation states (Dale, 1999; Enders, 2004; Jones, 2004; Levin, 2001; Mok, 2005). At the same time many governments are encouraging higher education institutions to become active in a world market place for educational services and programs. Codd (2005) reports that New Zealand now has a flourishing education industry and estimates that international students are up 320% between 2002 and 1996; created 20,000 jobs; and contributes more than \$2 billion per year to the New Zealand economy. He laments that "... economic objectives [have] replaced citizenship as the primary political purpose of public education in New Zealand" (p. 196).

The trend toward globalization has added significant momentum to the rising economic ideology of neo-liberalism which values competition, corporatism, and consumerism in the belief that these values will produce increased efficiency, innovation, and accountability, while reducing overall costs to government (Codd, 2005; Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2004). Neo-liberalism has been described by Giroux (2002) as the "defining political economic paradigm of our time" (p. 1), and has been attributed to the election and subsequent policies of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s,

and subsequently President Ronald Reagan in the USA (Codd, 2005; Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2004).

Neo-liberalism and globalization have had tremendous consequences for governments and in turn, for higher education institutions. Governments have effectively reduced both absolute and unrestricted funding for higher education forcing institutions to become more entrepreneurial, market driven, and accountable (Clark, 2004; Dearlove, 2002; Kezar 2004a; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2004; Meyer, 2007; Middlehurst, 2004; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Toma, 2007). In conjunction with reduced funding, governments have become more reliant on increased accountability and performance measurements, reflecting a trend on the part of politicians and governments toward declining confidence in the traditional governance of higher education (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Levin, 2001; Teichler, 2001; Wolter, 2004).

At the institutional level the trend toward neo-liberal or market-driven policies promoted less reliance on government; more competition between institutions for resources and students; increased demand for faster and more effective decision-making; and the development of increasingly sophisticated administrative support systems to accommodate the growing size and complexity of the institutions. This has been accomplished by the emergence of a clear trend toward private-public partnerships with universities and colleges seeking funding and endowments from private corporations and businesses. In response to these environmental challenges, features of the business world crept into higher education that included movement toward global mobility, the blurring of boundaries, the emergence of new competitors, technology driving efficiency and speed, and more informed, demanding consumers (Chaffee, 1998; Considine, 2006; Levin, 2001; Middlehurst, 2004; Toma, 2007). These challenges are a result of globalization and the broad adoption of the neo-liberal ideology across most Western nations (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Jones, 2004; Levin, 2001). Such forces have had a powerful affect on many institutions of higher education and have served as a catalyst for change. While there is wide variation as to how systems and institutions have responded to the trends toward globalization and the implementation of neo-liberal policies, a common response has found expression in the marketization of higher education (Buchbinder, 1993; Codd, 2005; Jones, 2004; Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2004).

Since the ideology of neo-liberalism has as one of its central concepts support for free trade and free markets, it is not surprising that higher education was also seen by advocates of neo-liberalism as a venue for the operation of free market principles.

The marketization of higher education is characterized by institutions operating as if competing in a marketplace. In doing so institutions take on entrepreneurial strategies and values, including institutional and professorial efforts directed at markets in order to generate incremental revenues (Knowles, 1995; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Within this metamorphosis it has been claimed by some that the traditional collegial interaction between administration, faculty, and students is displaced by managerial hegemony, resulting in student and faculty groups being marginalized and market strategies and values overshadowing the democratic collegium (Levin, 1995). Buchbinder (1993) characterizes the marketized university as having less democracy, less collegiality, more privatization, more centralization, as well as more rigid and top heavy administrations. Buchbinder (1993) suggests that universities have no choice but to become more efficient and to operate more like businesses. These changes place pressure on higher education institutions to adopt managerial styles and structures driven by the need to find revenue sources and increase enrolments (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Toma, 2007), all of which has the effect of destabilizing traditional academic values (Couturier, 2005; Giroux, 2002).

Eaton (2002) suggests that the following core academic values are central to the history and traditions of higher education: Institutional autonomy to provide independence; collegiality and shared governance that stresses participation and consultation; intellectual and academic authority of faculty in the areas of curriculum and academic standards; degree structures that organize the educational experience; general education to fulfill the responsibility for a broad education; and site-based education that supports a community of learning. Mike Jennings, General Secretary for the Irish Federation of University Teachers, in a speech to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, shared his frustration over the trend to managerial governance models, standing up for what he believed were traditional academic values:

I am proud to stand by traditional academic values of diversity and completeness, of inclusiveness and openness, of tolerance and mutual respect. But many people—regrettably too many in senior positions in

Universities—subscribe to the ‘greed is good’ philosophy that cooperation is for wimps and we should not extend respect for different traditions, but rather create competition between them to arrive at one superior tradition by survival of the fittest.... But these efficiency measures are often driven by ideological considerations rather than practical realities and they are devised by people who do not understand what it is that Academics actually do. Worse still is the fact that implementation of these measures is entrusted to administrators and managers not to educators. The result is that we are over-managed and under-led, because our managers have no coherent or viable vision. (CAUT, 2008b, p. 662)

Considine (2006) suggests higher education governance and decision-making has experienced “titanic pressures” (p. 255) to evolve toward more responsive decision-making. In some jurisdictions such as Australia, New Zealand, and to a lesser extent the UK, the state has imposed managerial governance and decision-making structures, whereas in other jurisdictions such as Canada and the USA, institutions have been largely left to react autonomously although under pressure to respond to a variety of political and economic agendas at both the provincial/state and federal levels.

2.6.2. *Forces Impacting Canadian Higher Education*

Within Canada, as Duff and Berdahl predicted in their (1966) Report, most provinces continued to demonstrate rapid rates of expansion in post-secondary education. However by the mid-1980s, federal and provincial budgetary and fiscal constraints negatively affected funding for the higher education sector, for the most part ending system expansion. Amidst the backdrop of globalization impacting other national higher education systems, new demands for greater efficiency and competitiveness were now targeted at Canadian higher education institutions. These demands signalled the beginning of a trend to market-oriented higher education in Canada (Buchbinder, 1993; Schuetze & Bruneau, 2004). Jones (2004) asserts that Canada joined the list of countries influenced by neo-liberal ideology in 1995, when the Ontario Conservative Party under Premier Mike Harris introduced major policy initiatives such as reduced government spending, similar to those already enacted in Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Jones (2004) suggested that up until that time, Canada’s higher education institutions had enjoyed relative stability. This position is supported by Slaughter and Leslie (1997), who suggest that because Canadian higher

education institutions were more autonomous, they were sheltered for a time against the forces of globalization.

Since the mid-1990s, economic and higher education policies enacted across the country have resulted in reduced funding, which when taken in conjunction with increased student enrolments, culminated in a net drop in per student funding over the period 1994 through 2005 (Shanahan & Jones, 2007). CAUT (2008a) cites Statistics Canada data in its 2008-2009 CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, wherein it reports a decrease in government transfer payments to Canadian higher education institutions of 8% (adjusted for inflation), per student FTE (full time equivalent) between 2005 and 1994. In response to reduced funding for higher education institutions, an increased proportion of the financial cost was shifted to students in the form of increased tuition. Tuition increased on average across Canada by 25%, adjusted for inflation and tax credits, between 1995 and 2006 (Usher, 2006). In terms of the overall proportion of institutional revenue, tuition increased from 22.4% in 1996, to 29.2% in 2006 (CAUT, 2008a). Perhaps a more striking statistic is the same comparison in 1976, where tuition represented only 13% of total university revenue and government grants represented 83% (CAUT, 2008a). It was apparent that Canada's higher education institutions had no option but to become more oriented towards the market (Levin, 2001) and compete to attract both students and additional sources of revenue.

Several trends are evident as we assess the current state of higher education governance in Canada today: increasing system-level coordination; increasing inter-institutional competition; increasing market-orientation; and increasing accountability to institutional stakeholders (Schuetze & Bruneau, 2004; Shanahan & Jones, 2007). Gallagher (1995) adds another trend to this list, one which is central to this study: the simmering tension between shared (collaborative) and managerial governance models in higher education. Gallagher (1995) suggests that this has been a growing point of contention in Canadian higher education. He claims that in order for institutions to be effective in the future they must move toward models of shared governance that support cooperation between faculty and administrators rather than adversarialism.

2.6.3. Forces Impacting Governance and the Structure of the Higher Education System in BC

In British Columbia, the amended *Universities Act* of 1974 recognized the inclusion of faculty, support staff, and students on the university governing boards, a move consistent with the Duff & Berdahl (1966) report's recommendations and the government of the day's preference for participatory democracy (Dennison, 1992). About the same time, BCIT benefited from legislation that removed it from direct control of the Department of Education and provided it with an independent Board of Governors, with faculty and student representation. The *College and Institute Act* which followed in 1977 transferred the legal authority of the remaining community colleges from the local school boards and centralized governance under three intermediary councils (Dennison, 1992). At that time BCIT was joined by several other specialized colleges and institutes (The Emily Carr College of Art, the Justice Institute of British Columbia, the Pacific Vocational Institute, the Pacific Marine Training Institute, and the Open Learning Institute) along with the community colleges organized under the triumvirate. By the end of the 1970s BC boasted three universities, 14 community colleges, five provincial institutes, and an Open Learning Institute to support distance learning (Dennison & Schuetze, 2004).

In a fashion similar to other provinces, the 1980s brought a climate of fiscal restraint to BC and despite inflationary pressures, budgets were rolled back resulting in program closures and restricted student access (Dennison, 1992). In terms of governance, the *College and Institute Act* was amended to abolish the three centralized governing councils and establish government-appointed boards at each institution. This was consistent with what MacDonald's (1962) report had intended in stating: "... an institution can achieve excellence only if it can define its own goals and organize its own programme in such a way as to achieve its goals" (as quoted in Dunae, 2001).

As the BC economy improved by the late 1980s and expanded beyond heavy reliance on resource extraction, public concerns over access to BC's higher education system became more apparent. BC trailed most other provinces in terms of degree granting and the participation of the 18 to 24 age group in higher education. In 1988 the Provincial Access Committee recommended an immediate increase of 15,000 degree seats (Dennison, 1992, 1995). The implementation of this recommendation had the

effect of expanding existing university capacity, but more significantly five community colleges were approved to extend their programming to include the completion of degrees in certain fields. These institutions were renamed University Colleges. This initiative was eventually expanded to include other community colleges and institutes. Between 1988 and 1998 BC recorded the following statistics related to access: in 1988, BC's system of post-secondary education included 21 higher education institutions, of which three were degree-granting universities; by 1998, BC's system included 28 higher education institutions, of which six were universities, and 13 colleges and institutes were empowered to grant degrees (including BCIT). Enrolment in higher education in BC over the decade had increased 30% to 42,000 students (Dennison & Schuetze, 2004). These statistics suggest expansion and investment in British Columbia's higher education system, in contrast to the earlier discussion regarding reduced government funding for higher education in Canada and elsewhere. Increased investment by the government in BC is confirmed by the CAUT 2008-2009 Almanac on Post-Secondary Education in Canada (CAUT, 2008a), where Statistics Canada data is cited, showing a 29% increase (adjusted for inflation) in government spending on higher education between 1992 and 2006 in BC. However, if this funding is viewed on a per student basis, it is evident that funding actually decreased 13% on a student FTE (full time equivalent) basis over this same timeframe (CAUT, 2008a). Similar to the Canada-wide statistics discussed earlier, the reduced funding from government resulted in more of the financial burden being shifted to students in the form of higher tuition. Tuition increased in BC more than any other province between 1995 and 2006, up more than 50% after being adjusted for inflation and tax credits (Usher, 2006). As a source of institutional revenue in BC, the overall proportion derived from tuition increased from 20% in 1996, to 31% in 2006 (CAUT, 2008a). It is striking to compare the 2006 proportions with those of 1976, where tuition only represented 10% of total university revenue in BC, and government grants represented 88% (CAUT, 2008a).

The 1990s reflected a key period in terms of reform of governance in higher education in BC. Historically colleges and institutes had been governed more managerially than the relatively autonomous comprehensive universities (Cowin, 2007; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004; Levin 2001). However, the *College and Institute Act* (1996) was amended to establish Education Councils, whose members were representative,

elected, and provided statutory authority over academic areas, as originally called for in the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report and subsequently embraced by the AUCC. The *College and Institute Act* (1996) specified the following composition for Education Councils in the province of BC: 10 faculty elected by faculty, 4 students elected by students, 2 support staff elected by support staff, and 4 administrators appointed by the President. The President is a non-voting member and the Board is permitted to appoint one other non-voting member. This legislation ushered in a bicameral, shared governance structure for BC colleges and institutes (Dennison, 1995; Dennison & Schuetze, 2004). Levin (2000) surveyed 104 community colleges, in eight dispersed North American jurisdictions and concluded that through specific legislation only BC had the legal framework for true shared governance in higher education institutions. It is important to understand that education councils do not have the full authority of university senates, a key difference being that the Board of Governors for colleges and institutes in British Columbia retain both financial and academic responsibility, whereas university senates in BC retain final authority for academic matters.

With the election of the BC provincial Liberal party in 2001, BC's higher education system entered the 21st Century with expectations for more dramatic change. The first significant policy change introduced by the new government was in support of increased access, although with a distinctly neo-liberal tone that not only succeeded at increasing access to higher education, but also increased competition between institutions. This was accomplished in part through the accreditation of some private higher education providers. BC now lists more than 450 registered private vocational training and educational institutions such as English Second Language training colleges (Private Career Training Institutions Agency of BC, 2008). The BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development promotes private higher education institutions as providing students with more choice and greater access to a range of program options, as well as a wider spectrum of locations and methods of program delivery (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2008).

The most significant indications of changes to come were contained in the BC Government's Campus 2020 report (Plant, 2007). This report was commissioned by the provincial government to provide a systemic approach to education reforms through to the year 2020, with the aim of making "...BC the best educated, most literate jurisdiction

in North America by 2015” (Plant, 2007, p. 3). It contains 52 sweeping recommendations impacting governance, accountability, funding, capacity, access, technology, participation, graduation objectives, student aid, scope of programs, private-sector participation, internationalization, research, credentials, and accreditation among others. The Premier’s personal message in the report forebodes more (neo-liberal) changes for the system: “Demographic, economic and fiscal realities mean the system will be increasingly concerned with efficiency and accountability” (Plant, 2007, p. 10).

Two years after the Campus 2020 Report was released by the British Columbia Government’s Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (2009a), its website reported the following accomplishments:

- Making tuition free for all adult basic education.
- Commissioning an independent review of private post-secondary governance, legislation, and accountability.
- Appointing more members to the board of the Private Career Training Institutions Agency to increase representation.
- Announcing an Education Quality Assurance designation to recognize quality.
- Increasing enrolment opportunities so that students with a B average in high school now have ready access to BC Universities.
- Creating five new universities:
 1. Vancouver Island University
 2. Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 3. University of the Fraser Valley
 4. Capilano University
 5. Emily Carr University

The Ministry web-page closed with the statement that the five new universities had brought the Campus 2020 initiative to a conclusion (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2009a). One online daily journal, self-described as covering the backrooms of provincial and federal politics in British Columbia, had this to say about the Campus 2020 Report: “... many of the 52 recommendations in that plan, which was authored by former attorney general Geoff Plant, are languishing” (Public Eye Online, 2009). The (BC) Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development claims in its 2009/10-2011/12 Service Plan “... unprecedented investments in public post-secondary education in British Columbia—

\$2.25 billion in 2008 and \$15.9 billion since 2001. ... expansion of education and training spaces to their highest levels ever—36,700 new spaces since 2001 ...” (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2009a, p. 3). Levin (2008) opines that despite the provincial government’s neo-liberal orientations, they continue to cling to social-democratic ideals, with the result that faculty at BC’s public colleges and institutes continue to have a strong role in institutional governance.

Regardless of political orientation, one cannot but be impressed with the dynamic growth and success of BC’s higher education system over the past 50 years. From uninspired and spasmodic beginnings (Dennison, 1992), the BC higher education system has evolved into one of the most diversified and progressive in North America. It is considered by some commentators to be well-positioned for the challenges of the early 21st Century (Skolnik, 2006).

2.6.4. Summary

In summary, the changes that have occurred both inside and outside higher education institutions since the mid-1960s are significant. Rapid and sizeable expansion changed the nature of higher education and resulted in evolving approaches to institutional governance, essentially varying the degree to which power and decision-making was shared among constituents by the end of the 1970s. While the 1980s saw the introduction of new forces such as globalization, which opened up both society and institutions to global information, comparisons, new markets for services and programs, new clients, and ultimately international competition. Government policies generally followed the trend to neo-liberalism and encouraged academic institutions to expand their markets, their stakeholders, and their respective realms of entrepreneurial activity.

When compared to their mid-1960s counterparts, today’s higher education institutions are generally much larger, more sophisticated, and often employ specialized administrators to operate them to the level of their diverse stakeholders’ expectations. At the same time there has been a dramatic increase in the number of private post-secondary institutions offering a wide range of programs, often to meet specialized educational or training needs and demands. The trend to managerial models of governance may be consistent with neo-liberal economics, but can be criticized as being

inconsistent with the traditional collegial culture of governance in higher education (Codd, 2005; Harmon & Treadgold, 2007; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). The issue of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making has still not found a new equilibrium between managerial and collegial models, although shared governance offers a possible and dynamic solution.

2.7. Faculty Engagement in Higher Education Decision-Making: Challenges and Prospects

The subject of faculty engagement in higher education decision-making evokes spirited discussion along both the challenges to overcome and prospects to improve. This section reviews the literature from both sides of the discussion.

2.7.1. *Tensions between the Need for Institutional Responsiveness versus the Need for Faculty Engagement and Collegiality in Decision-Making*

Among the key challenges inherent in the discussion of faculty engagement in higher education decision-making is the trend to more managerial decision-making models in response to increased institutional size and complexity; increased competition; and stakeholder expectations for increased accountability and responsiveness. Duderstadt (2004) argues that faculty are no longer adequately equipped to contribute effectively to the complex decisions of modern higher education institutions and that the academic tradition of debate and consensus-building do not meet the needs for timely and responsive decisions. Others, including Simplicio (2006) share this view, arguing that administrators are best suited to see the big picture and make better informed decisions. Mallon (2004) suggests that there is a trend towards the managerial model while Schuetze and Bruneau (2004) underscore the need for higher education decision-making to address the expectations and needs for accountability and responsiveness. Duderstadt (2004) characterizes today's institutional decisions as being of higher value and higher risk than in simpler times. Furthermore, as institutions have become more oriented to the market and more entrepreneurial, they have diversified their funding bases (Clark, 2004), and accordingly become dependent and accountable to a wider

and more diverse set of external stakeholders, including government and corporate beneficiaries, research granting agencies, the local community, students (who pay a larger proportion of the institution's operating budgets now than before), and alumni (who can be a significant source of fundraising revenue and often expect a role in institutional affairs). Some governments such as those of Australia and New Zealand have already moved to managerial governance models for their higher education institutions. For example, Australia's TAFEs (Technical and Further Education Institutes), were transitioned into legally autonomous (from government) institutions during the early 1990s, with autonomous governing boards that have 50% of members appointed by government. They have corporate legal status and are viewed as both a business and as a social institution with strong entrepreneurial orientations: freedom from government control translated into a struggle for survival (Levin, 2008).

Authors such as Birnbaum (1988), Kezar (2004a), Lapworth (2004), and Eckel (1999) remind us that higher education is different from business and suggest that the managerial techniques appropriate for business are not appropriate for higher education. It may be ironic that some of the key recommendations from the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report that were intended to bring higher education decision-making in line with both academic values and external realities, are still relevant more than 4 decades later. Specifically Duff and Berdahl (1966) suggested in their report the need to re-engineer decision-making in higher education; increase faculty voice; and better define roles and decision-making structure and scope: These recommendations were applicable in 1966, and still have application in the present era (Duff & Berdahl, 1966; CAUT, 2004).

In the years following the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report in Canada, the adoption of its recommendations varied by institution. Faculty began to complain that the expectations of the report had not been realized. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) claimed that control of the universities remained with administrative groups, who ran the universities without any accountability. Furthermore, the Association claimed that in response to pressures to become more efficient, administrators had marginalized the roles of university senates in governance. Some faculty and students considered participating on senates as a waste of time (Jones et al., 2004). The CAUT's response was to recommend a shift in strategy and make collective bargaining its primary tool to protect and extend collegial governance models, and secondarily to

support the bicameral shared governance systems (CAUT, 2004). This position was contrary to the recommendations of Duff and Berdahl (1966).

A growing challenge according to Rhoades (2009) and Plater (2008) is the growing trend towards a non-tenured, contingent academic workforce. Both contend that approximately 67% of the USA academic workforce is now contingent, or part-time, non-permanent. Accordingly they have no security, limited academic freedom, and limited opportunity or incentive to become involved in institutional decision-making.

One of the challenges associated with shared governance according to Del Favero and Bray (2005) is the conflicting cultures between administrators and faculty. They explain that administrators are more focussed on the collective, whereas faculty are more driven by self-interested motives and as a result, faculty interest in institutional decision-making is low. Furthermore the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis which concluded from its 2003 study on faculty engagement in higher education governance, that apathy and lack of trust were the most significant challenge to meaningful faculty engagement (CHEPA, 2003).

Over the past 40 years, higher education has undergone profound changes; institutions that date back to the Middle Ages and beyond have experienced the most significant shifts in their entire history and are now being challenged to consider making fundamental changes to their systems of governance and management (Mora, 2001). These are major challenges to consider and overcome.

2.7.2. *Prospects to Elevate Faculty Engagement in Institutional Decision-Making*

The literature on higher education governance provides numerous suggestions designed to elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making. There is broad support for the need to revisit higher education governance and decision-making (Collis, 2004; Dearlove, 1995; Duderstadt, 2004; Harmon & Treadgold, 2007; Keller, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Mallon, 2004; Marginson, 2004; Toma, 2007), however there are differing perspectives about what to change and how. This section will report on some of the opportunities suggested in the literature.

In contrast to the CAUT position described above to shift focus away from shared governance to a collective bargaining model, it is encouraging that the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC), the other sponsor of the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report, continues to value academic participation in governance, as evidenced by one of its membership criteria, AUCC members must have a:

... governance and administrative structure appropriate to a university, including authority vested in academic staff for decisions affecting academic programs including admissions, content, graduation requirements/standards, and related policies and procedures through membership on an elected academic senate or other appropriate elected body representative of academic staff. (AUCC, 2003, as quoted in Dennison & Schuetze, 2004, p. 28)

This points to a bicameral system where for example the administrators and managers run the facility and manage its physical and financial resources; non-academic staff deal with the budget, operate the admission's and information technology systems; and the faculty have major roles in making academic decisions (curriculum, academic standards, faculty appointments, tenure and promotion).

In order to have effective faculty engagement, faculty must believe its voice is valued. Despite AUCC's fidelity towards the spirit of the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report as evidenced in the above statement, if faculty perceive its voice in institutional governance is muted or threatened, unionization or greater emphasis on collective agreements may result (Buchbinder, 1993; Jones et al., 2001; Levin, 2001; Meyer, 2007).

While neither shared governance nor managerial models are perfect for higher education (Dearlove 1995; Lapworth, 2004), there are compelling reasons to revisit the concept of shared governance and build upon its inherent strengths and incorporate elements that will make it more effective in dealing with the challenges and pressures of the 21st Century (Birnbaum, 2004; Clark, 2001; Dennison, 1995; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Lapworth, 2004; Tierney, 2004, Toma, 2007). Birnbaum (2004) contends that shared governance is generally accepted and that any move by administrators to unilaterally alter it would have negative consequences. Faculty expectations for a role in governance are inculcated by their professional socialization, institutional history and academic traditions (Birnbaum, 2004).

Duderstadt (2004) argues strongly for change and is critical of the efficiency of current governance models, but also values faculty input and collegiality. He suggests higher education institutions need to define which areas of faculty competence require their consent (for example academic programs and policies); those areas where faculty input will be sought, but not necessarily considered (for example funding priorities); and those areas where faculty need not be consulted (for example maintenance contracts). He insists that institutions must accept a more realistic balance between responsibility and authority.

The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis surveyed 3,800 higher education faculty and administrators, across 750 American institutions to better understand how faculty engaged in governance (CHEPA, 2003). In this survey 80% of respondents confirmed that shared governance was important to their institution's values and identity but accepted that the status quo was no longer appropriate. This view was confirmed in the same study where less than 50% of the respondents felt that shared governance was working effectively. It is noteworthy that this study determined that venues for faculty engagement went beyond the senate or comparable council, in fact three other venues were considered by respondents to be more important: Academic Departments; Standing Faculty Committees; and Ad Hoc Committees. The dissatisfaction with shared governance found by the CHEPA study is not new, as Kezar (2004b), cites an earlier 1991 study by Dimond where 70% of campus faculty, staff, and administrators felt their governance and decision-making processes were not effective.

Kezar (2004b) followed Birnbaum's (2000) lead in challenging the conventional wisdom that the best way to improve governance and decision-making effectiveness was to radically change decision-making structures and processes. The problem may not be with the structure as much as with how people experience their roles in the structures (how they engage). Kezar (2004b) suggests that a key factor in engagement is the relationship between leaders/managers and those who report to them or who are accountable to them or over whom they have some oversight and responsibility. Thus, in two organizations with very similar structures on paper, there could be very different levels of engagement. People do make a difference. In a 2001 study conducted on behalf of the AAUP and the American Conference of Academic Deans using National Survey data, Kaplan (2004) found little relation between governance structures and

institutional decision-making effectiveness. People may have more influence on governance effectiveness than the governance structure per se.

All acknowledge that context must be considered; as with most higher education decisions, one size does not fit all. Kezar (2004b) allows that structures and processes influence relationships, trust, and leadership, but asserts that the opposite is also true and with more impact. She refers to a series of case studies she conducted which concluded that where relationships, trust, and leadership were missing, decision-making was ineffective regardless of the structures and processes; conversely, regardless of how dysfunctional the governance structures and processes were, if the institution had functional relationships, trust, and sound leadership, governance was generally effective. “Structures and processes are not at the heart of organizations—people and relationships are” (Wheatley, 1996 as quoted in Kezar, 2004b, p. 39).

Kezar (2004b) highlights two sets of relationships as being particularly important in higher education institutions: those between faculty and administrators and that between the President and the Board. Since relationships develop through participation and consultation, Kezar (2004b) offers the following recommendations to ensure quality collaboration: early input; joint formulation of procedures; adequate time to articulate a response; availability of information; adequate feedback; and communication of decisions.

Building on the concept of trust facilitating decision-making, O’Toole and Bennis (2009) comment from the corporate perspective, suggesting that recent business failures and scandals have re-oriented the business community. They call on business leaders to rebuild trust in their institutions and learn how to communicate honestly. They offer the following suggestions to build a “Culture of Candor” (p. 54): tell the truth; encourage people to speak truth to power; reward contrarians; practice having unpleasant conversations; diversify your sources of information; admit your mistakes; build organizational support for transparency; and set information free.

Braskamp and Wergin (1998), Kaplan (2004), and Tierney (2004) have also weighed in to suggest that altering structure and process is not the panacea to more effective governance and decision-making in higher education. They agree with Birnbaum (2004) and Kezar (2004b) that relationships, trust, and leadership are the

dominant variables. Furthermore, Birnbaum (2004) suggests that organizational effectiveness increases when there is trust and cooperation; and Lapworth (2004) in a similar vein recommends evolving to a more flexible model of shared governance which emphasizes trust and delegation. Minor and Tierney (2005) reference the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (2003) survey with respect to trust. In that study fully 77% of respondents indicated that they felt their institutions had sufficient trust between faculty and administrators to make decisions.

In addition to building trust and emphasizing people and organizational culture over structure and process, the following authors provide a sampling of the literature regarding suggestions on how to elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making:

Tierney (2004) suggests that the five most important areas in which faculty should have voice are: curriculum; general education; admissions; academic standards; and promotion and tenure requirements. He offers four ideas on how to effect positive change from a cultural perspective: demonstrate trust; develop a common language; walk the talk; and concentrate on developing and maintaining a core identity. Tierney comments further as to the importance of culture over structure, "Paradoxically, the way to improve governance is usually not through an intensive restructuring of the organization but through paying attention to the culture of the organization" (p. 214).

Braskamp and Wergin (1998) offer the following six implications for academic leadership: recognize what motivates faculty; support both commonality and uniqueness; publicly commit the Institution to the common good; faculty must participate in social partnerships (for example community research); assess faculty more completely (with fairness and justice so that there is trust in the process and respect for its outcomes); and leaders must address higher education's 'specialness'.

Keller (2004) offers a perspective which balances the benefits of shared governance with the reality that institutions need to have responsive decision-making, and suggests the following for improved higher education decision-making: academic freedom should be balanced with administrative freedom to make decisions; shared governance should reflect institutional differences; shared governance may still be the best model for departmental decision-making, but not necessarily for the institutional

level; faculty participation at the institutional level should be by taskforce; and both faculty and administration should recommit to putting institutional needs first.

The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA, 2003) concluded their study with the following recommended strategies for improved governance: delineate and clarify responsibilities; articulate a consistent definition of shared governance; utilize multiple decision-making venues; communicate consistently with faculty; and create the conditions for trust.

Finally, Kezar (2004b) suggests that orientations for new employees to introduce them to institutional governance are rare, but those institutions that do practice orientations tend to have more successful governance.

2.8. Key Concepts Emerging from the Literature Review

The following six key concepts emerged from the review of the literature for this study, they are as follows:

1. Extensive changes have occurred in the external environment of higher education over the past 40 years including the political and economic influences of globalization and neo-liberalism; societal influences; and the volume and access to information and technology.
2. In response to the external changes, institutions of higher education have become more complex and diverse in terms of programs offered, funding sources, faculty and staffing, and the nature of student populations.
3. Despite changes in both the external environment and organizational complexity, institutional governance and decision-making models have not evolved to the same extent, creating tensions between the shared governance models that became common in the 1960s and 70s versus the present-day demands for increased decision-making responsiveness and accountability.
4. Despite frustrations with shared governance models and collaborative decision-making, many faculty still have a desire to have a role in decision-making, however it varies by the nature of the decision and by faculty member.
5. There are advantages to having faculty participate in decision-making, such as increased faculty engagement, increased idea generation, and increased commitment to the decisions.

6. There is evidence that faculty and their associations are placing an increased reliance on collective bargaining and union tactics to represent them in decision-making.

The above key concepts were derived using the repetition and recurring concept technique described in greater detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.3. For a partial list of authors whose published work supports the views of the above key concepts, refer to Appendix A.

2.9. Chapter Summary

Current research and scholarship describes a number of changes to the context of higher educational institutions. The pressure of external changes generates tensions between the traditional collegial values of collaborative decision-making and the need for increasingly complex higher education institutions to make timely and effective decisions. As a result, there is pressure to apply top-down managerial responses at the expense of collaborative decision-making processes thereby contributing to reduced faculty participation in or engagement with institutional decision-making.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology is a complex organization, combining some aspects of a university with those of a technology and trades training institute with pre-professional preparation in other program areas. The Institute often enters into active partnerships with industry in order to ensure its students are well-prepared to enter vocations or professional careers. The Institute must also prepare students in many of its programs to meet external standards and credentialing requirements. The Institute exists in the midst of rapidly changing technologies, not only in the fields for which it prepares students, but also applied to instruction and learning.

These conditions challenge the Institute to demonstrate effective governance both to external demands and also to remain faithful to academic values and traditions; and to standards of academic conduct. As such, the Institute presents a unique venue and opportunity for a study of the perceptions of administrators and faculty in regard to the structures of governance and decision-making. It was the purpose of this study to exploit that opportunity.

CHAPTER 3.

Research Methodology of the Study

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter reviews the research methodology employed for the study. It begins by linking the general research question (Section 3.2) to the six key concepts that arose from the literature review and that are summarized in Chapter 2, Section 2.8. Upon the review of the literature, a set of seven research sub-questions emerged, hereafter referred to as the research sub-questions (Section 3.3).

The research sub-questions provided the basis for the selection of the research methodology which is described in Section 3.4, followed by a detailed rationale for the choice of methodology in Section 3.5. Section 3.6 of this chapter defines the study's context, providing insights into the relevant details of the research site and participants. Section 3.7 provides a detailed discussion of the specific research approaches and instruments employed in the study including the procedures for conducting the research and analyzing the data. This section concludes with an example demonstrating how the key concepts derived from the literature review (Chapter 2, Section 2.8) connect to the research sub-questions and in turn to the two discussion guides. Section 3.8 discusses how the data was triangulated for corroboration to provide greater confidence in the findings. Section 3.9 discusses the ethical stance of the study. Section 3.10 concludes the chapter with a summary of the methodology and an introductory perspective on the results to be presented in Chapter 4.

3.2. General Research Question

What are the institutional decision-making structures and processes currently employed at BCIT and how effective are they at addressing faculty engagement?

3.3. Research Sub-Questions

The literature review provided insights into the scholarship on a broad range of subjects related to faculty engagement and institutional governance and decision-making in higher education. Six key concepts emerged from the review of the literature and are presented in Section 2.8 of Chapter 2. When these themes were collated with the general research question stated above, seven research sub-questions were seen to provide an appropriate framework for a detailed examination of the issue of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at BCIT.

The research sub-questions form the foundation of this study's primary research, and are as follows:

1. What are BCIT's official and unofficial decision-making processes?
2. How is faculty's role in institutional decision-making understood at BCIT?
3. What aspects of decision-making are most important for BCIT faculty?
4. How can BCIT balance the internal desire for collaborative decision-making with the external demands for responsiveness and accountability?
5. What role should BCIT's faculty unions play in institutional decision-making?
6. How effective is BCIT's Education Council in facilitating faculty's role in institutional decision-making?
7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?

Table 3.1 depicts how each of the key concepts emerging from the literature review connects to the research sub-questions above. The key concepts and sub-questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, please refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.8

for the complete key concept statement, and Chapter 3, Section 3.3 for the complete research sub-questions.

Table 3.1. Connection of Six Key Concepts from Literature Review to the Seven Research Sub-Questions

Key Concept ^a	Research Sub-Questions ^b						
	1. What are BCIT's Official and Unofficial decision-making processes?	2. How is faculty's role in decision-making understood?	3. What aspects of decision-making are important to faculty?	4. How can BCIT balance the desire for collaboration vs. responsiveness?	5. What role should faculty unions play in decision-making?	6. How effective is Education Council in facilitating faculty's role in decision-making?	7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?
1. Extensive external change over past 40 years	X		X	X			
2. Increased institutional complexity	X	X	X	X		X	
3. Governance and decision-making models have not evolved	X	X		X		X	X
4. Faculty continue to desire a role in decision-making		X	X		X	X	X
5. There are advantages to faculty participation		X	X		X	X	X
6. Increased reliance on collective bargaining and unions		X	X		X		

^a refer Chapter 2, Section 2.8.

^b refer Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

X = connected.

3.4. Description of the General Methodology

A mixed methods research methodology was selected for this study utilizing a variety of research approaches. The study relies primarily on a qualitative research design, but makes use of a quantitative survey tool, the Employee Opinion Survey, which has been employed by BCIT over the past several years. By utilizing a mixed methods methodology, the overall design is triangulated reducing the chance of error by not relying on one research instrument or approach. Furthermore, by using multiple approaches and instruments there can be increased confidence in the results if there is consistency, or if the findings are complementary to one another between approaches and instruments. The study was conducted from the perspective of a practitioner-researcher, since at the time of the study I held a position of Associate Dean at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the site and subject of this study.

The study's approach was based on the topics of faculty engagement and decision-making found in the literature, which were then viewed through the lens of a specific institution (BCIT) over a specific period of time (April 2008 through March 2009). The research was augmented by the practitioner-researcher approach which situated the researcher directly in the site while permitting unobtrusive integration with the participants.

The study utilized a complementary series of research approaches, including a review of internal organizational documents, semi-structured 1:1 interviews with key informants, focus group interviews involving representatives of three distinct employee constituencies, and data generated from an employee opinion survey. These sources and methods are discussed in detail in Section 3.7.

3.5. Rationale for the Methodology

There is a fundamental link between research theory and method, or more specifically between the interpretive paradigm held by the researcher and the type of research method and design proposed (Creswell et al., 2007; Darlaston-Jones, 2007; Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Hopwood, 2004; Morgan &

Smircich, 1980). I believe the combination of this linkage and the nature of the phenomena to be studied should drive methodology and design.

Ontology has been defined as the view of reality and epistemology as the understanding of knowledge and its creation (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). I lean to the subjectivist end of the continuum of the subjective-objective debate about ontology within the social sciences, believing that people interpret, influence, and construct their social worlds. This view takes me to the constructivist epistemological stance which argues that reality is socially constructed by and among people as they experience it. Hence any context is influenced by the cultural, historical, political and social norms operating within that specific context and time. This contrasts with a positivist perspective that takes a view that the world is concrete, quantifiable, and predictable regardless of context, and independent of who is observing (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). The constructivist view is consistent with qualitative research design. Governance and decision-making processes are highly influenced by context, specifically by the people, the history, the timing and the cultural norms affecting how all of these elements interact. Understanding context is central to this study. Context is the what, where, who, how, when, and why; and the subtle circumstances and understandings that encompass something as dynamic as institutional governance and decision-making. In order to understand the situation and its driving influences, the research must go below the surface and produce findings that a less situated study might miss (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). In order to understand institutional governance and decision-making and aspire to identify opportunities to make refinements, the researcher must delve into the essence of organizational culture to appreciate the nuances of the specific context. Institutional environments experience constant change, driven both by external forces such as government policies, competition, industry requirements, and the state of the economy; as well as by internal forces such as the constant entry and exit of individuals, organizational politics, and shifting strategic priorities. All of these define an organization's context. For this reason the study needs to define its specific contextual focus (Minor & Tierney, 2005). Governance and decision-making can vary significantly by organization and even from department to department, as well as over time as affected by differing leadership styles. Accordingly, this study limits its exploration of

governance and decision-making to BCIT as an organization and to the (2008-2009) context.

In engaging with the research reported here, I adopted the practitioner-researcher approach, one in which I sought to develop new understandings about my professional practice through systematic study (Tricoglus, 2001). My experience and passion for the issue of improved governance and decision-making was acquired from both practical experience and an academic perspective. The study provided an opportunity to strive for Aristotle's phronesis, the moral and intellectual virtue that is inseparable from practice, aspiring to do "the right thing in the right place at the right time in the right way" (MacIntyre, as quoted in Carr, 2006, p. 426). As an Associate Dean at BCIT, my role as a front line manager in an academic department entailed direct and frequent interactions with faculty and the processes of institutional decision-making, thereby providing contextual insights into the meanings of the results of this study and their potential implications. In addition, my position as a practitioner-researcher greatly assisted in gaining the requisite permissions and access needed to investigate the issues from the perspective of an insider. My position also assisted in obtaining useful rates of participation and responses; more so than would likely have been possible for an external observer, or through an exclusively quantitative approach. Positional bias and influence was minimized by adopting a professional, task-oriented approach to the key informant interviews, all of which were conducted with individuals holding greater positional authority than myself. In addition, although I was present and directly observed the focus group interviews, they were presided over by a professional, trained, third party moderator, which was important to reducing observer or researcher influences. The ethical stance for this study is discussed in Section 3.9 of this chapter.

In summary, the exploratory nature of the general and specific research sub-questions cited above required an inductive research design that was capable of investigating and probing in some detail the variety of individual perspectives of BCIT's decision-making structures and processes, and faculty roles in those structures. Qualitative methods are most appropriate where a phenomenological, interpretive, and inductive approach is deemed necessary to gain understanding of complex social phenomena (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The quantitative (survey) element of this study adds a broader dimension to the study

and potentially serves as a means of triangulating the findings from the qualitative approaches.

3.6. Research Context, Site, and Participants

The context for this research is a critical element of the study. As described in Chapter 1, during the course of this study, BCIT was in transition to a new leadership team, initiated by the resignation of the previous President in May 2007. Following the previous President's departure, the Institute was presided over by an interim acting President until the new President was installed in March 2008. Given the change in senior leadership at BCIT, this study's focus on faculty engagement in institutional decision-making attracted considerable interest.

The study took place at BCIT's main campus, in Burnaby, British Columbia, over the spring, summer, and fall of 2008; and the winter of 2009, with the majority of the primary research taking place in the fall of 2008. The first interview for the study was conducted in late November 2008. All six focus groups were conducted in the first 2 weeks of December 2008. The BCIT Employee Opinion Survey was activated in January 2009 and the final key informant interview was conducted March 30, 2009.

The participants for the key informant and focus group interviews; and the Employee Opinion Survey were all employed faculty and staff of BCIT. For the interviews, participants were required to have a minimum of 5 years experience at BCIT with one notable exception to this requirement being the newly installed President.

3.7. Research Approaches Employed

The selection of research approaches and information sources was consistent with the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study discussed in Section 3.5, leading to the selection of approaches that were exploratory, inductive, and interpretive. Within this broad range it was important to consider the particular objectives and requirements of the study when selecting possible research tools. Specifically, what characteristics of the setting and context should be taken into account when contemplating which data collection methods would yield information that was useful and

reliable and could lend potential relevance and validity to the research questions (Hopwood, 2004). Cousin (2005) recommends that the choice of research approaches be a function of the setting and bear a relation to the understandings the researcher hopes to generate. They should also be selected so that they are compatible with and complimentary to one another (Demerath, 2006; Yin, 1994, 2009).

