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Campus Student Unions as Spaces for Fostering a Critical Pedagogy of Consumption

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Campus Student Unions as Spaces for
Fostering a Critical Pedagogy of Consumption

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Amy Y. Liu

2015
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Campus Student Unions as Spaces for
Fostering a Critical Pedagogy of Consumption

by

Amy Y. Liu

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Robert A. Rhoads, Chair

This qualitative, multisite case study examined the current landscape of student unions and discovered how these spaces can be leveraged to foster a critical pedagogy of consumption. Using a constructivist approach, this study relied on data from interviews with 41 members of student union governing boards and management staffs, documents, and observations at three universities: California State University, Fullerton, California State University, Northridge, and University of California, Los Angeles. This study addressed how campus consumption amenities, specifically the student union, can serve an important and critical educational mission.

Findings from this study suggested that student unions are highly responsive organizations that manifest community, commercial, and consumer values. Differences in their organizational, governance, and revenue structures revealed variations in the strategic priorities, oversight, and
independence of these entities. The mixed-use options of student unions, especially when there was a food or consumer products retail component, and the discussions about services, practices, and potential tenants indicated that student unions are spaces in which the domains of campus commercialization, critical pedagogy, and ethical consumption can dovetail to foster a sense of caring and engagement within and amongst the communities they serve.

The implications for theory and practice discussed encourages researchers and practitioners to understand that student unions provide tangible contexts in which physical space, social relationships, and economic exchanges coalesce within a higher education environment to enact a critical pedagogy of consumption.
The dissertation of Amy Y. Liu is approved.

Darnell Hunt

Douglas Kellner

Robert A. Rhoads, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015
For my family, especially

D, I, and M
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UNLESS

someone like you

cares a whole awful lot,

nothing is going to get better.

It's not.

- The Lorax -
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CHAPTER 1: THE STUDENT UNION AS A SITE OF INQUIRY

Whether in a serene rural setting or an urban city center, university campuses exude an ambience and sense of space that one feels when stepping into their boundaries. Harkening back to Thomas Jefferson's notion of an "academical village" (Woods, 1985), a campus serves as the physical manifestation of an institution's functions and purposes. Just as there is heterogeneity of institutional types within the American higher education system, so too is there immense diversity in campus design and structure. Traditionally, however, a university campus is an assembly of buildings housing various educational, research, service, and administrative activities. One multipurpose facility in particular that often serves a broad campus constituency is the student union (also known as a student center, campus center, college union, or campus union).¹ Though it may vary in use, design, and importance across different campuses, the student union generally reflects an intersection of community, recreation, and commerce.

Student unions have evolved over time, often in response to contemporary demands and educational goals. Historically, unions emerged from the nineteenth century debating societies at Oxford and Cambridge and served as student organized outlets for political discussions. Originally modeled after their English forbearers, the early student unions in the United States shifted to a general club concept at the turn of the twentieth century, providing for all students (mostly male at that time) to meet on common grounds for social and recreational purposes. Over the course of the century, student unions developed more broadly into a central campus social and cultural center (Butts, 1971). The Association of College Unions International (ACUI), the organization representing student union interests, best articulates the present role:

¹ Although these facilities are known by various names, my study uses "student union" for nomenclature consistency.
The union is the community center of the college, serving students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. By whatever form or name, a college union is an organization offering a variety of programs, activities, services, and facilities that, when taken together, represent a well-considered plan for the community life of the college. (ACUI, 1996)

From this perspective, the student union represents an important community-building feature of campus life. ACUI also stresses the union's "integral part of the educational mission," declaring it to be an organization that "complements the academic experience," "values participatory decision-making," and "offers first-hand experience in citizenship and educates students in leadership, social responsibility, and values" (ACUI, 1996). Though ACUI's vision for what is a student union seems educationally ideal, such aspirations might not readily spring to mind when walking through a student union today.

Many student unions, especially ones that include the campus store, resemble urban shopping centers and serve as sites for selling goods and services and engaging in consumerist activities. A visit through the student union at UCLA provides a fitting illustration: It is the middle of February, but this is Los Angeles and it is a hot and sunny Wednesday morning as you enter the double doors into the A-level of the union. The ATMs immediately come into view and you realize you are low on cash so you stop to withdraw some. You are not quite yet awake so you head down the hall to Bruin Buzz to buy a cup of Fair Trade coffee. While sipping your caffeine you walk over to Textbooks to buy the books you need for class later this afternoon. At checkout, your phone dings with a reminder that you have an appointment to get your eyes checked in five minutes. You quickly make your way downstairs to B-level to the U See LA optometry, and while waiting your turn you scan the 700+ selection of eyeglasses and sunglasses and make a mental note of the ones you want to try on later. Your eye exam now complete, you
decide to head to the library to catch up on the class readings. However, a display of plush toys by the elevators catches your freshly dilated eyes and it hits you that your little nephew is turning two next week. You pick up a stuffed Hello Kitty and birthday card and head back upstairs to the post office to mail them to him. Feeling parched, you take the stairs up to the food court on the first floor and buy a refreshing passion fruit green tea with boba. You may as well do your readings here so you sit down at a table, but the flashing images from the mtvU screens are proving to be too distracting. You are kind of hungry anyway so after checking the menus and calorie counts at Panda Express and Taco Bell, you settle on Wolfgang Puck Express, the new fast casual eatery. Fully satiated and with some time to kill before class you check your email. There is a promotional message from the UCLA Store that February is "I ♥ iPad Month" and you can get additional savings on the latest models and accessories. You have been wanting a new tablet to stream music and movies and what better time to get one than when there is a big sale, so you take the elevator down two flights to the store on B-level to buy one. While in the campus store you also pick up some lipstick and mascara for the night out, buy a new UCLA t-shirt for the big game on Saturday, and grab a pair of flip-flops and some sunscreen for a beach day after midterms. You also pop by the convenience store to buy coconut water and Homeboy Industries tortilla chips to munch on later. It is almost time for class so you make one more stop to A-level to deposit your work-study paycheck at the credit union. On your way out via the second floor bridge you type a reminder into your phone to come back to the union on Friday to attend the Microsoft-sponsored career fair in the ballroom. All this with time to spare to get to class and all in one building.

The incarnation of student unions with convenience stores, food courts, ATMs, corporate brands, advertising billboards, and a bounty of rentable space is perhaps nothing extraordinary
when viewed within the context of higher education commercialization. Derek Bok (2003) defines this as "efforts within the university to make a profit from teaching, research, and other campus activities" (p. 3). Also described as academic capitalism, institutions actively seek revenue-generating prospects through entrepreneurial ventures such as corporate partnerships, patents, and copyrights (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The advancement of academic capitalism has also led institutions towards viewing students as sources of added revenue. Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) suggest that "as institutions adopt more of an economic, proprietary orientation to students, the consumption versus the educational dimensions of a college education become increasingly emphasized" (p. 279). This outlook would seem to give reason for the commercial character of student unions today.