Marshall and Rossman (2006) simplify the qualitative data collection methods into four core approaches which include: participating in the setting; observing directly; interviewing in depth; and analyzing documents and materials. They acknowledge that there are numerous secondary and specialized methods available to the researcher that can also be considered.

Given the highly contextual nature of this study, it was important that the data sources were capable of balancing the objectivity gained from a broader examination of institutional governance at BCIT, with the deep understanding that is best acquired through more targeted, responsive, and interactive approaches. For example, an extensive document search may yield a perspective of how decision-making is intended to work in an organization, whereas a semi-structured 1:1 interview may yield different views of the same process. The two information sources taken together can provide a more complete view of the process of decision-making at BCIT.

For the broader examination of BCIT's institutional governance, the following types of public sources were reviewed:

- Documents, including relevant legislation, organizational publications, web-sites, and other key internal documents;
- BCIT's Employee Opinion Surveys, including the results from 2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009.

To explore the contextual nuances of BCIT's governance qualitatively, the following approaches were employed:

- Seven semi-structured 1:1 interviews were held with key informants
- Six semi-structured focus group interviews were held with representatives from three distinct employee constituencies.

This combination of data from a broad review of documentary sources and the Employee Opinion Surveys, combined with the personal perspectives revealed through 1:1 and group conversations on the research questions with a selection of BCIT faculty and administrators provided an effective balance of information necessary to anchor the study and provide the requisite detail and insight to achieve its research objectives. The following provides a detailed description of each data source including its relevance for the study and the specific procedures employed.

3.7.1. Document Review

Document reviews can provide important insights into the history and context of specific settings; provide a good foundation to refine and orient a study; and corroborate other sources of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Yin, 1994, 2009). A review of documents was particularly useful for this study because the formal provincial legislative and policy regulations on institutional governance and decision-making are key considerations defining processes, roles, and responsibilities. Furthermore, archival documents such as the Board Governance Manual (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005) can provide evidence of how decisions have traditionally been made, or have been intended to be made at BCIT.

This study examined relevant legislation, primarily the *College and Institute Act* (1996) of British Columbia; and key internal documents, including institutional governance and policy manuals, Education Council By-Laws, strategic planning and visioning documents, BCIT's Website, BCIT electronic bulletins, BCIT's Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) Website, and public documents and websites.

3.7.2. Employee Opinion Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire can be an appropriate research instrument for making inferences about a larger population, based on data drawn from a smaller, representative sample. Surveys provide insights that can be used to corroborate other data, or identify new areas for subsequent exploration. They are convenient, efficient,

and can be used to generalize the larger population (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The survey utilized for this study was the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey (Appendix B). The survey is an ongoing management tool developed specifically for BCIT. As such its design was beyond my direct control. For the purposes of this study the survey information constitutes secondary research data. The survey asks respondents to evaluate a series of statements using a 1- to 5-Likert scale, where scale points 1-2 indicate degrees of disagreement with the statement, Point 3 reflects a neutral response, and points 4-5 reflect degrees of agreement with the statement (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009b).

The 2009 BCIT Employee Opinion Survey (Appendix B) was distributed to all regular and part time employees as of mid-November 2008, via Canada Post mailings made to employees' home address in early January 2009. Instructions were provided in hard-copy format, with a return, postage-paid envelope requesting that the completed survey forms be returned by February 6, 2009.

The 2009 survey contributed to this study by providing insight into the Institute's employees' general perspectives and satisfaction regarding the importance and effectiveness of current governance and decision-making. The data from previous surveys show how views of employees have evolved over the course of BCIT surveys from 2001, 2004, and 2006. Survey statements were reviewed for both relevance and continuity over the four survey cycles. Six statements were selected from previous surveys (2001, 2004, and 2006) for analysis in this study based on their relevance to the research focus of this report. One additional statement was added to the 2009 survey (Item 7 below) to address a specific aspect of the research of this study. Hence, of the 56 statements included in the 2009 survey, seven were considered to be relevant for this study. Relevance was determined by the nature of the statement being evaluated, specifically, did a statement relate to the subject of employee (faculty) engagement and satisfaction with decision-making at BCIT. The following is the list of seven statements selected on the basis of these criteria.

1. I am empowered to make appropriate decisions to get the job done successfully.

2. I have the opportunity to influence changes that directly impact my work.
3. In my department suggestions and ideas are encouraged.
4. BCIT fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.
5. BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing change.
6. Senior management fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.

Questions 1-6 were included in some or all of the 2001, 2004, and 2006 Surveys. Question 7 below, was added to the 2009 Survey in support of this research study.

7. Senior management actively consults with BCIT's unions on key institutional decisions.

In contrast, the following list provides examples of the types of statements which were *not* selected, given their lack of relevance to the subject of this study:

1. I have the skills needed to perform my work effectively.
2. I enjoy the work that I do.
3. I am encouraged to maintain good health and fitness.
4. My work place is clean.
5. BCIT makes a worthwhile contribution to society.
6. I am equitably paid compared with people doing equivalent work at other organizations.

The complete list of 56 statements included in the 2009 version of BCIT's Employee Opinion Survey is provided in Appendix B.

Comparisons were made of responses to the selected survey items among three employee groups within the same year: BCGEU Vocational Instructors, Faculty and Staff Association Instructors (FSA), and Administrators (Admin). Furthermore, comparisons were made between the years of 2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009 within each employee group. As more than two subgroups were involved in each of these comparisons, a 1-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the significant differences between the employee groups; and over the years. One-way ANOVA is a statistical technique that inspects significant differences between the mean scores of the dependent variable by one independent variable that has more than two

levels (Pallant, 2005). In this case, the dependent variable is the level of agreement with each of the seven statements being examined: for comparisons by employee group, the independent variable is the employee group which has three levels: BCGEU, FSA, and Admin; and for comparisons by year, the independent variable is the year which has four levels: 2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 software program was utilized to perform the ANOVA analysis.

3.7.3. Key Informant 1:1 Interviews

Interviews can take several forms, but usually involve the researcher asking participants questions about their knowledge, interest or opinions about a subject. Interviews allow the researcher to gain insight into other people's perspectives on the context of a situation, to gain deeper insights into phenomena, and to explore, corroborate, refute, or augment other findings from a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Yin, 1994, 2009). Darlaston-Jones (2007) adds that the interactive nature of interviews contributes to shared understandings and allows the researcher to explore and respond to information from interviewees during the interview process.

This study used semi-structured 1:1 interviews for the key informant phase. A discussion guide (Appendix C) was used to lead the interviews and was comprised of 23 semi-structured questions, some of which were demographic and introductory type questions to set the tone for the interview. The discussion guide was based on the seven research sub-questions discussed in Section 3.3. Table 3.2 depicts how the seven research sub-questions connect to the relevant questions in the key informant discussion guide (the first 5 of the 23 questions were demographic or introductory type questions). Some questions have been abbreviated to fit into the table.

The flexibility of the interview format permitted the pursuit of unanticipated lines of discussion relevant to the study. The semi-structured and dynamic nature of the interview format allowed for a conversation style interview. The discussion guide was used to prompt questions and ensure all topics were explored.

Key informants were recruited by purposeful sampling, based on their positions and experience with institutional decision-making. Key informants included BCIT's

President, Acting Vice-President of Education, Vice-President of Human Resources, Chair of the Education Council, Acting President of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA), Chair of the BCGEU Instructional Bargaining Unit, and the Chair of BCIT’s Employee Opinion Survey Committee. Key informant interviews were held in the participants’ offices. The key informant interviews typically lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours. All key informants signed the informed consent form required for this study (Appendix D).

Table 3.2. Connection of Research Sub-Questions to Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions

Research Sub-Questions	Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (refer Appendix C):
1. What are BCIT’s Official and Unofficial decision-making processes?	6. Describe BCIT’s official decision-making structures and processes. 7. How would you describe BCIT’s unofficial decision-making processes? 8. Which of the above do you believe are most important and influential in decision-making?
2. How is faculty’s role in decision-making understood?	9. Do you believe BCIT faculty understand their role in institutional decision-making?
3. What aspects of decision-making are important to faculty?	10. In your opinion, what aspects of decision-making are most important for faculty involvement? 11. In your opinion, what types of decisions do faculty want or expect to be involved in making?
4. How can BCIT balance the desire for collaboration vs. responsiveness?	15. To what extent do you think faculty are held accountable for their input on decision-making? 16. Do you think there should be shared decision-making without shared accountability?
5. What role should faculty unions play in decision-making?	18. What role do faculty unions play in institutional decision-making at BCIT? 19. What role should faculty unions play in representing faculty in institutional decision-making?
6. How effective is Education Council in facilitating faculty’s role in decision-making?	12. How effective is Edco in promoting faculty’s role in institutional decision-making?
7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?	13. Could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty engagement in the Vision Project? 14. What do you think about current level of faculty involvement in decision-making at BCIT? 20. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT? 21. What level of trust exists at BCIT today? Is that higher or lower than 5 years ago? 22. Do you have any suggestions for improving institutional decision-making at BCIT? 23. Do you have any other comments on faculty’s role in decision-making at BCIT?

Interviews were conducted and recorded with the participants' knowledge and permission. The audio recording of these interviews was augmented by written notes that I took through the course of the interviews. To maintain confidentiality, I personally transcribed each interview and sent back a detailed summary to be validated by each participant. All key informants confirmed the accuracy of their summaries.

After completing the initial six key informant interviews, I reviewed the transcripts for repetitive or recurring concepts, with the objective of identifying the major themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) define themes as a conceptual linking of expressions that pertain to a similar phenomena. They suggest that themes come from data (an inductive approach) and from the researcher's prior theoretical understanding of the subject (an a priori approach). Ryan and Bernard (2003) propose that there are numerous methods for determining the themes from findings and put forward that it begins with the transcription of the audio tapes, enabling the researcher to become deeply familiar with the material. These authors regard repetition as one of the most efficient means to identify themes, noting that people frequently touch on similar networks of ideas. They conclude that the more often the same concept occurs, the more likely that it is a theme. This is consistent with how I gathered, recorded, organized, and analyzed the data. Specifically, once I had identified themes by noting the repetition of recurring concepts, I used a colour coding scheme to sort and assemble the data. Ryan and Bernard (2003) refer to this processing technique as "cutting and sorting" (p. 94). Ryan and Bernard (2003) conclude that using the repetitive identification method with the cutting and sorting technique is "... by far the most versatile technique for discovering themes" (p. 101).

The initial theme identification process outlined above generated 19 preliminary themes from the key informant findings, which is consistent with Ryan and Bernard (2003) who opine that "in theme discovery, more is better" (p. 103). I next referred back to the six key concepts which emerged from the literature review, presented in Section 2.8 of Chapter 2. Upon comparison of the literature review's six key concepts, with the 19 preliminary themes, it was apparent several themes were related and could be consolidated, while several more were determined to be outside the scope of this study on faculty's role in institutional governance and decision-making. The result was nine key informant themes derived from the key informant interviews. I next compiled them into a document entitled Key Informant Interview Emerging Themes, which I sent back to

the key informants as a group, including all relevant (supporting and contradicting) comments, organized and connected to each of the nine key informant themes (see Appendix E). Contradictory comments were included to allow participants to evaluate the relevance and accuracy of the emerging themes from a balanced perspective so as to avoid any notion that the supporting comments were selected on the basis of supporting a particular view or bias. Extraneous comments, for example complaints about parking, were eliminated. Participant names were not attributed to specific comments and where a comment could be attributed, it was modified with changes marked by [brackets]. The key informants were directed to review the themes, provide input as to their reasonableness and invited to provide opposing, or additional views. All seven key informants confirmed the validity of the emerging themes. Lincoln and Guba recommend giving participants the opportunity to examine and comment on themes if the themes are to be attributed to them (as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The findings and themes from the key informant interviews were then used to refine the discussion guide for the focus group interviews.

The details of the focus group interviews, including an example demonstrating how the key concepts from the literature review are connected to the research sub-questions, which in turn are connected to the key informant interview discussion guide, the results of which influenced the focus group discussion guide; are discussed in detail in the next section.

3.7.4. Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews are small group interviews involving up to 10 participants, where a facilitator asks open-ended questions to encourage discussion and draw out varying opinions. They are useful for identifying themes and testing conclusions, and can sometimes identify unanticipated issues for subsequent exploration (Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2006, Yin, 2009).

For the purposes of this study, focus group interviews were used to further explore concepts emerging from the literature and other research sources for this study, including the key informant interviews. The semi-structured interview discussion guide

for the focus groups (Appendix F) was based on the same question format as the key informant interviews, with some additional specificity added to facilitate the group discussion nature of the interviews and probe more deeply on specific concepts and themes that arose during the key informant interviews.

The discussion guide was based on the seven research sub-questions discussed in Section 3.3. Table 3.3 depicts how the seven research sub-questions connect to the relevant questions in the focus group discussion guide (Appendix F). Some questions have been abbreviated to fit into the table.

The guide served to lead the interviews and maintain consistency between groups. It was comprised of 35 open-ended questions which facilitated the flexibility of the moderator to pursue unanticipated lines of discussion relevant to the study while ensuring that all topic areas were covered; the focus groups were semi-structured and dynamic.

Six focus groups were conducted across three distinct employee groups from the BCIT community, two each for: Administrators, comprised of Deans and Associate Deans; Members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) who teach in the Technology (Health, Business, Sciences, and Academic Studies) programs; and members of the faculty who belong to the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU), who teach in the Vocational and Trade (Construction, Transportation, And Apprenticeship) programs.

Focus group participants were recruited by a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling, based upon their employee group affiliation, interest in the study, and availability to attend. Priority for recruiting was to obtain broad school and program representation and to engage people who met the length of service requirement (5 years). Additional recruiting criteria included employment group affiliation and gender representation. Age and other demographic criteria were not considered relevant to this study's purposes. See Appendix G for a breakdown of participant characteristics. Focus group size ranged from 5 to 8 participants, resulting in a total of 37 focus group participants. All focus group participants signed the informed consent form required to participate in this study (Appendix D).

Table 3.3. Connection of Research Sub-Questions to Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions

Research Sub-Questions	Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (refer Appendix F)
1. What are BCIT's Official and Unofficial decision-making processes?	1. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes. 2. As you understand it, who is involved in the official decision-making processes at BCIT? 3. Can you give an example of when the official decision-making processes worked well? 4. Can you give an example when the official decision-making processes did not work well? 8. How many of you are aware of the recent Visioning Exercise? 9. Did you participate in any of the [Vision] meetings or workshops? 11. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes? 12. Can you give an example of when the unofficial decision-making processes worked well? 13. Which decision-making process, official or unofficial do you believe is most effective?
2. How is faculty's role in decision-making understood?	17. How well do you think faculty understand their role in institutional decision-making?
3. What aspects of decision-making are important to faculty?	18. What aspects of institutional decision-making are most important for faculty involvement? 19. What types of institutional decisions have you been involved in?
4. How can BCIT balance the desire for collaboration vs. responsive-ness?	14. Is there a balance between the desire for collaboration and the need for responsiveness? 15. Should there be a balance between collaborative decision-making and responsiveness? 16. Should anything be done about the balance? 21. To what extent are faculty held accountable for their input to decision-making? 22. Do you think there can be shared decision-making without shared accountability? 23. If faculty were held accountable, would that affect their involvement in decision-making?
5. What role should faculty unions play in decision-making?	30. How do you feel about the role faculty unions play in institutional decision-making? 31. How well do you think unions represent faculty interests in institutional decision-making? 32. Any conflict between union mandate to advocate for member interests vs. institutional good?
6. How effective is Education Council in facilitating faculty's role in decision-making?	5. Are you familiar with Education Council? 6. How does Education Council promote decision-making at BCIT? 7. How effective do you think Edco is in promoting faculty's role in institutional decision-making?
7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?	10. Could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty engagement [Vision]? 20. What do you think about current level of faculty involvement in decision-making? 24. What are the best ways to involve faculty in decision-making? 25. What are the reasons why faculty may not be involved in decision-making? 26. What is a reasonable amount of time to allow for faculty consultation? 27. Over the past 5 to 10 years, have you perceived any major changes to engage faculty? 28. The literature suggests a trend to more managerial decision-making, why is that? 29. Do you think there is a trend towards, more managerial decision-making at BCIT? 33. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT? 34. What level of trust exists at BCIT today? Is that higher or lower than 5 years ago? 35. Any final suggestions for improving institutional decision-making at BCIT?

The focus group interviews were held in various meeting rooms across the main campus in Burnaby BC, and lasted approximately 2 hours each. They were scheduled between classes and during examination periods where faculty had more flexibility to attend. Light refreshments, snacks, and a \$50-honourarium was provided to all focus group participants.

The focus groups were presided over by a trained, professional focus group moderator who had both industry experience moderating focus groups and experience at BCIT as faculty (teaching research courses). Two moderators split up the six focus groups, working as a team under my leadership to ensure consistency. Both moderators complied with and signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix H) consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Medical Research Council of Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998).

I organized the rooms and invited the participants. When participants arrived for the focus group, I provided a brief overview of the study, explained my role as an observer and recorder for the session, and answered any questions the participants may have had, then disengaged and sat down unobtrusively at the back of the room. The moderator then assumed the lead and led the discussion following the discussion guide and normal focus group protocols. I observed that participants were generally very enthusiastic, open, and engaged with the subject, speaking freely and without apparent concern for my presence. I did not invite any participants from my own department due to potential conflict of interest concerns.

Interviews were recorded with participants' knowledge and permission and were augmented with hand written notes I took through the course of the interviews. After each focus group interview I personally transcribed the recordings, producing a detailed hand-written summary of each focus group interview.

Following the process described in detail for the key informant interviews above, I identified themes from the focus group findings using the repetition of recurring concepts method (Ryan & Bernard, 2003); then through the use of a colour-coding scheme I sorted and assembled the data. Using the process outlined for the key informant interview data and theme analysis noted above, a list of nine themes emerged from the

focus group interview findings. These nine themes were summarized into a document entitled [Specific] Focus Group Summary of Emerging Themes (refer to Appendix I for an example of 1 of 6 such documents), and validated with the focus group participants from each specific focus group, using the same process described above for the key informants.

Twenty-nine of 37 focus group participants responded and confirmed their agreement with the comments and theme analysis, a response representing 78% confirmation. The remaining eight participants did not respond to multiple requests; it was not that they disagreed with the comments or themes, no responses at all were received. Consequently we cannot infer agreement or disagreement from these eight non-responding participants. The responses were strong across all employee groups: Administrator members confirmed by 77%; FSA members confirmed by 77%; and BCGEU members confirmed by 82%.

To reinforce the connection between the six key concepts derived from the literature search to the resulting seven research sub-questions which informed the key informant discussion guide, whose results further refined the focus group discussion guide, the following example is offered.

Concept 6 as derived from the literature review and reported in Chapter 2 Section 2.8 states: There is evidence that faculty and their associations are increasingly looking to collective bargaining and union tactics to represent them in decision-making.

This concept informed research Sub-Question 5 as presented in Section 3.3 of this chapter (see Table 3.1): What role should BCIT's faculty unions play in institutional decision-making? In turn, this sub-question generated the following questions in the key informant discussion guide (see Table 3.2):

18. In your opinion, what role do faculty unions play in institutional decision-making at BCIT?
19. In your opinion, what role should the faculty unions play in representing faculty in institutional decision-making?

Through the course of the key informant interviews, it became apparent that there were differing views as to how representative the unions were of faculty. For

example, the theme related to this topic that was validated by the key informants stated: There are varying opinions as to the role unions should play in BCIT decision-making, but they are generally perceived as being representative of the general faculty population. This led to (or informed) Questions 30, 31, and 32 in the focus group discussion guide, by including the following questions (see Table 3.3):

30. How do you feel about the role faculty unions play in institutional decision-making at BCIT? Should anything be done differently?
31. Overall, how well do you think unions represent faculty interests in institutional decision-making? Why is that? Is it possible for the FSA/GEU to truly represent the interests of a diversity of faculty members? Is there a better way?
32. Do you think there is a conflict between the union's mandate of advocating for faculty members' interests and participating in the decision-making for the higher good of the institution?

The responses to the above focus group discussion guide questions were reviewed for recurring, repetitive comments, using the previously described process and led to the following slightly refined theme, which was sent back to the focus group participants for validation: There are varying opinions as to the role unions should play in BCIT decision-making and whether or not they are generally perceived as being representative of the general faculty population.

These findings are then reported in Chapter 4, and discussed and interpreted in Chapter 5.

3.8. Triangulation of Data

The data gathering approaches described above were intended to be complementary. Collectively the data sources contributed to a more complete understanding of the case and facilitated triangulation (Chen, 2006). Triangulation is a term borrowed from naval science representing the use of multiple reference points to confirm an object's precise location (Hanson et al., 2005). Yin (2009) suggests the most important advantage of using multiple sources of evidence is the development of "converging lines of inquiry" (p. 115), which facilitates triangulation when data from several different sources support and corroborate each other.

For the purposes of this study, triangulation occurred across and within sources of data. For example, the document search data was analyzed for references and relevance to institutional decision-making, governance, and faculty's role therein, so when a reference was found in legislation, such as the requirement for colleges and institutes to have an Education Council, this was followed through with a search and analysis for how this was applied at BCIT. Evidence was found for Education Council within the Institute's Board Governance Manual (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005), and the Institute's policies (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009c).

An example of how data was triangulated across sources of data would be the exploration of the impact on decision-making and governance regarding the installation of a new president at BCIT. This subject was explored in both key informant and focus group interviews, and also analyzed as part of the Employee Opinion Survey.

3.9. Ethical Stance

This study was conducted under the combined auspices and approval of the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics, and the British Columbia Institute of Technology Research Ethics Board. It complies with the principles set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, as cited below.

- Respect for human dignity
- Respect for free and informed consent
- Respect for vulnerable persons
- Respect for privacy and confidentiality
- Respect for justice and inclusiveness
- Balancing harms and benefits
- Minimizing harm
- Maximizing benefit.

Consistent with the intent of these principles, this study strives to achieve morally acceptable ends, by using morally acceptable means according to the Tri-Council Policy

Statement (Medical Research Council of Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998).

3.10. Chapter Summary

In summary, the research methodology was carefully selected to fit the specific purposes of this study and to be compatible with its genre. The mixed method qualitative design provided the requisite flexibility and variety of research approaches needed to probe the contextual nuances of BCIT's institutional decision-making processes and explore interactively the underlying issues about decision-making in the Institute while offering insight into possible opportunities to possibly enhance faculty engagement in the practice of institutional decision-making at BCIT.

Chapter 4 presents the results from the study. The organization of the chapter reflects the complementary character of the research design and its underlying approaches. The results illuminate key themes, issues and findings that share multiple cross-references, thereby providing increased confidence in the findings.

CHAPTER 4.

Results of the Study

4.1. Chapter Overview

This study examines the issue of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Chapter 2 provides a summary of the literature search on the topic of decision-making in higher education institutions and faculty engagement in the process. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used for this study. The study design is based on a mixed method qualitative design utilizing a variety of research approaches to examine the subject.

The results presented here are based largely on four primary sources; details about the derivation of these sources are provided in Chapter 3:

1. A review of published documents describing or relevant to BCIT's organizational structure and decision-making processes.
2. Interviews conducted 1:1 with key informants comprised of senior administrators and faculty who were selected based on their knowledge of decision-making and their positional authority at BCIT. The key informants included the leaders of both faculty unions, the Chair of BCIT's Education Council, the President of BCIT, the Vice President (VP) of Human Resources, the Acting VP of Education, and the Chair of BCIT's Employee Opinion Survey Committee.
3. Focus group interviews conducted separately with three different constituencies of the BCIT Community: Administrators, which included Deans and Associate Deans; members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) who teach in the Technology (Health, Business, Science, and Academic Studies) Programs; and members of faculty who belong to the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU) who teach in the Vocational and Trade (Construction, Transportation, Vocational and Apprenticeship) Programs. Two focus groups were conducted for each constituency.

In order to protect the identities of the participants, a coding scheme was used to identify different speakers while obscuring their names. Pseudonyms based on the International Civil Aviation Organization (n.d.) phonetic alphabet were used for all participants. While this chapter is organized around the key topics and sub-questions associated with each topic in the interviews and focus groups, it is important to understand that the interviews and focus group sessions were continuous conversations in which the various topics and questions were introduced as the discussions proceeded. I have assembled the content of the interviews from various participants to generate a narrative account of their remarks organized by the themes generated by the seven research sub-questions, rather than reporting their remarks individually or parsed directly from the interview transcripts. An attempt has been made to retain the voices and views of the interviewees, identifying commonalities as well as differences in their positions on the various topics covered. The details of recording, transcribing, and analysing the session data are described in Chapter 3.

4. The results of the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey, a survey conducted every 2 years and distributed again in January 2009. The results described in this chapter are based on employee responses to the seven statements deemed to be relevant to the research focus of this study, analyzed over the four iterations of this survey. These were identified in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.2. For clarity, please note that 5 of the 7 statements were included in all four survey cycles, 1 was included in the most recent three cycles, and 1 was added specifically for the 2009 survey. The complete 2009 survey is provided in Appendix B.

This chapter begins with the general research question (Section 4.2) which frames the study and follows with a brief overview of BCIT's current organizational structure (Section 4.3) in order to provide the necessary context before moving into the detailed results. The results of the study follow the sequence of the seven specific research sub-questions derived from the six key concepts of Chapter 2, Section 2.8; and as posed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3. The first three research sub-questions generated results that followed common themes; their results are grouped together in Section 4.4. Research sub-questions 4 through 7 generated discrete results and are reported in separate sections (Sections 4.5 through 4.8). For clarity, each section of this chapter identifies which specific research sub-question and which interview discussion guide questions generated the results reported.

Accordingly, Section 4.4 reports on BCIT's official and unofficial decision-making processes and combines results obtained by the document search (Section 4.4.1) and the key informant and focus group interviews that reveal insights into the faculty's understandings and perceptions of institutional decision-making at BCIT (Sections 4.4.2 through 4.4.6). Section 4.5 presents participants' views on how BCIT can attain a balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making. Section 4.6 imparts findings related to the role of BCIT's faculty unions in decision-making. Section 4.7 reports on the Education Council's role as a facilitator of faculty decision-making. Section 4.8 offers participant suggestions on measures to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. Section 4.9 reports on the elements of BCIT's Employee Opinion Survey which relate to engagement and decision-making at BCIT. Section 4.10 concludes the chapter by providing a brief summary of the findings and offers a segue to Chapter 5.

4.2. General Research Question

What are the institutional decision-making structures and processes currently employed at BCIT and how effective are they at addressing faculty engagement?

4.3. BCIT: Overview of Governance and Decision-Making

BCIT is one of the largest higher education institutions in the province of British Columbia, with more than 48,000 students enrolled in over 400 full and part-time programs, supported by an annual operating budget of approximately \$250 million. According to BCIT's 2008-2009 Service Plan (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2008b) funding is derived primarily through provincial government grants (48%), and student tuition fees (30%). Similar to the national and provincial trends discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.6.2) the government grant has been decreasing as a proportion of total institutional revenue, with the 48% government portion of 2008 being down from 54% of total revenue in 2002. Conversely, tuition has been increasing as a proportion of total revenue, being up from 23% in 2002 to 30% in 2008 (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2008a).

Legislation introduced in 2004 as an amendment to the (BC) *College and Institute Act*, through Bill 26, granted BCIT unique status as the province's only Polytechnic Institute of Technology (College and Institute Amendment Act, 2004), offering a diverse range of programming from vocational trades training through to Bachelor's and Master's degrees in various technologies such as health, engineering, and business. BCIT operates five campuses across BC's lower mainland region and has a presence in other regions of the province.

BCIT opened in 1964 under the auspices of the provincial Department of Education, with new facilities and 500 students enrolled in engineering, health, and business programs. BCIT was built in response to the *Technical and Skills Training Assistance Act* of 1960, which saw significant federal funds made available to increase Canada's competitiveness by emphasizing technology training (Dennison, 1992). The Institute grew steadily and by 1974 was granted more independence, reporting directly to the Ministry of Education through a dedicated governing board. This significant change in governance was also marked by the first two collective agreements with faculty and staff (Magee, 2004; Dunae, 2001). BCIT continued to evolve and expand; merging with the Pacific Vocational Institute in 1986, the Marine Training Institute in 1994 and in 2002 formed an equal partnership with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in the establishment of a new urban campus in Vancouver (the Great Northern Way Campus).

The timing of the current study coincided with BCIT's transition to a new leadership team arising from the installation of a new president in March 2008. The transition was prompted by the resignation of the Institute's previous President in May 2007. This organizational change made the study of decision-making at the Institute particularly relevant and of heightened interest to the majority of participants. During the course of the research the Institute concluded a Vision Project which provided insights into the new administration's approach to institutional decision-making. The Vision Project produced the Institute's first new Vision, Mission, and Mandate in over 5 years. It was released in February 2009 and contains the following elements:

Vision: BCIT is integral to the economic, social, and environmental prosperity of British Columbia.

Mission: The Mission of BCIT is to serve the success of learners and employers:

- By providing technical and professional education and training that supports our graduates as practitioners and as citizens, and
- By advancing the state-of-practice.

Mandate:

- BCIT's foundation is entry-to-practice credentials that lead to good careers. These are enhanced by programs and courses that are coordinated with career development and growth of the practitioner and include degrees, advanced studies and continuing education.
- BCIT offers experiential and contextual teaching and learning with the interdisciplinary experiences that model the evolving work environment.
- BCIT conducts applied research to enhance learner experience and advance state-of-practice.
- BCIT exercises its provincial mandate by collaborating with the post-secondary system and employers in activities that improve learner access and success.

(British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009a)

The following results are organized by the seven specific research sub-questions posed in Section 3.2 of this study.

4.4. BCIT's Decision-Making Processes

This section reports the results generated by the first three research sub-questions posed in Chapter 3, Section 3.2. Section 4.4.1 reports the findings from the document search; Sections 4.4.2, 4.4.3, and 4.4.4 report the findings generated by the first research sub-question:

1. What are BCIT's official and unofficial decision-making processes?

Section 4.4.5 reports the findings generated from the second research sub-question:

2. How is faculty's role in institutional decision-making understood at BCIT?

Section 4.4.6 reports the findings generated from the third research sub-question:

3. What aspects of decision-making are most important for BCIT faculty?

Each of these research sub-questions drove interview discussion guide questions specific to each of the key informant interviews (see Table 3.2) and the focus group interviews (see Table 3.3). These will be shown in tabular form at the beginning of each sub-section of Section 4.4 where interview responses comprise the findings, commencing with Section 4.4.2.

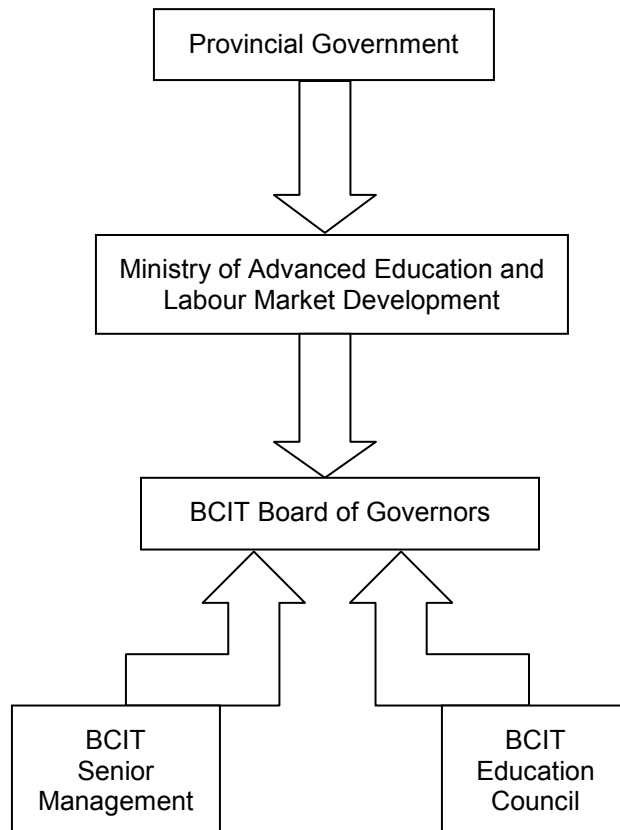
4.4.1. *BCIT's Formal Organizational Structure as Revealed by Published Documents*

In terms of official governance and decision-making processes, BCIT is consistent with the bicameral shared governance model as established in legislation by the province's *College and Institute Act* (1996). The Board has overall stewardship and fiduciary responsibility for the Institute and is charged with achieving and advancing the public policy objectives for the Institute as established by government through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (Figure 4.1).

The Board is appointed by BC's Lieutenant Governor in Council and is comprised of eight local citizens; and four members elected from faculty, support staff, and students. The chair of the Education Council sits on the Board of Governors as a non-voting member, as does BCIT's President. The Education Council has a close relationship with the Board and is required to provide advice to the Board on matters of educational policy and programming, or any other matter the Board may direct. Specifically, the *College and Institute Act* (1996) requires the Education Council to be responsible for setting policy relative to educational program quality, student admission, evaluation, and progression. Section 15 of the *College and Institute Act* (1996) outlines the composition of the Education Council as: 10 faculty elected by faculty, 4 students elected by students, 2 support staff elected by support staff, and 4 administrators appointed by the President. The President is a non-voting member and the Board is

permitted to appoint one non-voting member. The Institute has taken an inclusive approach to the Education Council and has included one other non-voting member, the President of the BCIT Student Association (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005; *College and Institute Act*, 1996).

Figure 4.1. BCIT Governance Structure



In describing the legislated role of Education Councils, Levin (2008) commented that BC’s colleges and institutes “... were jointly governed: formally through the Education Council and the Governing Board and ... [Education Council] accorded faculty a place at the table for institutional decisions” (p. 71).

BCIT has three certified bargaining units: The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA), represents faculty and staff engaged in technology programs; the British Columbia Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) Vocational Instructors bargaining unit, which represents the Institute’s trade and vocational faculty; and the BCGEU

Support Staff bargaining unit. Each of these bargaining units is certified under the Labour Relations Board of British Columbia (Labour Relations Board, 2009), and is governed by their own collective agreement with BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCGEU, 2007; British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, 2007). All three of these bargaining units have the right to strike. In addition to the three bargaining units, BCIT has a management group which has no union affiliation, and is comprised of managers, directors, associate deans, deans, vice-presidents, and the President. These employees are governed by the Institute's management terms and conditions (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2002). For all management appointments, BCIT employs a Quadrilateral Agreement, which is a Memorandum of Agreement between all three unions and the Institute, whereby each party has equal representation in the selection process for BCIT managers (British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, 2007).

The Board Governance Manual contains detailed guidelines to assist the Board in its duties, and references the more specific Institute Policies and Procedures for additional guidance beyond the Board's responsibilities (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005). There is appropriate clarity within the Institute's Policies and Procedures for most dimensions of operating the Institute (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009c), for example Human Resources, Financial Management, Administration, and Education (see Table 4.1, list of BCIT Policies and Procedures), however strategic planning is not referenced other than within the BCIT Board Governance Manual:

Senior Management, led by the President & Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for the development of the Strategic Plan, Master Capital Plan, as well as the annual operating and capital budgets of the Institute and the Service Plan Report. The President & Chief Executive Officer has the responsibility to ensure that all employees are aware of the Strategic and Service plans approved by the Board and understand how the functions they perform fit with the strategic direction of the Institute. (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005, Tab 11, pp. 6-7)

There is no explicit or implied requirement to engage faculty in the strategic planning process, or similar broad institutional level decisions. The Board Governance Manual indicates the strategic planning process should include the following

components: Vision, Mission, Core Values, Strategic Objectives, Strategic Initiatives, and Performance Targets (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005).

Table 4.1. BCIT Official Decision-Making Structures and Processes Matrix

Type of Decision	Official Decision-Making Structure or Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Policies and Directives for Post-Secondary Education and Training in British Columbia • Resource Decisions to support post-secondary education in British Columbia • Reporting and Accountability Measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development for the province of British Columbia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the Functions and Duties of a College; and BCIT • Specify Board Composition; Remuneration; Term of Office • Define Education Council; specify composition and Chair selection • Specify Powers and Duties of Education Council • Specify Financial and Legal Obligations • Duties of the President 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and Institute Act of British Columbia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Governance • Commercial Interests and Public Policy • Educational and Training Programs • Employee and Student Discipline • Accountability and Reporting • Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning • Policies and Procedures • Corporate Communications • Selection of the President; Management Compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCIT Board Governance Manual • Board of Governors in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team as led by the President; and Education Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Development • Food & Beverage • Liquor Consumption • Procurement and Retail Distribution of Textbooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Seal • Programming • Assigning Credits to Courses • Student Regulations • Student Code of Conduct • Student Evaluation • Academic Integrity and Appeals • Honourary Awards • Authored Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Council • Education Policies

Type of Decision	Official Decision-Making Structure or Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank Signing Officers • General Expenditures • Purchase of Operating Goods and Services • Capital Asset Expenditures • Travel • Petty Cash • Cash Collection and Handling • Current Restricted Funds • Fees and Charges • Continuing Education Fee Surcharges • Tuition Fees for International Students • Contracts • Audiovisual Equipment Purchase • Major Capital Projects • Budget Estimates for Major Capital Budgets • Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Supply Management Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming Facilities • Gifts-in-Kind Donated Equipment • Corporate Sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation and Industry Liaison Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring, Promotion, and Termination • Guidelines for Serving on External Bodies • Pre-retirement seminar attendance • Harassment and Discrimination • Employment and Educational Equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Use of Information Technology • Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy • Model Consent • Consent to Release Personal Information • Records, Management • Records Destruction • Records Retrieval • Archives and Special Collections • Copyright Compliance • Voice Processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Management Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Education • Research Ethics for Human Subjects • Integrity in Research • Intellectual Property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and International Policies

Type of Decision	Official Decision-Making Structure or Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking Locations • International Travel: Risk and Security • Parking • Closure due to Inclement Weather • Response to Inclement Weather • Occupational Health and Safety • Critical Incident Response • Response to Bomb Threat • Radiation Safety • Environmental Management • Security • Response to Abusive or Threatening Behaviour • Protection of Equipment, Property, and Information • Emergency Response • Filming on Campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Security Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convocation Policy and Procedures • Accommodation for Students with Disabilities • Advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Service's Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union: Management Relations • Faculty Rights • Faculty and Staff Working Conditions • Faculty and Staff Remuneration • Selection procedures for Faculty, Staff, and Management • Departmental Decision-Making • Dispute Resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA Collective Agreement • BCGEU: Instructional Collective Agreement • BCGEU: Support Staff Collective Agreement • Management Terms and Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School level Strategic Planning • New Program Quality Assurance • School and Department Budget and Finances • Departmental Priorities • School Level Marketing • Enrolment Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Dean in conjunction with VP Education and School Leadership Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty, Staff and Management Selection Committee Representation • Faculty Selections • Faculty Work Assignments • New Program Development • Major Curriculum Changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Decision-Making • Associate Dean in conjunction with Dean and Department Leadership Team

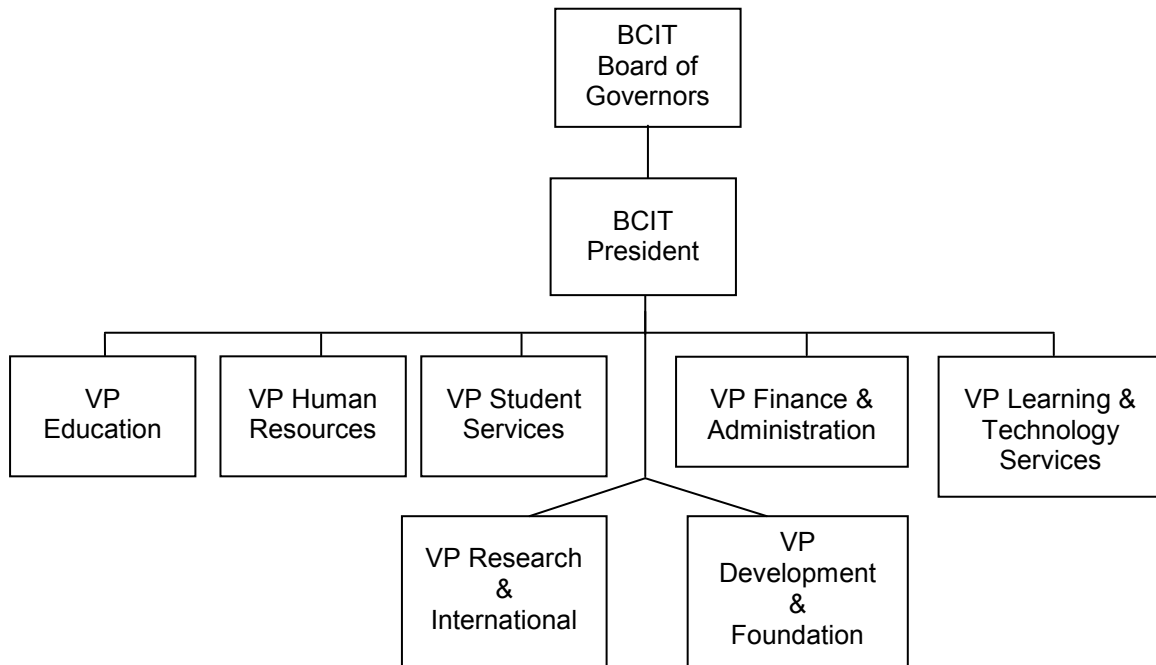
A review of BCIT documents, such as Institutional Policies and Procedures, collective agreements, as well as personal observations, indicates there is variation in the formality of official decision-making structures and processes, depending on the nature of the decisions being considered.