In an effort to attract student dollars, colleges and universities appear to be focused on enhancing their student and campus services in order to appeal to the consumer tastes and lifestyles of students. Brian Jacob, Brian McCall, and Kevin Stange (2013) find that students increasingly seek college consumption amenities such as student unions, luxury residence halls, athletics, and recreational activities. They demonstrate in their National Bureau of Economic Research paper entitled "College as Country Club: Do Colleges Cater to Students' Preferences For Consumption?" that these demand-side market pressures have led schools to respond in kind, thereby escalating the growth of non-academic spending. Universities certainly have poured large sums of capital into developing and renovating their student unions. Examples include the University of Pennsylvania, an institution that spent $62 million in the late 1990s to create Perelman Quadrangle, named after alumnus Ronald O. Perelman of the Revlon cosmetics empire. The project included renovations to Houston Hall, the nation's first student union (Rodin, 2007; Wallace 1997). The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) opened its $58 million
Southern Management Corporation Campus Center in September 2009 (Walker, 2009). UMB is an institution with only graduate and professional schools, which suggests that the scope of student unions is not limited to satiating the desires of an undergraduate population. At $118 million is Ohio State University's Ohio Union which opened in March 2010. To fund the construction and building renewal costs, the university assesses a quarterly student union facility fee of $63. The fee was reduced to $25-$27 in the opening year's spring and summer quarters owing to financial support from Coca-Cola (Ohio Union, n.d.). The University of Southern California (USC) opened its $136 million Ronald Tutor Campus Center in August 2010 (Lytal, 2010). The center is named after trustee Ronald Tutor, head of one of the largest general contracting companies in the United States, who pledged $30 million to the project (Heitman, 2007). Incidentally, USC awarded the center's construction contract to his Tutor-Saliba Corporation (2008). Many other universities in the last two decades have completed and (re)opened their unions or they are currently at various stages of planning, funding, and constructing their own multi-million dollar entities due for unveiling in the near future. Indeed, it appears to be a veritable student union arms race with universities dedicating hundreds of thousands of square feet to a combination of mixed dining and retail use, student programming and meeting space, campus services, and leisure-time pursuits.

The hefty price tag for college consumption amenities often leads to much hand-wringing and criticisms about the ever escalating costs of higher education. Rita Kirshtein and James Kadamus (2012) suggest that expenditures on these types of items are easy scapegoats for blame fueled by sexy media headlines such as "Resort Living Comes to Campus" in The Wall Street Journal and "U.S. Colleges Get Swanky: Golf Courses, Climbing Walls, Saunas" from Bloomberg News. In reality, the reasons for rising costs in higher education are far more
complex and broad (see e.g., Paulsen, 2000; Mumper & Freeman, 2005). However, as the trend of promoting higher education as a consumption item takes root, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that it does entail shifts in institutional expenditures that may compromise colleges' and universities' educational emphasis. Indeed, Jacob et al. (2013) show that there is a stronger incentive for some institutions to spend more money on consumption amenities because "this is what their marginal students value" (p. 38). In other words, the extra spending on, for example, the shiny new student union, will attract additional students to enroll. Their research also indicates that spending more on instruction as opposed to consumption "will actually harm enrollment" at less selective schools (p. 38).

Critics of school commercialism decry activities that place business and consumer values above educational ones (see e.g., Aronowitz, 2000; Boyles, 2005; Giroux, 2002, 2003; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001; Molnar, 2005; Shumar, 1997; Washburn, 2005; White & Hauck, 2000). Henry Giroux (2009) contends that "colleges and universities do not simply produce knowledge and new perspectives for students; they also play an influential role in shaping their identities, values, and sense of what it means to become citizens of the world" (p. 674). The apprehension is that as campus spaces increasingly transform into sites of commercialism dominated by corporate branding and consumerism, the separation between student and consumer becomes less and less distinct. Giroux argues that commercial spheres increasingly replace public ones as consumption amenities and a corporate presence gain prominence on campuses, diminishing the non-commodified public spheres that emphasize social responsibility and citizenship, critical democracy, and public service. Ramin Farahmandpur (2010) maintains that in the marriage of corporate interests with educational ones, "corporations are not so much interested in preparing students for critical citizenship and civic engagement as they are in developing future consumer-
citizens” (p. 65). Again, the concern is that in the zeal for attracting external dollars from corporations and students, colleges and universities may also be promoting unquestioned piety to consumer capitalism.