At the formal end of the spectrum, the Institute's Board Governance Manual (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005) articulates the inter-relationships

between the senior members of the governance team of BCIT, including the Board of Governors, Senior Management, and the provincial government (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development). This manual sets out the specific policies and procedures which will guide the Institute in fulfilling its governance roles and responsibilities. The Board Governance Manual (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005) recognizes that “The Institute has two governing bodies: The Board of Governors and the Education Council” (Tab 2, p. 2). Faculty are acknowledged to be a key stakeholder in the Institution and their legislated role in governance is clearly stated: “Through the governing legislation, the Province has also ensured that key stakeholders, specifically student, faculty, and administrative staff, have representation on the Board” (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005, Tab 1, p. 3).

The Board Governance Manual (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005) identifies Senior Management, led by the President, as responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Institute. Among other responsibilities delegated by the Board, senior management is responsible for delivering the core business of the Institute, which includes delivering programs, courses, and services to students; providing strategic leadership; and managing the financial, technical, capital, human, intellectual, and other resources of the Institute, in accordance with the Institute’s Policies and Procedures. Figure 4.2 depicts the organizational chart for BCIT’s administration.

Figure 4.2. The Organization of BCIT's Administration



The Institute embraces the spirit and intent of the *College and Institute Act* (1996) with regard to shared governance; specifically budgetary and administrative matters are for the most part the domain of administration and ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Governors; and academic matters for the most part are the domain of faculty, who exercise that role formally through the Education Council. Table 4.1 illustrates how the various types of decisions relate to the formal decision-making structures and processes.

At the informal, or unofficial end of the decision-making spectrum, by definition there is less policy and procedure associated with decision-making, hence a document review has limitations in the sense that what records exist are often in the form of minutes or meeting summaries and reports and as such are not readily available. One of the areas where unofficial decision-making is perceived to be common-place is at the Senior Leadership Team level. A member of the Senior Leadership Team characterized decision-making at that level as “ultra ad hoc ... at the strategic level, Senior Management want to behave opportunistically” (A1-Echo). Furthermore, there are few formal policies to guide decisions at the School, Department, or Program level, with the

exception that there are some specific references in the respective collective agreements. These refer for example to faculty workload, compensation, and discipline among other matters (British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, 2007; British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCGEU, 2007). This lack of specificity is consistent with unofficial decision-making.

4.4.2. *How Well Are BCIT's Current Formal Structures Understood by Faculty?*

4.4.2.1. Overview

Responses reported in this section were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the first research sub-question (see Table 4.2). In response to the discussion guide questions, perspectives varied across both key informant and focus group participants as to how well BCIT's formal decision-making structures and processes were understood by faculty. The key informants generally had a good understanding of BCIT's formal structures, however as the following comments attest, they did not agree among themselves about how well the faculty understood BCIT's formal decision-making structures. Within the three focus group constituencies, clear differences emerged reflecting each group's experiences with BCIT's decision-making structures and processes.

Table 4.2. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 1

<p>Research Sub-Question 1</p> <p>1. What are BCIT's Official and Unofficial decision-Making processes?</p>
<p>Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)</p> <p>6. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.</p> <p>7. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?</p> <p>8. Which of the above do you believe are most important and influential in decision-making?</p>
<p>Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)</p> <p>1. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.</p> <p>2. As you understand it, who is involved in the official decision-making processes at BCIT?</p> <p>3. Can you give an example of when the official decision-making processes worked well?</p> <p>4. Can you give an example when the official decision-making processes did not work well?</p> <p>8. How many of you are aware of the recent Visioning Exercise?</p> <p>9. Did you participate in any of the [Vision] meetings or workshops?</p> <p>11. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?</p> <p>12. Can you give an example of when the unofficial decision-making processes worked well?</p> <p>13. Which decision-making process, official or unofficial do you believe is most effective?</p>
<p><i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.</p>

4.4.2.2. Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key informants in order to address the issue of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regarded the efficiency of the structures.

The 1:1 interviews with the key informants provided more personal and detailed views of how they viewed the operation of the Institute's prescribed, formal structures and policies while allowing them to express their personal views on how effectively faculty engaged with these structures and about the decision-making culture at BCIT.

In order for faculty to participate effectively in institutional decision-making at BCIT, it is reasonable to suggest that they should have an awareness and understanding of its formal structures, policies, and procedures. The key officials interviewed expressed a range of views about faculty understanding of the official or formal structures. A number of comments were fairly optimistic that the channels of

decision-making were clear and generally well understood and that they were operating effectively. For example, informant K-Alpha suggested “For program approvals, that one is easy, it’s documented in BCIT policy.” K-Echo supported the effectiveness of the formal structures with the observation “I think the official channels are where most of the decision-making gets done.” K-Charlie agreed by offering “A lot of decisions are done through the labour-management committee ... it is the only place where meaningful decision-making occurs”, although this person elaborated with the following moderating comment, “One size cannot fit all of BCIT, there has to be a lot of discretion.”

In contrast, informant K-Golf did not believe that there was broad understanding of BCIT’s formal structures, or of how faculty should engage with them, as evidenced by this comment: “A lot of people do not understand their role [in Institutional decision-making].” This informant also provided an example of how even management did not understand the official decision-making structures, “... we pissed off the FSA. We just launched without consultation, the contract was signed. It is an example of management not understanding the consultative requirements of the collective agreement.” Informant K-Foxtrot opined “BCIT’s decision-making has been less strategic and more opportunistic”, a comment reflective of the concerns expressed by K-Golf and indicating at least concern, if not scepticism about the state of understanding of the decision-making processes at BCIT and their current operation.

The above comments demonstrate a range of perspectives amongst the key informants. This finding is explored further by both subsequent questions and responses with the key informants; and is amplified by the various views expressed within and between the following three focus group constituencies.

4.4.2.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT’s current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the efficiency of the structures, six focus group sessions were held across the three employee affiliation groups (two each for Administrators, FSA faculty, and BCGEU faculty members).

4.4.2.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures; and how they regard the efficiency of the structures, the Administrator focus group participants offered a range of comments based on their various experiences and perceptions.

The Administrative focus groups were comprised of Deans and Associate Deans from across the various Schools at BCIT. This group is charged with significant responsibility to lead and manage the educational and business elements of their respective schools; they have direct and frequent contact with the Institute's faculty. They are expected to be familiar with the official decision-making structures and processes of BCIT and be compliant. They are often at the nexus between the demands for timely and responsive decision-making and the desire for consultative (collegial) decision-making. For the most part, this group was critical of the nature and efficiency of BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes, as evidenced by participant A1-Echo: "The normal business at BCIT is bureaucratic as hell, like a police state, but at the strategic level it is ad hoc and opportunistic." This participant continued the critique, suggesting "At the transactional level we are managed to death." Participant A1-Foxtrot was equally critical, commenting "I have no clear understanding of decision-making at the top; it is very ad hoc, not strategic." This participant specifically and critically referenced one of the Institute's key official decision-making structures, the Institute's Education Council: "Edco [Education Council] is meaningless to us; we are federally regulated." A1-Foxtrot declared in frustration "I don't know what the process is in this organization, it seems more dictatorial, based on politics ... we suffer from a non-disclosed layered bureaucratic non-decision-making process." Administrator A1-Alpha agreed, "I know instances where nobody seems to know what the policy is." Participant A1-Delta suggested there is a dichotomy between decision-making at the operational level and the executive or strategic level: "BCIT's decision-making structures range from very bureaucratic at the program level, to non-existent at the strategic level, where there is no formal process ... there is an ill-defined framework where people can make decisions that do not fit into any overall strategy." However, perhaps in an attempt to balance the commentary, A1-Delta offered: "We are heading in the right direction now, for example the student conduct policy. Policies have changed, now the right people are

dealing with things like that.” Participant A1-Echo suggested there are benefits to allowing the Schools to have flexibility in their higher level decision-making, “One of the positive elements is that the strategic decisions are left to the schools, not micro managed, there is a fair bit of autonomy.”

4.4.2.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT’s current formal organizational structures and procedures; and how they regarded the efficiency of the structures, the FSA (Faculty and Staff Association) focus group participants offered the following comments, which generally underscore a lack of understanding among the members of this group who participated in this study about the Institute’s official decision-making structures and processes. For example, participant F2-Juliet candidly admitted a complete lack of understanding and personal engagement in institutional decisions with the following remarks:

Decision-making at the institutional level feels mysterious to me. Do I feel I have direct input to decisions? No. Do I know what decisions are being made? No. Do I feel there is open communication? No. Do I know how I can interact? No. It feels like an old boys’ network.

This person went on to say “I don’t think I have ever been asked, or heard on a major, official Institute decision. I do not understand the process of decision-making at BCIT.” F2-Hotel agreed with these sentiments, stating: “It feels like a mystery to a lot of people.”

Interviewees F2-Kilo and F2-Foxtrot were both critical of the use of managerial-style decision-making. F2-Kilo opined:

Decision-making can be dominated by a strong Operation’s Manager who bases their decisions strictly on numbers; it drives me crazy, dollars are driving education decisions, without any discussion with faculty, sometimes even the Dean and Associate Deans back down, this is a problem. There is a disconnect at how the top level views decision-making and how it occurs at the School level. The reality is that down in the trenches, they are just crunching numbers; this hurts our ability to deliver quality education. I think the middle-management is not strong enough to do the right thing.

F2-Foxtrot succinctly added, “I think the strategic decision-making process is disabled by the use of business models.”

Several participants in the FSA group voiced uncertainty about how institutional decisions were actually made. F1-Bravo mused: “The leadership team, the Deans, VP’s [Vice Presidents], they are the ones who have to approve, that’s my guess. The BOG [Board of Governors] is a rubber stamp ... if a program has already gone through a viability process, then I don’t know what the role of Edco [Education Council] is?” F2-Hotel admitted to only recently hearing about one of the Institute’s key decision-making structures (Education Council), with the following comment: “I’m not that familiar [with Education Council]; I only heard about it 2 years ago.” F1-Alpha offered a perspective in which uncertainty over roles in the current structure was apparent: “I think that has changed, the BOG used to have power; they used to have committees for degree approval; I don’t think they have power anymore.” Similarly, participant F2-India had an idea about how institutional decisions were made, but clearly was not confident in understanding how decisions were actually made:

For the Institute, I think it is the PEC [President’s Executive Council, which is now referred to as the Senior Leadership Team] where the critical decision-making occurs, some would go to the BOG—I think. I don’t know if the BOG ever rejects a decision from the PEC, probably not. ... It is changing all the time. I thought I knew our process for the operating plan, but it just changed—again. I don’t understand why it changed.

Participant F1-Delta offered some suggestions that might clarify institutional decision-making: “It would help if there was a clear definition of what the Dean, Associate Dean, Program Head, and Operations Manager do, we just don’t know ... new people come in, but they don’t know what their role is, it creates a lot of problems. The roles of Faculty, Programs Heads etcetera are not well defined; if you want effective decisions, you must first define the roles.”

4.4.2.3.3. Government Employees Union Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT’s current formal organizational structures and procedures; and how they regarded the efficiency of the structures, the BCGEU focus group participants also offered a range of comments: there were some clear gaps and misunderstandings; some criticisms about the efficiency and accessibility of the formal processes; and some positive comments about recent institutional decision-making initiatives.

Participant G2-India observed:

Sometimes, it is not that there is no process, but it is the visibility of the process, it can be hidden. It can be hard to see and understand the official decision-making structures and processes. To find out a decision-making process, sometimes you have to dig, other times it is right in front of you.

G1-Echo provided a recent example: "I was not aware the Vision Project was going on."

BCIT's Education Council (Edco) was cited by the BCGEU focus group participants as a formal institutional decision-making structure that was not clearly understood. Participant G2-Kilo commented on how their department's perspective about Education Council had evolved through personal experience: "I have heard dire warnings about how daunting Edco would be if I wanted to add a new course; that was the impression. Once I went through it, sure there was a process, but it was not that difficult." G2-Hotel provided a similar perspective:

Our admin staff have the fear of God for Edco. We do not know how difficult it is, but people are scared of Edco, I think some people hide behind the excuse of Edco. How often has Edco ever visited the satellite campuses? That is why.

G1-Foxtrot agreed that there was a disconnect between the main campus decision-making and the satellite campuses:

The Burnaby centric thing kicks up again! I am casually aware of it [Vision Project], but most of us at our campus just tossed it because all the meetings are in Burnaby; they do not consider the satellite campuses. We just can't drop everything and come here. Same thing with the President's Forums. The Burnaby centric thing drives us nuts; we just can't participate in these things.

G1-Delta, although located on the main campus, suggested that not enough consideration was given to accommodate the trade program instructors who had different schedules than the FSA instructors and who generally had more difficulties attending meetings: "Even though I am in Burnaby, I still could not attend. The [Vision Project] meeting times did not work for most of the trades' instructors, I was told a later time would not be convenient for the leader, so I didn't bother." Participant G2-Hotel agreed with the comment about limited time available for the BCGEU instructors to

participate in decision-making: “The Deans think we have time for consultation; they have no idea how busy we are.”

Participant G2-Golf offered a different perspective on how well the decision-making structures worked at BCIT, suggesting that the senior administrators were out of touch and did not fully understand the impact that decisions made without consultation could have:

You have to look at the altitude of decision-making, the mission / vision, that’s all great, but when you get down to the Dean and Director level, it gets a bit wonky in this organization. People make decisions in silos, without knowledge or consideration of how their decision is going to affect others. They can inhibit people doing their job.

Despite the misunderstandings and criticisms, there was some indication that more recent institutional decision-making initiatives were gaining support among at least some BCGEU participants. In contrast to the remarks of G1-Foxtrot and G1-Delta above, G1-Bravo participated in the Vision Project and reported a positive experience: “I participated [in the Vision Project], it was fabulous. People on the front lines could input, it was a great forum. I was listened to, and felt appreciated.” Similarly, G2-Hotel commented about a recent initiative related to the 2010 Olympics, suggesting it was also effectively executed: “The recent Olympic Committee did a good job; they should copy this model for other important decisions. They asked for input; they communicated; they made decisions, and they communicated. It was very structured.”

4.4.3. The Unofficial Structure of Decision-Making at BCIT

4.4.3.1. Overview

Responses reported in this section were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the first research sub-question (Table 4.3). As demonstrated by the comments from the study’s participants, many faculty and administrators embrace unofficial decision-making processes at BCIT. These findings provide insights into how participants from each of the employee groups understand BCIT’s decision-making structures and processes, in particular the role of unofficial decision-making processes.

Table 4.3. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 1

Research Sub-Question 1	
1. What are BCIT's Official and Unofficial decision-Making processes?	
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)	
6. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.	
7. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?	
8. Which of the above do you believe are most important and influential in decision-making?	
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)	
1. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.	
2. As you understand it, who is involved in the official decision-making processes at BCIT?	
3. Can you give an example of when the official decision-making processes worked well?	
4. Can you give an example when the official decision-making processes did not work well?	
8. How many of you are aware of the recent Visioning Exercise?	
9. Did you participate in any of the [Vision] meetings or workshops?	
11. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?	
12. Can you give an example of when the unofficial decision-making processes worked well?	
13. Which decision-making process, official or unofficial do you believe is most effective?	
<i>Note.</i>	Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.4.3.2. Key Informant Interviews

The 1:1 interviews with the key informants suggest a relatively high awareness and general acceptance of some degree of unofficial decision-making at BCIT. Informant K-Bravo put forward “There is a lot of behind the scenes decision-making at BCIT ... the unofficial is normal and natural in an organization; I accept that as part of the game.” Informant K-Delta agreed: “Decisions that are not major can be made through informal agreements between individuals who know each other well”; however K-Delta hinted at some dysfunction in the overall decision-making structures and processes by suggesting: “Difficult decisions are sometimes made by omission, default, or lack of action.”

Informant K-Alpha proffered a practical explanation:

I don't think BCIT has an official policy ... there are practices that have emerged over the years ... different people would have different interpretations of what those practices entail ... they vary on who the President, VP's, and Deans are at the time.

Informant K-Foxtrot observed: “[in the past] unofficial was more important; I would like to move to a state where the official is more important, although I need to be realistic. You need to accept and encourage a certain level of opportunism.”

4.4.3.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT’s current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the unofficial decision-making processes, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups using the same methods described in previous sections.

4.4.3.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT’s current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the unofficial decision-making processes, the Administrator focus group participants offered a spectrum of perspectives, however more often they tended to be critical of the value and efficiency of BCIT’s official decision-making structures and processes. For example participant A2-Hotel suggested:

If you follow the rules, you run into headaches.... there is a tendency to structure business to avoid the formal process, for example vague course outlines, so that changes are never considered major, thus not requiring Edco [Education Council] approval. This results in more vagueness in order to leave flexibility. The policies are very rigid, and often outdated.

Participant A2-Mike supported this view: “My department is not responsive because the policies and processes do not permit. We could launch a program in September, but the processes will drag it out. It boils down to resource and process issues.” This participant continued, placing the fault for inefficiency on the official processes: “The bottleneck is not collegiality, it is the bureaucracy, it is daunting.” Participant A1-Delta agreed: “We spend an amazing amount of time figuring out how to bypass the official systems, just so we can get things done ... the amount of processes have increased dramatically.” A1-Delta then added: “We laugh with the VP’s about how obstructionist our expense approval process is, but nothing seems to change.” Building off of this comment, participant A1-Echo was quick to add: “The VP’s have failed in their responsibilities, they

are the architects of the [official] structures and processes; they should deal with them.” Following this line of conversation, participant A1-Foxtrot lamented: “I don’t even know what the official processes are because of the poor leadership at the VP level.” It was interesting to observe the willingness to assign the blame for the alleged dysfunction of the official decision-making structures and processes to the Vice President level of the organization.

The administrators who participated in these focus groups were generally supportive and saw a functional need for unofficial decision-making processes and practices at BCIT in order for them to fulfill their duties in light of the perceived obstructionist official decision-making structures and processes. Participant A1-Foxtrot declared: “80% of my decisions are unofficial, otherwise nothing would get done ... you must go around the official policies ... ironically, the VP’s and President actually back me up ... not a good indictment.” Participant A2-India affirmed the need to go around the official systems: “The unofficial decision-making structures and processes are the work-around systems ... we have lots of practice ... beg forgiveness versus seeking approval.” Informant A2-Golf agreed and suggested: “Most decisions are done unofficially.” A1-Echo concurred: “The unofficial decision-making structures and processes are more important without a doubt.” A2-Mike, who had been highly critical of the bureaucratic nature of the official processes, tendered this remark:

The unofficial works well, it lets me have autonomy as long as I am prepared to be accountable. At the program level, all kinds of decisions, all the time. I try not to violate policy, that can be uncomfortable, but I tip toe around the edges.

The line of conversation then illuminated some reluctance to holistically embrace unofficial decision-making practices, as evidenced by A2-Golf’s comment: “It is situational, you run risk if you go around the process.” Participant A2-Juliet put a finer edge on the perspective with this observation: “People are willing to help you get it done unofficially, but it results in a lot of randomness and inconsistency, I would say it is not working so well.” Participant A2-Hotel hedged with the observation that the unofficial processes can be effective, however they are not always effective: “Yes, it does work well, if you can get the person above you on board, but I agree it is random, frustrating, and inconsistent; not a good system.”

4.4.3.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the unofficial decision-making processes, the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants offered a variety of comments which were primarily negative towards the official processes and structures, notably what they perceived as weak and inconsistent leadership from the management ranks. Participant F2-Foxtrot believed the turnover in the management ranks over the past few years was a contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of the official processes: "Constant change and flux over the past 4 years. The acting positions have really undermined the official processes. We have resorted to unofficial processes just to get things done, but that is not right." Participant F2-India shared this perspective: "So much change, no consistency. Acting, acting, acting"; as did F1-Alpha: "Every time there is a change in leadership, there is a back and forth, yes you can, no you can't, and I find if we are not supported, we won't consult the AD [Associate Dean] and Dean." Participant F2-Lima saw this slightly differently: "I think there are a lot of privileged conversations that go on and decisions are made without context and do not follow policy. There is a lack of consistency, a lack of transparency, decisions are made differently for different people; it is like an old boy's favouritism." F1-Delta added: "At the program level, we just do it, get it done, unless we are told not to. We have learned that if we ask [management] for approval, it takes too long and nothing will get done."

It was interesting to note this group seemed more focussed on criticizing management's role in the official processes as reported above, however there were some specific positive references to the effectiveness of unofficial processes and practices from the FSA faculty, for example participant F1-Alpha extends the comment made above regarding not consulting the Associate Dean or Dean, with: "The faculty are resourceful, they get it done, that's why we have such a good reputation, we make tons of decisions informally and they work well." Participant F2-Foxtrot supported this position: "Faculty do a great deal of things unofficially all the time.... unofficial decisions allow for more agility; you can make incredible things happen here through unofficial channels."

4.4.3.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the unofficial decision-making processes, the Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus group participants offered a relatively balanced range of comments in that they perceived issues with both the official and unofficial processes, but shared a similar perspective with the Administrator and FSA focus groups that unofficial processes were necessary to accomplish their jobs.

The BCGEU focus group participants had their own criticisms of BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes, as illustrated by participant G1-Charlie: "We have to go around the official, we are the front line, it has to get done, or you look stupid in front of your students." G1-Echo shared the front-line view: "We work with more senior students in our department. The challenge is to get them through the course without letting them see the bureaucracy and the hogwash that goes on behind the scenes." G1-Delta seemed resigned with this observation:

I find it frustrating to deal with; now I don't ask anymore. I like the autonomy of the classroom. I make it fit the learning outcomes; do what I want; I don't even ask anymore. I don't suggest; I don't go to them anymore. There are lost opportunities because we don't share ideas anymore.

Participant G2-Hotel had similar reservations about not having official structures and processes:

It all depends on how the AD [Associate Dean] manages and his leadership style. There are no set procedures which is a concern. Right now, we have an excellent AD, he lets us get on with it and the team is really good. But if someone new comes along, who has a different leadership style, we might not be as effective. I think we should have more policies and procedures written down.

G1-Charlie proffered both advantages and disadvantages of unofficial processes: "We use the unofficial decision-making to get things done. With registration, the bureaucracy was a brick wall, but one well-placed phone call got it done. But we certainly do not think this is the right way to do things." Participant G1-Delta, who seemed resigned to an

apathetic approach above, returned with a more forceful opinion on the problems with unofficial decision-making:

What I see with the unofficial is that things become disjointed. Yes things get done, but it is not the way to go, I think it makes our programs worse. There is no consultation, so things are piecemeal, they don't fit, and then they fall apart.

BCGEU participant G1-Foxtrot agreed that unofficial decision-making was not ideal, but it was how he got things done: "I agree being reactive is not the way, but unofficial is the key, it is the only way you make it work." G2-Golf agreed that unofficial was preferred in their department: "Our department depends most on unofficial decision-making; we work well together, and can solve things in the hallways." Participant G1-Delta confirmed this position with an unequivocal endorsement for the unofficial processes: "Unofficial decisions are what works for us best 110% of the time; things just get done."

4.4.4. Views of the Style of Institutional Decision-Making at BCIT

4.4.4.1. Overview

Responses reported in this section were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the first research sub-question (Table 4.4). This section provides insights as to how participants view the style of decision-making at BCIT. Comments reference who is perceived to have decision-making authority at BCIT; how collaborative are the decision-making structures and processes perceived to be at BCIT; and what is the nature and style of decision-making at BCIT.

Table 4.4. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 1

<p>Research Sub-Question 1</p> <p>1. What are BCIT's Official and Unofficial decision-Making processes?</p>
<p>Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)</p> <p>6. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.</p> <p>7. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?</p> <p>8. Which of the above do you believe are most important and influential in decision-making?</p>
<p>Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)</p> <p>1. Describe BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes.</p> <p>2. As you understand it, who is involved in the official decision-making processes at BCIT?</p> <p>3. Can you give an example of when the official decision-making processes worked well?</p> <p>4. Can you give an example when the official decision-making processes did not work well?</p> <p>8. How many of you are aware of the recent Visioning Exercise?</p> <p>9. Did you participate in any of the [Vision] meetings or workshops?</p> <p>11. How would you describe BCIT's unofficial decision-making processes?</p> <p>12. Can you give an example of when the unofficial decision-making processes worked well?</p> <p>13. Which decision-making process, official or unofficial do you believe is most effective?</p>
<p><i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.</p>

4.4.4.2. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant responses to this subject consistently suggest a more managerial approach to decision-making at BCIT, however, there is suggestion that decision-making has been moving towards a more collaborative approach over the past year. Informant K-Alpha suggested: "Officially, many decisions are made by the executive committee [Senior Leadership Team]." Informant K-Golf agreed, but offered a critical perspective on the nature of consultation: "Many decisions were made on the 3rd [Executive level] floor; consultation was more of a reaction test to the decisions; kind of a benign lip-service." Despite this critical view of past decision-making, this informant hinted at a shift towards a more consultative approach:

My answer would be different now than had you asked me a year ago. A year ago I would have said we peripherally consult; we take a long time to do it; and the consultation would have had little impact on the outcomes. It gave people the feeling they had been consulted, but not really.

4.4.4.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the efficiency and style of the decision-making structures and processes, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups using the same methods described in previous sections.

4.4.4.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the efficiency and style of the decision-making structures and processes, the Administrator focus group participants generally viewed decision-making as managerial (top down); and offered what could be characterized as a cynical view of what they perceived to be disingenuous consultation. Participant A2-Mike clearly articulated the view: "If I think of strategic decisions, it is pretty clear it is at the senior management level." A2-Mike elaborated: "Work is done at the faculty, program head, and Associate Dean levels but the decisions are made at the top." Participant A2-Hotel extended this view: "Everyone knows senior management can make a unilateral decision, they do not need to consult". A2-India suggested decision-making had been top down in the past, but may be changing: "We are only now starting to look at things from the strategic level. Previously, and by that I mean the past decade, it was all top down." A1-Echo provided context to this view suggesting it was different depending on the nature of the decision:

There are rules galore in areas like programming, but at the strategic level it is ultra ad hoc ... at the strategic level, the senior executive want to behave opportunistically, which is a polite way of saying they want to do what they want.

Participant A2-Golf proposed there was a disconnect between BCIT's official decision-making processes and what actually took place: "Officially, they are driven by a series of committee structures that report up, which is consensus driven; program decisions are bottom-up, budgets are top-down... unofficially however, it is more top down for everything."

The notion of senior management paying lip-service to consultative or collegial decision-making gained momentum with the administrator focus group participants. A2-Mike challenged the sincerity of BCIT's consultative processes: "They always want to appear collegial, whether it is, that's another matter." A1-Echo offered this blunt assessment: "Anyone in an over-sight role ... pays lip-service to collaboration." A2-Hotel referred to strategy sessions where consultation took place but had no effect: "Strategy was developed at the top; there was an opportunity to consult, but the strategy never changed." A2-Juliet recounted similar experiences: "The budget and education plans have not been connected ... we always get put through the process of budget wish-lists, but it doesn't matter." A2-India concurred: "It is supposed to be an open and iterative process, but we can never impact, it does not matter.... is there an appearance of consultation? Always, but it is lip-service." Participant A2-Golf offered the following judgement: "BCIT has a high level of commitment, people work hard; but you lose that if you don't follow through."

4.4.4.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the efficiency and style of the decision-making structures and processes, the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants shared many of the critical perspectives of the Administrative focus group participants with regard to managerialist tendencies and lip-service to consultation. Some also suggested a degree of dysfunction in BCIT's decision-making structures and processes.

Some FSA participants felt BCIT practiced a managerial style of decision-making. Participant F1-Alpha opined: "Government level decisions are made at the top and rolled out; they are a done-deal ... before they even come to faculty, faculty have no say, it's going to happen." F1-Bravo agreed and provided a specific example: "I concur, when our programs were cancelled, there was no faculty input; the decision had been made." F1-Delta extended the point noting the decision-making style was dependent on the nature of the decision: "At the school level it depends who the Dean and Associate Dean are, whether or not they involve faculty. At the institutional level, the PEC

[President's Executive Council] makes the decisions." This participant continued with a specific example:

In my experience with Edco [Education Council], its job is education quality, however I don't feel Edco plays a major role in decision-making, whereas at UBC Edco is more powerful. At BCIT, decisions are made by the Deans or President's Executive Council.

F2-Mike agreed: "In the past, faculty have not been involved in official decision-making at BCIT." F1-Delta suggested more transparency and communication would be beneficial:

Let the draft [Vision Project] report be made public so that people can look at what has transpired into it and then provide feedback. Quite often with these types of task force reports we never see the report, it's hidden somewhere and we never know what came of it.

The issue of consultation evoked a strong response from the FSA faculty focus group participants. F1-Alpha complained: "Big decisions are top-down, the party line is it doesn't work that way, that we are collegial; but it doesn't work that way ... big decisions are decreed." Participant A1-Alpha continued the charge suggesting consultation after the decision has been made was deceitful:

Angst occurs when the decision has already been made, but the faculty don't know that, and then we are asked to provide input ... if you have made the decision, then don't put us through the hoops, if you don't want our input up front, then don't waste our time ... it happens all the time around here, it's almost subversive, it is bogus when the decision has been already made our culture quite regularly makes decisions, then asks for input.

Participant F1-Bravo agreed, and provided a specific example:

I agree, I feel we are put through these hoops after the decision has been made, for window dressing, so they can show there was faculty input. We know managers have been told to cut their budgets by 3%, but I don't know of any faculty who have had input, so the result will be a surprise to us.

F1-Echo was of the same mind and provided an example where consultation was not in earnest:

In our school, we have a quality assurance committee to vet new programs, but even before we look at a new program, we know the decision has been made to go with it, no matter what we say ... if you question it, you are made to feel meddlesome. It lacks the academic rigour you would expect from Canada's Premier Polytechnic.

The FSA faculty focus group participants' also had concerns about the effectiveness and efficiency of BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes. Participant F2-Juliet related frustration trying to access funds for research:

The recent push on research has been hell. The top was pushing for grassroots to do more research, we were told there was a pool of money, so we came up with suggestions, but there was no structure or ability to influence decisions, so it went nowhere.

F2-Foxtrot had similar criticisms: "Lots of positive things come from faculty, then get stopped at the higher levels, such as the Dean. It stops your momentum." F2-Kilo returned to the criticism that the turnover in management requiring acting managers to fill in was ineffective: "I agree that strategic direction comes from the Dean and up, but there is real diversity at BCIT, especially with all the acting Deans and VP's lately. Actings don't act, decision-making does not happen, it gets put on hold." This participant went further alleging a lack of access to BCIT's Senior Leadership Team: "We never see our Dean; it is too easy to say no by email. You never see the Senior Leadership Team at BCIT."

4.4.4.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

In response to the topic of how well faculty and administrators understand BCIT's current formal organizational structures and procedures, as well as gaining some insights as to how participants regard the efficiency and style of the decision-making structures and processes, the Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus group participants provided a range of comments that supported similar themes emerging out of the Administrator and FSA faculty focus groups: perceptions of a managerialist style of decision-making; dysfunctional official decision-making structures and processes; and lip-service paid to consultation.

With regards to the style of decision-making, participant G1-Echo was clear: "A lot of information comes from the ITA [Industry Training Authority] and Transport

Canada, not from the institution, it is all top down.” G2-Juliet suggested faculty requests are not adequately considered or responded to: “Faculty don’t understand why requests are not approved, there are no explanations.” G1-Charlie agreed and referenced the frustration of not having issues brought forward by faculty adequately considered and responded to: “The chief instructors, who are already so over-worked, take issues to the top, but they get stopped, almost like a dictatorship.” Participant G1-Alpha summed up these feelings: “Faculty involvement in decision-making is inadequate.”

The BCGEU faculty participants were very critical of the functionality of BCIT’s official decision-making structures and processes. Participant G2-Golf remarked: “There are good ideas at the grassroots or instructor level, but the constant response 2 levels up with the Deans, is there is no money, can’t do, they have no appetite to support us. It stalls there.” G1-Bravo had a specific example of top down decision-making resulting in a poor result:

It is mind boggling how much power some of the service departments like Safety and Security have at BCIT. Recently, without consultation, they decided to change the parking policy for our campus, and took away our passes for the Burnaby campus. All it did was make it more difficult for us to come to Burnaby, at least an extra 15 minutes to check in with Safety and Security, to find out where they wanted you to park. It destroyed morale on our campus, created complete havoc. All they had to do was ask us and we could have saved everyone a lot of hassle—they have changed it back now.

This same participant had another example:

It is hard to direct suggestions up; it is bureaucratic and there are no clear lines of communication. They are clear in theory, but in practice it is a challenge. For example the registration process at BCIT doesn’t work for the ITA programs; they set out a specific path and we tried to make suggestions, it was like a brick wall.... We know what to ask and who to ask, but the information gets stopped; we seem to resurrect it time and again, our concerns fall on deaf ears, I don’t know why that happens.

G1-Delta extended the point with an additional example: “I agree, it’s so structured that there is no wiggle room, everything with HR, management, the ITA, it is almost impossible to make changes.”

Finally, with respect to lip-service being paid to faculty consultation in decision-making, similar concerns were declared. Participant G2-Kilo observed: “There is no feedback loop, lots of times you are asked your opinion, but then you never hear about it again.” G2-Hotel expanded on this issue: “When people are asked for their input, it is too late, or there is not enough time.”

4.4.5. Perceptions of the Faculty’s Role in Institutional Decision-Making at BCIT

4.4.5.1. Overview

Responses reported in this section were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the second research sub-question (Table 4.5). This section relays how participants perceive faculty’s role in institutional decision-making. There are varying opinions within and between employee affiliation groups, which could suggest there is not a common understanding of faculty’s role in decision-making at BCIT, nor a common understanding of how faculty should engage in decision-making at BCIT.

Table 4.5. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 2

Research Sub-Question 2
2. How is faculty’s role in decision-making understood?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
9. Do you believe BCIT faculty understand their role in institutional decision-making?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
17. How well do you think faculty understand their role in institutional decision-making?

Note. Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.4.5.2. Key Informant Interviews

In response to this question, key informants offered a range of comments with no clear consensus. Some felt that faculty did not understand their role, while others felt they did. Some felt faculty were not qualified to participate in institutional decisions, while others felt they did not make the effort to exercise their rights in this regard.

Informant K-Charlie held a very clear view of faculty's understanding of their role in institutional decision-making at BCIT: "Faculty do not really understand their role in decision-making." K-Echo amplified this view:

Faculty play a huge role, and influence decisions ... but I am not sure they fully appreciate the extent that they are active participants in the decision-making process ... there are many opportunities for faculty to be heard from, and influence decisions at both the department, and institutional levels.

K-Golf looked at this issue through a theoretical lens, agreeing there was a lack of understanding:

I think where the confusion comes in, and it is kind of a misinterpretation of the role of consensual decision-making; consultation does not equal consensus; and consensus doesn't mean you are always going to get your way.... If management does not clarify at the front of the process how the decision-making process will be used, most people will assume consensus decision-making.

Informant K-Delta held a stronger view, suggesting not only did faculty not understand their role in decision-making; they also did not have the expertise to deal with broader institutional issues:

Faculty generally do not understand their role in decision-making. Their role is limited to the work they do on a day-to-day basis ... they have some sense of the overall institutional issues, but it is neither their role, nor their expertise to deal with the broader institutional decisions.

K-Charlie agreed with this view:

Institutional decisions are at a higher level than most faculty would feel qualified to provide input on. They may have high vocational skills, but the vocation of education is new to them and most do not have demonstrated management skills. Faculty are not qualified to make institutional decisions, nor are they given the opportunity to decide.

Some key informants felt that faculty understanding and involvement in institutional decision-making varied widely across the Institute and not all faculty took advantage of the opportunities to participate in decision-making. Informant K-Bravo offered this perspective:

Faculty's understanding of their role in decision-making is all over the map ... it varies between schools, programs, and individual faculty ... some are very involved, some make no effort. ... They make no effort to exercise their rights and have input.

K-Alpha's view of faculty's understanding of their role generally was pessimistic: "Faculty do not feel they have much of a role in decision-making, they are disenfranchised; they feel it is best to keep their head down, to do otherwise is futile." However this same informant provided a decidedly more positive view when considering faculty's influence on decision-making done through the Institute' Education Council: "With respect to faculty on Edco [Education Council], I believe they do feel they have influence."

Several key informants felt there were opportunities to enhance faculty's understanding of decision-making. K-Alpha built off the previous pessimistic view suggesting: "If people are to participate openly in decision-making, they must know what their role entails." K-Delta shared this optimistic view: "It would be helpful if there was more engagement and more understanding." This comment was in contrast to this participant's previous opinion that faculty did not have the expertise to contribute to decisions at the institutional level. Informant K-Foxtrot took a more supportive position for faculty's role in decision-making: "Faculty do understand their role in decision-making, however the organization has not been clear in how faculty input should be channelled into decision-making."

4.4.5.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how faculty understand their role in institutional decision-making at BCIT, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups using the same methods described in previous sections.

4.4.5.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participants offered a range of comments which augmented some of the themes introduced by the key informants regarding faculty's lack of understanding and interest in institutional decision-making. Furthermore, the Administrator focus group participants added significant comments on the theme of lack of opportunity for BCIT faculty to engage in institutional decision-making.

Participant A1-Foxtrot suggested: "If the Associate Deans and Deans are unclear about their role, how can Faculty be expected to know their role?" A1-Bravo extended the concept of difficulty in dealing with the issue of engaging faculty in institutional decision-making: "It is a struggle trying to define the role of faculty in decision-making." Participant A1-Echo suggested faculty do not understand, nor are they interested in larger institutional decisions:

Faculty understand they have a lot of authority over teaching, pedagogy, etc. ... they do not understand, or are even interested in how they can influence big decisions. ... The AD oversees the day-to-day operations of education... faculty understand their role as content experts; where it falls off is when they engage in strategy etcetera.

A1-Delta concurred:

Faculty have a very strong understanding of their responsibility and ability to change course materials ... they don't understand that they have the ability to take ownership; and with that comes responsibility for action. They are not as willing to take action as in the past ... faculty do not want to lead.

Several of the Administrator focus group participants felt BCIT did an inadequate job of providing opportunities for faculty to participate in decision-making. Participant A1-Alpha suggested some faculty are interested, but do not have the opportunity to participate at BCIT: "Some are interested in participating, some are not, but they do not have the opportunity at this institution. Other than the Visioning [Project], there has not been any opportunity for them at the institutional level." A1-Delta agreed: "There is no system or process for faculty input on institutional decisions ... the forums are talking head things; you don't feel like you are achieving anything." A2-Golf observed that there were differences in workload between the FSA and BCGEU instructors, which may impact the BCGEU faculty's ability to engage: "It depends on which bargaining unit and what department. The BCGEU 30-hour-per-week contact provides them with little opportunity to participate; time is a problem for them. We need to find ways to structure faculty input."

4.4.5.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants contributed a number of relevant comments, which reinforced the themes introduced by the key informants and Administrator focus groups regarding the lack of understanding by faculty about their role in decision-making. There were also some comments made to suggest faculty want to be more involved in institutional decision-making.

Participant F1-Charlie's comment reinforces both the lack of understanding and lack of interest in institutional decision-making: "I do not understand [institutional decision-making] well; it is a black box. That said, I am guilty for many years, I did not know, did not want to know; just let me do my job." F1-Bravo agreed: "I don't know how the decision process trickles down to faculty; it is a deep dark secret. I would like to have input before the numbers show up in our operating plan." Participant F2-India added: "The contract is vague as to what role we play. ... Program Heads have a reasonable idea of their role in decision-making, but most faculty do not know at all." F2-Lima responded: "I'm a Program Head and I am not convinced we fully understand decision-making at BCIT, we may understand it a little more, but that's about it." F2-Juliet added further perspective to the issue of lack of understanding by faculty about their role in decision-making: "I don't think I have ever been asked or heard on a major, official institute decision. I do not understand the process of decision-making at BCIT."

Participant F1-Delta offered the following explanation and perspective:

What I find is the vision leads into the strategic plan and then into our operating plans, one after another, but the time lag is too long to affect our action plans; it is difficult for us to see how they connect, or how we can input.

F1-Bravo expressed the desire to regain, perhaps strengthen faculty's role in decision-making:

As a union, one of the challenges we face is what decisions are departmental? What is a department? There is no consensus, many departments have given their right to decide to the Associate Dean, they have given that right away, we must take that back.

F2-India offered the following opinion: “It is important for faculty to understand the decision-making process; they need this information to provide input.”

4.4.5.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) focus group participants also contributed comments to illuminate the issue of faculty’s understanding of their role in decision-making at BCIT. Several comments were made supporting the theme that faculty do not understand their role, while others supported the theme that there was a lack of opportunity; additionally there were several comments made regarding faculty’s lack of interest in getting involved in decision-making.

Participant G2-Hotel had a clear opinion on faculty’s understanding of their role in institutional decision-making: “Faculty do not understand their role in institutional decision-making very well.” G1-Charlie suggested both a lack of understanding and a structural impediment to faculty from the trade’s area of campus getting involved in decision-making: “The north-south divide is paramount here. The regime cannot relate to the trades, carte blanche decisions usually don’t work well. I don’t know if communal decisions are possible, I have no idea how we could accomplish these goals.” G1-Echo offered the following perspective:

I don’t know if faculty understand their role in decision-making, it depends on the Associate Dean and Chief Instructor. If they allow faculty to provide input, then it helps, we see positive results, but some Chiefs and Associate Deans are autocratic.