A prosaic perspective of student unions is that they are merely auxiliary enterprises extrinsic to a university's educational functions, but the critiques of elevating consumer values in higher education raised by Giroux (2009), Farahmandpur (2010), and Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) suggest that it would be remiss to take such a view. Rather, the escalating expectation of consumption amenities such as student unions underscores the necessity of closer examination. Associations such as ACUI and student affairs professionals that work with student unions advocate a unifying community and co-curricular educational objective (Milani & Johnston, 1992). Student unions can bridge course work and recreation, formal and informal interactions, and individual and organizational space to serve as a complement to the academic experience. Although student unions may progressively be assuming a consumer purpose, potential still exists for these campus spaces to engender a sense of public engagement. A cynical view would suggest that such lofty educational expectations are merely lip service for justifying the increased spending on non-academic personnel and activities. Perhaps this is so. However, putting cynicism aside in an age wherein consumption can be considered a defining aspect of society (Featherstone, 2007; Slater, 1997) and wherein academic capitalism is firmly entrenched, how might colleges and universities, and more importantly, the educators that work within them, strive to ensure that higher education institutions do not irresponsibly transform into vacuous sites of "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen, 1899/2000)? How might student unions address the polemic of critical intellectuals such as Giroux and Farahmandpur and demonstrate that they are
an "integral part of the educational mission" and serve as places for educating students in "leadership, social responsibility, and values" (ACUI, 1996)?

One possible approach to finding the educational silver lining for a broad audience is to draw attention to student unions as sites for engaging a "critical pedagogy of consumption." Jennifer Sandlin (2005a) defines this as a conscious effort to foster learning experiences where individuals "learn to critically analyze and question the taken-for-grantedness of consumer capitalism" (p. 179). She suggests that this type of critical consumer education would encourage people to duly consider the social and political contexts of consumption, reflecting on issues such as fair labor practices and environmental impacts (p. 179). Within the ever expanding sphere of consumer capitalism, Sandlin and colleagues Richard Kahn, David Darts, and Kevin Tavin (2009) call upon educators to "begin making more connections between consumption, education, and learning" (p. 119). They also "challenge educators to explore the consumptive aspects of the everyday educational and learning sites that [they] teach in or learn in" and "to explore the educational and learning aspects of various sites of consumption" (p. 119). Their appeal can be applied to higher education in these two ways: 1) Explore the consumption amenities of colleges and universities (e.g., student unions) and 2) Within a site of consumption (i.e., student unions), explore its education and learning potential.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of my study was to examine the current landscape of student unions and discover how these sites could be leveraged to enact a critical pedagogy of consumption. Student unions exist within temporal campus communities, and they often evolve to meet the current demands and desires of the constituents they serve. The local context, historical perspectives, and political dynamics of each campus also influence and shape the student union. Student unions are
places where individuals and groups interact and engage in campus life. They are also cultural artifacts, "objects produced by members of the society that explicitly or implicitly manifest societal [and campus] norms and values" (Chang, 2008, p. 80). To investigate my chosen phenomena, I embraced a constructivist approach that aimed to advance an understanding of modern-day student unions and their relevance to pedagogy and consumption. This was a qualitative study guided by three research questions: 1) What is the contemporary structure of student unions? 2) How do student unions contribute to a critical pedagogy of consumption? 3) What are student union overseers' perceptions of ethical consumption and its practices?