G2-Juliet reinforced this sentiment: “Instructors are dependent on their managers for decision-making.” G1-Foxtrot shared his experience about involvement in decision-making at BCIT: “I wouldn’t have a clue; there are places in BCIT where the instructor is just a means to deliver information to students. They aren’t involved in decision-making.”

Several BCGEU participants voiced opinions that the lack of faculty involvement in decision-making related to the lack of opportunity. G1-Charlie advised: “I believe it probably varies by school and who their managers are. In our school, faculty do not have a role, it is non-existent. We put ideas in; they get shot down then and there, without consultation or consideration.” G2-Juliet put forward: “It is because there is often a lack of knowledge of the process, or the collective agreement, by both management and the

instructors. The collective agreement is not clear in its wording sometimes.” G2-Delta shared similar views: “There is no procedure for how faculty should participate in decision-making at the department level, we need step-by-step and time to respond.” G2-India punctuated this theme with this observation: “You have to reach out to people who are not used to having their opinions taken seriously.” G1-Delta provided the following context: “The average trade instructor would think this question is absurd: Us, involved in decision-making?! Faculty don’t get involved.”

Similar to the other groups, there was a proportion of BCGEU faculty participants who believed faculty were not interested in being more involved in institutional decision-making. G1-Foxtrot clearly did not want more involvement: “Shared decision-making with shared accountability? You mean you want us to take responsibility for our decisions? Are you crazy, why would we do that? That’s the wrong direction.” Others, such as G1-Delta had a more moderate view, but still did not want greater involvement: “I don’t want to be a part of decision-making per se; just keep me informed.” Similarly, G2-Hotel proposed: “People on the floor, the instructors, don’t get involved in decision-making. The instructor level is not involved in decision-making.”

4.4.6. Views of the Importance of Faculty Participation in Decision-Making at BCIT

4.4.6.1. Overview

Responses reported in this section were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the third research sub-question (Table 4.6). This section reports participant perceptions on the importance of faculty participation in institutional decision-making at BCIT and provides insights as to the types of decisions faculty are most interested in participating in.

Table 4.6. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 3

Research Sub-Question 3
3. What aspects of decision-making are important to faculty?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
10. In your opinion, what aspects of decision-making are most important for faculty involvement?
11. In your opinion, what types of decisions do faculty want or expect to be involved in making?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
18. What aspects of institutional decision-making are most important for faculty involvement?
19. What types of institutional decisions have you been involved in?
<i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.4.6.2. Key Informant Interviews

The key informant responses to the above questions centered primarily on two themes: faculty were perceived to be most interested in decisions that directly impact their work environment; secondly, faculty were perceived to want an opportunity to be involved and have influence on broader institutional decisions. There were a few additional comments relevant to these questions that did not fit under the above themes which are reported out separately below.

Informant K-Charlie believed that faculty were most interested in decisions relating to their direct work environment, however they appreciated the opportunity to be involved in broader institutional decisions: “Most are interested in decisions that affect their direct work environment, however they appreciate being invited to participate in bigger decisions, such as management selection committees, but they need to realize that with the invitation comes responsibility.” K-Delta agreed, but was critical that faculty did not time their engagement as effectively as they should:

Most want 100% control and influence over their classroom activity. They are relatively unengaged in other types of decision-making, however if they have an issue with an institutional decision, they have the right to engage; unfortunately it is often after the fact, which is of limited value.

Informant K-Alpha concurred with faculty’s primary interest in decisions regarding their direct work: “Faculty are most interested in decisions that affect their turf, such as

curriculum, pedagogy, student admissions.” K-Bravo added further support: “Most faculty are interested in the day-to-day, direct impact types of decisions... they prioritize the local over the broader types of decisions.” K-Golf reinforced these points and added specificity: “Program selection, teaching methodology, curriculum, pedagogy—what’s being taught, and how they are going to teach it... I think they generally want the ability to maintain the quality of their program.”

Informant K-Foxtrot felt faculty’s interest in decision-making should go beyond decisions related to their direct work:

Faculty should be most involved in making their particular program successful ... but they also have a role, but not as significant in informing resource allocations and strategic direction... faculty should be involved at all levels of decision-making, particularly strategic planning... top down just does not work in an educational environment.

Informant K-Bravo shared this view and added insights into faculty’s level of interest:

Senior management needs to consult, needs to listen, and then they need to make the decision... faculty want some degree of control over where BCIT is headed ... they want to be heard on issues that will affect them... it is inevitable that faculty will want to stay involved in decision-making into the future.

K-Alpha expanded on an earlier comment, providing this insight: “Faculty do not expect to make budget decisions, but they do want to know what is going on at the institutional level, they do not like surprises.”

Informant K-Echo already believed opportunities existed for faculty, particularly FSA faculty to get involved in broader decisions: “There are many opportunities for faculty to be heard and influence decisions; at both the department and institutional level ... more the case with the FSA than the BCGEU instructors.”

K-Alpha noted that the interest level varied across the faculty: “They all have different expectations as to what they want to be consulted on.” K-Foxtrot agreed: “There is a real dichotomy with faculty engagement; some just want to teach, while others want to be involved in everything.”

K-Alpha offered a personal perspective: “It is the responsibility of the President to be strategic.”

4.4.6.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of which aspects of decision-making are most important to faculty, as well as to gain an understanding of faculty’s views on the importance of their participation in institutional decision-making at BCIT, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups using the same methods described in previous sections.

4.4.6.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participants offered insightful comments to this set of questions, often suggesting the interest level of faculty in participating in decision-making was dependent on the nature and circumstances of the decision. It was interesting to note that generally the Administrator focus group participants did not agree with the key informants regarding faculty’s interest in participating in the broader institutional decisions. Generally, the administrators did not believe faculty were interested in institutional decisions.

Participant A1-Delta explained the dependent nature of faculty interest this way: “Faculty involvement depends on levels, at the department level, they are very involved, but even at the school level they are not engaged; and not at all at the Institutional level.” A1-Delta extended this theme: “Some faculty will take advantage of the opportunity, others never.” A2-Juliet drew a distinction between the two faculty unions: “The BCGEU are less connected to the Institute generally.” A1-Alpha added another dimension to the interest level of faculty in decision-making: “It is also a function of the time of year; you cannot get faculty attention on matters no matter what you do at certain times of the year ... it is hard to keep momentum.”

Participant A2-India had a strong view on faculty’s lack of interest in the broader institutional decisions:

It depends on the nature of the decision; they are not interested in the bigger issues like the budget. I could not get any input to my operating plan; they have no interest, even though I tried my best to engage them.

This same participant went on to explain:

Their interest is in the classroom; that is their mandate not budgets and operating plans; anything that impacts their department; but not the larger institute things. They want me to get them the dollars and keep senior management off of them; let them do their job, don't interfere ... they came to teach, they are not interested in the politics or bureaucracy.

A1-Echo agreed with this view: "Faculty understand they have a lot of authority over teaching, pedagogy, etc. ... they do not understand, or are even interested in how they can influence big decisions." A2-Mike provided further support to this position:

I believe the most important role for faculty is in the classroom; I deliberately try to keep things away from them that are a distraction; I am a filter. This allows faculty to get on with the job of teaching, I don't want to create false expectations. My department wants to be informed, but does not want to be involved; they like to know, unless it affects them directly.

A2-Hotel agreed and proffered a recent example: "Most aren't interested in the institutional stuff, they came here to teach; there was not strong faculty engagement in the Vision Project." This participant offered the following suggestion: "If you want to hear from faculty, you have to go see them, get into their faces."

A1-Bravo suggested the level of faculty involvement in institutional decision-making was up to the faculty themselves, insinuating nothing was preventing them from being as involved as they wished: "They have the opportunity to be as involved as they want to be."

4.4.6.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants interviewed for this study generally aligned with the Administrator focus group participants on this subject. There were several comments made regarding the variable nature of faculty interest in institutional decision-making; and a large number of comments suggesting faculty were primarily interested in decisions relating to their direct work and much less so in broader institutional decisions.

Participant F1-Charlie offered this comment regarding the variable nature of faculty interest in institutional decision-making: "It depends on the nature of the decision,

what are the repercussions ... it depends on the nature and how you solicit the input; meetings take too much time." F2-India agreed: "It depends on the nature, significance, and whether it is official, or unofficial."

Participant F1-Echo provided these insights as to faculty's reluctance to get involved in broader institutional decisions:

Some faculty are not interested in getting involved, either because of workload, or because they do not believe it will make a difference ... I think faculty are most interested in program related decisions, the quality of education, enrolment, curriculum. At the program level, decision-making is done among faculty; we discuss and come to agreement, but at the higher levels, for funding and capital, that is up to the administration.

F1-Charlie extended this perspective and demonstrated a degree of cynicism:

I think for institutional decision-making, these guys get paid big bucks, they don't need to come to me for every little thing. What they need to do is ask who is it going to impact and how do we get onboard People are too busy, they have less time for the collegial model; management has to make the decisions. As faculty, there are only certain decisions I can make. I'm tired, someone at the top should make the decisions, research as an example, just tell me what to do... I worked with someone who worked at BCIT for many years, every time we talk about the Vision [Project], he can't even remember how many of them he has been through and he says nothing ever changes; so I view this is for the politicians, it is airy-fairy stuff. My job, and our purpose, is to deliver education, that's what I am here for.

F1-Alpha continued the critique on the value of faculty participating in broader decision-making such as the School's Vision Project:

I participated in our school's Vision Project and it seems more like 5 years since it started, it seems like an exercise in futility, I can't see anything coming out of it. Every new Dean goes through it; it is like cross-training for Deans. I stopped going, I have better things to do with my time, it could go on forever. The meetings are a waste of time, they never produce anything. They turn into motherhood statements.

Participant F1-Delta offered a contrasting perspective on participating in decision-making such as Vision Projects, recognizing such initiatives could affect programs:

I agree, faculty should be involved in their program, the education of their students, but it depends on the individuals, I would like to be involved in the Vision [Project], because it will ultimately affect my program, but I can't make all the meetings, there are a lot.

F2-India suggested a pragmatic view:

Realistically, there are a fair number of faculty that are not interested in providing input ... if you want to participate, you have to make time for it. You need to provide a venue, but faculty also need to make this a priority. You will also find it is the same people who show up for everything. There are broad masses of people who never input, but they don't realize it is part of their job.

4.4.6.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus group participants provided a more diverse range of responses to this set of questions. There were familiar themes of faculty involvement being dependent on various things and general support for faculty being involved with decisions that impact their direct work; however there were different views and rationale among this group on whether faculty should be involved in broader institutional decisions.

Participant G2-Kilo provided this perspective to faculty interest in engaging in institutional decision-making: "It depends; if it impacts them and you are organized, they will engage." G1-Foxtrot gave insight to how some faculty determine if they will engage:

I would not have attended this [research focus group] meeting if I did not believe in its purpose; we can't afford the time to come to Burnaby all the time. Faculty are interested most in decisions that involve their immediate environment and everything that touches the students, such as classrooms, facilities, parking, curriculum, even selection committees.

G2-Juliet provided additional specificity to the types of decisions faculty were interested in: "Things like time and location of their classes, curriculum, and student recruiting, training, resources." G2-Kilo added this perspective: "Things that affect them; the worst way to make a decision at BCIT is from the top with no dialogue with the people it affects."

Participant G1-Delta shared a recent decision regarding engagement with institutional decision-making: "My first impression of the Vision Project was that it was

just a big waste of time, a waste of tax-payers money. I did not participate.” Similarly, G2-Golf did not hesitate to share opinions about institutional decisions: “I don’t care about the marketing stuff.” Interestingly, this sparked some debate on the subject, with G2-Hotel suggesting there was value in being involved and informed about institutional decisions: “I think marketing has its own agenda, I want transparency there too. We should understand how much it costs, the rationale, and what we should expect.” G1-Delta struck a constructive tone with this comment: “I would like to at least be informed and know why; that way we can be onside and help support.” G2-Kilo articulated a range of decisions that faculty should be involved with, taking care to delineate faculty’s role:

Things like revisions to course offerings and curriculum, changes to the labour: management agreement, the Vision, Edco [Education Council] ... I don't want to be accountable for major institutional decisions, that is not my skill set. I want to give feedback, I want them to consider it, but it is management's job to make the best decision based on the above. I don't want to cross into management's job, they sign the cheque.

4.4.7. Summary

BCIT’s official decision-making structures and processes are well established and formalized. Participants offered varying opinions as to the effectiveness of these structures and processes, with many suggesting they were too cumbersome, bureaucratic, and in some cases irrelevant. This could explain the apparent wide-spread use of unofficial decision-making processes at BCIT.

This section also explored the perceptions of faculty’s role in decision-making at BCIT; participant responses suggest that this particular construct is neither well understood, nor well supported. In terms of the importance of having faculty participation in institutional decision-making, participant responses suggest it depends on several variables. These findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

4.5. Attaining a Balance Among Collaboration, Responsiveness, and Accountability in Decision-Making at BCIT

All responses reported in Section 4.5 were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the fourth research sub-question (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 4

Research Sub-Question 4
4. How can BCIT balance the desire for collaboration vs. responsiveness?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
15. To what extent do you think faculty are held accountable for their input on decision-making?
16. Do you think there should be shared decision-making without shared accountability?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
14. Is there a balance between the desire for collaboration and the need for responsiveness?
15. Should there be a balance between collaborative decision-making and responsiveness?
16. Should anything be done about the balance?
21. To what extent are faculty held accountable for their input to decision-making?
22. Do you think there can be shared decision-making without shared accountability?
23. If faculty were held accountable, would that affect their involvement in decision-making?
<i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.5.1. Improving Communication, Transparency, Respect, and Trust

4.5.1.1. Overview

Participant comments suggest communication, transparency, respect, and trust are key to achieving a greater balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making. Many suggested that if faculty were made aware of the constraints and expectations for their input, they would be more willing to participate in institutional decision-making.

4.5.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

The interviews were conducted using the protocol described in the preceding sessions. The key informants offered comments and perspectives on the issues associated with achieving a greater balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in institutional decision-making at BCIT. Several themes emerged, including the extra time required for collaboration; the inherent need for trust in decision-making; and the need for clear communication around process and expectations.

Informant K-Echo made the following observation regarding the time required for collaboration: “Tension always exists between collaboration and responsiveness. It takes a long time to reach decisions given the number of people that must be consulted.” K-Charlie agreed: “Consultation takes time, faculty need to respond in a timely manner.” K-Delta questions the practicality of more balance, possibly due to the pressures of time: “I wouldn’t question the need for more balance, the question is how practical is it?”

Informant K-Echo also had a perspective on the need for trust in decision-making: “If you don’t have trust, it negatively impacts everything, not just decision-making.” K-Foxtrot concurred with this view: “Trust is fundamental to decision-making; you cannot build a strong sense of team without trust.” This informant went on to provide context for this view: “[If] you have survived a scenario where upwards of 75% of your managers got fired over the term of [the previous President], there cannot be a strong sense of team and trust in an environment like that.”

Informant K-Golf made the following statement regarding the need for clear communication:

We need to clarify upfront with people the type of decision we are making. An example might be you consult with your Program Heads on a professional development schedule; you let them know you are happy to make a consensual decision, you are one vote; you are happy for this to be consensual, in other words, you guys decide. Alternatively, in another example you might have \$5,000 to spend on marketing; you let them know you have ideas, you want their ideas, lots of ideas, you will be consultative, but in the end you make it clear it will be your decision. The key is you set expectations upfront.

This informant extended the comment: “We need to be thoughtful about the design of our decision-making matrix before we get into the process; we need to anticipate the scope, and clarify expectations.”

4.5.1.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups (two each for: Administrators, FSA faculty, and BCGEU faculty members). The focus groups were conducted according to the protocol described in previous sections.

4.5.1.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participant’s comments were centered on the subject of trust with respect to the issue of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT. In addition, a few comments were recorded on the issues of collaboration and balance.

Administrator A2-Juliet suggested trust was integral to collaboration: “You cannot have collaboration without trust.” A2-India reinforced this perspective: “Trust is all you really have, it is crucial.” A2-Lima agreed: “Once you lose trust, you can’t make it work anymore.” A2-Golf suggested trust could help gain support for decisions: “If you have the trust of your faculty, you can include them ahead of time, [and] you are more likely to gain their support.”

On the negative side, the absence of trust can be a hindrance, as declared by A1-Delta: “The lack of trust among the management group is a key issue; it is the cause of such inefficient decision-making.” A2-Mike agreed and provided a specific example:

We had program cuts 2 years ago, with no input from the AD [Associate Dean] or Dean; we were told what programs to cut. This cost us credibility with our staff. They trusted me about the story, but the respect for me and my position was diminished.

This participant went on to add this view: “It is difficult to isolate trust without looking at the organization as a whole, it is complex. When they terminated or suspended programs, they did not follow official policy; there can be no trust when that happens.”

A2-Hotel provided this perspective on the relationship between trust and people's position in the organization:

I think the level of trust diminishes as the separation increases, that is faculty generally trust their AD [Associate Dean], a little less the Dean, less so the VP, even less so the President. As you go up the ladder, the doubt increases.

This participant continued with a reference to the 2006 BCIT Employee Opinion Survey: "The last employee opinion survey indicated a large drop in trust towards Senior Management." A2-Hotel then added this rationale: "Trust diminished dramatically until [the previous President] left, he severed 60 to 70 managers; that was a disaster, trust disappeared."

A2-Mike suggested that an autocratic approach was not conducive to building an engaged decision-making culture: "If you autocratically cut programs, it makes it hard to get faculty to engage." A1-Charlie suggested a collaborative approach was essential to surviving at BCIT as an Associate Dean: "If you don't collaborate on every single decision, you won't last as an AD [Associate Dean] in my world ... faculty have a lot of passion and a lot of power."

Administrator A1-Echo proffered that tension was normal and could be a positive element in a dynamic decision-making environment and that balance was generally achieved: "Balance is good, but there is always tension, which is generally positive, not adversarial; it is a dynamic process. The demands of industry versus the process of education; we generally find balance."

4.5.1.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants were critical of BCIT's past efforts at collaborative decision-making and shared similar perspectives to the Administrator focus group participants on the lack of trust in the organization.

FSA faculty participant F1-Charlie saw an advantage to an effective collaborative approach to decision-making: "Collaboration can help identify the constraints." F1-Bravo recalled the lack of collaboration when the Institute invoked program cuts a few years ago:

When there were program cuts, management should have come to us first. We figured out a solution, but they didn't ask. Why not come to us in the first place? We could work at it together, rather than dropping the nuclear bomb; that just isolates faculty.

Similarly, F2-Golf shared another experience where faculty were not consulted: "Our faculty had a previously made decision handed to us to implement. If we had been involved sooner, we would have made the same decision, but we would have provided a more informed, creative solution."

Participant F2-Juliet voiced a sense of lack of trust in the organization: "I sense a lack of trust, quite strongly, from faculty towards management; and between deans, right across the board." F2-Hotel picked up on the same issues some of the key informant and Administrator focus group participants had voiced regarding the numerous management terminations under the previous President: "The rotating door of management under [the previous President], where some ridiculous number of managers were let go had to change things; they must have been quite afraid." F2-India commented on the importance of communication and how that can contribute to greater organizational trust:

Management must manage expectations, decisions do need to be made; budgets exist. Not all decisions are going to be popular; sometimes programs should be cut. Trust can be built by being open. Openness is really important, without it, it breeds fear.

4.5.1.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus group participants shared a variety of perspectives with respect to the issue of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT. Comments were made about the importance of communication and trust; and the benefits of moving to a more collaborative decision-making approach at BCIT.

BCGEU faculty participant G2-Juliet commented on the importance of communication: "If faculty knew the issues, they would be more likely to support a project." G1-Alpha voiced frustration about the lack of communication and difficulty getting support:

Responsiveness is key; if we had someone we could approach and ask for help, it would share the load; but I have no idea how to connect. If our chief instructors, or our AD's could help us plough through, and clarify what we need to know, that would help.

Participant G1-Echo suggested trust and faculty engagement were linked: “If faculty trust their upper management and know they will be backed, then they are more likely to share in decision-making and accountability, but if they don’t trust their upper management, they won’t participate, it is a trust issue.”

On the subject of collaboration, G1-Echo had this to say:

I prefer a collaborative management structure. The more direct information you get from your customers, which for us is students first, industry second, the better off you will be; there is more opportunity to satisfy them. If we continue with the top down approach, we will not meet their needs. The people at the top cannot do it on their own; they are too far removed.

G2-Kilo shared a recent positive experience with collaborative decision-making at BCIT:

The Vision Project was a good example, they tried to have dialogue, it was good to be involved and there was opportunity to have input. The further you go down into the trenches, the better your feedback is going to be.

G2-India offered a more philosophical view: “Education is a community of practice with legitimate participants, if you break that up, you have something other than education. The industrial model is not going to cut it.” G2-Juliet suggested there was no downside to collaborating:

All good leaders do not make rational decisions without taking input. What’s the harm in taking input? You still have the final decision because you are the leader. If you consult, you get buy-in; they will work harder as a result.

4.5.2. Developing compromises in the Decision-Making Process

4.5.2.1. Overview

Participant comments suggested that faculty and middle-managers at BCIT generally perceived a lack of communication, transparency, trust, and respect for their

inputs with regard to institutional decision-making. Some participants reported an inadequate understanding by all parties of the expectations for collaborative decision-making, compounded by increasing pressures for more responsive and accountable decisions from diverse stakeholders. Participants were cognizant of the increasing demands for greater responsiveness and accountability in institutional decisions.

4.5.2.2. Key Informant Interviews

The interviews were conducted here under the protocol described for previous sections. The topic generated contrasting views among the key informants: some felt balance was achievable through communication and compromise; others felt balance would continue to be elusive.

Informant K-Alpha offered a pragmatic view, implying compromise is possible with communication and understanding:

It is not possible to consult on all issues; that would be paralyzing. Balance is possible if when you consult, you advise people of the restrictions on your decision-making, such as time, money, and the law. If you tell them what the rules are, they can rise to the occasion ... people do not need forever to provide input.

K-Echo supported the notion of communication facilitating compromise: “If you communicate the deadline, faculty and unions understand that we might have to compress the consultation, but if you bypass the consultation process, that is when you are going to have problems.”

K-Charlie did not agree that balance was possible in an education environment: “There is no balance; the external forces that we must work with just don’t understand the process of education.” K-Delta was also pessimistic about achieving balance: “I am not sure balance is practical; there is always tension around this.” K-Foxtrot took a longer-term view, suggesting balance was possible, but would require collaboration: “We don’t have the balance right yet. We are entering a much more competitive era. We will only be successful if we collaborate, and that will mean being responsive to a changing environment.”

4.5.2.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT and to understand when compromises in the decision-making process might be acceptable, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups, conducted using the protocol described in the preceding sections.

4.5.2.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participants only made a couple of comments relative to the issue of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT; and to when compromises in the decision-making process might be acceptable.

Administrator A1-Delta acknowledged the natural tension between collaborative decision-making and responsiveness: “There is a necessary tension: Industry wants it fast, but there are reasons we can’t do that.” A1-Bravo suggested there are outside forces at play which impact the ability to be collaborative: “A lot of our decisions are driven by outside industry, therefore there is not a lot of room for collaboration ... industry makes demands, we have to accommodate, or they won’t accredit our program.”

4.5.2.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

When this topic was introduced into the focus groups involving members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) there were no comments made by participants that were relevant to it.

4.5.2.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) focus group participants also had only a couple of comments, albeit contrasting, which were relevant to the subject of balance between collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making at BCIT; and to when compromises in the decision-making process might be acceptable.

Participant G1-Delta felt there was no time for balance: “There is no balance. There is a desire to work together at the lower levels, but the outside changes are so fast, like the ITA [Industry Training Authority] changes, it is impossible to keep up. There

is no connection.” G2-Golf on the other hand described a collaborative culture, but suggested it would be more efficient to move to more of a managerialist style of decision-making:

In our department, we are collegial, but there is also consultation in business. I believe we should adopt more of a business model. Management would call the shots, but gather input first. That’s why they get paid the big bucks, they should make the decisions; they are the ones held responsible.

4.5.3. Improving Opportunities for Faculty Participation in Decision-Making

4.5.3.1. Overview

Participant comments suggest there is an opportunity to improve faculty participation in institutional decision-making at BCIT. Participants were asked to comment on the current level of involvement of faculty in institutional decision-making and make suggestions as to how to improve the level of engagement.

4.5.3.2. Key Informant Interviews

The interviews with key informants that included the above topic were conducted according to the protocol described previously. These questions generated responses from the key informants that suggested general support for increased faculty engagement in decision-making.

Informant K-Foxtrot was clear about faculty’s role in institutional decision-making: “Whenever we respond, it should be based on faculty being partners in the development of the response and being fully supportive.” K-Golf believed that the new President was moving the Institute towards greater faculty engagement in decision-making:

This [increased faculty engagement] is what [the new President] is trying to do, this is his major plan. Not only are there opportunities out there, but he is telling people to go out and find opportunities; he is getting some push back, this is foreign to some people.

K-Bravo supported the move towards greater faculty engagement, suggesting they could add value: “Ideally we will get to the point where the Institute wants to consult with

faculty and faculty can provide value by providing good information quickly.” This participant went on to provide a specific example of where the unions acted as a proxy for faculty input: “Unions need to be able to formulate a meaningful response in timely manner, for example when [the new President] invited the unions to participate in the budget process.”

4.5.3.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT and to understand how to improve the opportunities for faculty to provide input to decision-making, six focus group interviews were held across the three employee affiliation groups conducted according to the protocol previously described.

4.5.3.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrative focus group participants were not as optimistic as the key informants about the benefits and ability to engage faculty in institutional decision-making.

Administrator participant A1-Delta questioned the organizational desire for increased collaboration: “The President reinforces the importance of collaboration, but I’m not sure there is a desire for collaboration, there seems to be a gap between the schools, program heads, and the President.” A1-Echo also questioned the desire for collaboration, but drew a distinction between faculty and administration: “The rank and file insist on collaboration, but anyone in an oversight role, from Program Heads and up, pay lip-service to collaboration.” A2-Kilo voiced concerns about the amount of time required for collaboration: “It depends on how you define collaboration. Collaboration involves the process of getting input, especially from faculty. Collaboration requires time, by definition.”

4.5.3.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants recognized benefits to increased faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT; and they also had some reservations.

FSA participant F1-Delta believed faculty could add value to decision-making given their familiarity with the details: “Collaboration is always good to make decisions. It is totally wrong to make decisions without collaboration. We should consult with the people who know the details, that is the faculty, they should at least try first.” F1-Echo felt collaboration with faculty on an ongoing basis would actually help the Institute be more responsive to external demands:

I think the collaborative approach internally is directly proportional to the level of external pressure. Collaboration should be encouraged when there is not a crisis; this has not been the case. If we collaborated on an ongoing basis, that could help deal with the external demands more efficiently.

F1-Alpha suggested faculty would be more engaged generally if they had a role in the decision-making:

This is where we get caught, the Institute says yes to outside money, but faculty have not been consulted, then they backdoor, do lip-service to consulting with faculty, they should have asked us before they said yes to the money. Faculty would be reasonable, we would be more engaged if we were a part of the decision.

F2-Kilo resented that management often bypassed collaboration on the basis there was a crisis that needed a fast response:

If upper management is doing its job, there should not be so many surprises, they need to be more ready upstairs, I resent that it is always a crisis. Clarity of communication is the key to capitalizing on collaboration. Faculty here at BCIT are so practical. I think it is the unofficial crap that generates all the crisis.

F2-Mike suggested it was possible to engage faculty as long as they were aware of the constraints: “It depends on the time of year, but just tell me how much time I have to provide input and I will do the best I can in the time available.”

4.5.3.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) focus group participants offered a couple of comments aimed at increasing faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT.

Participant G1-Charlie shared the view of F2-Kilo above that if senior management planned appropriately, there would be sufficient time for collaboration: “If the people at the top looked ahead more, there would be more time to consult, instead of being so reactive.” G2-Juliet recommended that the support for increased collaboration must extend beyond the senior leadership of the Institute. When that happens, G2-Juliet expected more engagement and positive change:

It is great to have a change in leadership, but how that transfers down the line is important. Some of the middle-tier in the organization is still from the old school. The new executive has to make sure the middle-management embrace the collaborative approach. Once that happens, we will see faculty get more engaged, bring new ideas, make positive change.

4.5.4. Summary

This section reports on attaining balance between collaborative decision-making and organizational responsiveness and looks at it through the lens of communication, trust, and the role of compromise among others. It explores the opportunities to improve faculty participation in decision-making.

Participants generally support the notion that a balance can be struck and believe that the benefits of additional input and increased commitment arising from faculty’s ability to participate, more than offset the extra effort and time required. These findings are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

4.6. The Role of BCIT’s Faculty Unions in Decision-Making

All responses reported in Section 4.6 were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the fifth research sub-question (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 5

Research Sub-Question 5
5. What role should faculty unions play in decision-making?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
18. What role do faculty unions play in institutional decision-making at BCIT?
19. What role should faculty unions play in representing faculty in institutional decision-making?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
30. How do you feel about the role faculty unions play in institutional decision-making?
31. How well do you think unions represent faculty interests in institutional decision-making?
32. Any conflict between union mandate to advocate for member interests vs. institutional good?
<i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.6.1. Varied Opinions about the Role of BCIT’s Faculty Unions in Decision-Making

4.6.1.1. Overview

The issue of what role BCIT’s faculty unions do play, can play, and should play generated vigorous discussion among participants in the key informant interviews and in the focus groups with the three major segments of the BCIT community. As before, the topic was introduced into the key informant and focus group interviews; both were conducted according to the previously described protocol.

4.6.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

These questions generated a strong response from the key informants. The majority of responses suggest the key informants believe the unions are representative of faculty in decision-making; and that the unions have an important role to play in institutional decision-making.

Informant K-Charlie was unequivocal: “I believe the union is representative of faculty.” K-Golf agreed, but was careful to qualify the comment: “People look to their unions for representation. If they are happy on an issue, they feel they do not need to show up. If you establish a good relationship with the union leadership, they can be representative.” K-Bravo took a broader view: “The unions have a dual role: they have a

legal obligation to represent their members; and they provide input to the institution on broader strategic issues.” K-Alpha agreed with the principle that the unions were representative but were bound to protect their member’s interests, which could pose challenges:

Unions are representative of faculty. Their role is to protect the interests of their members ... union responses are filtered through the lens of the collective agreement. Their focus is not necessarily on the ‘common good’—they have an agenda they have to follow.

K-Foxtrot took a pragmatic view: “No representative body is ever perfectly representative ... the world gets run by the people who show up.” This participant perceived a difference between BCIT’s two faculty unions: “I believe the FSA is broadly representative, whereas the BCGEU is a more conventional union.” K-Foxtrot expressed this general opinion: “Unions must blend protecting and advocating for the interests of faculty, with the broader objective of making BCIT more successful.”

In terms of adding value to decision-making, the key informants generally believed the unions played a key and valuable role. K-Delta had this to say:

The unions act as a spokesperson for its membership to the institution; and for the institution back to its members ... they help interpret expectations. Unions play an important role in employee relations ...they provide checks and balances, which is valuable. They can help the President understand the consequences of decision-making; they can also help their membership better appreciate the parameters of institutional decision-making.

Informant K-Echo agreed, adding:

Unions play a huge role and are being asked to participate more and more. The administration has evolved its perspective from viewing the unions as a necessary evil, to now where they are seen as true partners in the enterprise. Unions should not have their input limited to the narrow terms and conditions of employment, but rather they should have input on virtually any important issue, it should all be open for discussion.

K-Charlie also believed the unions could add value, similar to a consultant: “The unions provide the role of counsel and stewardship ... they provide the opportunity to consider the consequences ... they are the voice of reason.” K-Foxtrot felt the same way: “Unions should be like an internal consultant to management.”

4.6.1.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of what role BCIT's faculty unions have in institutional decision-making at BCIT and to understand if the faculty unions are perceived to be representative of the broader faculty population, this topic was introduced into the focus group discussions held with three sectors of the BCIT community as described in previous sections.

4.6.1.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The topical questions listed above generated a very different response from the Administrator focus group participants in contrast to the key informants on this subject. Generally, the Administrator comments suggest that the unions are not representative of faculty in decision-making. There were a couple of comments that suggested the unions could have a conflict between representing faculty's interests and participating in decisions focussed on the Institution's best interests.

Administrator participant A2-Kilo had a clear perspective that union representation was not equivalent to faculty representation:

Union representation does not equal faculty representation. They represent a narrow view: member interests. The problem I see with BCIT is that they put too much emphasis on union representation versus faculty representation. What you want is [faculty] expertise for BCIT's broader best interest.

A1-Echo had similar concerns, believing the unions sometimes went beyond their mandates:

The union theoretically represents the rank and file, but I have seen the union play the role of another layer of management and that's not their job. They should not be the decision-maker; they should represent the rank and file. There is no single faculty perspective. The unions are challenged to represent, it is hard to deal with the conflicting goals of their membership; it can be a dirty job. The unions regularly have a conflict between their member's interests and what is best overall for BCIT, for example how do they reconcile being involved with the recent budget process, which will involve program closures, when they have to advocate for their members?

A1-Delta extended this view with an example: “I have seen situations where the union has completely misread, and misrepresented the rank and file, for example the recent management selection committees, where they have not given much attention as to who represented them on the committees.” A1-Foxtrot agreed that the unions were not representative and could find themselves in conflict making decisions aimed at advancing the Institute’s common good: “The union is not representative; they have their own agenda, and should not be involved in management [decisions].” A2-Mike concurred: “It remains to be seen whether the unions can put the common good ahead of their member interests.”

4.6.1.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups were comprised of faculty members teaching in the technology [Health, Business, Sciences, and Academic Studies] programs at BCIT. When the topic of the role of unions in the governance and decision-making processes at BCIT was introduced in the focus groups for members of the FSA, their comments generally suggest they believe their union is representative of their interests.

FSA participant F1-Echo believed the FSA was representative and presented an efficient way for management to connect with faculty: “The FSA as an organization represent faculty and are a good way for management to connect. The FSA does a good job of soliciting faculty input, for example their on-line survey for the last contract negotiation.” F1-Delta agreed: “I don’t see any conflict between how they represent member interests, they don’t act like a union.” F1-Charlie also supported the suggestion that management could work more with the union executives:

The Institute should talk to the FSA and BCGEU Executives; tell them what they want to do; see if they have a problem with it. I don’t think the unions have a problem making it work, they do have a problem not having a say.

There was a dissenting comment put forward by F2-Golf: “The FSA is not a proxy for faculty representation.”

4.6.1.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus groups were comprised of faculty members teaching in the trades and vocational (Construction, Transportation, Apprenticeship, etcetera) programs at BCIT. When the topic of the role of unions in BCIT's governance and decision-making was introduced into the focus group discussion it generated comments that generally were negative towards the concept of the unions being representative of BCGEU faculty.

G1-Foxtrot demonstrated a clearly negative view of his union:

Unions only happen when a company deserves it. Here we have a company in bed with the union from Day 1. They pat themselves on the back for being consultative; well not really, they don't represent faculty. The union's only responsibility [should be] to its members.

G1-Charlie shared a similar view: "They have never advocated for member interests; it is the same for all unions, they let the dollars drive their decisions." G1-Bravo concurred: "I agree the union is working for the Institute, I don't think they work for the membership." G2-Juliet sounded a more conciliatory tone, suggesting the BCGEU union was dependent on decisions made outside of BCIT given it was a broad-based provincial union: "Do they [BCGEU Union] adequately represent faculty interests? Yes and no, not 100% of the time; it depends on the support [they] get from overall BCGEU headquarters." G2-India suggested an example where the unions provided value to its membership: "They formalize participation in key decisions such as the selection of management, where all unions are represented." G1-Foxtrot did not agree, suggesting union participation in institutional decision-making may be for appearances: "That decision-making is done just to make management feel good." G2-Kilo offered a positive perspective on union representation: "Can the union represent the diverse interests of its membership, yes I think so."

4.6.2. The Labour Environment at BCIT

4.6.2.1. Overview

Interview questions related to BCIT's unions, faculty engagement, trust, and decision-making in general generated a range of comments, many of which related to BCIT's labour environment.

4.6.2.2. Key Informant Interviews

The key informant responses to these questions yielded responses that indicated support for the efforts of the new President and suggested the labour environment is improving at BCIT.

Informant K-Charlie testified to a much improved relationship between the administration and the unions:

The unions have become much more cooperative and less adversarial, more like partners. The unions are more productivity oriented [now], they are not perceived as being quite as adversarial; they are more inclined to have their shoulder to the wheel, [rather] than to be throwing rocks and sticks in front of the wheel.

K-Golf also perceived a change in the processes to engage the unions and was optimistic this would lead to an improved working environment:

The newly emerging official processes have resulted from [the new President's] insistence of including the unions in institutional decision-making. He knows they are not VPs or part of the Institute's executive, but he knows they are key stakeholders. I believe this will pay dividends; they will be key to unlocking some of the informal chains.

K-Delta voiced support for a good relationship between the unions and management: "It is critical for management to have a good relationship with its unions."

4.6.2.3. Focus Group Interviews

The following broad questions were introduced into the series of focus group discussions conducted with three sectors of the BCIT community: Administrators,

members of the FSA, and members of the BCGEU. The protocol for the focus group has been described above.

4.6.2.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

In regard to the topic of labour relations and the general labour management climate at BCIT, the Administrator focus groups produced comments which were mostly negative about the historical climate and not particularly optimistic about the future climate.

Participant A2-India referred to the baggage of historical relations and the conflict between member interests and BCIT's common good: "There is a lot of baggage or history. There is a conflict between member interests and the common good, it comes forward in negotiations, but other than that, we see very little FSA activism, we comply with the contract." A2-Golf agreed there were issues related to past practices and suggested the labour model may be outdated: "We have an old labour-management model; it is industrial, not collegial, it is complex and endemic. The issue is it sees unions as necessary to prevent managerialism." A2-India questioned whether the new President's initiatives to be more inclusive of the unions could be counter-productive: "[The new President] invites the union Presidents to [management retreats] and management breakfasts. I wonder if the union members feel this is good, or is [the new President] seen as trying to co-opt the union leadership?" A1-Echo shared this observation: "I think we are headed in the direction where the Presidents of the unions will be an element of the management team."

A2-Mike did perceive a difference in the labour environment between the reigns of the past and new presidents: "Under [the previous President], there was tremendous friction with the unions and senior management. Under [the new President] there is a desire to bring the unions into decision-making."

4.6.2.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups generated more positive and optimistic comments to the same questions regarding labour relations and the general labour management climate at BCIT.

FSA participant F2-India's comment was positive and did not compare past versus current conditions:

They [union-management relations] are good, because they are not militant. It would make things worse if they were militant; then it would become adversarial with management. The way it is, the gap between faculty and management is small, this is best for faculty.

F1-Charlie saw an improving climate between the unions and the administration at BCIT:

There was a lot of turmoil with the FSA a few years back, it has gotten much better. I think the unions are improving, there is more dialogue with the faculty and the administration seems to be consulting them more.

4.6.2.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus groups did not generate many comments directly related to this subject, however the one comment recorded suggests a qualified positive perspective, somewhere in between the optimism of the key informants and FSA participants compared to the pessimism of the Administrator participants. BCGEU participant G2-Golf offered this perspective: "There is a good climate now, but the proof will be in the results, I am not impressed until I see results, I'll believe it when I see it."

4.6.3. Summary

Participants offered diverse and passionate views on the subject of what role BCIT's faculty unions should play in decision-making at BCIT. A range of opinions was offered as to the representativeness of the unions for faculty generally, with the majority of participants believing that the unions were a reasonable proxy. Differences were noted on these issues between the two faculty unions (FSA and BCGEU) and questions were raised as to whether the unions could, or should put aside partisan interests and subordinate their member's interests if there was a conflict with what was in the Institution's best interests. The evolving labour climate at BCIT was also a subject that generated rich discussion, particularly the impact of new initiatives introduced by the Institute's new President. These findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.7. The Education Council’s Role as Facilitator of Faculty Decision-Making

All responses reported in Section 4.7 were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the sixth research sub-question (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 6

Research Sub-Question 6
6. How effective is Education Council in facilitating faculty’s role in decision-making?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
12. How effective is Edco in promoting faculty’s role in institutional decision-making?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
5. Are you familiar with Education Council?
6. How does Education Council promote decision-making at BCIT?
7. How effective do you think Edco is in promoting faculty’s role in institutional decision-making?
<i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.7.1. The Structure and Representative Nature of the Education Council as a Key Element of the Decision-Making Structure at BCIT

4.7.1.1. Overview

The Education Council (Edco) is one of the key official decision-making structures and processes at BCIT, however participant comments appear to reveal that neither its mandate, nor its structures or processes are clearly understood by all.

4.7.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

The key informant interviews were conducted as previously described and when the question of the role of the Education Council was introduced into the conversations, it generated a range of comments.

Informant K-Delta believed the Education Council had a clearly structured process: “[New program approvals] are straight forward, there is a structured process through Edco.” K-Alpha opined that faculty had a valuable role on Edco: “Faculty on

Edco do believe they have influence, and that they help inform decision-making at BCIT.” K-Golf declared no direct involvement with Edco, but held a favourable impression: “I should pass on this one, I am not close to Edco, but as an outsider, it seems pretty good.” K-Foxtrot believed Edco had a broader mandate than just being a forum to promote or facilitate faculty’s role in institutional decision-making: “Edco is representative of the broader institution; it is not just a forum for faculty.”

4.7.1.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of the Education Council as a facilitator of faculty decision-making and to understand participant’s views on the Council’s overall effectiveness, six focus group interviews were conducted across the three employee affiliation groups as described in previous sections.

4.7.1.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participant’s comments on this subject suggest a good understanding of the role of Education Council and supported the notion that Education Council played a positive role in facilitating faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT.

Administrator participant A1-Echo articulated a sound knowledge of BCIT’s Education Council:

Edco is the final decision-making authority on many academic decisions; that is by legislation. The legislation requires that faculty be consulted; their responsibilities are well laid out. Edco serves an important QA function; the consequences of not having Edco would be worse.

A1-Echo believed Education Council was a positive influence in gaining faculty input to decisions:

If it wasn’t for Edco, I would question if faculty would have a voice over certain matters ... without Edco, I’ve seen it before, it would just be the administration making the decisions ... Edco provides tremendous value. Edco is effective for getting faculty input to decisions.

A2-Kilo also demonstrated awareness of some of the nuances of Education Council and had a positive view of its role in engaging faculty: “The programming committee is

populated by faculty; it provides a good forum for faculty input.” A1-Bravo acknowledged that Education Council could be time consuming, but seemed generally supportive: “It takes awhile for things to get done, but there are rules they have to follow, I don’t know how else you could do it.” A2-India shared a personal experience and suggested Education Council was a good forum: “I’ve had one experience with Edco; they asked good questions, it was a good forum, well done, no concerns.”

4.7.1.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) sector who participated in the focus group discussions were both positive as to the effectiveness of Education Council and to its role in engaging faculty.

FSA participant F1-Mike applauded Education Councils clear mandate: “Edco has a clearly defined mandate and process, we know the rules; they guide Edco.” F1-Alpha shared a positive personal experience:

I sat on a committee and presented to Edco for some policy changes to appeals; Edco vetted the work, it did make sense to me. They look at the balance, in a non-biased way to vet it. It was effective in my experience, but I am not cognizant enough of the workings to judge. If I had more time, I would want to know more ... Edco is working, no one is complaining.

F1-Charlie supported this view: “One criterion I use at BCIT; if no one complains, it is working.” F2-Lima complimented the value in attending Education Council meetings: “I frequently go to the Edco meetings to see what is going on; they generally do a good job, it is useful. I learn a lot, it keeps me up to date.” F2-Golf agreed Education Council provided value, but observed its structure was cumbersome: “It is a good system for checks and balances, but it can be cumbersome given the diverse stakeholders.”

F2-Juliet observed that Education Council was both effective in its mandate as well as engaging faculty:

It is good, there are few environments like that here that are cross-institutional. The school silos are so strong here. The recent education policy development has been done well, they sent out proposals for feedback, to all faculty, asked for input, reported back on the input, I thought it worked well.

F2-Foxtrot also expressed that Education Council was effective in its decisions and opined that part of the reason for its effectiveness might be the absence of certain manager types:

All I know is that Edco seems to work. When I put something through that should pass, it does, and when I have sent something in that shouldn't, it didn't. I think part of its success is that it is disengaged from the business model; there are no deans or operations managers, it is focussed on education, that is why it works.

F2-India agreed that faculty's strong presence on Education Council was a positive influence:

I have been involved in Edco officially this year, but in the past I served on several standing committees, it is quite an involved process. It seems to work quite well, it is a good process that involves faculty, some of the committees, like programming, and the school quality committees, are dominated by faculty. A lot of faculty, not just FSA, but also BCGEU are involved in Edco. It is a senior education decision-making body, which has a significant faculty component.

The same participant extended this view and suggested the interdisciplinary and interschool nature of Education Council contributed to its success; and also shared the previous view of F2-Foxtrot regarding the benefit of not having Deans serve on Edco:

Edco works well because everyone plays a team role; you can't tell where people are from, whether they are management, faculty, or what. It is a good thing no Deans are on it; AD's are ok, they are very close to education, more like half management, half faculty. The Deans are too much business priority. The consultative structure works well.

4.7.1.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus group participants offered a few comments that suggested they believed the Education Council was an effective decision-making structure.

BCGEU participant G1-Charlie related a positive experience and view: "Edco drives my curriculum changes, they are all volunteers, and in my experience, I found them to be very effective. They are good at going over your curriculum, double checking

things, like quality control. They definitely helped me.” G2-India agreed, suggesting: “Edco is there to help; they try to remove obstacles out of the way.”

4.7.2. Legislative Limits to the Role of Education Council

4.7.2.1. Overview

BCIT’s Education Council has its mandate and scope defined by provincial legislation (*College and Institute Act*, 1996). Its operating agenda is established by the Education Council Executive Committee. During Education Council meetings, the Chair limits questions and discussion to those that are consistent with the Education Council’s mandate.

4.7.2.2. Document Review

Education Council’s mandate is clearly stipulated in BC’s *College and Institute Act* (1996). According to the Act, the role of the Council is defined as “An Education Council must advise the Board, and the Board must seek advice from the Education Council, on the development of education policy ...” (*College and Institute Act*, 1996, s.23.1). The full list of matters on which the Education Council is to advise the board on is contained in Section 23 of the Act, and summarized as follows:

- Mission statement and educational goals, objectives, strategies, and priorities
- Proposals about implementation of courses or programs
- Reports after implementation of non-credit programs, or programs under service contract
- Priorities for implementation of new programs
- Cancellation of courses or programs
- Evaluation of programs
- Policies concerning library and resource centres
- Setting the academic schedule
- Policies on faculty member qualifications
- Adjudication procedure for appealable matters of student discipline
- Terms for affiliation with other post-secondary bodies

- Consultation with community and program advisory groups
- Qualifications for admission policies
- Criteria for awarding credentials
- Other matters specified by the board

In addition, the *College and Institute Act* (1996) specifies the following as powers of the Education Council.

- Set policies concerning examinations and evaluation of student performance
- Set policies concerning student withdrawal
- Set criteria for academic standing, and the grading system
- Set criteria for awards recognizing academic excellence
- Set policies for appeals by students on academic matters
- Set curriculum content for courses leading to credentials.

BCIT's Board Governance Manual summarizes Education Council's key responsibilities as related to program quality, student admission, evaluation, and progression (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005).

4.7.2.3. Key Informant Interviews

This question was introduced into the interviews conducted with key informants, a group described in previous sections. The question generated limited, albeit consistent comments from two of the key informants.

Informant K-Foxtrot had a clear opinion regarding the limitations of Education Council's mandate:

Edco is effective in its primary purpose that is program quality control, and admission policies, etcetera. Edco does not have the mandate to represent faculty on the full range of issues that faculty are concerned about ... it cannot deal with strategic, or budget-oriented issues. Edco can only be part of faculty's voice in institutional decision-making.

K-Delta felt that BCIT's Education council worked within its legislated mandate:

"Generally, Edco sticks with the legislated issues and concerns."

4.7.2.4. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of Education Council as a facilitator of faculty decision-making and to understand participant's views on the Council's overall effectiveness, six focus group interviews were conducted across the three employee affiliation groups as described earlier.

4.7.2.4.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participants generated a response in complete contrast to earlier comments. Administrator participant A2-Mike did not feel Education Council effectively worked within its mandate and required additional oversight: "Edco struggles to stay within its mandate, it is not operational, but I have seen Edco flex into operational issues, which is frustrating ... Edco's behaviour and role should be monitored."

4.7.2.4.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups produced a different perspective, recognizing Education Council provided a forum for faculty participation in decision-making. F2-India observed: "It is not just a BCIT creation, it is legislated, it formally recognizes faculty involvement in decision-making."

4.7.2.4.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

No comments relevant to this finding were noted for the participants in the Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus groups.

4.7.3. Summary

Participants had varying degrees of familiarity with BCIT's Education Council, including its mandate and how effectively (or not) it operates. Participant opinions often depended on whether or not they had actually had experience with the Education Council, either as a member, or as a faculty or staff member applying for approval for a new program, or policy. Several participants understood the limitations of the Education Council's mandate, which effectively limits the scope of its ability to facilitate faculty decision-making. These results are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.8. Measures to Elevate Faculty Engagement in Decision-Making at BCIT

All responses reported in Section 4.8 were generated by the specific interview discussion guide questions corresponding to the seventh research sub-question (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Interview Discussion Guide Questions Corresponding to Research Sub-Question 7

Research Sub-Question 7
7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?
Corresponding Key Informant Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix C)
13. Could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty engagement in Vision?
14. What do you think about current level of faculty involvement in decision-making at BCIT?
20. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT?
21. What level of trust exists at BCIT today? Is that higher or lower than 5 years ago?
22. Do you have any suggestions for improving institutional decision-making at BCIT?
23. Do you have any other comments on faculty's role in decision-making at BCIT?
Corresponding Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions (see Appendix F)
10. Could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty engagement [Vision]?
20. What do you think about current level of faculty involvement in decision-making?
24. What are the best ways to involve faculty in decision-making?
25. What are the reasons why faculty may not be involved in decision-making?
26. What is a reasonable amount of time to allow for faculty consultation?
27. Over the past 5 to 10 years, have you perceived any major changes to engage faculty?
28. The literature suggests a trend to more managerial decision-making, why is that?
29. Do you think there is a trend towards, more managerial decision-making at BCIT?
33. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT?
34. What level of trust exists at BCIT today? Is that higher or lower than 5 years ago?
35. Any final suggestions for improving institutional decision-making at BCIT?
<i>Note.</i> Some of the above questions have been abbreviated to fit in the table, and the question numbering above relates to the order of questions in the specific discussion guides: See Appendix C for the Key Informant Discussion Guide; Appendix F for the Focus Group discussion Guide.

4.8.1. The Effect of the Appointment of a New President

4.8.1.1. Overview

The resignation of the past President signalled a new era in BCIT decision-making which began under an interim acting President (May 2007 through February 2008), pending the installation of the new President on March 1, 2008. Participant

comments suggest that faculty and staff optimism grew under the interim acting President and continued to build with the installation of the new President. As the comments related to this issue demonstrate, first impressions were mostly positive. However, it was apparent from the comments that there would be a finite window of opportunity for the new President to put his goodwill into action.

4.8.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

The discussion guide questions generated numerous comments from the key informants. Most perceived there was a genuine effort to increase consultation, however some reserved their judgement until they had more time to assess.

Informant K-Golf linked the improving collaborative climate to the interim acting President who among other things initiated the Institutional Vision Project:

... [the interim acting President] did all the right things when she took over from (the previous President). What we see today started with the [Vision Project], where the project leader truly engaged with anyone who wanted to; there was extensive dialogue, people were listened to and this input was shaped into the Vision document. It took a long time by the nature of the extensive consultation process. Now we are in the Strategic Planning phase, and we are moving quickly due the research that [the Vision Project] produced. The availability of consultation remains very high; the Council is representative, and is being listened to.

K-Alpha felt the new President deserved credit for his efforts to engage the broader BCIT community:

The new President is very consultative; this has not always been the case at BCIT. The new President is building a more collaborative culture. It is already better than it was, the change is the result of more open communication ... this has resulted in a reduction of the adversarial relationship that existed previously between management and the unions... this level of openness is a major improvement to our culture. The new President has set the example, now it will be up to his direct reports to follow.

Informant K-Foxtrot also believed the positive changes traced to the arrival of the new President: "Trust was missing between the unions and senior management prior to [the new President]. We have made some good progress, but there is still a long way to go. [The new President] is building a greater sense of team." K-Echo concurred: "Since [the

new President] arrived, there has been more opportunity for faculty to be involved in decision-making, for example Kumbaya [management retreat] and the Budget process. We have more trust since [the new President] arrived.” K-Charlie commented specifically on the greater influence faculty had in decision-making since the new President arrived: “Faculty have more voice now than before.” K-Bravo agreed with this perspective:

[The new President] is seen to be consulting faculty and providing useful information. I commend [the new President] for recognizing consultation was an issue, we still have a long way to go, but it is clear he wants to be more inclusive.

K-Bravo reiterated the concern that more time was needed to assess if this new approach would be successful: “I like the direction we are headed, but the jury is out as to how successful we will be.” K-Golf shared this reservation: “... the honeymoon period [for the new President] ... is a natural dynamic, time will tell.”

4.8.1.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT and to understand participant’s views on the effect of the appointment of a new President, six focus group interviews were conducted across the three employee affiliation.

4.8.1.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The Administrator focus group participants generated a range of generally optimistic comments regarding the impact of the new President on the organizational culture at BCIT as experienced so far.

Administrator A2-Golf referenced the damage done to the organizational culture prior to the new President arriving: “This organization was torn 2 to 3 years ago, it has not had time to heal; the trust is not there yet. Kumbaya [management retreat] was supposed to fix that; well it is not that simple.” A1-Echo suggested hope was natural in these circumstances, but qualified the comment that more time is needed to assess the ultimate impact: “It is a natural human reaction to have hope when we see change at the top ... it will depend if all the words turn into action.” A1-Delta expressed similar desire for hope: “It is safe to say that the whole education division has been marginalized,

things must improve.” A1-Bravo added further perspective to the need for optimism: “We are all hoping for change ... people have felt they did not have a voice before.” A2-Mike agreed that a tangible demonstration of trust was necessary: “We need a demonstration of trust, the organization is ready.”

A2-Hotel suggested there was evidence of positive change: “[The interim acting President], and now [the new President] are trying to rebuild.” A2-India believed things were improving: “It is evident now there is an attempt to make it bottom-up ... there is an attempt to bring folks into the room.” A2-Mike also saw efforts to engage more broadly: Under [the new President] there is a desire to bring the unions into decision-making.” A2-Lima made this encouraging observation: “I used to think the President Forums were a waste of time, but now I see more passion for the big picture, faculty seem more interested now.”

4.8.1.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus group participants generated similarly optimistic comments in regard to the effects of the new President on the organizational culture at BCIT as experienced so far.

FSA participant F1-Bravo offered a specific insight into how things have changed:

The lines of communication are vastly improved since the departure of our past President. I know our union President gets almost daily phone calls from the new President, just to talk about ideas. They have weekly meetings, so they are more attuned to what’s going on at the Institute. For example, the first time ever, each union was asked to present on the budget to the executive team, on what each union sees as the needs for the institute—that has never happened before. I think things have become far more transparent and more inclusive, look at Kumbaya [management retreat].

K-Foxtrot offered a similarly positive example: “The Visioning [Project] is encouraging.” F2-Lima felt similarly encouraged: “I see light at the end of the tunnel.” F2-Mike found one of the new President’s offers particularly hopeful: “The invitation to write him directly and he will respond personally is impressive.” F1-Delta shared a positive experience from attending the President’s open forums: “There is more opportunity for faculty input

than before. I go to most of the forums; they are a good update from time to time.” This participant tempered the last comment with this cautionary comment: “Superficially, more people are asking questions, that’s good, but does it mean it will get listened to? I have a big question there.”

4.8.1.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

The Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) focus group participants generated cautiously optimistic comments in regard to the effects of the new President on the organizational culture at BCIT as experienced so far.

BCGEU participant G1-Bravo built on the theme of hope, similar to the Administrator and FSA focus group participants: “... under [the past President] there was no hope, now I am hopeful things will get better. [The new President] has to be better than the previous regime, we are sure hopeful, it has to be better.” G2-Hotel extended the hopeful comments: “I hope with the new President and leadership team, that it will translate into greater transparency right down to the instructor level, and provide the right conditions to drive collaboration.” G2-Juliet believed the new President’s efforts to invite the unions to management retreats was a significant change:

I have never seen any BCIT president invite the unions to a management retreat; that is a big step, a very positive change. As a result, I don’t think managers feel there is as big a gap between us and them.

G1-Echo shares what seemed like a relatively minor incident that made a significant positive impression: “I met him at open house, I found him quite approachable, he even remembered my name.”

G2-Golf remarked that although the climate seemed improved, more time was needed to be convincing that the environment had really changed: “There is a good climate now, but the proof will be in the results, I am not impressed until I see results, I’ll believe it when I see it.” G2-Juliet sounded a similarly unconvinced tone: “[The new President] has encouraged input through his President forums; I have not seen any change at the Dean or Associate Dean level, still business as usual.” G2-India felt compelled to take a broader perspective and recognize that the fact BCIT was having this discussion was a step in the right direction: “These issues are not BCIT specific;

they exist at other post-secondary institutions. What may be unique is we are talking about them now.”

4.8.2. Fostering a Culture for Change

4.8.2.1. Overview

Although participant comments hint at a sense of renewal and change at BCIT, this theme only resonated with the key informants to any extent.

4.8.2.2. Key Informant Interviews

When this topic was introduced into the interview conversations, the key informants took a high-level and future-oriented perspective suggesting the need to evolve from the status quo.

Informant K-Delta felt faculty needed to broaden their perspective about higher education: “Faculty need to broaden their understanding of post-secondary education, including student behaviour and the wider environmental reality. Education is no longer a place of low risk and expectations, it is changing, and we must change with it.” K-Foxtrot extended the argument that today’s education environment is different and more competitive than it was, requiring collaboration and increased responsiveness:

We are entering an era that will be much more competitive than it has been in the past. I think governments will be looking at system redesign, which is another way of saying rationalization, or that some institutions will cease to exist. We will only be able to position ourselves well in that environment if we collaborate successfully; that will mean being responsive to changing environments and changing where we need to change.

This same informant suggested faculty must understand the need to change and BCIT’s need to be responsive to its changing environment: “It is more a question of how we get faculty to understand that they will have to change, the world is changing, and we need to respond to that.” K-Golf observed that despite the calls for change, it does not happen quickly: “Notwithstanding all the theory, nature still prevails. People and organizations won’t change overnight.”

4.8.2.3. Focus Group Interviews

In order to address the issue of how to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT and to understand participant's views on the need to foster a culture for change, six focus group interviews were conducted across the three employee affiliation groups.

4.8.2.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

No comments relevant to this finding were noted from the Administrator focus groups.

4.8.2.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

No comments relevant to this finding were noted from the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups.

4.8.2.3.3. Government Employee's Union Focus Groups

No comments relevant to this finding were noted from the Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) focus groups.

4.8.3. *Increasing Stakeholder Awareness Concerning Decision-Making Rights and Obligations*

4.8.3.1. Overview

Participant comments underscored a broad lack of understanding across most Institute constituencies with regard to their decision-making rights and obligations. Comments suggest that it was important for the Senior Leadership Team and middle-managers to embrace the new spirit of collaboration demonstrated by the new President. Faculty generally expressed an interest in engaging more, but indicated they need more guidance and support in this area.

4.8.3.2. Key Informant Interviews

The key informants offered comments that suggested there was a need to ensure that the Senior Leadership Team, beyond the President, must demonstrate they

support increased faculty engagement in institutional decision-making; and that there is an opportunity to educate faculty on how to effectively engage.

Informant K-Charlie was critical that the Vice Presidents were not demonstrating sufficient support for faculty:

Things are getting better under [the new President], but there is still a time-lag with the VP's. The VP's must get closer to the day-to-day business of education. They must realize they share responsibility for the quality of education and take more action to support faculty.

K-Bravo perceived an opportunity to support faculty engagement in decision-making by educating them on their decision-making rights:

There is an opportunity to educate faculty on their [decision-making] rights. The strategic planning process is a big opportunity ... we need to do that right, with broad consultation and input. It can't be top down; it has to come from the grass-roots.

4.8.3.3. Focus Groups Interviews

In order to address the issue of how to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT and to understand participant's views on the need to increase stakeholder awareness concerning decision-making rights and obligations, this topic was introduced into the six focus group sessions conducted with the three different sectors of the BCIT community, as described previously.

4.8.3.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The participants in the Administrator focus groups had suggestions regarding clarity and sincerity of expectations; and empowerment.

Participant A2-Golf believed increased empowerment would enhance decision-making: "BCIT should empower people to take calculated risks." A2-Mike felt it was important to have clear expectations about what faculty participation would lead to; and remarked that it was important not to mislead faculty about how their input would be used:

You need to make it clear to faculty what role you want them to play ... you must explain what their participation will result in. Don't create false

expectations, which is common at BCIT ... people get jaundiced ... heard that before.

4.8.3.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

In response to the topic of enhancing faculty engagement members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups made few suggestions although participant F2-Juliet supported the key informant suggestion to provide education and training on how faculty should engage in decision-making: “Provide training on how BCIT makes decisions, and what is expected of faculty, their role. De-mystify institutional decision-making.”

4.8.3.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

In response to the topic of enhancing faculty engagement members of the Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) Focus Groups offered suggestions that would educate other aspects of the Institute on how to make and support better decisions.

G1-Echo did not feel other departments adequately understood the impact of their decisions and would benefit by entering into dialogue with those who are impacted:

All sub-departments need to understand the needs of the organization, like registration, safety and security; they need to understand the satellite campuses better. Those kinds of things need to be discussed and communicated both ways. Those other departments need a broader understanding before they make decisions; that is not happening now.

G2-Hotel felt that management could assist by facilitating more frequent and more effective department meetings as a forum for faculty to participate in decision-making: “Management should provide clear expectations on department meetings; it seems not many of us are meeting as much as we should. There should be a consistent process, for minutes etcetera.”

4.8.4. Enhancing the Decision-Making Framework

4.8.4.1. Overview

A number of participants had strong views on the need for an effective decision-making framework for the Institute. Their comments centered on the need for forward-

planning, transparent and timely communication, accountability, decision-making training, and follow-up.

4.8.4.2. Key Informant Interviews

In response to this question the key informant participants offered ideas and opinions on improved communication, improved decision-making frameworks, and the need for increased strategic thinking at the Institute.

K-Alpha felt better communication was essential to establishing the right culture to support collaborative decision-making: “We have to follow through with communication, it is critically important to establishing a culture of collaboration and trust.” K-Golf believed the solution required a formal decision-making process: “We need a decision-making process or matrix.” K-Bravo suggested a more strategic approach to planning at BCIT would facilitate better decision-making: “Strategic planning is very new for BCIT ... there are not a lot of strategic thinkers in the senior management ranks. At the heart of the problem, no one has looked at BCIT strategically before.”

4.8.4.3. Focus Group Interviews

As in previous sections, the general issue of improving decision-making at BCIT was introduced as part of the discussions in the focus group sessions involving representatives from three sectors of the BCIT community.

4.8.4.3.1. Administrator Focus Groups

The participants in the Administrator focus groups offered limited comments in respect to the topic of improving decision-making at BCIT. Participant A2-Golf believed there was an opportunity to facilitate faculty input by developing structures and processes: “We need to find ways to structure faculty input.” A2-Juliet returned to the theme of increasing trust as a means to increasing collaboration: “You cannot have collaboration without trust.”

4.8.4.3.2. Faculty and Staff Association Focus Groups

The members of the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) focus groups had a large number of ideas and suggestions to contribute on the topic of enhancing the

Institution's decision-making framework. Their comments ranged from having formal and clear decision-making structures and processes; more open and accessible communication; providing appropriate time to disseminate information and gather feedback; and the need to educate faculty on how to make collegial decisions.

FSA participant F2-Kilo commented that the importance of formal decision-making structures and processes has increased as the Institute has grown in size: "The bigger we are, the more important it is that we have official decision-making processes that actually work." F2-India supported the need for unbiased and consistent official decision-making processes: "Personal agendas influence unofficial decision-making, it is important that BCIT have an official process that is not biased and is Institute wide for consistency and integrity." F1-Delta took the concept of formal structures and processes down to the micro-level, suggesting it starts with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the people involved: "The roles of Faculty, Programs Heads etcetera are not well defined; if you want effective decisions, you must first define the roles." This participant went on to remark on the importance of structure and transparency: "Institutional decision-making should be structured and open, rather than a few people sitting behind doors and making the decisions." F1-Bravo concurred: "Institutional decision-making should be more open, more transparent."

F1-Alpha proffered the importance of timing: "There is no value in seeking input after a decision has been made, our opinion needs to be sought before the decision is made." F1-Charlie reinforced this comment: "Information should be disseminated before, so we can be informed." F2-India felt the same way: "Provide background ahead of time, with sufficient notice." F1-Delta offered an explanation to further reinforce this comment: "The best way to engage faculty is by being timely with the request for input. If it is during the term, you can't expect feedback in a couple of days, give us some options."

F1-Charlie explained it would be beneficial to have more information to make decisions and offered a solution: "I don't have a good sense of what the BCIT executive is up against; a half page newsletter would be better than the President's forums, I don't have time for them." F2-Golf also felt there was an opportunity to improve the exchange of information through alternative communication vehicles: "[They] need to develop alternative ways to engage faculty, not just meetings at 2:30 on Wednesday afternoons."

They should use more technology and surveys; the President Forums are not the best way to engage faculty.” F2-Mike supported keeping the forums: “Open forums are a good start.” F-1-Delta felt faculty should be able to communicate directly with the President: “We should be able to email our feedback to the President.” F2-Kilo extended this idea to the greater access to the Vice-Presidents and the Deans: “There should be more access to the Deans and VP’s.”

F2-Foxtrot captured many of the sentiments of this group with this statement: “We need an open, transparent decision-making process that is traceable, and ensures input is considered, and decisions are communicated back.” F1-Delta added further perspective: “There should be a system to hold people accountable.”

F1-Alpha proposed that new faculty would benefit by an orientation on how to make collegial decisions: “We need to educate younger faculty on how to make collegial decisions.”

4.8.4.3.3. Government Employee’s Union Focus Groups

The participants in the Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU) focus groups offered a similarly prolific number of observations on how to enhance the Institute’s decision-making framework. Suggestions ranged from better planning; alternative communication vehicles to disseminate information and solicit feedback; and revisiting the BCGEU collective agreement to provide more opportunity for the BCGEU faculty to participate in institutional decision-making.

BCGEU participant G2-Juliet suggested it would not be difficult to plan more effectively given the highly cyclical nature of education: “BCIT is cyclical, there is no reason we cannot plan better, and schedule sessions for better instructor consultation.” G2-Hotel supported this suggestion: “BCIT should use a calendar to help faculty schedule in key events, such as major decision inputs, chief instructor meetings, and meaningful professional development. A 6-month planning window would be very helpful.” This participant went on to suggest alternative venues for meetings beyond the main campus so that more trade instructors would be able to participate: “Hold forums and meetings like the Vision Project at the satellite campuses at times that work for the trade instructors.” F1-Foxtrot concurred: “They need to consider beyond the mother ship,

beyond Burnaby centric.” G2-Kilo further reinforced the need for alternative venues: “Alternatives for faculty to provide input, not just meetings and President Forums, things like surveys.” G1-Echo had more to add to this theme: “Daily emails to faculty from the School or Department, monthly meetings, just to keep them informed and involved, you can resolve a lot of anxiety through communication.”

G2-Kilo suggested there was not consistent, nor sufficient time provided for BCGEU instructors to participate in decision-making, nor did they have the training on how to contribute:

There needs to be a structure in place, consistent across all schools that supports time off to meet and collaborate on key issues, this way you aren't robbing the instructors of the precious little time they have. Let us know the agenda and background ahead of time, and give us some training on how you want us to contribute. The labour model for the BCGEU is based on a 30-year-old or more platform; it did not envision the complexity and pace of change in our jobs now. We don't have enough time with 30-hours-per-week student contact to have much engagement; this should be revisited.

G2-Hotel agreed, offering a solution: “Provide clear release time as part of the instructor’s load if you want serious engagement. The BCGEU instructors do not have enough meetings to exchange information and provide input. Management, the Associate Deans need to support this.”

4.8.5. Summary

Participants were asked a number of questions, probing issues such as: the impact of the recent appointment of the new President for BCIT; the notion of change; stakeholder rights and obligations with respect to decision-making; and how to enhance decision-making generally at BCIT. The majority of participants offered suggestions on how to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making. There was considerable optimism associated with the arrival of the new President, inconsistent expectations associated with the need for change, strong opinions as to the need to clarify and support stakeholder’s rights, but less awareness generally of the associated responsibilities that accompany them. These results are discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.9. BCIT Employee Opinion Survey

4.9.1. Overview

The 2009 BCIT Employee Opinion Survey is part of an ongoing survey developed and used exclusively by BCIT. The surveys are conducted bi-annually. The 2009 version consisted of 56 questions, and represented the fourth iteration of the Employee Opinion Survey at BCIT. The survey has the following stated objectives:

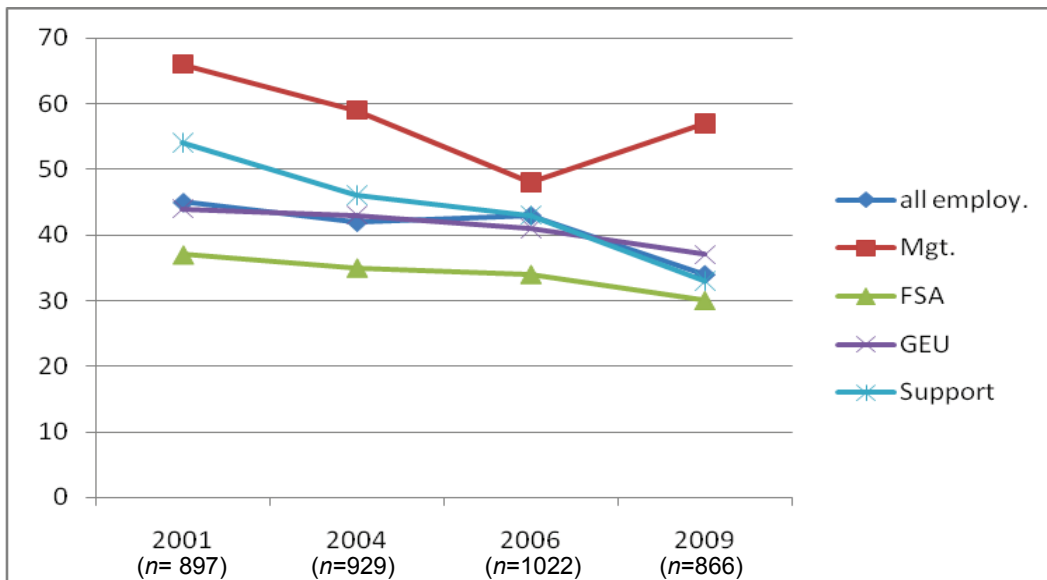
- Develop a survey format that is easy to respond to and is accessible to all BCIT employees;
- Develop a survey process which is endorsed by BCIT's senior management and its unions;
- Obtain survey data that can be trended against previously collected data. (British Columbia Institute of Technology Employee, 2009b)

The Chair of the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey Committee commented that the survey's primary objective was "... to get people's opinions on issues that are important to them". (Chair of BCIT Employee Opinion Survey Committee, personal communication, March 30, 2009).

The 2009 survey was distributed to all full and part-time employees of BCIT on the payroll as of November 2008. The survey was distributed by mail in early January 2009, with responses closed off on February 18, 2009. In that time period 866 responses were received, representing a 34% response rate, which is down from 1022 responses in 2006 (representing a 43% response rate). However, the 2009 response remains statistically representative of the total population of 2,500 (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009b). Figure 4.3 represents the trend in participation rates by employee group, over the past four survey cycles.

It is noteworthy that the percentage of respondents to the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey that did not declare their employee group affiliation in the demographic section of the survey, dropped from 11% in 2006, to 3% in 2009. This may suggest more trust, or less fear in the new administration and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Figure 4.3. Participation Rates by Employee Group



Note. In percent.

BCIT’s Employee Opinion Survey Committee presided over the analysis of the 2009 survey and published results to the BCIT community. The survey utilized a 5-point Likert rating scale, where rankings of 1-2 represent disagreement, 3 represents a neutral response, and 4-5 represent agreement with the statement. The number of respondents (*n* value) for each survey cycle are as follows: 897 in 2001; 929 in 2004; 1022 in 2006; 866 in 2009).

For the purposes of providing an overview of the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey results, the following three figures provide the summary highlights presented by the BCIT Employee Opinion Survey Committee.

The Committee combined the results of the 56 questions into nine themes and reported that all themes received higher average scores in 2009 vs. 2006 (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11. Average Ratings by Consolidated Theme: All Respondents

Theme	2004	2006	2009
Challenge, Growth, and Development	3.6	3.5	3.8
About my Department	3.3	3.6	3.7
Making a Contribution	4.0	4.2	4.3
Communication and Knowledge Management	3.4	3.3	3.4
Personal Wellness and Safety	3.6	3.6	3.7
Physical Environment	3.5	3.5	3.7
Leadership at BCIT	3.5	3.1	3.3
Pride in BCIT	4.3	4.0	4.1
Compensation and Workload	3.5	3.2	3.4

Note. Adapted from BCIT Employee Opinion Survey (2009).

Furthermore, the published results highlighted the following statements as receiving the highest rankings in 2009, and provided the 2006 comparable rankings for comparison (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12. Highest Ranked Responses: All Respondents

Survey Statement	2006	2009
I have a sense of pride in the work I do.	4.4	4.5
I have the skills needed to perform my work effectively.	4.3	4.4
I am proud to work for BCIT.	4.3	4.4
I enjoy the work I do.	4.3	4.4
BCIT makes a worthwhile contribution to society.	4.3	4.4

Note. Adapted from BCIT Employee Opinion Survey (2009).

Similarly, the published results report the following statements as receiving the lowest ratings in 2009 (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Lowest Ranked Responses: All Respondents

Survey Statement	2006	2009
BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing change.	2.7	2.9
I understand BCIT's future direction.	3.3	3.0
Senior management communicates their goals effectively.	2.9	3.0
I am paid equitably compared with people doing equivalent work at other organizations.	3.0	3.0
I have the time available to be able to keep my job skills current.	3.0	3.1
Senior management does what they say they will do.	2.9	3.1

Note. Adapted from BCIT Employee Opinion Survey (2009).

The 2009 BCIT Employee Opinion Survey Report concludes with the following listed as next steps, all of which were either complete, or in process simultaneous to the writing of this dissertation:

- Communicate results to the (BCIT) community at large.
- Analyze data and prepare high level recommendations to address systemic issues.
- Embrace strategy of appropriately linking new initiatives to employee opinion data.
- Finalize the result reports detailed by employee group and school/department.
- Support senior managers in communicating results to employees in their school/department. (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009b)

4.9.2. Focus for This Study

For the purposes of this study, the analysis will focus on each of the two faculty employee groups (FSA and BCGEU), and the Management group; although the All Employees metrics are reported for illustrative and comparative purposes. As indicated earlier, the survey utilized a 5-point Likert rating scale, where rankings of 1-2 represent disagreement with the statement, 3 represents a neutral response, and 4-5 represent agreement with the statement.

In terms of statistical analysis, comparisons between employee groups and between survey years were done using 1-way ANOVA. All reported results are

statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level; equivalent to a 95% confidence level. The rationale for this approach was discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.2).

Seven statements from the 2009 Survey were considered to be relevant to this study's research question and to provide a reasonable proxy for employee satisfaction with their engagement in decision-making at BCIT. The specific statements and the rationale for their selection is discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.2. The complete list of 56 survey questions is contained in Appendix B.

4.9.3. Results

Results for each of the seven statements are presented below in chart form, with accompanying statistical analysis to assist with interpretation. The question number identified with each question below relates to the 2009 survey questionnaire. A 1-way ANOVA analysis (as discussed in Chapter 3) was conducted to find out the differences in level of agreement with each of the following survey statements: by employee group (BCGEU, FSA, and Management); and by year (2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009). The numerical results for each of these questions are presented in table form in Appendix J; and the summary tables from the 1-way ANOVA statistical analysis to support these findings are presented in Appendix K.

Figure 4.4 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 12, "*I am empowered to make appropriate decisions to get the job done successfully,*" over the past four survey cycles.

For Statement 12, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all four years: the mean scores for Management in 2001, 2006, and 2009 were statistically higher than those for the BCGEU and FSA. The mean scores for Management and FSA in 2004 were statistically higher than the BCGEU.

In terms of the mean scores of level of agreement by year, there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the FSA: the mean scores for the FSA were statistically higher in 2004 compared to 2006.

Figure 4.4. Responses to Statement 12

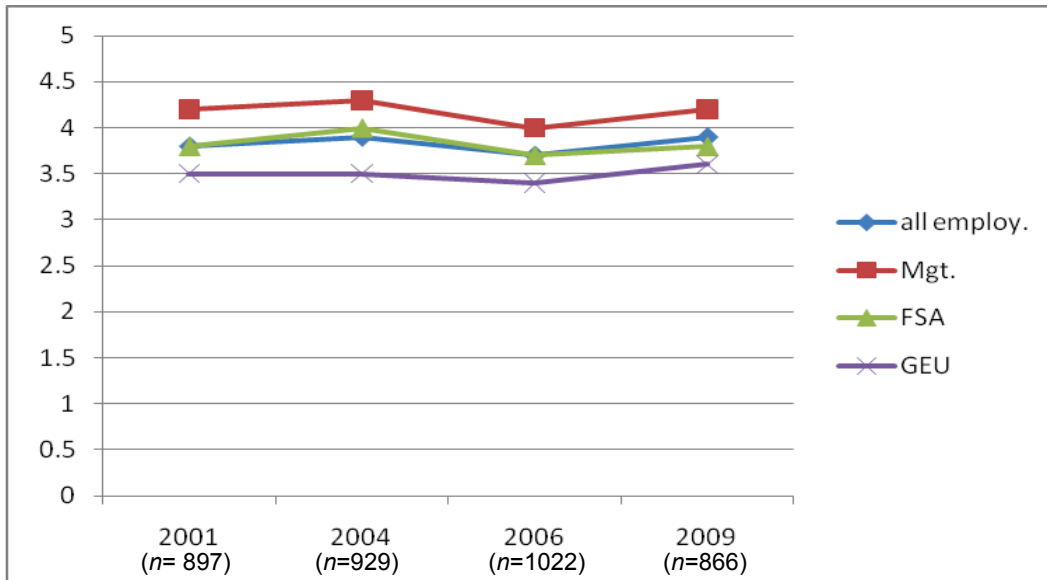
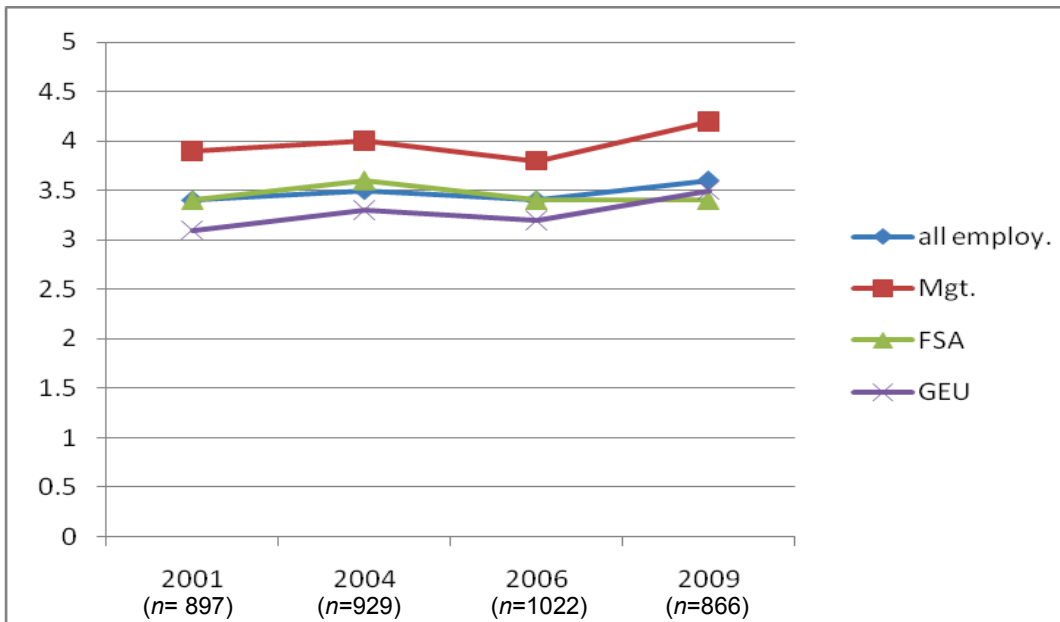


Figure 4.5 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 15, “I have the opportunity to influence changes that directly impact my work,” over the past four survey cycles.

Figure 4.5. Responses to Statement 15

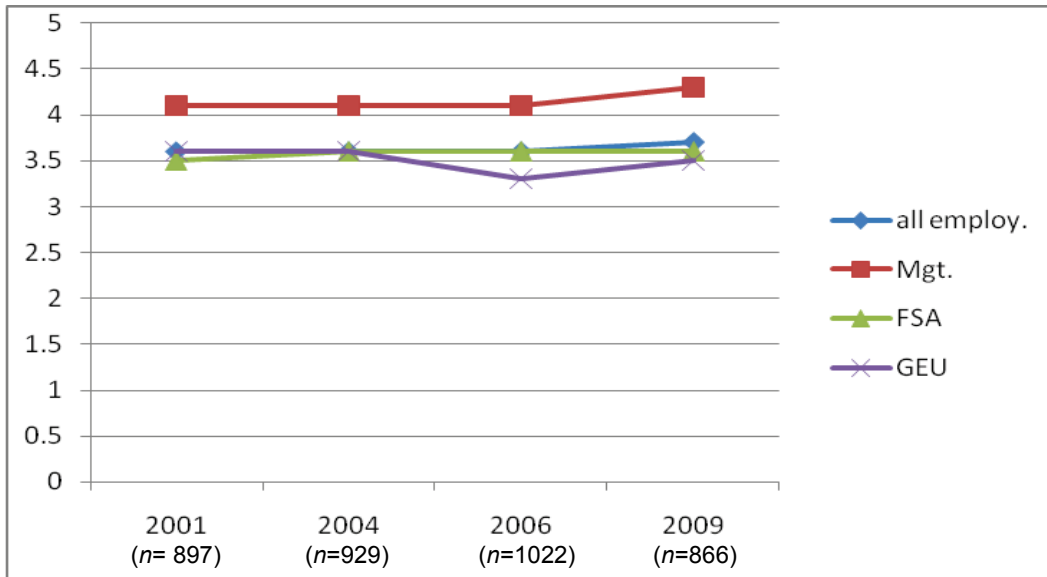


For Statement 15, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all four years: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher than those for the BCGEU and FSA.

In terms of mean scores of level of agreement by year, there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for Management: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher in 2009 compared to 2006.

Figure 4.6 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 16, “*In my department suggestions and ideas are encouraged,*” over the past four survey cycles.

Figure 4.6. Responses to Statement 16

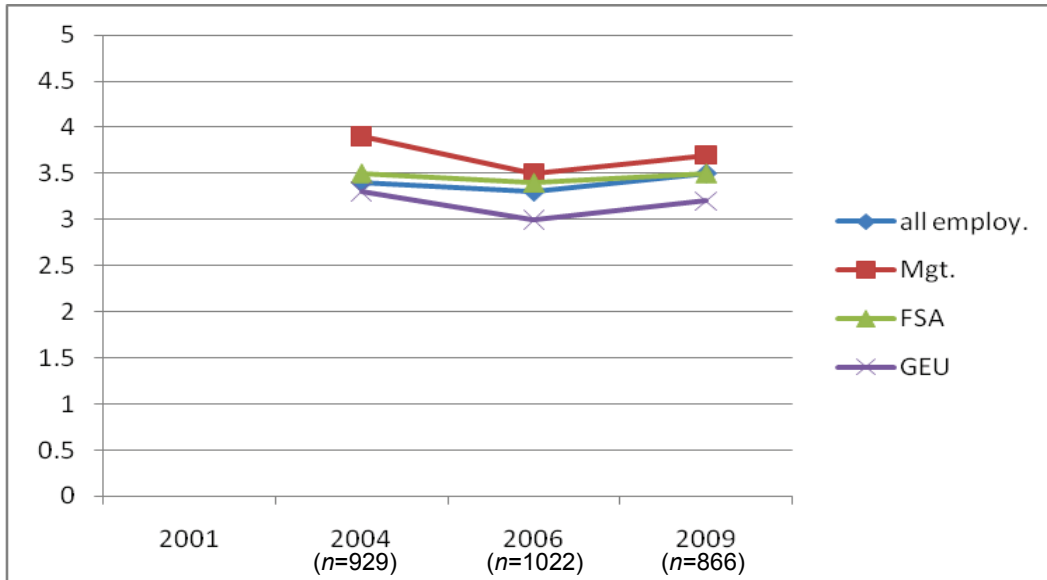


For Statement 16, the difference in mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all four years: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher than those for the BCGEU and FSA.

In terms of the mean scores of level of agreement by year, all comparisons were statistically insignificant at the $p < .05$ level.

Figure 4.7 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 24, “BCIT fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas and recommend changes,” over the past three survey cycles.

Figure 4.7. Responses to Statement 24

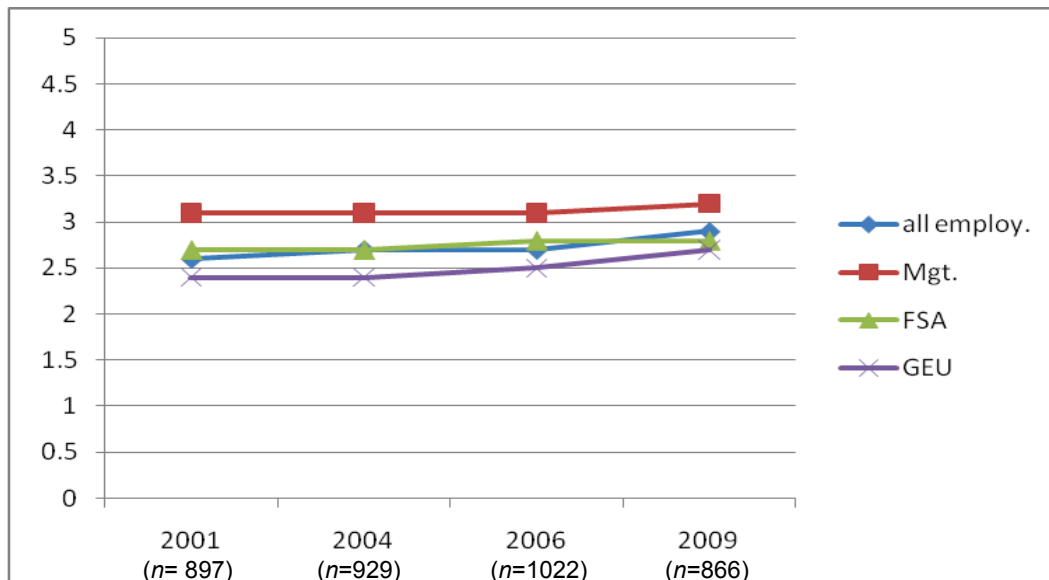


For Statement 24, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for three of the four survey years: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher than the BCGEU and FSA in 2004; and the mean scores for Management were greater than the BCGEU in 2006 and 2009.

In terms of the mean scores of level of agreement by year, there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for Management: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher in 2004 compared to 2006. It is notable that the trend downward in 2006, is followed by the rebound in 2009. There was generally lower agreement and more neutrality. This may reflect the new president’s honeymoon period.

Figure 4.8 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 25, “BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing new work processes,” over the past four survey cycles.

Figure 4.8. Responses to Statement 25

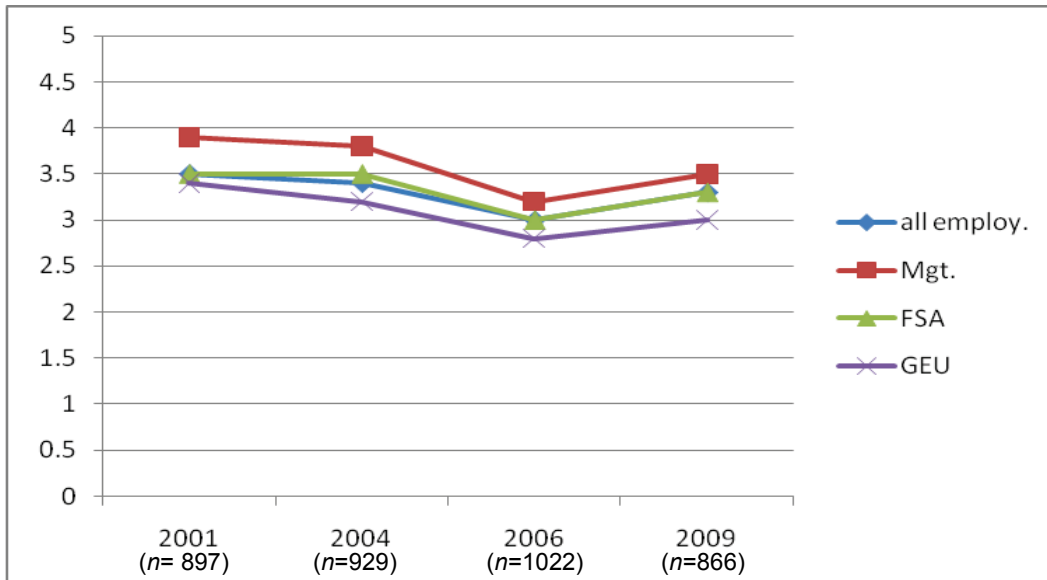


For Statement 25, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all four years: the mean scores for Management were greater than the BCGEU and FSA in 2001; Management was greater than the FSA, who was greater than the BCGEU in 2004; and Management was greater than the BCGEU in 2006 and 2009.

It is interesting to note that for this statement there was no statistically significant difference between the years, by employee group. This item shows the lowest level of agreement among all employee groups; and the most neutrality so far.

Figure 4.9 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 40, “Senior management fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes,” over the past four survey cycles.

Figure 4.9. Responses to Statement 40

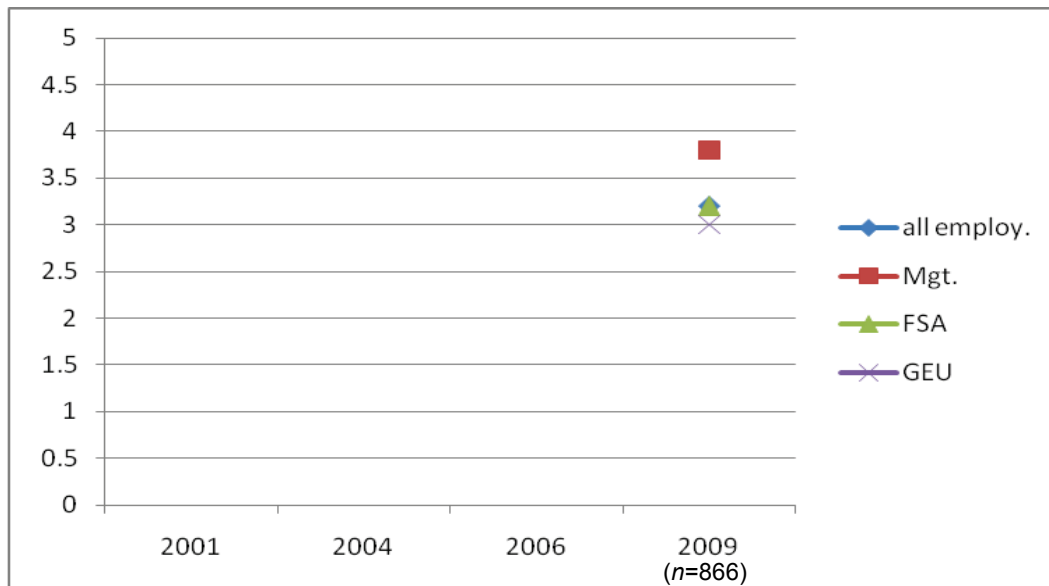


For Statement 40, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all four years: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher than the BCGEU and FSA in 2001; and the mean scores for Management were higher than the BCGEU in all other years.

In terms of the mean scores of level of agreement by year, there were statistically significant differences at the $p < .05$ level for all employee groups: the mean scores for the BCGEU were statistically higher in 2001 compared to 2006; the mean scores for the FSA were statistically higher in all years compared to 2006; and the mean scores for Management were statistically higher in both 2001 and 2004 compared to 2006. The low point in 2006 may reflect the turmoil and stress the organization was experiencing at that time.

Figure 4.10 reports the level of agreement by employee group to Statement 43, “Senior management actively consults with BCIT’s Unions on key institutional decisions,” over the past four survey cycles.

Figure 4.10. Responses to Statement 43



For Statement 43, the difference in the mean scores of the level of agreement by employee group was statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for 2009, the first year this statement was tested: the mean scores for Management were statistically higher than those for the BCGEU and FSA.

In terms of the mean scores of level of agreement by year, this was the first year for this statement; therefore no statistical analysis could be conducted between years.

Although there is only 1-year's data available for this question, the pattern of Management rating statements higher continues. The relatively low-neutral scores for both the FSA and BCGEU faculty groups are somewhat inconsistent with the praise the new President was accorded by this study's interview participants for his inclusive approach to the unions.

4.9.4. Summary

The survey results from the selected seven survey questions shown above compared data among each of the three employee groups which were the focus of this study (Management, FSA, and BCGEU) within each specific survey year; and also

compared each employee group year-to-year, over the four cycles of the survey (where available).

There are clear differences between employee groups in terms of their level of agreement with the survey statements. For example the management group tended to rate statements more positively than the members of the FSA, who in turn tended to be more positive than the BCGEU members. Furthermore, there were clear trends between years, with results generally dipping in 2006, possibly as a result of the deteriorating labour climate at that time; and then rebounding in 2009, potentially reflecting the optimism accompanying the arrival of a new President. These results are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

4.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter has reported results that were generated by the seven specific research sub-questions identified in Chapter 3, Section 3.2. The results provide contextual insights into the subject of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at BCIT.

Section 4.4 reported the results generated by the first three research sub-questions, under the broad heading of BCIT's official and unofficial decision-making processes. In summative terms, the results revealed varying degrees of understanding and appreciation for BCIT's official decision-making processes and perhaps as a consequence of that, the findings also demonstrated active use of unofficial decision-making processes. This section also reported on participants' perceptions of faculty's role in decision-making at the Institute.

Section 4.5 reported results related to the fourth specific research sub-question, which dealt with achieving a balance among collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability in decision-making. Participants in this study generally recognized the tension and trade-offs related to this challenge and offered insightful suggestions on how to achieve more balance.

Section 4.6 reported participants' responses to the fifth research sub-question, which probed the role of BCIT's faculty unions in decision-making. This subject was

discussed enthusiastically, with diverse and strong opinions being voiced. Section 4.7 reported results for the sixth question dealing with the role that the Education Council can play as a facilitator of faculty decision-making. There was a range of responses commenting in general about the Council, but most salient was the recognition that the Council is limited by a very specific mandate and accordingly cannot represent faculty's broader interests.

Section 4.8 reports on the final specific research sub-question, which probed for suggestions as to how to elevate faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. Participants contributed numerous constructive suggestions to this question and embraced the opportunity this study presented. Section 4.9 reported on the findings from items included in BCIT's Employee Opinion Survey that were deemed to be germane to this study. Where available, the results of three previous surveys were compared to the 2009 results and a statistical analysis was conducted to determine if the comparisons between groups within the same survey year and also between years within the same group were statistically significant. The survey results do not directly correlate to the seven specific research sub-questions, however, they do provide insights into the perceptions of the broader BCIT community; the relative perceptions of the specific employee affiliation groups; and, the swings in perceptions between survey years.

The results illuminate and give voice to the issues and opportunities regarding decision-making at BCIT as seen through the eyes of a selected group of the Institute's constituents (faculty and middle-management). Of particular note in the findings is the consistent support shown across all employee affiliation groups for the value and role of faculty voice in institutional decision-making.

Chapter 5 discusses and interprets these results, including their implications for practice and organizational development at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

CHAPTER 5.

Discussion of the Results

5.1. Overview

This final chapter of the dissertation offers a comprehensive discussion of the results, including their implications for practice and organizational development at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Section 5.2 restates the general research question which framed the study. Sections 5.3 through 5.8 discuss the findings reported in Chapter 4 which correspond directly to the seven research sub-questions, as depicted in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Chapter 5 Discussion Related to the Seven Research Sub-Questions

Research Sub-Question	Chapter 5 Section and Heading	Corresponding Chapter 4 Section
1. What are BCIT's official and unofficial decision-making processes?	5.3 Formal Decision-Making Structures at BCIT	4.3 4.4.1-4.4.4
2. How is faculty's role in decision-making understood?	5.4 Faculty Involvement and Engagement in Decision-Making Structures at BCIT	4.4.5
3. What aspects of decision-making are important to faculty?	5.4 Faculty Involvement and Engagement in Decision-Making Structures at BCIT	4.4.6
4. How can BCIT balance the desire for collaboration vs. responsiveness?	5.5 Obtaining Balance Between Collaborative Decision-Making and Institutional Responsiveness	4.5
5. What role should faculty unions play in decision-making?	5.6 The Role of BCIT's Faculty Unions in Representing Faculty in Institutional Decision-making	4.6
6. How effective is Education Council in facilitating faculty's role in decision-making?	5.7 The Education Council as a Key Element of the Organizational Structure at BCIT	4.7
7. How can BCIT elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making?	5.8 The Potential of Initiatives to Raise or Improve the Level of Faculty Engagement in Decision-Making at BCIT	4.8

Section 5.9 discusses the relationship of this study to previous research. Section 5.10 discusses the implications from this study for practice and organization at BCIT. Section 5.11 concludes the chapter and the study by providing recommendations for BCIT's consideration regarding the enhancement of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at BCIT.

5.2. General Research Question

What are the institutional decision-making structures and processes currently employed at BCIT and how effective are they at addressing faculty engagement?

5.3. Formal Decision-Making Structures at BCIT

As indicated in the research question, a goal of this study was to describe the formal organizational structures for decision-making at BCIT. BCIT is a large complex post-secondary educational institution with a range of program types and offerings, including both degree and non-degree outcomes, a diverse student body, and a faculty with qualifications ranging from trade and professional certifications to advanced graduate degrees. This study revealed that the formal organizational structure and decision-making processes are well defined by a variety of policies and statutes that are published in print and online. The Institute has a Board of Governors, a senior management team (referred hereafter as the Senior Leadership Team) headed by the Institute's President; and the Education Council, a key decision-making body which is charged with overseeing policies related to programs, curriculum, and student progression.

In addition to the formal decision-making bodies mentioned above, BCIT has two faculty unions, the Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) and the BC Government Employee Union (BCGEU) Instructional Bargaining Unit. Both unions have collective agreements with the Institute which guide matters such as Union-Management relations; faculty rights; faculty and management selection procedures; working conditions; faculty remuneration; and dispute resolution among others (British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, 2007; British Columbia Institute of

Technology & BCGEU, 2007). All faculty must belong to 1 of the 2 faculty unions, and both unions have the right to strike. In addition to the Senior Leadership Team and the faculty unions described above, BCIT's support staff belong to the BCGEU – Support Staff Bargaining Unit. BCIT's management are excluded from any bargaining units, but are guided by BCIT's Management Terms and Conditions (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2002). The following discussion focuses on the faculty and institutional aspects of decision-making at BCIT.

In addition to affiliation with their respective unions, faculty also belong to departments, which generally follow specific technological or vocational affiliations. For example within the School of Transportation, there is an Aerospace Technology Department. Many faculty affiliate most closely with their departments because it provides a sense of community, fosters established relationships and inter-dependencies, and for the FSA, encompasses a formalized decision-making body as defined in their collective agreement (British Columbia Institute of Technology & BCIT Faculty and Staff Association, 2007). The FSA collective agreement provides some level of role definition and procedural guidance for decision-making within the departments, but not beyond. There are no references in the agreement as to how faculty should engage at the broader school or institutional levels, except for the collective bargaining process and the selection of managers. The direction provided by the respective collective agreements for decision-making is neither extensive nor detailed. In fact, the BCGEU collective agreement does not specifically reference decision-making or consultation. As one BCGEU instructor put it: "It is because there is a lack of knowledge of the process, or the collective agreement, by both management and instructors. The collective agreement is not clear in its wording sometimes" (BCGEU focus group participant G2-Juliet).

Faculty may also be invited by management or their respective unions to participate in various committees. For example, management may invite faculty to participate in a strategic planning council, or a union may invite some of its faculty members to participate in a collective bargaining committee, but there is no explicit definition of decision-making responsibilities, or roles within this context; they are more informally defined. Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 illustrates how the various types of decisions relate to the formal decision-making structures and processes. As Table 4.1

demonstrates, there is an abundance of official decision-making structures and processes at BCIT. These processes have been developed over the years and for the most part are thoroughly documented. If a faculty or staff member knows where to look and how to access these structures and processes, he or she will find direction on the majority of issues that would normally be encountered, or that he/she would have to deal with. However, it was clear from the participants' responses reported in Chapter 4 that faculty generally did not have a full appreciation of the extent of the official decision-making structures and processes; how they could access and engage with them or, what specific roles they might assume in those structures and processes. BCIT does not provide any orientation or training specifically on its decision-making structures and processes. There is no employee handbook or orientation guide to assist faculty and staff learn and understand the Institute's various and complex decision-making structures and processes. Furthermore, there is no formal mentorship program; each department is left to manage this aspect of employee integration on its own, resulting in inconsistent and incomplete training with regard to the Institute's official decision-making structures and processes.

Many participants in this study viewed BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes as cumbersome, bureaucratic, and even irrelevant, which contributed to their views that BCIT's decision-making processes negatively affected their ability to get their jobs done. This is evident in a number of comments, for example, an administrator made the following remark: "We spend an amazing amount of time figuring out how to bypass the official systems, just so we can get things done ... the amount of processes have increased dramatically" (A1-Delta). A faculty member reinforced the point with this comment: "Our department depends most on unofficial decision-making; we work well together, and can solve things in the hallways" (G2-Golf). This may contribute to the general lack of understanding and appreciation for the Institute's official decision-making structures and processes. If experienced faculty and staff are routinely circumventing or avoiding the official processes, it is reasonable to infer that new recruits would not gain exposure, or gain an understanding of the official processes, nor would they be supported for trying. This could well perpetuate the problem of by-passing the official processes.

It is important to note that this study does not purport to be a representative sample of *all* BCIT employee opinions regarding the institution's decision-making structures and processes. The study was drawn from a faculty point of view, so the majority of participants represent the academic side of the Institute. The teaching and learning imperative drives to the heart of the Institute's core purpose and comprises the work of a majority of its employees. It is conceivable that employees in support areas such as Finance may have a better understanding of the policies in their areas and consider them to be effective. However, as the following demonstrates, this understanding is not one that is shared by those on the academic side of the Institute.

5.4. Faculty Involvement and Engagement in Decision-Making Structures at BCIT

The study results support the following general statements in regard to BCIT's current decision-making structures and processes.

- BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes are not well understood and are not operating as effectively as they could.
- Faculty's role in institutional decision-making is neither well understood, nor consistently supported at BCIT.
- Faculty have varying degrees of interest in engaging in decision-making.
- BCIT's Employee Opinion Survey demonstrates varying degrees of satisfaction with the Institute's decision-making between employee groups; and between survey cycles.

Each of the above general claims is discussed below:

5.4.1. *BCIT's Official Decision-Making Structures and Processes Are Not Well Understood and Are Not Operating as Effectively as They Could*

It is clear from the overall findings that BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes were not well understood by most of the interview participants (Key Informants; Administrator, FSA and BCGEU Focus Groups). In essence, these decision-making processes were perceived by respondents to be ineffective. Indeed, the majority

of participants had difficulty describing examples where the official processes had worked well. This communicative difficulty emerged in stark contrast to the ease and variety of examples participants from the same groups could offer as to how they had circumvented the official processes. This use of informal processes and channels is referred to earlier in this study as the 'unofficial' structures and processes. There was a sense of accomplishment, sometimes bordering on pride as to how faculty and administrators reported that they were able to circumvent the official structures and processes. The underlying tone is cynical and finds expression in remarks to the effect that if you want to get something done at BCIT you really must go around (or even ignore) the official channels, a sentiment exemplified by the following participant comments: "I circumvented [official Education Council] policy by launching a new course as an industrial service course, to avoid Edco [Education Council]. ... Those courses continue to be a success" (G2-Golf); "Faculty do a great deal of things unofficially all the time ... unofficial decisions allow for more agility; you can make incredible things happen here through unofficial channels" (F2-Foxtrot).

Despite BCIT having developed and prescribed a variety of official decision-making structures and processes, they were not apparent to most participants in this study and there was a lack of awareness as to how they could access and participate in the official organization. As one member in an administrator focus group commented "I know instances where nobody seems to know what the policy is" (A1-Alpha). A faculty focus group participant added:

Decision-making at the institutional level feels mysterious to me. Do I feel I have direct input to decisions? No. Do I know what decisions are being made? No. Do I feel there is open communication? No. Do I know how I can interact? No. It feels like an old boys' network. (FSA focus group participant F2-Juliet)

A second concern voiced by the majority of participants was that the official structures and processes of which they were aware were perceived as being cumbersome, burdensome, and irrelevant. Furthermore, there was a sense that balance and common sense were not present in many of the existing structures and processes, and some participants suggested that it was not only necessary to circumvent official processes but that doing so was unofficially sanctioned by senior administrators.

While recognizing the reality of unofficial channels of decision-making and informal processes several participants in this study suggested that the institution's disregard for the official decision-making structures was not appropriate nor in its best interests, often producing inconsistent and sub-optimal results.

The demonstrated lack of understanding and perceived low regard for the relevance and effectiveness of BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes may detract from employee effectiveness. It is striking that many of the administrators who were involved in this study felt that the official organizational processes either didn't work or were awkward or difficult to apply. In many organizations it could be expected that administrators would be proponents of the use of official channels and procedures and even be advocates, if not enforcers of their use. There did appear to be clear support among a number of participants for a redesign of the official decision-making structures so that they could effectively serve the institution. However, a redesign of decision-making structures and processes should be deeply considered before undertaking given the current lack of understanding, functionality, and respect for the existing structures and processes. It may be that the issue is not the decision-making structures and processes themselves, but rather faculty and administration's understanding and commitment to operate within those structures and processes.

When an organization embodies and fosters trust and respect across all categories of employees and when there is a shared sense of purpose and a common vision, people will make an effort to make procedures work or actively contribute to revising them (Kezar, 2004b). These conditions did not appear to be present at BCIT during the time of this study.

The Institute's Vision Project may represent a start in the direction of building inclusive trust and respect, but the key will be if the Vision can be translated into proposals for action; proposals that can be widely circulated, discussed and then implemented. People are often cynical or skeptical of visioning exercises because they sometimes lead nowhere, as evidenced by some participant comments.

5.4.2. Faculty's Role in Institutional Decision-Making is Neither Well Understood, Nor Consistently Supported at BCIT

Some studies confirm that there is often a weakness in faculty's understanding of their roles and the manner in which they can engage in institutional decision-making (Hamilton, 2002; Kezar 2004b). This claim aligns with observations I made upon my arrival at BCIT as an administrator in 2002. I was told that BCIT practiced collegial decision-making. Accordingly I accepted that I would need to understand, appreciate, and practice a collegial approach to decision-making if I were to be successful as a front-line administrator heading an academic department. What surprised me upon my arrival was the apparent lack of institutional knowledge and systematic practice of collegial decision-making at BCIT. While the term *collegial decision-making* was an entrenched element of the institution's vernacular; collegial practices between administrators and faculty were not as prevalent as I would have expected, nor were they always evident among faculty in various units across the organization.

Possible explanations for this apparent lack of institutional knowledge include the absence of any structured general in-service education and training for faculty and staff on collegial values and processes and in particular about BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes. This was illustrated in this study by an administrator's reflection, "If the Associate Deans and Deans are unclear in their role, how can faculty be expected to know their role?" (A1-Foxtrot). The Institution provides no orientation for either faculty or administrators on the concept of collaborative decision-making, nor does it provide any orientation or training about BCIT's specific decision-making structures and processes. This lack of orientation and decision-making training is not uncommon in higher education (Kezar, 2004b). In general new employees are left to figure things out for themselves, or it is presumed that *someone* will mentor them along the way. This study demonstrates that the academic staff of the Institute feel a general lack of knowledge and experience in collaborative decision-making

As one seasoned faculty member remarked, "We need to educate younger faculty on how to make collegial decisions" (F1-Alpha). My observations suggest that BCIT needs to educate all members of the academic side of the organization on how to make collaborative decisions, about the existing formal processes and structures, how

they work, and how to access them. Further study would be required to determine if these issues pervaded all elements of the institution, including the non-academic staff.

An additional explanation for the general lack of knowledge of the Institute's decision-making structures and processes may be found in the high turn-over in management positions at the institution, as captured in this faculty member's account: "Constant change and flux over the past 4 years. The acting positions have really undermined the official processes. We have resorted to unofficial processes just to get things done, but that is not right" (F2-Foxtrot).

Further exacerbating faculty's understanding of their role in institutional decision-making is the finding that not all faculty have an active interest in engaging in institutional decision-making. This is discussed in the following section.

5.4.3. *Faculty Have Varying Degrees of Interest in Engaging in Decision-Making Dependent on Several Key Variables*

One of the issues related to faculty engagement in institutional decision-making is the apparent inconsistent and issue-dependent levels of interest in participation. As one participant in this study noted, "They all have different expectations as to what they want to be consulted on" (K-Alpha). This attitude or orientation, if it is actually prevalent makes it more difficult to design structures and processes. However, a common theme running through the participants' comments was the view that they wanted to be informed about decisions and have the opportunity to participate. Moreover, if they had an interest in a decision, they wanted to see a mechanism in place for their voices to be heard before a decision was made. A key informant summarized this sentiment: "... faculty want some degree of control over where BCIT is headed ... they want to be heard on issues that will affect them ..." (K-Bravo). This comment appears to underscore a need for effective communication, transparency, and planning to facilitate faculty input.

The findings reported in Chapter 4 suggest that faculty members' interest in decision-making is highly affected by the nature of the decisions. Faculty participants were universally inclined to expect a role in decisions that directly affected them, or affected their roles as instructors. This expectation is consistent with the notion of a

bicameral governance structure, which affords faculty a leading role in decisions concerning educational matters such as curriculum, pedagogy, faculty hiring, and workloads. However, there was no agreement among participants in this study on how engaged faculty expected to be on broader institutional decisions. A key informant stated the view this way: “There is a real dichotomy with faculty engagement; some just want to teach, while others want to be involved in everything” (K-Foxtrot). Interest in the broader institutional decisions was apparently dependent on several variables, including an individuals’ personal interest in such decisions, the time available, which was often further dependent on the time of year and segment of the academic calendar.

Interest in institution-level decisions also appeared to be highly dependent on how confident the faculty member was that his/her input would be used and genuinely considered. BCIT has apparently earned a reputation, at least among some participants in this study, for coming to faculty after the fact, or with too little time available to allow meaningful faculty engagement or to permit consideration of their inputs. As one faculty member commented: “Our culture quite regularly makes decisions, then asks for input” (F1-Alpha). If the view of this participant is generally held then it would likely make some faculty members skeptical about the value of participation and accordingly reluctant to engage in decision-making. It might be suggested here also that the issue of trust has underlying significance. Where the members of an organization or community feel that their participation is actually only a form of tokenism and that they are merely being asked to ratify decisions that have already been made, then cynicism and reluctance to participate can be expected.

5.4.4. *BCIT’s Employee Opinion Survey Demonstrates Varying Degrees of Satisfaction with the Institute’s Decision-Making, between Employee Groups and between Survey Cycles*

As reported in Chapter 4, BCIT’s Employee Opinion Survey Committee published the results of the 2009 survey and provided a summary of observations. This section discusses those results and this study’s accompanying analysis.

The first issue is the matter of participation. As reported in Chapter 4, participation in the survey, or response rate, dropped from 43% of all BCIT employees in

2006, to 34% for 2009. When an explanation was requested, a key informant offered this comment:

I think part of it is that things have calmed down a bit. People tend to respond when they are really excited, or really angry. When the last survey was done in 2006, there were people who were excited and angry. If everyone is middle of the road, you get a much lower response. ... The only other thing is that we are getting surveyed to death; survey fatigue is a real factor. (K-Golf)

Related to the issue of response rates, a positive indicator is the increase in the percentage of participants who completed the optional demographic section of the survey. 97% of participants identified their employee group affiliation in 2009 versus only 89% in 2006. This may be an indication of increasing trust within the Institute. The same key informant offered this comment:

In the last survey [2006] you can see 110 respondents did not identify their employee group affiliation, this year that number dropped to 29. I have heard [some] say this was due to the reign of terror at the time [2006]. The spike in management participation is likely due to non-identification issues with the 2006 survey. (K-Golf)

In the published report of the survey, the Survey Committee combined the results from all 56 questions into nine clusters or themes. The report stated that overall results were trending up in all areas as compared to 2006 results (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009b). Similarly, the report highlighted the five highest ranked statements and the six lowest ranked statements and provided comparisons to 2006 results. It is evident that there has been modest incremental improvements in all cluster themes, with one notable exception, that being *I understand BCIT's future direction*, which shows a slight decline from 3.3 in 2006, to 3.0 in 2009.

The next steps announced in the report reflect awareness by the Survey Committee and the Senior Leadership Team that greater communication and responsiveness is required. I believe the areas of improvement in the 2009 results were modest at best and were a disappointment to many who expected to see more positive views as a reflection of the change in leadership at the top. I believe this is consistent with the tone of many of this study's participant comments which suggest a wait-and-see

attitude as expressed in the following comment: “I like the direction we are headed, but the jury is out as to how successful we will be” (K-Bravo).

This study focused on seven statements that were selected from the 56 statements measured in total that comprised the 2009 version of BCIT’s Employee Opinion Survey. The seventh statement listed below was added specifically for the benefit of this study. The following statements were selected for their relevance to the subject of faculty engagement in decision-making:

1. I am empowered to make appropriate decisions to get the job done successfully.
2. I have the opportunity to influence changes that directly impact my work.
3. In my department suggestions and ideas are encouraged.
4. BCIT fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.
5. BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing change.
6. Senior management fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.
7. Senior management actively consults with BCIT’s Unions on key institutional decisions.

The responses to these statements are summarized below (the survey design is described in Chapter 3).

First, the overall neutrality of the responses to the above statements at the aggregate (All Employee) level implies relative satisfaction with decision-making at BCIT among employees in general. In the aggregated *All Employee* metrics, 6 of the 7 statements were rated between 3 and 4 (on a 5-point Likert Scale) for all 4 survey cycles (2001, 2004, 2006, and 2009). Only Question 5 above was rated marginally negative, scoring below 3 for all 4 survey cycles.

On the surface, these results would appear to be inconsistent with this study’s findings from the key informant and focus group interviews: specifically that BCIT’s decision-making structures and processes are not well understood, nor working as effectively as they could.

However further analysis of the survey responses to the seven items listed above by the three employee groups (Management, FSA, and BCGEU) that were included in this study revealed clear differences among employee groups. The responses of Management-level employees always indicated higher agreement with the survey statements as compared to the level of agreement with the same statements expressed by members of the FSA and the BCGEU, although the differences were not always statistically significant (see Chapter 4, Section 4.9). A key informant familiar with the Employee Opinion Survey explained the difference in rankings this way:

All lines are moving in the same direction, there is real consistency. Management is consistently higher, which is likely reflective of their higher involvement in key decisions, this is not unusual. The BCGEU tend to be less happy than the FSA; to a large degree that is driven by working conditions where the nature of the collective agreements are different ... as a jurisdictional group, they tend to be less happy. (K-Golf)

Responses to most statements showed a relative drop in agreement with the selected statements in the 2006 Survey. This may be indicative of the deteriorating labour climate at BCIT at that time. This trend has been followed by a clear rebound in 2009, perhaps supporting the optimism about a change in labour-management relationships that this study's interview participants demonstrated in their comments (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.8.1). A key informant offered this explanation:

... [2006] clearly shows the dark ages under [the previous President]. It impacted everybody, but played out particularly hard on managers. The 2009 rise reflects the honeymoon period [for the new President], which is a natural dynamic, time will tell. (K-Golf).

While the Employee Opinion Survey was not customized for or specific to this study and many differences were not statistically significant, the survey does help provide a broader institutional perspective on decision-making at BCIT because it includes employee groups not covered in this research and is taken from a larger sample of all employees.

5.5. Obtaining Balance between Collaborative Decision-Making and Institutional Responsiveness

The following represents a synthesis of the conclusions drawn from the findings related to the balance required to exist between the need for internal collaboration and the reciprocal need for external accountability. The findings of this study suggest that it is possible to balance the desire for collaborative decision-making with the demands for institutional responsiveness if the decision-making structures and processes appropriately meet the complex needs of the Institution. Furthermore, for balance to be obtained there must be good communication and trust between stakeholders.

In this study the majority of participants felt it was possible to strike an appropriate balance between the desire for collaborative decision-making and the need for institutional responsiveness and accountability. Consistent with some literature on this subject, (Birnbaum, 2000; Eckel, 1999; Kezar, 2004b; Tierney, 2004), participants recognized the value of collaborative decision-making, particularly in an academic environment and believed the benefits of additional input and commitment arising from faculty's ability to participate in the decision more than offset the extra effort and time that was required. It was reassuring to hear a key informant suggest, "... top down just does not work in an educational environment" (K-Foxtrot).

However, participants also appreciated the need for the Institution to *occasionally* make decisions with truncated collaboration because of time and availability constraints. Even so, most felt that with improved planning, communication, appropriate in-service orientation, and a genuine will to engage faculty, crisis-type decisions could be minimized. Faculty participants felt that the BCIT senior administration routinely relied on the excuse of insufficient time in order to bypass, or marginalize faculty input. It was the view of some participants that the lack of time was largely preventable: "If upper management is doing its job, there should not be so many surprises, they need to be more ready upstairs, I resent that it is always a crisis ..." (F2-Kilo). In addition to improved foresight, planning, and communication, participants felt that senior administration should demonstrate increased respect for and trust in faculty's input, moving past the traditional perspective of "lip-service" (K-Golf; A1-Echo). If the administration of BCIT values faculty's input, it must respect their need to have adequate

information, time, and appropriate venues for providing feedback. An administrator viewed it this way: “If you have the trust of your faculty, you can include them ahead of time, [and] you are more likely to gain their support” (A2-Golf). Furthermore, senior administration and those in managerial positions should trust that faculty will provide inputs that serve the common good of the institution, rather than being self-serving or partisan. The administration should also trust faculty to respect the time available for feedback depending on the urgency of the decision. I believe faculty can rise to this challenge, a view supported by this faculty member’s comment: “... just tell me how much time I have to provide input and I will do the best I can in the time available” (F2-Mike).

Both faculty and administrators made comments that the need for support for collaborative decision-making must extend beyond the President’s good intentions. On one hand, there is a need for more relevant and efficient official decision-making structures and processes, or at least a more complete understanding of them across the academic side of the Institute (and perhaps beyond), including sufficient training and resources to support these structures. On the other hand, what is seen to be lacking at present at BCIT is broad commitment by the administrative team, from VP’s down to Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, and Managers; to support faculty involvement in decision-making. As one faculty member pointed out:

It is great to have a change in the leadership, but how that transfers down the line is important. Some of the middle tier in the organization are still from the old school. The new executive has to make sure the middle management embrace the collaborative approach. Once that happens, we will see faculty get more engaged, bring new ideas, make positive change. (G2-Juliet)

No doubt part of this behaviour or attitude among managers stems from the lack of awareness and training referenced earlier. Furthermore, it is possible that some of it can be traced to traditional perspectives and apathy about the respective roles of administrators and faculty.

5.6. The Role of BCIT's Faculty Unions in Representing Faculty in Institutional Decision-Making

This study discovered a variety of opinions in regard to how representative faculty unions are of general faculty interests and concerns. Nevertheless, most participants in this study agreed that these organizations should play a role in institutional decision-making.

All BCIT faculty must belong to 1 of 2 distinct certified bargaining units, depending on the nature of the programs in which they teach: The Faculty and Staff Association (FSA), represents faculty and staff engaged in technology programs; or the British Columbia Government Employee's Union (BCGEU) –Vocational Instructors bargaining unit, which represents the Institute's trade and vocational faculty. Each of these bargaining units is certified under the Labour Relations Board of British Columbia (Labour Relations Board, 2009) and is governed by their own collective agreement with BCIT. Both bargaining units have the right to strike.

A range of opinions was expressed with regard to whether the faculty unions were truly representative of faculty and whether they should play formal roles in institutional decision-making. For the most part, participants in this study agreed that the unions were reasonable proxies for faculty representation, although support was generally stronger for the FSA in this regard than for the BCGEU, with participants noting the differences of a BCIT-focused union (the FSA only represents BCIT personnel), versus the BCGEU which is a chapter of a larger provincial union: the BC Government Employees Union, which has a broader mandate and perspective than solely to represent BCIT employees. It is possible that the BCGEU might be less likely to be driven by what is best for BCIT if a specific issue was in conflict with the Union's broader goals. A BCGEU faculty member noted "... it depends on the support [they] get from overall BCGEU headquarters" (G2-Juliet).

With respect to the role the unions should play in institutional decision-making, there was discussion about whether the unions could, or should put aside partisan interests and provide input from the perspective of what was genuinely best for BCIT's interests for the Institute's common good. Study participants debated whether the unions' legal responsibilities were primarily to act in their members' best interests,

defined narrowly as compensation, job security, and working conditions; or if they should place those goals in a subordinate position to BCIT's best interests at the level of the entire organization. The majority of participants felt that a union's priority was to represent faculty interests, as one faculty member commented, "... the union's only responsibility [should be] to its members" (G1-Foxtrot). Others, like this key informant, sought a balanced role, "Unions must blend protecting and advocating for the interests of faculty, with the broader objective of making BCIT more successful" (K-Foxtrot). An example of a possible conflict of interest between the responsibility of unions to represent their members versus their interest in the greater good of the organization is found in the recent invitation by the President to have the unions take an active role in the 2009-2010 Fiscal Budgeting process. Some participants felt that this invitation made the unions potential partners in decisions that could result in program cuts and ultimately faculty member layoffs. My view on this issue is that both management and the union executive should be aware of the potential conflict and recognize that both sides have legitimate perspectives and responsibilities. I would argue further that the union members would be better served by having their representatives participating in the budget discussions so that more informed decisions can be made. Participation of this kind will serve the faculty interests by ensuring their views are considered; management's interests are recognized by including faculty's perspectives for consideration; thereby demonstrating that faculty input is valued while also expanding the input for potentially better decision-making. By extension, through active faculty participation, management should possibly enjoy improved decision-making and greater support for its decisions, however difficult and controversial they may be. The value of this approach was voiced by several faculty participants in this study, as seen in the following examples. "Management must manage expectations, decisions do need to be made, budgets exist, not all decisions are going to be popular; sometimes programs should be cut. Trust can be built by being open" (F2-India). "All good leaders do not make rational decisions without taking input. What's the harm in taking input? You still have the final decision because you are the leader. If you consult, you get buy-in; they will work harder as a result" (G2-Juliet).

Enhancing trust at every level in the organization is a lingering issue for BCIT to overcome if it is interested in nurturing a truly collaborative decision-making culture. As

referenced earlier, in its history BCIT has endured some periods of strained relations between its faculty unions and management. In 2006 a unilateral executive decision to cut programs, a decision implemented in early 2007, resulted in the deterioration of relations between both faculty unions and the Senior Leadership Team to the point where relations were characterized as adversarial. When the new President arrived in March 2008, he was aware of the strained relations, as evidenced by this key informant's observation:

When [the new President] arrived, [he observed] two solitudes ... most would agree the last couple of years were fairly traumatic for the organization, in particular the way the 2007 program cut decisions were made. Those decisions polarized the organization even more. (K-Foxtrot)

The new President was generally perceived by participants in this study as working towards improving relations between the faculty and management. For example, a BCGEU participant suggested the overall labour climate was improving:

I have never seen any BCIT president invite the unions to a management retreat; that is a big step, a very positive change. As a result, I don't think managers feel there is as big a gap between us and them. (G2-Juliet)

One of the new President's initiatives was to work more closely with the Presidents of the three (FSA, BCGEU Instructional, and BCGEU Support Staff) unions. The President did this openly by inviting the union leaders to meetings and events that were previously the exclusive domain of management. Most participants in this study saw both symbolic and tangible value in these initiatives, observing more transparency, better communication, and respect for the role that the unions, and by extension the role faculty members could play in the institution's decision-making. However some participants, across both faculty and the administrative groups wondered if the faculty would see the union presidents as being compromised by this new alliance. This concern was articulated by one participant: "[The new President] invites the union Presidents to [management retreats] and management breakfasts. I wonder if the union members feel this is good, or is [the new President] seen as trying to co-opt the union leadership?" (A2-India).

I take the view that as long as both the union leaders and the new President understand and respect their different roles in the decision-making process, as long as

they continue to be transparent, communicate regularly, and work towards BCIT's common good, the faculty's role in decision-making will be elevated. Any gap between what is best for union members, and the interests of the institution as a whole should be mitigated, or at least be made apparent and capable of being understood and addressed.

5.7. The Education Council as a Key Element of the Organizational Structure at BCIT

Study participants most often identified the BCIT Education Council as an example of an official decision-making structure and process that was working well. That said, overall general awareness and understanding of the Education Council, its specific mandate, and how it worked was not uniformly well developed. This finding is in line with the previous finding that BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes were generally not well understood. There was a dichotomy of opinion between participants who had direct experience with the Education Council versus those who had not. Generally, those who had experience with the Education Council were complimentary about its role and effectiveness in carrying out its functions, whereas those unfamiliar with the Council often cited rumours about the burdensome and onerous nature of its procedures. The contrasting views cited below demonstrate the divided opinions about Edco: "Our admin staff have the fear of God for Edco [Education Council]. We do not know how difficult it is, but people are scared of Edco ..." (G2-Hotel).

I have heard dire warnings about how daunting Edco would be if I wanted to add a new course; that was the impression. Once I went through it, sure there was a process, but it was not that difficult. (G2-Kilo)

The above comments serve to illustrate how the lack of understanding of BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes may undermine their effectiveness. Several participants gave examples of how they by-passed the Education Council because of negative, albeit incorrect perceptions.

With respect to the role of the Education Council in facilitating faculty's participation in institutional decision-making, the Council was seen to be very effective within its mandate, particularly when participants recognized that the mandate was

restricted to matters of education policy. The Education Council's mandate and composition is prescribed by the *BC College and Institute Act* (1996) and it includes a high proportion of faculty representation (10 of 20 voting members). Its policies and procedures are clearly articulated in both the *BCIT Board Governance Manual* (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2005), and BCIT's policies (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009c).

Many faculty participants attributed the Education Council's effectiveness to two necessary conditions: faculty representation, and clearly articulated policies and procedures. A related theme was the cross-institutional composition of the Education Council, which is also prescribed in its by-laws. This eclectic structure serves to elevate the discussion and decision-making in the Education Council beyond the partisanship of employee group or school affiliations.

Looking at the Education Council's effectiveness in facilitating faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, it can be said that it serves as a good model and is perceived as working very well within its specified mandate. However, as required by legislation, the Council cannot represent faculty's broader decision-making interests. One participant correctly pointed out that issues of resource allocation, operational issues, or strategic issues are beyond its mandate. Faculty need to be engaged at many levels and in diverse decision-making forums if their voices are to be heard on institutional issues. As noted above, the new President seems to be creating processes that augment the narrow mandate of the Education Council by creating channels for faculty input on decisions other than those related directly to education policy as defined in the legislation governing the terms of the Education Council.

In general terms, the findings of this study indicate the Education Council is effective at facilitating faculty engagement in decision-making within its specified mandate, although it cannot represent faculty's interests in all aspects of institutional decision-making.

5.8. The Potential of Initiatives to Raise or Improve the Level of Faculty Engagement in Decision-making at BCIT

The findings of this study suggest that there are opportunities to elevate faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at BCIT, both in the short and longer terms. It is a coincidence that this study was conducted during the transition year for BCIT's new President. The findings from the study will be published and made available to BCIT in 2010, when the new President will be well established in his first term. All participant groups demonstrated optimism that the President would embrace and instil more collaborative, transparent, and effective decision-making structures and processes. For example, key informant K-Alpha commented: "... the new President is building a more collaborative culture...". Administrator participant A1-Bravo opined: "We are all hoping for change ... people did not feel they had a voice before". FSA participant F1-Bravo shared this optimism: "... I think things have become far more transparent and more inclusive...". BCGEU participant G1-Bravo extended the theme of hopefulness: "... under [the past President] there was no hope, now I am hopeful things will get better. [The new President] has to be better than the previous regime, we are sure hopeful, it has to be better". Despite this general optimism several participants commented that the time available to make tangible progress was finite and that the goodwill that accompanied the new President's arrival would diminish if his good intentions were not followed through with actions.

This study explored the different views of participants in regard to both the need for organizational change at BCIT and the scale of change that is required. It is interesting to note that the key informants brought broad institutional perspectives to their comments, sometimes relating to external pressures and expectations of the Institute. Their comments can be interpreted as presenting a general view that the Institute should accept the inevitability of change. Further, the majority of the comments from key informants underscored the need for faculty to recognize that they must also accept change as a baseline requirement for the Institute to be successful in the future. However, these views were unique to the key informant group and were not volunteered in the comments of any of the other participant groups.

A further disconnect between the key informants and the focus group participants was that the key informants as a group did not voice the degree of dissatisfaction expressed by either faculty group or by the administrator group with respect to the Institute's official decision-making structures and processes. For example: a front-line administrator commented, "80% of my decisions are unofficial, otherwise nothing would get done ... you must go around the official policies ..." (A1-Foxtrot). This view contrasts considerably with the perspective offered by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who stated, "I think the official channels are where most of the decision-making gets done" (K-Echo). These findings indicate a clear contrast in perspectives between the senior executives and regular faculty and front line managers with respect to the degree and nature of change that is required.

In order for BCIT to transition to a more collaborative decision-making culture, it must start with all members of the Senior Leadership Team, but it is paramount that the same philosophy, values, and tangible support extend down throughout the Institution. Informant K-Alpha saw it this way: "... the new President has set the example, now it will be up to his direct reports to follow". Another key informant, K-Charlie suggested the Vice Presidential level of the Institute had not yet picked up on the new President's collaborative intentions: "Things are getting better under [the new President], but there is still a time-lag with the VP's ...". Similarly, BCGEU participant G2-Juliet did not see evidence of collaborative change at the Dean and Associate Dean level: "[The new President] has encouraged input through his President's Forums; I have not seen any change at the Dean or Associate Dean level; still business as usual".

One of the key impediments to the effective operation of the existing official decision-making structures and processes is the lack of awareness, understanding, access, and respect for the current structures and processes, a condition expressed by many participants in this study. Informant K-Bravo commented: "There is an opportunity to educate faculty on their [decision-making] rights". Administrator participant A2-Mike made this recommendation: "You need to make it clear to faculty what role you want them to play... you must explain what their participation will result in" FSA participant F2-Juliet had this further recommendation: "Provide training on how BCIT makes decisions, and what is expected of faculty, their role. De-mystify institutional decision-

making”. BCGEU participant G2-Kilo had the same request: “... give us some training on how you want us to contribute”.

One of the issues that individual faculty and their unions in conjunction with BCIT’s Senior Leadership Team will need to deal with is the balance between faculty decision-making rights versus responsibilities. For the most part, faculty comments focused on their right to have a voice in decision-making although, with such rights, come responsibilities (Hamilton, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 2, the notion of academic freedom is premised on the expectation that the professoriate will self-regulate and participate in institutional governance and decision-making. However the difficulties of maintaining collegial or shared governance in conjunction with unionization and legalized collective bargaining are well documented (Burgan, 2004; Dearlove, 1995; Hamilton, 2002; Hamilton, 2006; Keller, 2004; Kezar, 2004a; O’Neill, 2004). These contrasting agendas may sometimes result in faculty abdicating their decision-making rights to their union executives. That said, if faculty expect a greater voice in institutional decision-making, the ground rules must be clear to ensure timely, representative, appropriate, and value-added input from all faculty. It will not be simple to resolve the differences between the rights and responsibilities of faculty as individuals; the interests of the organization as a whole; and the rights and responsibilities of unions as representatives of the interests of specific faculty bargaining units.

Taking the aforementioned challenges into consideration, three key findings from this study stand out.

1. Faculty engagement in decision-making has value. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 supports this notion, which was clearly echoed in the comments of participants in this study.
2. Participants in this study were generally supportive of greater faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT.
3. The challenges to increasing faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT do not appear to be insurmountable.

The arrival of a new President who has quickly recognized the value of and opportunity to employ more collaborative and transparent decision-making processes should serve to augment these findings. Through the course of the research for this study, examples such as the Vision Project, a new Strategic Planning Process, and the

Fiscal Budgeting Process all illustrated efforts by senior management to be more collaborative and inclusive in the Institute's decision-making processes. It is my expectation and hope that BCIT is well poised to build from these new initiatives and that this study will assist in those efforts by illuminating both the potential issues and undiscovered opportunities, while also revealing the enthusiasm that was found in many quarters to embrace constructive change.

5.9. The Relationship of this Study to Previous Relevant Research

The findings of this study echo those of a number of the studies reviewed in Chapter 2. The study also makes contact with issues raised in a variety of reports and commissions that have explored governance and decision-making in higher education institutions and with some of the recommendations made in those sources.

First, the study's finding that official decision-making structures and processes at BCIT were often viewed as no longer serving the institution's needs, given all of the external and internal changes that have taken place over the past 4 decades or so is a recurrent theme in the literature (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998; Collis, 2004; Kezar, 2004b; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Marginson, 2004; Toma, 2007). At BCIT, the pace of change and increased expectations for institutional responsiveness have created an environment where the faculty and staff involved in this study felt that they often must work around the official structures and processes simply to be able to respond to needs for change in a timely and appropriate fashion. Among participant responses the notable exception to this was the Education Council. While it was recognized that the decision-making structures and processes of the Council required effort to negotiate, most of those who had direct experience with the Council found that it added value and was worth the effort.

BCIT may be somewhat unique in British Columbia in that it is a polytechnic institution where many students are seeking the skills and training necessary to enter technical fields that are both highly regulated and also subject to rapid changes through the development of new technologies and procedures and the application of revised standards. BCIT's programs are expected to be up to date with the best of current

practice and to equip students to enter the workplace well prepared and capable of meeting performance standards. These facts require that the Institute be in close contact with a variety of fields of practice and with the trade, technical, and professional organizations that oversee and regulate those fields. The reputation of the Institute with students, government regulators, prospective employers and professional/technical/trade organizations depends on the Institute's programs and curriculum maintaining currency with the market's needs. However, despite BCIT's close affiliation to industry with its incumbent pressures for responsive decision-making, this study reinforced the concept that educational institutions should not simply replicate corporate decision-making models. Knowledge in areas such as critical thinking, ethics, and the responsibilities associated with being a contributing member of society are still highly valued. Educational institutions have key roles to play in ensuring that this knowledge is part of a comprehensive education. If an institution only prepares students for the technical or vocational end of the spectrum of knowledge, it is reasonable to assume that its graduates and ultimately its reputation will suffer. Hopefully BCIT prepares not just technicians and skilled trades-people, but critical thinking, responsible, ethical technicians and trades-people who view their roles in a more complete context. These skills and values are reflected in BCIT's new Strategic Plan (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009a).

Second, the trend to managerial or hierarchical decision-making models in higher education institutions is well documented in the literature (Buchbinder, 1993; Burgan, 2004; Codd, 2005; Dennison, 1995; Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Levin, 2001; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). This trend suggests the clear possibility of a conflict between the need for organizational changes and adaptability to a changing environment and the desire for greater faculty participation in decision-making. The conflict highlights a common belief that efficiency and responsiveness require more corporate managerial models of administration (Birnbaum, 1987; Benjamin & Carroll, 1998; Duderstadt, 2004; Keller, 2004; Simplicio, 2006) and that collegial or bicameral models are much slower and less effective. Part of this belief traces to the difficulty of educational institutions measuring the effectiveness of their decisions whereas businesses and corporations can look at bottom line results such as share price, capital gains, sales, etcetera. There must be a distinction between fast decisions and good decisions.

Third, this study affirmed the value in greater faculty participation. Participants generally shared the view of authors, such as Kezar (2004b), Birnbaum (1988, 1998, 2004), Eckel (1999), Tierney (2007) among others, that better decision-making occurs when an organization is able to effectively harness its knowledge capital, which extends beyond the senior management team. Not only does this result in broader and deeper input to decisions, it generates increased commitment to decisions because participants have a greater connection to the investment in them.

Fourth, the observation made in this study that (BCIT) faculty were not clear about their role in institutional decision-making was found to be a broader concern as evidenced in the literature (Carlisle & Miller, 1998; CHEPA, 2003; Kezar, 2004b; Hamilton, 2002; Plater, 2008). Examples cited in the literature show a pattern in regard to the absence or neglect of formal institutional and professional support for the education, orientation, and facilitation of faculty participation in institutional decision-making (Askling, 2001; Kezar 2004b; Hamilton, 2002; Hamilton, 2006). The all too frequent assumption of higher education institutions seems to be that new faculty members will somehow learn on the job or be mentored by colleagues, with the result that there is little if any systematic orientation for novices to the processes and structures in which they could and should participate.

Fifth, the finding that BCIT faculty vary in their interests in decision-making depending on the type of decisions being considered is also consistent with other literature. Pope (2004) suggests that faculty's desire to participate in shared decision-making varies according to the level of trust, and moreover, that trust diminishes as the distance between participants increases. The finding that most participants in this study were more interested in being involved with decisions that directly affected them, was also clearly found to be the case in other studies (Birnbaum, 2004; CHEPA, 2003; Del Favero, & Bray, 2005; Duderstadt, 2004). Hamilton (2002) provides a compelling overview of how faculty in general are unaware of their obligations associated with academic freedom and tenure. Tierney (1998) reminds us that faculty's professional responsibilities include obligations to one another, to the greater good of the institution, and to society. Eckel (1999) argues that faculty must work with administrators in assuming the responsibility to make shared governance work. Braskamp and Wergin

(1998) remind faculty that academic freedom requires "...freedom with responsibility, not freedom from responsibility" (p. 89).

Sixth, the issue of balance between collaborative decision-making and the demands for institutional responsiveness and accountability is contested both in the literature and within this study, with arguments being made on both sides. On one side, authors like Birnbaum (2004), Hellowell & Hancock (2001), and Kezar & Eckel (2004) argue the benefits of collegial decision-making, suggesting that despite the challenges and pressures facing higher education institutions, collaborative decision-making is still the most effective approach for these organizations. Conversely, authors like Keller (2004) and Duderstadt (2004) make strong claims that collegial decision-making can no longer meet the needs of modern, complex higher education institutions, which now require professionally trained managers, who can make more autonomous decisions. However, even though Duderstadt (2004) favours a more managerial or corporate style of governance he suggests that improvements to decision-making in higher education should retain a collaborative element. For example Duderstadt (2004) believes modern post-secondary educational institutions must accept a more realistic balance between collegial input and the need to keep pace with the institutional need for breadth and momentum; and recognize the reality of some high-risk decision-making. On the other hand, Powell's (2008) recent study of Ontario's public higher education institutions concludes that while collaborative decision-making is time consuming, it remains essential for better decision-making in higher education. Shattock (2002) echoes the need for balance between managerial and collegial formats, arguing that shared governance values faculty dialogue, but restrains excessive consultation so as to provide relevant and timely input. This study's participants generally appreciated the need and value of balancing collaboration with responsiveness.

Seventh, the literature is divided about the role of unions in higher education institutional decision-making. Jones et al. (2001) reported on CAUT's (2004) recommendation supporting a greater role for unions in decision-making, with less dependence on academic senates. This change in policy by CAUT (2004) follows their review of the original intent and recommendations of the Duff-Berdahl Report of 1966, specifically those arguing for increased decision-making authority by the university senates, and their subsequent determination that this strategy had not been as effective

as intended in strengthening faculty's voice in institutional decision-making. On the other hand, author's such as Burgan (2004), Hamilton (2006), Keller (2004), and Kelsey (1998) suggest that unions de-professionalize the professoriate, while others such as Kezar (2004a) and O'Neil (2004) go so far as to suggest that unions negatively affect faculty's role in decision-making. Powell (2008) recently completed a study on higher education decision influencers in Ontario and determined that unions were not seen to be a key influence in the decision-making process. The participants in this study had various and often contrasting views of the role the unions should play in BCIT's institutional decision-making.

Eighth, it is more difficult to find direct correlations in the literature in regard to the question of the effectiveness of BCIT's Education Council in facilitating faculty's role in institutional decision-making. This may result from the fact that other jurisdictions use alternative terms such as senate, or other local terms. For example Ontario Colleges use Academic Council for decision-making bodies analogous to university senates as described in the Duff and Berdahl (1966) report, and in a number of statutes governing higher education institutions (Powell, 2008). Dennison and Schuetze (2004) and Levin (2000, 2008) have reviewed the legislation about and role of the Education Councils in BC institutions. These authors note that because of the legislated structure and mandate of the Councils, they confer upon faculty stronger voices in decision-making. Dennison, Schuetze and Levin's views are consistent with the claim made in this study that BCIT's Education Council has the structural foundation to be effective.

Finally, the suggestion made here that there is an opportunity to elevate faculty's role in institutional decision-making at BCIT is widely supported in the literature. Among the authors calling for a greater faculty voice and providing suggestions as to how this might be accomplished are Birnbaum (2004), Braskamp and Wergin (1998), Clark (2001), Duderstadt (2004), Kezar, (2004b), and Tierney (2004). Benjamin and Carroll (1998) suggest the only appropriate groups to develop and implement improved governance structures are the constituencies within the existing governance structures, not outside consultants. These suggestions are considered within the context of this study and discussed further in the next two sections of this chapter.

5.10. Recommendations for Further Study

This study suggests several opportunities for further study and research. First, it would be of interest to examine what conditions and formal incentives are required to enrich and sustain faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. Second, there would seem to be potential in exploring the relationship between organizational culture and formal decision-making structures at BCIT. British Columbia has recently created a set of new regional universities, many formed from University Colleges that incorporated both vocational/technical and academic programs. The designation of these institutions as universities, as distinct from colleges, may foster tensions between the vocational/technical and career preparation programs and the more academic programs that can ladder into upper level courses at the larger research universities in the province. BCIT can now offer graduate degrees at the Master's level. Will this change in status create a gap between the trade and non-trade areas of the Institute and create political divisions or factions that will affect the overall processes of governance and decision-making in the Institute? Third, this study also suggests that there is a fruitful area for research in the relationships between unionized and non-unionized faculty, especially in the processes of institutional governance.

5.11. Implications for Practice and Organization at BCIT

This section discusses eight broad implications for practice and organization at BCIT.

1. One of the most significant implications from this study is the acknowledgement that faculty voice in institutional decision-making is valued at BCIT and that there is enthusiasm across the various employee groups represented in the study for the improvement of the present state of faculty engagement at the Institute. There was recognition that faculty's voice is beneficial to institutional decision-making by providing additional experience, insights, and perspectives for improved decision-making. Including faculty in decision-making promotes greater understanding of the issues and increases their investment in decisions, both of which serve to increase their commitment and support, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful implementation of given decisions. Despite a history of managerial-style decision-making at BCIT, a history that has resulted in strained relations between the unions and the Senior Leadership

Team in the past; the majority of participants in this study confirmed that there was value in hearing from faculty on broader institutional decisions. This was a pleasant surprise and an encouraging signal for the Institute's future.

2. Both the literature reviewed and this study's findings with respect to BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes, revealed dissatisfaction with the ability of existing decision-making systems to meet the needs of a large, modern, complex higher education institution. Participants in this study referred to BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes as cumbersome, bureaucratic, and irrelevant. This finding underscores the need for a thorough review of the Institute's decision-making structures and processes to evaluate how effectively they are understood and whether the issues in faculty engagement are cultural or structural, or both.
3. The relationship between the institution's unions or faculty associations and management is very context specific. It is essential to understand how both faculty and administrators feel about the representativeness of their unions or associations. If faculty believe that their unions or associations are good proxies for their voices, their roles in institutional decision-making will be greatly enhanced. Conversely, if faculty do not feel that their bargaining units are appropriate surrogates at the decision-making tables, then other mechanisms such as committee structures or task groups must be developed and employed. Alternatively steps must be taken to build confidence in those organizations that claim to speak for faculty. The former course can be promoted and supported by the administration while the latter must be undertaken directly by the unions or associations. It is essential that these relationships be understood and not taken for granted. The dynamic, either between the administration and the unions; or between the unions and their members can change very quickly. Furthermore, this study suggests there is an opportunity to enhance the existing collective agreements, particularly the BCGEU's, to better address and support the subjects of decision-making and consultation.
4. The desire for greater faculty engagement in institutional decision-making supports a requirement for better education to enhance faculty's role in the process. The literature reviewed here and the study's results both reveal a lack of understanding or agreement across the faculty and administrative ranks as to how faculty should engage in institutional decision-making. In order for faculty's voice to be heard, they must understand their roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms that allow and encourage them to engage. On the other hand, the Institute's Senior Leadership Team must take the leadership on this critical initiative, ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are developed with faculty and line-management input, and then ensure that constituents receive the appropriate training and support. This

training should become standard as part of every new employee's orientation to the institution, not just the new academic employees. In developing a culture of participation, consultation, and trust, all employees need to understand their roles and how they can contribute to the organization's success. Enhanced planning around decisions, mechanisms and venues for engaging faculty, and improved dissemination of the outcomes of decisions are crucial for ongoing success.

5. This study reinforced other studies (Birnbaum, 2004; Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Duderstadt, 2004; Pope, 2004) that have found that individual faculty interests in institutional decision-making will vary and be dependent on several variables. Some of these variables are out of the control of the institution, such as a faculty member's interest in being involved in decisions. However, an argument can be made that by actively encouraging and supporting faculty to become more involved and demonstrating that faculty input is valued and effective, it is possible to positively influence faculty interest in decision-making. Variables such as how much time is available and required for participation, time of year, how faculty can engage, and how they perceive their inputs will be used are all within the greater control and influence of the institution.
6. This study suggests that the Education Councils, Senates, or other education-oriented decision-making bodies are not panaceas for providing faculty voice in institutional decisions. Each institution must survey its constituents to determine how most effectively to harness the wisdom and energy of its faculty, whether through sub-committees, task forces, departmental or faculty meetings, or other forums. For BCIT, the Education Council is a key component, but it cannot represent all faculty across the wide range of issues requiring institutional decisions.
7. The findings in this study suggest that there is a desire at BCIT to balance collaborative decision-making with the need for the institution to be responsive and accountable to diverse stakeholders. Participant comments suggest that BCIT's Senior Leadership Team is beginning to demonstrate that it values faculty voices in institutional decision-making. Similarly, participant comments suggest that faculty are becoming more interested in engaging in the processes if they believe their inputs will be genuinely considered. The majority of participants recognized the need for the Institute to be able to make timely decisions. There was enthusiasm for providing suggestions as to how to more effectively balance collaborative decision-making and responsive decision-making at BCIT.
8. This study reveals the presence of positive energy and enthusiasm for exploring how to improve the effectiveness of institutional decision-making in general and specifically how to engage faculty more actively in the process. It is a subject that has evoked strong opinions and rich discussion. The opportunity is particularly relevant for

institutions experiencing a change in leadership or reorganization, as the promise of a fresh start, with fresh leadership is encouraging to many constituents. This is particularly salient if there have been tensions or issues associated with the effectiveness of institutional decision-making in the past.

The next and final section of this chapter takes these broader implications and extends them into specific recommendations for BCIT to consider.

5.12. Recommendations to Enhance Faculty Engagement in Decision-Making at BCIT

This study has endeavoured to answer the General Research Question that guided it. Throughout the process of this study, valuable insights were revealed as to how to enhance faculty engagement in institutional decision-making at BCIT. This section builds from the broader implications for practice discussed in Section 5.10 and offers recommendations for consideration by the faculty and administration of BCIT that are premised on the belief that there is value in faculty input to institutional decisions; and that there is broad-based desire to enhance faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. As one BCGEU faculty member optimistically opined at the conclusion of one of the focus group sessions: “These issues are not BCIT specific; they exist at other post-secondary institutions. What may be unique is that we are talking about them now” (G2-India).

1. It is imperative that the preliminary goodwill generated by the new President’s demonstrated commitment to more transparent and collaborative decision-making be extended throughout all levels and areas of the Institute. This will require explicit support and commitment to collaboration by leaders at all levels of the Institute, including faculty and union leaders.
2. Both faculty and administration should recognize the issues and opportunities, as well as the potential challenges associated with greater faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. Although this study involved only a small sample of the total of BCIT’s faculty and administration, the results suggest that many of the participants had prior negative experiences with the Institute’s decision-making processes and approach. Given this climate the senior executives of the Institute may wish to build on the study’s results to propose a more comprehensive review. A fundamental question that requires an

answer is whether the dissatisfaction is a result of poorly designed decision-making structures and processes, or cultural issues including lack of understanding, support, and commitment to those decision-making structures and processes.

3. Once the issues, opportunities, and challenges are understood with respect to how faculty engage in institutional decision-making, a collaborative effort to clearly define and delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of faculty and administrators should be undertaken. This could include a discussion paper on the nature and benefits of collaborative decision-making in a collegial environment, and could be extended to establishing a working group on faculty engagement in decision-making with clear terms of reference and a time-line for reporting.
4. Once the specific roles and responsibilities are established, the Institute should embark on an education and awareness program to provide existing employees with the information they need to be effective in their roles. In addition, this information should become part of every new employee's orientation to the Institute. It should be evident and convenient for every employee to find the information they need and to know where and to whom to turn for assistance. The expectation that it is every employee's responsibility to become familiar with and engage with these processes should be clearly stated.
5. In recognition of BCIT's diverse employee base, there should be increased flexibility and wider opportunities for faculty participation in decision-making. Employees should not be discouraged from participating because of geographic or timetable issues. Electronic venues such as web blogs, on-line forums, and webinars should be explored and employees provided with training and access. In addition, BCIT's Senior Leadership Team should make a concerted effort to be more accessible and regularly visit BCIT's various campuses and departments.
6. Faculty should have access to the appropriate information required to participate in decision-making. When faculty are engaged in institutional decision-making, efforts should be made to provide access to the information they require, or request.
7. Appropriate time should be provided for faculty to participate, consider, and respond to decision-making opportunities. Deadlines associated with decisions should be clearly communicated and there should be appropriate advance notice of upcoming decisions, adequate time for consultation and for the articulation of responses.
8. Faculty should receive feedback that their advice or inputs were received. Faculty should also be informed about how their inputs were considered. This does not imply that every participant input must get a personalized response, but that there should be some form of general recognition and acknowledgement that the input was considered.

9. Communication about decisions should be transparent, honest, and timely. It should include clear rationale for how and why a decision was determined. BCIT's Senior Leadership Team should be approachable if elaboration is required.
10. BCIT should periodically audit the effectiveness of its decision-making structures and processes. There are many ways this might be accomplished including the addition of new questions into the ongoing BCIT Employee Opinion Survey.

These recommendations are intended to assist BCIT with enhancing the engagement of its faculty in institutional decision-making.

5.13. Concluding Comments

The answer to this study's General Research Question came to be more complex than perhaps was initially expected. BCIT clearly has numerous official decision-making structures and processes as described in Section 5.3 of this Chapter. However, many of the participants in this study did not consider them effective, or were unclear about the procedures entailed in accessing and employing them (Section 5.4.)

Participants generally had a lack of knowledge, awareness, and commitment to the official decision-making processes, resulting in widespread use of unofficial decision-making channels and general disregard for the official procedures. Even so, many participants who actively relied on the unofficial processes felt that they were not optimal and expressed views that if the official processes were effective, they would prefer to use them, believing they would lead to better decision-making.

The value of this study lies within the richly contextual nature of its findings about the General Research Question. The findings present multiple explanations and examples of why the official decision-making structures and processes do not effectively engage BCIT's faculty. However, the majority of the participants felt that a balance could be struck between the time and effort required for collaborative decision-making and the Institute's need to be responsive and accountable to external stakeholders (Section 5.5). Furthermore, this study offers a compelling range of participants' observations and suggestions for improving the state of faculty members' engagement in the Institute's decision-making (Section 5.8).

The role of unions in institutional decision-making versus soliciting broader faculty input was found to be a complex and sensitive subject. As noted in Section 5.6, this subject generated much discussion, revealing clear differences between the Faculty and Staff Association and BC Government Employee Union participants. Further consideration is required to determine which decisions can rely on the union leadership as a proxy for faculty representation, and which decisions faculty prefer to engage directly and as individuals.

The role of Education Council as a facilitator of faculty engagement in BCIT's decision-making revealed stark differences of opinion regarding its effectiveness dependent on whether or not the respondents had any direct experiences with the Council, as noted in Section 5.7. Although the Education Council's mandate is legislatively restricted to academic matters, it was encouraging to observe that faculty and administrators held the Council in relatively high regard if they had direct experience with it.

I believe the processes of reviewing current decision-making structures and developing an improved approach to the orientation of faculty and staff to their roles and responsibilities in these structures go hand in hand. If greater involvement of faculty and staff in organizational decision-making can lead to better decisions and more effective implementation through improved utilization of the institution's knowledge capital, then the organization's structures should enable and even require such involvement, while the culture of the organization should promote and encourage it from all.

This study's results indicate that there is a significant reservoir of commitment and enthusiasm for enhanced faculty engagement in decision-making at BCIT. I believe BCIT is at a pivotal point in making the transition to an organization that embodies greater faculty engagement. It is my hope that that the information, perspectives, and recommendations put forward in this study will be of assistance to the Institute's Senior Leadership Team, and ultimately to all members of the BCIT community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Key Concepts Linked to Key Authors from Literature Review

Key Concepts	Key Concept from Literature Review (Chapter 2, Section 2.8)	Literature Review Key Authors Supporting Key Concept (not all-inclusive)
1	Extensive changes have occurred in the external environment of higher education over the past 40 years including the political and economic influences of globalization and neo-liberalism; social influences; and the volume and access to information and technology.	Clark (1995, 2001, 2004) Codd (2005) Dale (1999) Giroux (2002) Jones (2004) Kezar & Eckel (2004) Levin (1995, 2001) Marginson (2004) Slaughter & Leslie (1997) Toma (2007)
2	In response to the external changes, institutions of higher education have become more complex and diverse in terms of programs offered, funding sources, faculty and staffing, and the nature of student populations.	Clark (2001, 2004) Collis (2004) Dennison & Schuetze (2004) Jones (2004) Keller (2004) Rhodes (2009) Schuetze & Bruneau (2004) Scott (2006) Slaughter & Leslie (1997) Toma (2007)
3	Despite changes in both the external environment and organizational complexity, institutional governance and decision-making has not evolved to the same extent, creating tensions between the collaborative shared governance models that arose in the 60s and 70s versus the present-day demands for increased decision-making responsiveness and accountability.	CHEPA (2003) Collis (2004) Duderstadt (2004) Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan (2001) Keller (2004) Kezar & Eckel (2004) Lapworth (2004) Marginson (2004) Slaughter & Leslie (1997) Toma (2007)

Key Concepts	Key Concept from Literature Review (Chapter 2, Section 2.8)	Literature Review Key Authors Supporting Key Concept (not all-inclusive)
4	Despite frustrations with shared governance and collaborative decision-making, many faculty still have a desire to have a role in decision-making, however it varies by the nature of the decision and by faculty member.	Birnbaum (2004) CHEPA (2003) Clark (2001, 2004) Dennison (1995) Duderstadt (2004) Hamilton (2002, 2006) Kezar & Eckel (2004) Lapworth (2004) Shattock (2002) Tierney (2004)
5	There are advantages to having faculty participate in decision-making, for example: greater awareness of issues; greater generation of solutions; and greater commitment to the decision.	Birnbaum (1988, 1998, 2004) Buchbinder (1993) Clark (2004) Dearlove (1995, 2002) Duff & Berdahl (1966) Kezar (2004b) Kezar & Eckel (2004) Minor & Tierney (2005) Pope (2004) Shattock (2002)
6	There is evidence that faculty and their associations are placing an increased reliance on collective bargaining and unions to represent them in decision-making.	Buchbinder (1993) Burgan (2004) CAUT (2004) Duff & Berdahl (1966) Hamilton (2006) Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan (2001, 2004) Keller (2004) Levin (2001) Meyer (2007) Powell (2008)

Appendix B.

BCIT Employee Opinion Survey: 2009

BCIT's
2009 Employee Opinion Survey

This survey is confidential.

The responses will be compiled by an external contractor with all responses held in strict confidence. Only data in grouped tables will be provided to BCIT. While we ask for basic demographic data for analysis purposes, the categories have been kept deliberately broad so that individual identities cannot be identified.

The survey has been sent to employees' homes to help ensure it's received in a timely manner by everyone.

Once you have completed your survey, please seal it in the enclosed return envelope and return it either via Canada Post (postage paid) or via interoffice mail – addressed to the Institutional Planning and Analysis Office in SE-16.

Please return it by February 6th, 2009.

Survey Instructions

The objective of this confidential survey is to gather your opinions about different aspects of your work with BCIT. The response trends will be used to help ensure that as an organization, we are working towards making BCIT a great place to be.

Please respond to the statements as you personally feel. Remember, there are no right or wrong responses, your opinions are valuable no matter what they are.

Throughout the questionnaire you will be asked to respond to a series of statements using a 1- to 5-scale: 1 and 2 reflect degrees of disagreement with the statement, 4 and 5 reflect degrees of agreement with the statement, and 3 reflects a neutral response. If you feel the statement does not apply to you, you have the opportunity to choose a Not Applicable response.

For each statement, simply check the rating that best indicates your view of it as shown in the example below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
	5	4	3	2	1	0
1. The world is flat.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

No survey can cover all the issues and opinions that people may have about their job; therefore, a comments page is included at the end of the survey.

About You:

The following information will be used for statistical analysis and to assist in the interpretation of the results.

Your School/Department (check only one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Health Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Construction & the Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Ancillary Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Computing and Academic Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Supply Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School of Manufacturing, Electronics and Industrial Processes | <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research and International | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing and Communication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Registrar's Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Teaching Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation and Alumni |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Your length of service with BCIT (check only one)

- under a year 1 to 5 years 6 to 10 years 11 to 20 years over 20 years

Your main affiliation (check only one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BCGEU Support Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> FSA Faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BCGEU Vocational Instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> FSA Non-teaching Faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management/Excluded | <input type="checkbox"/> FSA Tech Staff |

Your primary work location (check only one)

- Burnaby DTC ATC Marine GNW Other

Employment Status:

- a) Check one → Regular Temporary or Auxiliary

- Check one → Full Time Part Time

or

- b) Part Times Studies Instructor

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Future Employee Opinion Surveys

- I would be comfortable completing this survey on-line.

Appendix C.

Key Informant Interview Discussion Guide

Hogan Dissertation Research: BCIT Case Study
Interview Questions for Key Informants
Semi-Structured Interview Questions to Be Asked in a 1:1 Format

Name of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Introduction

- Welcome and thank you
- Review objectives of research, how this fits, form of output
- Review confidentiality agreement, and have participant sign it
- Review timing for interview, and next steps (draft transcription, review and edits, approval)
- Provide follow-up form (4)

Questions

1. Can you tell me how long you have been employed by BCIT?
2. Can you tell me your current position at BCIT, and how long you have been in that position?
3. Can you briefly tell me what other positions you have held at BCIT?
4. Have you ever been a faculty member at BCIT?
5. What other higher education institutions have you been employed by, and in what capacity?
6. How would you describe BCIT's *official* decision-making structures and processes (at the ***Institutional*** level – two examples might be: The strategic direction of the Institute; How new programs are approved)?
7. How would you describe BCIT's *unofficial* decision-making structures and processes (how things really get decided at BCIT?)

8. Of the above, official and unofficial, which do you believe is the most important and influential in making *Institutional* decisions at BCIT, and why?
9. Do you believe that BCIT faculty understand their role in Institutional decision-making? Please explain why you feel that way.
10. In your opinion, what aspects of Institutional decision-making are most important for faculty involvement?
11. In your opinion, what types of decisions do faculty want, or expect to be involved in making?
12. How effective do you think Edco is in promoting or facilitating faculty's role in institutional decision-making? **PROBE FOR REASONS WHY/WHY NOT EFFECTIVE**
13. If we reflect on the current VISION project, could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty's engagement in this exercise? **PROBE FOR LIKES AND DISLIKES**
14. Overall, what do you think about the current level of faculty involvement in decision-making at BCIT?
15. To what extent do you think that faculty are held accountable for their input on decision-making?
16. Do you think there can be shared decision-making without shared accountability?
17. Do you believe a balance exists between the desire for collaborative decision-making at BCIT, and the external demands for Institutional responsiveness and accountability? If you answered "no", can you explain why you feel that way? If you answered "yes", can you discuss your feelings about the balance?
18. In your opinion, what role do faculty unions play in Institutional decision-making at BCIT?
19. In your opinion, what role should the faculty unions play in representing faculty in Institutional decision-making?
20. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT? Do you think it impacts how faculty (people) engage in decision-making?
21. What level of trust do you think exists at BCIT today? Is that higher, or lower than 5 years ago?
22. Do you have any suggestions for improving Institutional decision-making at BCIT; and if so, what are they?
23. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding faculty's role in decision-making at BCIT?

NOTES TO SELF: _____

Thanks!

Appendix D.

Confidentiality Agreement for Study Participants



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

GRADUATE PROGRAMS
15 Floor, 13450 102 Avenue
Surrey BC Canada
V3T 0A3
Phone: 778-782-8120
Fax: 778-782-8119
WWW.EDD.SFU.CA

Form 2- Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Study

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University, Dr. Hal Weinberg by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 778-782-6593; or the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at BCIT, Dr. Norman Streat by email at nstreat@bcit.ca, or phone at 604-432-8815.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, whether there are possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Title: *Faculty Engagement at the British Columbia Institute of Technology:
A Case Study in Institutional Decision-Making*

Investigator Name: Barry Hogan

Investigator Department: Faculty of Education

Having been asked to participate in the research study named above, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the Study Information Document describing the study. I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the personal risks to me in taking part in the study as described below:



Purpose and goals of this study:

To explore institutional governance and decision-making at BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology) through the lens of faculty engagement and collegial practices; to explore opportunities to enhance the practice of decision-making at BCIT; and to add to the literature by providing a Canadian case study on decision-making in higher education.

What the participants will be required to do:

7 key informants will be interviewed using a semi-structured 1:1 interview format (each interview will be approximately 90 minutes). In addition, approximately 40 faculty and administrators will be invited to participate in a series of focus group interviews (2 focus groups for each faculty union, and 2 focus groups for administrators). Each focus group will be approximately 90 minutes). A \$50-honorarium will be provided to all interview participants (key informants and focus group participants), as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Risks to the participant, third parties or society:

By following appropriate human research protocols, the risks of this study to you are considered minimal. All necessary precautions regarding informed consent, privacy, security for collection and storage of data, and interpretation and recording of results will be taken, and overseen by experienced SFU faculty (supervisory committee).

Benefits of study to the development of new knowledge:

This study undertakes to provide a unique and insightful review of the role of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, within a Canadian higher education setting. It has potential to both enhance practice, and add to the literature.

Statement of confidentiality: The data of this study will maintain confidentiality of your name and the contributions you have made to the extent allowed by the law.

The proposed research study is being conducted under the combined auspices and approval of the British Columbia Institute of Technology, and Simon Fraser University. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your confidentiality will be protected to the full extent permitted by law. All responses will be stored in a secure manner, in a locked environment, and if electronic, will be encrypted, and password protected, and stored on servers resident in Canada. No individual responses will be disclosed.

Interview of employees about their company or agency:

In agreeing to participate in this research study, you will be asked questions about BCIT, and how decisions are made. The BCIT executive has approved this research study as part of a doctoral research project at Simon Fraser University, conducted by Barry Hogan, an Associate Dean at BCIT. The BCIT executive has not participated in the selection of participants, nor will any data be reported or shared that identifies an individual participant. All responses will be aggregated at the specific faculty union or administrative group level. Agreement or non-agreement to participate in this research will form no part of an employee's evaluation. Similarly, data gathered from this research will not form any part of an employee's evaluation. In addition, focus group participants, by consenting to participate in the focus groups, confirm that any information they encounter will be kept confidential, and not revealed to parties outside of the focus group.

Inclusion of names of participants in reports of the study:

Participants of the study will have their anonymity and confidentiality protected. Any quotes incorporated will not be directly attributed. Data collection will use code names to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Contact of participants at a future time or use of the data in other studies:

The information collected from the focus group interviews, and key informant interviews will be used solely for the purposes of this study, and corresponding dissertation. The aggregated results could also be presented in scholarly journals, or presentations. If this research leads to further research, would you agree to future contact? If so please initial the box on the signature form.



I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics:

Dr. Hal Weinberg
Director, Office of Research Ethics
Office of Research Ethics
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Multi-Tenant Facility
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
hal_weinberg@sfu.ca

Alternatively:
Dr. Norman Streat
Chair, Research Ethics Board
BCIT
3700 Willingdon Ave.
Burnaby, BC, V5G3H2
nstreat@bcit.ca

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting:
the Librarian at Simon Fraser University Library;
or by contacting Barry Hogan: at work [REDACTED]
or at home, [REDACTED]

I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate:

The participant and witness shall fill in this area. Please print legibly.

Participant Last Name: <input type="text"/>	Participant First Name: <input type="text"/>
Participant Contact Information: email: Phone: Other (optional):	
Participant Signature (for adults): <input type="text"/>	Witness (if required by the Office of Research Ethics): <input type="text"/>
Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY) <input type="text"/>	Contact at a future time / use of data in other studies <input type="text"/>

Appendix E.

Key Informant Interview Emerging Themes

Hogan Ed.D Dissertation

“Faculty engagement at the British Columbia Institute of Technology:

A case study in institutional decision-making”

Key Informant Interview Summary of Emerging Themes

Submitted back to Key Informants for Triangulation Purposes @ January 14, 2009

Please note that the following represents a compilation of comments, organized by emerging themes. Each comment can be traced back to a specific respondent's transcript, but to protect confidentiality, I have paraphrased, and alternated the order of respondent's comments. No participant will be identified in my research, and please do not forward or share this summary in accordance with the confidentiality agreement that you have signed.

Would you please ***review the attached summary of themes, and provide feedback*** as to the reasonableness of the theme, based on the comments provided, and your own knowledge of the organization. Please note that some comments may conflict with your perspective, and you are not being asked to agree with them, but rather, whether you can confirm that the 8 theme's emerging out of the comments are reasonable, i.e. that this could be someone's perspective, and the corresponding theme identified is reasonable. Your feedback can be as concise (for example, “I agree that the themes presented are fair and reasonable based on the attached compilation of comments”), or as detailed as you care to make it. Please note that I have focussed the comments and themes on the subject of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, it is beyond the scope of this research to record and analyze all of the variant discussion comments. If you feel I have overlooked a theme relating to faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, please let me know so that I may revisit.

This summary is preliminary, and represents the first of 8 sources of input data. In addition to this summary, there will be corresponding summaries sent out to each of the 6 employee groups interviewed, based upon the transcripts of their respective focus group interview (2 each for: FSA faculty; BCGEU faculty; and admin comprised of deans and associate deans). The 8th source will be the results from BCIT's 2009 Employee Opinion Survey. Each of these preliminary summaries will be rolled up into a comprehensive research report. I will consider these aggregated findings in light of the broader research and literature on the subject of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making. The final product will be my doctoral dissertation.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated—it will help ensure the validity of my research.

Sincerely,

Barry Hogan

Emerging Themes

1. BCIT's decision-making structures and processes are not well understood.
 - I don't think BCIT has an official policy ... there are practices that have emerged over the years ... different people would have different interpretations of what those practices entail ... they vary on who the president, VP's, and deans are at the time.
 - Strategic planning is new for BCIT ... there are not a lot of strategic thinkers in the senior management ranks.
 - There is a lot of behind the scenes decision-making at BCIT.
 - Decision-making structures and processes are evident through Edco, and the Operating planning process.
 - Difficult decisions are sometimes made by omission, default, or lack of action.
 - BCIT's decision-making has been less strategic, and more opportunistic.
 - External authorities, such as the ITA, or Transport Canada have jurisdiction over certain programs, and have a direct bearing on BCIT's strategic direction.
 - I think the official channels are where most of the decision-making gets done.
 - A lot of decisions are done through the labour-management committee ... it is the only place where meaningful decision-making occurs.
 - One size cannot fit all of BCIT, there has to be a lot of discretion.
 - Officially, many decisions are made by the executive committee.

2. Faculty at BCIT generally do not understand their role in Institutional decision-making, nor do they understand how they should engage in the decision-making process.
 - Faculty do understand their role in decision-making, however the organization has not been clear in how faculty input should be channelled into decision-making.
 - Faculty do not really understand their role in decision-making.
 - Faculty are not qualified to make institutional decisions, nor are they given the opportunity to decide.
 - Institutional decisions are at a higher level than most faculty would feel qualified to provide input on.
 - Faculty play a huge role, and influence decisions ... but I am not sure they fully appreciate the extent that they are active participants in the decision-making process ... there are many opportunities for faculty to be heard from, and influence decisions at both the department, and institutional levels.
 - Faculty generally do not understand their role in decision-making. Their role is limited to the work they do on a day-to-day basis ... they have some sense of the overall institutional issues, but it is neither their role, nor their expertise to deal with the broader institutional decisions.
 - Faculty do not feel they have much of a role in decision-making, they are disenfranchised; they feel it is best to keep their head down, to do otherwise is futile.
 - Faculty's understanding of their role in decision-making is all over the map ... it varies between schools, programs, and individual faculty ... some are very involved, some make no effort.
 - Faculty need to know what their role in institutional decision-making entails.

3. Faculty have varying degrees of interest in participating in institutional decision-making at BCIT, dependent on the nature of the decision.
 - Most are interested in decisions that affect their direct work environment, however they appreciate being invited to participate in bigger decisions, such as management selection committees, but they need to realize that with the invitation comes responsibility.
 - Most want 100% control and influence over their classroom activity. They are relatively unengaged in other types of decision-making, however if they have an issue with an institutional decision, they have the right to engage; unfortunately it is often after the fact, which is of limited value.
 - Faculty are most interested in decisions that affect their turf, such as curriculum, pedagogy, student admissions.
 - It is the responsibility of the president to be strategic.
 - Faculty do not expect to make budget decisions, but they do want to know what is going on at the institutional level, they do not like surprises.
 - They all have different expectations as to what they want to be consulted on.
 - The FSA, more than the BCGEU, seem to want to play a bigger role in institutional decision-making. They want to be involved in everything that touches upon the work they do.
 - Senior management needs to consult, needs to listen, and then they need to make the decision.
 - Most faculty are interested in the day-to-day, direct impact types of decisions.
 - They prioritize the local over the broader types of decisions.
 - Faculty want some degree of control over where BCIT is headed ... they want to be heard on issues that will affect them.
 - It is inevitable that faculty will want to stay involved in decision-making into the future.
 - Faculty should be involved at all levels of decision-making, particularly strategic planning.
 - Top down just does not work in an educational environment.
 - Faculty should be most involved in making their particular program successful ... but they also have a role, but not as significant in informing resource allocations, and strategic direction.
 - There is a real dichotomy with faculty engagement; some just want to teach, while others want to be involved in everything.
 - In education, you need to find a way to engage faculty.

4. Faculty's engagement in decision-making at BCIT depends on how they perceive their input will be used.
 - It is very important that you make clear what you are going to do with faculty's input, and who is ultimately responsible for the decision.
 - The key is what the institution does with faculty input ... if it proves to be a waste of time, faculty will not bother next time.
 - With the vision exercise, there was very healthy faculty engagement, there were many opportunities, and faculty responded.

- If faculty do not believe management provides them with the opportunity for constructive input, they can resort to rule-based approaches, as opposed to a true collegial approach.
 - Until recently, there was a lack of trust between management and the FSA in particular, resulting in minimal invitations to faculty to become involved in institutional decision-making... it was an adversarial relationship.
5. There are varying opinions as to the role unions should play in BCIT decision-making, but they are generally perceived as being representative of the general faculty population.
- The unions have a dual role: they have a legal obligation to represent their members; and they provide input to the institution on broader strategic issues.
 - The unions provide representation for faculty on the broader institutional issues.
 - Their role is to protect the interests of their members.
 - Union responses are filtered through the lens of the collective agreement. Their focus is not necessarily on the 'common good' – they have an agenda they have to follow.
 - They provide checks and balances, and can help the president understand the consequences of a decision.
 - Unions can help their membership understand the parameters of institutional decision-making.
 - Unions are representative of faculty.
 - They provide a useful role, they provide balance and perspective.
 - It depends on the circumstances ... the FSA is more involved in the traditional academic culture, less so with the BCGEU.
 - Unions play an important role in employee relations.
 - It is critical for management to have a good relationship with its unions.
 - The unions act as a spokesperson for its membership to the institution, and for the institution back to its members ... they help interpret expectations.
 - It is easy for the union to assert rights under the collective agreement, but they can also assert rights under co-governance legislation, and that can be a challenge for management.
 - Unions must blend protecting and advocating for the interests of faculty, with the broader objective of making BCIT more successful.
 - Unions should be like an internal consultant to management.
 - No representative body is ever perfectly representative ... the world gets run by the people who show up.
 - I believe the FSA is broadly representative, whereas the BCGEU is a more conventional union.
 - Unions play a huge role, and are being asked to participate more and more.
 - The administration has evolved its perspective from viewing the unions as a necessary evil, to now where they are seen as true partners in the enterprise.
 - Unions should not have their input limited to the narrow terms and conditions of employment, but rather they should have input on virtually any important issue, it should all be open for discussion.
 - The unions provide the role of counsel and stewardship ... they provide the opportunity to consider the consequences ... they are the voice of reason.

- The unions have to be closely connected to management
 - The unions have become much more cooperative, and less adversarial, more like partners.
 - The unions want a minor voice in institutional decision-making; it is not in their best interests to take the lead on leadership for the institution.
 - BCIT's unions are representative of faculty.
6. Edco's role is seen as valuable to the organization, albeit its scope is limited, and cannot represent faculty's broader interests.
- Edco has a very structured process for program approvals.
 - Faculty representatives can exert pressure through Edco if there are decisions that will impact their work directly.
 - Faculty on Edco do believe they have influence, and that they help inform decision-making at BCIT.
 - Generally, Edco sticks with the legislated issues and concerns.
 - Edco is effective in its primary purpose that is program quality control, and admission policies, etc.
 - Edco is representative of the broader institution; it is not just a forum for faculty.
 - Edco does not have the mandate to represent faculty on the full range of issues that faculty are concerned about ... it cannot deal with strategic, or budget-oriented issues.
 - Edco can only be part of faculty's voice in institutional decision-making.
7. It is possible to achieve a greater balance between collaboration and responsiveness in BCIT's decision-making by establishing greater trust, and clarity of expectations for input.
- Tension always exists between collaboration and responsiveness. It takes a long time to reach decisions given the number of people that must be consulted.
 - If you communicate the deadline, faculty and unions understand that we might have to compress the consultation, but if you bypass the consultation process, that is when you are going to have problems ...
 - If you don't have trust, it negatively impacts everything, not just decision-making.
 - It is not possible to consult on all issues, that would be paralyzing.
 - Balance is possible if when you consult, you advise people of the restrictions on your decision-making, such as time, money, and the law. If you tell them what the rules are, they can rise to the occasion ... people do not need forever to provide input.
 - We don't have the balance right yet. We are entering a much more competitive era. We will only be successful if we collaborate, and that will mean being responsive to a changing environment.
 - Whenever we respond, it should be based on faculty being partners in the development of the response, and being fully supportive.
 - Trust is fundamental to decision-making; you cannot build a strong sense of team without trust.
 - There is no balance; the external forces that we must work with just don't understand the process of education.
 - I am not sure balance is practical; there is always tension around this.

- Consultation takes time, faculty need to respond in a timely manner.
 - Unions need to be able to formulate a meaningful response in timely manner, for example when [new President] invited the unions to participate in the budget process.
 - Ideally we will get to the point where the institute wants to consult with faculty, and faculty can provide value by providing good information quickly.
8. There is a sense of opportunity for improved faculty engagement at BCIT with the arrival of the new president, [new President].
- The new President is very consultative; this has not always been the case at BCIT.
 - The new President is building a more collaborative culture.
 - It is already better than it was, the change is the result of more open communication ... this has resulted in a reduction of the adversarial relationship that existed previously between management and the unions... this level of openness is a major improvement to our culture.
 - The new President has set the example, now it will be up to his direct reports to follow.
 - I like the direction we are headed, but the jury is out as to how successful we will be.
 - I commend [new President] for recognizing consultation was an issue, we still have a long way to go, but it is clear he wants to be more inclusive.
 - [New President] has been helpful at building relationships, but it is his use of performance measures that will be truly transformational for BCIT.
 - Trust was missing between the unions and senior management prior to [new President]. We have made some good progress, but there is still a long way to go.
 - Since [new President] arrived, there has been more opportunity for faculty to be involved in decision-making, for example Kumbaya, the budget process.
 - We have more trust since [new President] arrived.
 - Faculty have more voice now than before.
 - Things are getting better under [new President], but there is still a time-lag with the VP's.
 - [New President] is building a greater sense of team.
 - [New President] is seen to be consulting faculty, and providing useful information.
9. Summary of suggestions for improving faculty engagement in institutional decision-making:
- BCIT needs a greater sense of team
 - BCIT needs to look at the data ... should not be so complacent... should embrace change more.
 - BCIT should not lose sight, or take for granted how collegial our environment is.
 - The VP's must get closer to the day-to-day business of education. They must realize they share responsibility for the quality of education, and take more action to support faculty.
 - Faculty need to broaden their understanding of post-secondary education, including student behaviour, and the wider environmental reality. Education is no

longer a place of low risk and expectations, it is changing, and we must change with it.

- We have to educate faculty on their decision-making rights, role, and how to engage. The strategic planning process is a big opportunity ... we need to do that right, with broad consultation and input. It can't be top down; it has to come from the grass-roots.
- We have to follow through with communication, it is critically important to establishing a culture of collaboration and trust.

Appendix F.

Focus Group Interview Discussion Guide

- Welcome
- Collect Confidentiality Agreements
- Introductions – name, length of time at BCIT, current position/teaching duties

Official Decision-Making

1. How would you describe BCIT's **official** decision-making structures and processes at the **Institutional** level? Two examples of what I mean by 'official decision-making' include setting the strategic direction of the Institute and getting new programs approved.
2. As you understand it, what individuals and/or groups are involved in the official decision-making process at BCIT? **IF NECESSARY, PROBE FOR THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, ETC.**
3. Can you give me an example of a situation in which you felt that the **official** decision-making structure and process at BCIT worked particularly well? Feel free to speak in generalities if you wish.
4. What about a situation in which you felt that the **official** decision-making structure did not work well? Again, feel free to speak in generalities.
5. How many of you are familiar with the Education Council, commonly referred to as Edco?
6. What can you tell me about how Edco promotes or facilitates decision-making at BCIT?
7. How effective do you think Edco is in promoting or facilitating faculty's role in institutional decision-making? **PROBE FOR REASONS WHY/WHY NOT EFFECTIVE**
8. How many of you are aware of the Institute's recent 'Visioning' Exercise?
9. **IF AWARE, ASK:** Did you participate in any of the meetings and/or working sessions? Which ones?
10. Overall, could the Institute have done anything differently to increase faculty's engagement in this exercise? **PROBE FOR LIKES AND DISLIKES**

Unofficial Decision-Making

11. How would you describe BCIT's **unofficial** decision-making structures and processes; that is, the day-to-day decision-making that doesn't follow any particular rules, written or unwritten?
12. Can you give me an example of a situation in which you felt that the **unofficial** decision-making structure and process at BCIT worked particularly well? Feel free to speak in generalities if you wish.

Overall Decision-Making

13. Overall, which decision-making structure, official or unofficial, do you believe is the most effective in making *Institutional* decisions at BCIT? Why is that?
14. To what extent do you think **there is** a balance between the desire for collaborative decision-making at BCIT and the **external demands** for Institutional responsiveness and accountability? Why is that?
15. Do you think that there **should be** a balance between collaborative decision-making and the external demands for Institutional responsiveness and accountability? **PROBE FOR PROS AND CONS OF EACH**
16. In your opinion, what, if anything, should be done about the balance between collaborative decision-making versus the need for responsiveness and accountability?

Role of Faculty in Decision-Making at BCIT

17. How well do you think that BCIT faculty, as a whole, **understand** their role in Institutional decision-making? Why is that?
18. In your opinion, what aspects of Institutional decision-making are most important for faculty involvement? Put another way, what types of decisions do you think faculty want, or expect, to be involved in making? **IF NOT MENTIONED, ASK SPECIFICALLY ABOUT STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DECISIONS THAT IMPACT THE INSTITUTION AS A WHOLE (E.G., DECISION TO POSITION BCIT AS A POLYTECHNIC)**
19. What types of institutional decisions have you been involved with?
20. Overall, what do you think about the current level of faculty involvement in decision-making at BCIT?

Shared Decision-Making and Accountability

21. To what extent do you think that faculty are held accountable for their input on decision-making?
22. Do you think there can be shared decision-making without shared accountability?

23. **ASK IF TIME PERMITS:** If faculty were held accountable, how might that affect their involvement and/or way in which they provide input?

Faculty Involvement

24. What do you think are the best ways to involve faculty in institutional decision-making? In answering this question, try to be as specific as possible. That is, would it be through things like forums, committees, surveys, something else?
25. In your opinion, what are the reasons why faculty may not be involved in decision-making?
PROBE FOR SPECIFIC REASONS AND BARRIERS
26. What do you think is a reasonable period of time to allow for faculty consultation?
27. Over the past 5 to 10 years, have you perceived any major changes in efforts to engage faculty, staff and mid-level administrators in decision-making at BCIT? What about over the past year, since [New President] arrived? **PROBE FOR SPECIFICS OF PERCEIVED CHANGES**
28. In the literature, the trend is towards more managerial decision-making, less consultative decision-making in higher education. Why do you think this trend is growing?
29. Do you think that there is a trend towards more managerial decision-making at BCIT? Can you give some concrete examples of how this has occurred?

Role of Unions in Decision-Making at BCIT

30. How do you feel about the role faculty unions play in Institutional decision-making at BCIT? Should anything be done differently?
31. Overall, how well do you think unions represent faculty interests in Institutional decision-making? Why is that? Is it possible for the FSA/BCGEU to truly represent the interests of a diversity of faculty members? Is there a better way?
32. Do you think there is a conflict between the unions mandates of advocating members' interests and participating in the decision-making for the higher good of the institution?
33. How does the issue of trust influence decision-making at BCIT? Do you think it impacts how faculty (people) engage in decision-making?
34. What level of trust do you think exists at BCIT today? Is that higher, or lower than 5 years ago?

Wrap-Up

35. Do you have any final suggestions for improving Institutional decision-making at BCIT; and if so, what are they?

Appendix G.

Focus Group Participant Characteristics

School	Administrator	FSA	GEU	Total
Business	3	4		7
Construction & Environment	2	3	4	9
Computing & Liberal Arts Studies	2	1		3
Health Sciences	2	4		6
Manufacturing & Electronics	2	1	2	5
Transportation	2		5	7
Total	13	13	11	37

Appendix H.

Confidentiality Agreement for Focus Group Moderator



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Hogan Dissertation, Ed.D. (SFU)

Title: *Faculty Engagement at the British Columbia Institute of Technology: A Case Study in Institutional Decision-making*

Focus Group Moderator Confidentiality Statement

I commit to protecting all participants' privacy, and to conduct this focus group interview in accordance with the guiding ethical principles set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans". Specifically I commit to using scholarly and scientific rigour and integrity in obtaining, recording, and analyzing data, and in reporting and publishing the results.

Moderator name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place: _____



Appendix I.

Focus Group Interview Emerging Themes ¹

Hogan Ed.D Dissertation

“Faculty engagement at the British Columbia Institute of Technology:

A case study in institutional decision-making”

FSA 2 Focus Group Interview Summary of Emerging Themes

Submitted back to Participants for Triangulation Purposes @ January 14, 2009

Please note that the following represents a compilation of comments, organized by emerging themes, derived from your focus group interview. Each comment can be traced back to a specific respondent's comment on the interview transcript, but to protect confidentiality, I have not identified specific contributors, or programs. No participant will be identified in my research, and please do not forward or share this summary in accordance with the confidentiality agreement you have signed.

Would you please **review the attached summary of themes, and provide feedback** as to the reasonableness of the themes, based on the comments provided, and your knowledge of the organization. Please note that some comments may conflict with your perspective, and you are not being asked to agree with them, but rather, whether you can confirm that the 8 theme's emerging out of the comments are reasonable, i.e. that this could be someone's perspective, and the corresponding theme identified is reasonable. Your feedback can be as concise (for example, "I agree that the themes presented are fair and reasonable based on the attached compilation of comments"), or as detailed as you care to make it. Please note that I have focussed the comments and themes on the subject of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, it is beyond the scope of this research to record and analyze all of the variant discussion comments. While the support for some of the themes may seem light based on your group's discussion, I have included themes that have shown broad support across the groups, even if there was limited support from your group. If you feel strongly that they are inappropriate given your group's discussion, or if you feel I have overlooked a theme relating to faculty engagement in institutional decision-making, please let me know so that I may revisit.

This summary is preliminary, and represents 1 of 8 sources of input data. In addition to this summary, there will be corresponding summaries sent out to each of the 5 other employee groups interviewed, based upon the transcripts of their respective focus group interview (2 each for: FSA faculty; BCGEU faculty; and admin comprised of deans and associate deans). The two other sources are the aggregated key informant interviews, and the results from BCIT's 2009 Employee Opinion Survey. Each of these preliminary summaries will be rolled up into a comprehensive research report. I will consider these aggregated findings in light of the broader

¹ FSA 2 group used as example.

research and literature on the subject of faculty engagement in institutional decision-making. The final product will be my doctoral dissertation. Your assistance is greatly appreciated—it will help ensure the validity of my research.

Sincerely, Barry Hogan.

Emerging Themes

1. BCIT's official decision-making structures and processes are not well understood, and are not operating effectively.
 - "In the past, faculty have not been involved in official decision-making at BCIT.
 - "I agree that strategic direction comes from the dean and up, but there is real diversity at BCIT, especially with all the acting deans and VP's lately. Actings don't act, decision-making does not happen, it gets put on hold.
 - "Not all schools have deans and associate deans that have the skills to listen.
 - "Good ideas come from the bottom up, from faculty. I see the acting leadership as a buffer, you can do things differently depending on who the deans and VP's are.
 - "Decision-making at the institutional level feels mysterious to me. Do I feel I have direct input to decisions? No. Do I know what decisions are being made? No. Do I feel there is open communication? No. Do I know how I can interact? No. It feels like an old boys' network.
 - "It feels like a mystery to a lot of people.
 - "There are problems when the dean or AD come from faculty, they have friends, it is an old boys club.
 - "I approached a dean with an idea, and x just dismissed it, but at least I tried.
 - "I've worked in 3 different areas of the institute, and each had very different decision-making processes, and different levels of faculty involvement. One sought no faculty input, another involved faculty more, and one asked for input, but then took no action on it. It is very inconsistent, but I guess it is not going to be the same between schools.
 - "In our school, it is the dean and the government that make the big decisions, then they come to faculty for implementation.
 - "For the Institute, I think it is the PEC where the critical decision-making occurs, some would go to the BOG – I think. I don't know if the BOG ever rejects a decision from the PEC, probably not.
 - "Some critical decisions occur at the faculty level, but where the disconnect occurs, faculty aren't recognized for their involvement in the decision-making process.
 - "I think the strategic decision-making process is disabled by the use of business models.
 - "Decision-making can be dominated by a strong operations manager, who base their decisions strictly on numbers, it drives me crazy, dollars are driving education decisions, without any discussion with faculty, sometimes even the dean and associate deans back down, this is a problem. There is a disconnect at how the top level views decision-making, and how it occurs at the school level. The reality is that down in the trenches, they are just crunching numbers, this hurts our ability to deliver quality education. I think the middle management are not strong enough to do the right thing.

- “I don’t think I have ever been asked, or heard on a major, official institute decision. I do not understand the process of decision-making at BCIT.
 - “It is changing all the time. I thought I knew our process for the operating plan, but it just changed – again. I don’t understand why it changed.
 - “Lots of positive things come from faculty, then get stopped at the higher levels, such as the dean. It stops your momentum.
 - “The recent push on research has been hell. The top was pushing for grassroots to do more research, we were told there was a pool of money, so we came up with suggestions, but there was no structure, or ability to influence decisions, so it went nowhere.
 - “It is unclear and confusing to faculty where BCIT stands on research.
 - “I think there are a lot of privileged conversations that go on, and decisions are made without context, and do not follow policy. There is a lack of consistency, a lack of transparency, decisions are made differently for different people, it is like an old boy’s favouritism.
 - “Unofficial decisions allow for more agility, you can make incredible things happen here through unofficial channels.
 - “There are so many new AD’s lately, they need to figure out the role, and either give us more authority, or attend more meetings.
 - “Our manager prefers the path of least resistance.
 - “Faculty do a great deal of things unofficially, all the time.
 - “Constant change and flux over the past 4 years. The acting positions have really undermined the official processes. We have resorted to unofficial processes just to get things done, but that is not right.
 - “We never see our dean, it is too easy to say no by email.
 - “You never see the senior leadership team at BCIT.
 - “So much change, no consistency. Acting, acting, acting.
2. Faculty at BCIT generally do not understand their role in Institutional decision-making, nor do they understand how they should engage in the decision-making process.
- “There is huge variation in decision-making, it depends on the AD, I am not sure how much authority we have. Program heads can have significant authority.
 - “It is unclear when a program head needs to get an associate dean’s approval vs. when it is a department decision. I often bypass my AD, just to get it done. We are assuming liability, but then again, we belong to a union, so don’t really need to worry about it.
 - “Program heads have a reasonable idea of their role in decision-making, but most faculty do not know at all.
 - “I’m a program head, and I am not convinced we fully understand decision-making at BCIT, we may understand it a little more, but that’s about it.
 - “It is important for faculty to understand the decision-making process, they need this information to provide input.
 - “The contract is vague as to what role we play.

3. Faculty have varying degrees of interest in participating in institutional decision-making at BCIT, dependent on the nature of the decision.
 - “If you want to participate, you have to make time for it.
 - “It depends on the nature, significance, and whether it is official, or unofficial.
 - “Things that are central to education, like curriculum, use of instructional tools and technology, space, number of students, student conduct, selection committees, pd committees.
 - “Not the strategic direction for the institute, unless you mean the vision.
 - “I would say yes for the strategic direction of the school, but zero institutionally.
 - “Community space, that would really help collaboration, a place where we could meet.
 - “Realistically, there are a fair number of faculty that are not interested in providing input. You need to provide a venue, but faculty also need to make this a priority. You will also find it is the same people who show up for everything. There are broad masses of people who never input, but they don’t realize it is part of their job.
 - “You have to engage yourself, you need to tune yourself into notes, pick up on what is going on around here.
4. Faculty’s engagement in decision-making at BCIT depends on how they perceive their input will be used.
 - “I participated in the vision project, I liked it, lots of energy, but I have not yet seen how the input was used. It was a good process, I was glad to see they attempted to get broad input.
 - “I found it hard to participate, between workload and scheduling, it was problematic.
 - “Is it worth getting involved in? I’ve seen too many previous attempts, it would have been good to see how he was going to use the input.
 - “The open forums are good because you can ask the president a direct question, and hear his response directly. We need to get faculty more actively engaged.
 - “You can’t expect faculty to engage if you aren’t going to consult them, you can’t ask for input after the fact, that’s no good.
 - “I have seen new staff join our department, and in the beginning they are keen to participate, but after seeing nothing change, they get beat up, put their heads down. Are the keeners rewarded? No. Are the inactive ones corrected? No. What drives us? In the end, there is not much engagement.
5. There are varying opinions as to the role unions should play in BCIT decision-making, and whether they are generally perceived as being representative of the general faculty population.
 - “The FSA is not a proxy for faculty representation.
 - “It has its place, but every time I contact them, nothing is clear, the contract is full of grey. Sometimes it strangles you. The collective agreement is restrictive, for example loading.
 - “The FSA is good, but it depends on how many faculty actually get involved with them, and I think that is declining now.

- “They are good, because they are not militant. It would make things worse if they were militant, then it would become adversarial with management. The way it is, the gap between faculty and management is small, this is best for faculty.
6. Edco’s role is seen as valuable to the organization, albeit its scope is limited, and cannot represent faculty’s broader interests.
- “I have been involved in Edco officially this year, but in the past I served on several standing committees, it is quite an involved process. It seems to work quite well, it is a good process that involves faculty, some of the committees, like programming, and the school quality committees, are dominated by faculty.
 - “The recent education policy development has been done well, they sent out proposals for feedback, to all faculty, asked for input, reported back on the input, I thought it worked well.
 - “A lot of faculty, not just FSA, but also BCGEU are involved in Edco. It is a senior education decision-making body, which has a significant faculty component.
 - “It is not just a BCIT creation, it is legislated, it formally recognizes faculty involvement in decision-making.
 - “I frequently go to the Edco meetings to see what is going on, they generally do a good job, it is useful. I learn a lot, it keeps me up to date.
 - “It is a good system for checks and balances, but it can be cumbersome given the diverse stakeholders.
 - “I’m not that familiar, only heard about it 2 years ago.
 - “I just joined, and I got a full orientation, they told me it was like a university senate, but I am not sure what role Edco plays in decision-making.
 - “I think it is more of a QC role, it is not strategic.
 - “Edco works well because everyone plays a team role, you can’t tell where people are from, whether they are management, faculty, or what. It is a good thing no deans are on it, AD’s are ok, they are very close to education, they are more like half management, half faculty. The deans are too much business priority. The consultative structure works well.
 - “It is good, there are few environments like that here that are cross-institutional. The school silos are so strong here.
 - “Edco has a clearly defined mandate and process, we know the rules, they guide Edco.
 - “All I know is that Edco seems to work. When I put something through that should pass, it does, and when I have sent something in that shouldn’t, it didn’t. I think part of its success is that it is disengaged from the business model, there are no deans or operations managers, it is focussed on education, that is why it works.
7. It is possible to achieve a greater balance between collaboration and responsiveness in BCIT’s decision-making by establishing greater trust, and clarity of expectations for input.
- “Our faculty had a previously made decision handed to us to implement. If we had been involved sooner, we would have made the same decision, but we would have provided a more informed, creative solution.
 - “I know someone at Kwantlen, and they told me since it was announced they were transitioning to university status, they had to collaborate on how to further their research agenda. They were able to collaborate effectively to meet an outside force, it can be done.

- “If upper management is doing its job, there should not be so many surprises, they need to be more ready upstairs, I resent that it is always a crisis. Clarity of communication is the key to capitalizing on collaboration. Faculty here at BCIT are so practical. I think it is the unofficial crap that generates all the crisis.
 - “Collaboration occurs at the lower levels, it is a practice in many departments.
 - “It depends on the time of year, but just tell me how much time I have to provide input, and I will do the best I can in the time available.
 - “I sense a lack of trust, quite strongly, from faculty towards management, and between deans, right across the board.
 - “The rotating door of management under [the past President], where some ridiculous number of managers were let go, had to change things, they must have been quite afraid.
 - “Openness is really important, without it, it breeds fear.
 - “Management must manage expectations, decisions do need to be made, budgets exist, not all decisions are going to be popular, sometimes programs should be cut. Trust can be built by being open.
8. There is a sense of opportunity for improved faculty engagement at BCIT with the arrival of the new President.
- “I hope the new President will bring some consistency to decision-making.
 - “I see light at the end of the tunnel.
 - “The visioning process is encouraging.
 - “The invitation to write him directly, and he will respond personally is impressive.
9. Summary of suggestions for improving faculty engagement in institutional decision-making:
- “Instead of open invites for faculty input, make it more focussed on specific departments.
 - “Personal agenda’s influence unofficial decision-making, it is important that BCIT have an official process that are not biased, are institute wide for consistency and integrity.
 - “The bigger we are, the more important it is that we have official decision-making processes that actually work.
 - “Need to develop alternative ways to engage faculty, not just meetings at 2:30 on Wednesday afternoons. They should use more technology, and surveys, the president forums are not the best way to engage faculty.
 - “More and better community space where we could meet, it would support collaboration.
 - “Open forums are a good start.
 - “We need an open, transparent decision-making process that is traceable, and ensures input is considered, and decisions are communicated back.
 - “There should be more access to the deans and vp’s.
 - “Provide background ahead of time, with sufficient notice.
 - “Provide training on how BCIT makes decisions, and what is expected of faculty, their role. De-mystify institutional decision-making.

Appendix J.

Numerical Mean Results by Statement for the BCIT Employee Survey

Sample Size Values for Appendix J

Employee Groups		2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	<i>N</i> =	897	929	1022	866
BCGEU	<i>n</i> =	124	131	126	115
FSA	<i>n</i> =	390	413	443	416
Management	<i>n</i> =	93	95	85	94
Other (not reported separately)	<i>n</i> =	290	290	368	241

Statement 12: *I am empowered to make appropriate decisions to get the job done successfully*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.9
Management	4.2	4.3	4	4.2
FSA	3.8	4	3.7	3.8
BCGEU	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.6

Statement 15: *I have the opportunity to influence changes that directly impact my work.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.6
Management	3.9	4	3.8	4.2
FSA	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.4
BCGEU	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.5

Statement 16: *In my department, suggestions and ideas are encouraged.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
Management	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.3
FSA	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6
BCGEU	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.5

Statement 24: *BCIT fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees		3.4	3.3	3.5
Management		3.9	3.5	3.7
FSA		3.5	3.4	3.5
BCGEU		3.3	3	3.2

Statement 25: *BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing change.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.9
Management	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
FSA	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8
BCGEU	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.7

Statement 40: *Senior management fosters a climate where employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	3.5	3.4	3	3.3
Management	3.9	3.8	3.2	3.5
FSA	3.5	3.5	3	3.3
BCGEU	3.4	3.2	2.8	3

Statement 43: *Senior management actively consults with BCIT's Unions on key institutional decisions.*

	2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees				3.2
Management				3.8
FSA				3.2
BCGEU				3

Appendix K.

1-Way ANOVA Statistical Analysis: BCIT Employee Survey

Sample Size Values for Appendix K

Employee Groups		2001	2004	2006	2009
All Employees	<i>N</i> =	897	929	1022	866
BCGEU	<i>n</i> =	124	131	126	115
FSA	<i>n</i> =	390	413	443	416
Management	<i>n</i> =	93	95	85	94
Other (not reported separately)	<i>n</i> =	290	290	368	241

Note. 1-Way ANOVA Statistical Analyses for Statements 12, 15, 16, 24, 25, 40, 43 subsequently appear on the following pages.

Statement 12: I am empowered to make appropriate decisions to get the job done successfully.

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2001					
Between Groups	26.98087	2	13.49044	10.76615	2.63E-05
Within Groups	636.5455	508	1.253042		
Total	663.5264	510			
2004					
Between Groups	38.98966	2	19.49483	18.90961	1.17E-08
Within Groups	546.4025	530	1.030948		
Total	585.3921	532			
2006					
Between Groups	16.33019	2	8.165094	6.945547	0.001052
Within Groups	631.2902	537	1.175587		
Total	647.6204	539			
2009					
Between Groups	19.15339	2	9.576696	8.279346	0.00029
Between Groups	579.5053	501	1.156697		
Total	598.6587	503			
By Year					
FSA					
Between Groups	24.80401	3	8.268003	7.316489	7.3E-05
Within Groups	1395.612	1235	1.130051		
Total	1420.416	1238			
All					
Between Groups	34.07487	3	11.35829	9.322	3.88E-06
Within Groups	4471.673	3670	1.218439		
Total	4505.747	3673			

Statement 15: I have the opportunity to influence changes that directly impact my work.

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2001					
Between Groups	37.1041	2	18.55205	15.62571	2.6E-07
Within Groups	600.7623	506	1.187277		
Total	637.8664	508			
2004					
Between Groups	25.10089	2	12.55045	10.88843	2.32E-05
Within Groups	609.7469	529	1.152641		
Total	634.8477	531			
2006					
Between Groups	15.76828	2	7.884142	7.378525	0.00069
Within Groups	571.6611	535	1.068525		
Total	587.4294	537			
2009					
Between Groups	46.31611	2	23.15806	18.35196	2.04E-08
Between Groups	628.4184	498	1.261884		
Total	674.7345	500			
By Year					
MGT					
Between Groups	8.105841	3	2.701947	3.677535	0.012393
Within Groups	260.8245	355	0.734717		
Total	268.9304	358			
All					
Between Groups	14.10189	3	4.700629	3.846422	0.009211
Within Groups	4467.919	3656	1.222078		
Total	4482.02	3659			

Statement 16: In my department suggestions and ideas are encouraged.

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2001					
Between Groups	28.6983	2	14.34915	10.64553	2.97E-05
Within Groups	675.2997	501	1.347904		
Total	703.998	503			
2004					
Between Groups	19.34122	2	9.670611	8.261204	0.000293
Within Groups	614.5679	525	1.170605		
Total	633.9091	527			
2006					
Between Groups	35.59094	2	17.79547	14.924	4.95E-07
Within Groups	633.1675	531	1.192406		
Total	668.7584	533			
2009					
Between Groups	41.98456	2	20.99228	16.85204	8.28E-08
Between Groups	621.5951	499	1.245682		
Total	663.5797	501			

Statement 24: *BCIT fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas and recommend changes.*

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2004					
Between Groups	22.7803	2	11.39015	9.911869	5.97E-05
Within Groups	592.9577	516	1.149143		
Total	615.738	518			
2006					
Between Groups	14.03971	2	7.019855	5.669269	0.00366
Within Groups	666.1673	538	1.238229		
Total	680.207	540			
2009					
Between Groups	12.02394	2	6.011968	5.56604	0.004065
Between Groups	544.3784	504	1.080116		
Total	556.4024	506			
By Year					
MGT					
Between Groups	6.778898	2	3.389449	3.357447	0.036323
Within Groups	265.5068	263	1.009532		
Total	272.2857	265			
All					
Between Groups	13.48705	2	6.743523	5.681872	0.003447
Within Groups	13.48705	2762	1.186849		
Total	3291.564	2764			

Statement 25: BCIT consults with impacted employees before implementing new work practices.

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2001					
Between Groups	24.34099	2	12.17049	11.86988	9.68E-06
Within Groups	429.6116	419	1.025326		
Total	453.9526	421			
2004					
Between Groups	24.60473	2	12.30236	12.08527	7.72E-06
Within Groups	457.0656	449	1.017964		
Total	481.6704	451			
2006					
Between Groups	14.14057	2	7.070287	7.013553	0.00099
Within Groups	507.0689	503	1.008089		
Total	521.2095	505			
2009					
Between Groups	13.96123	2	6.980615	6.338574	0.001919
Between Groups	526.4171	478	1.101291		
Total	540.3784	480			
By Year					
All					
Between Groups	28.8805	3	9.626834	9.048229	5.78E-06
Within Groups	3549.326	3336	1.063947		
Total	3578.207	3339			

Statement 40: *Senior management fosters a climate in which employees are encouraged to ask questions, contribute ideas, and recommend changes.*

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2001					
Between Groups	15.54162	2	7.770809	7.403729	0.000687
Within Groups	467.0633	445	1.04958		
Total	482.6049	447			
2004					
Between Groups	15.39326	2	7.696629	7.208727	0.000823
Within Groups	513.5551	481	1.067682		
Total	528.9483	483			
2006					
Between Groups	10.85507	2	5.427537	4.542699	0.011068
Within Groups	624.8712	523	1.194782		
Total	635.7262	525			
2009					
Between Groups	12.56702	2	6.283512	5.823244	0.003167
Between Groups	527.6505	489	1.07904		
Total	540.2175	491			
By Year					
BCGEU					
Between Groups	27.61305	3	9.20435	7.439982	7.13E-05
Within Groups	565.3761	457	1.237147		
Total	592.9892	460			
FSA					
Between Groups	49.66444	3	16.55481	15.86334	4.16E-10
Within Groups	1176.125	1127	1.043589		
Total	1225.79	1130			
MGT					
Between Groups	25.61263	3	8.537542	7.717034	5.24E-05
Within Groups	391.6388	354	1.106324		
Total	417.2514	357			
All					
Between Groups	152.9523	3	50.98411	44.79788	2.15E-28
Within Groups	3925.279	3449	1.138092		
Total	4078.231	3452			

Statement 43: *Senior management actively consults with BCIT's unions on key institutional decisions.*

Level of Agreement	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
By Employee Group					
2009					
Between Groups	32.53551	2	16.26776	23.91909	1.38E-10
Between Groups	297.8908	438	0.680116		
Total	330.4263	440			