**Significance of the Study**

Critics have raised several important questions about marketing consumer capitalism to a captive student market. I am one of those critics, but I am also pragmatic. On the one hand, the lamentable commodified and commercial spheres of higher education are far-reaching and ever-expanding. On the other hand, the notion of a purely academic ascetic environment seems neither realistic nor preferred. Within the current environment, however, it is possible to find avenues for some resistance. In the book, *Critical Pedagogies of Consumption: Living and Learning in the Shadow of the "Shopocalypse,"* Sandlin et al. (2010) begin the work of developing a critical consumer and educational research agenda. The edited volume brings together a range of education scholars who view consumption as a generative area of inquiry in K-12 to higher education and beyond. The aim is to examine ways in which educators can create and enact a critical pedagogy of consumption, thereby bringing the sociopolitical contexts of consumption and its intersection with education to the forefront. The authors in the volume begin the work, but the line of inquiry is in early development and needs to advance. It was in this emerging research call to arms that I situated this study.
This study is significant because it examines the nexus of campus commercialization, critical pedagogy, and consumption as mediated by student unions. The intent of a student union is to serve as a central gathering space, a hub that brings together constituents from all localities of a campus and beyond to build a greater sense of community. At universities across the country, these spaces seem to carry expensive multi-million dollar price tags, costs which institutions then transfer to students, perhaps by their choice, in the form of increased fees. However, a student union is not merely a high-priced physical entity. A union is also an association of people – students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests – and therefore, a space for social actors to engage in interactions and constructions of value and meaning. As part of the larger research agenda advocated by Sandlin et al. (2009, 2010), my study offers both theoretical insight and practical value. Theoretically, I built on the work that Sandlin et al. have done connecting consumption, education, and learning, and intersected it with the academic capitalism scholarship of Slaughter and Rhoades (2004). In the chapter "Undergraduate Students and Educational Markets," Slaughter and Rhoades highlight the increasing emphasis on consumption and the consequences it has wrought in higher education. I engaged their thesis vis-à-vis a highly visible campus consumption amenity, the student union, and positioned it within an exploration of pedagogical value. Practically, the findings from this study have implications for student affairs, campus life, and organizational change. Administrators and overseers of student unions can gain awareness about the internal structures and practices of consumption amenities at peer institutions. They can use this information for a comparative assessment with their own organizations. The findings also contribute to the knowledge base of professional associations such as ACUI. Finally, this study encourages researchers and practitioners to understand that student unions provide tangible contexts in which physical space, social relationships, and
economic exchanges coalesce within a higher education environment to enact a critical pedagogy of consumption.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

In the next chapter, I review literature related to the corporate and commercial climate of higher education, students as consumers and captive markets, and the history of student unions. I also outline the conceptual framework that underlies this study. Chapter 3 describes the research paradigm, strategy, and methods used to conduct this study. In Chapter 4, I present findings pertaining to the contemporary structure of student unions, and in Chapter 5, I discuss the critical pedagogy of consumption findings. The dissertation concludes with Chapter 6, in which I share a summary, critical reflections, and implications of this study.
CHAPTER 2: COMMERCE AND CONSUMPTION ON CAMPUS

In this chapter, I examine the conditions that have brought higher education into an era of academic capitalism and discuss the consumer and market mentality of colleges and universities. I then review the evolution of student unions and explain the conceptual framework that guides this study.

A Corporate and Commercial Climate

The American university at the turn of the twentieth century had undergone immense transformation, yielding an institution of great "structural complexity" (Lucas, 2006, p. 195; Veysey, 1965). With an expanded scope of purpose, the university functioned as a site for preserving and transmitting liberal culture, sharing useful knowledge with the public, producing new knowledge through scholarship, serving as a place for disinterested inquiry, and operating as "an agent of beneficial social change in a burgeoning industrial and commercial order" (Lucas, 2006, p. 194). As the university developed, there were also secular changes due to the exchange of clergymen for laymen (i.e., businessmen and politicians) on governing boards and as presidents. As Thorstein Veblen (1918) notes, "…discretionary control in matters of university policy now rests finally in the hands of businessmen" (p. 64). With a new vanguard overseeing the well-being of universities and given their increased complexity, it was not before long that critics described them as nothing more than bureaucratic organizations under the guidance of administrators who exerted a business and managerial approach to educational affairs (Lucas, 2006; Veysey, 1965).

The university as a modern business corporation is over 100 years in the making and as we are now midway through the second decade of the twenty-first century, that characterization has not waned. The acceptance of a market-oriented system of higher education has hastened
calls for colleges and universities to more assertively align their mission, public purpose, and student services within a market framework (Hirt, 2007; Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004; Zemsky, Wegner, & Massy, 2005). Since the late twentieth century, universities have increasingly relied on an industry logic for operational guidance (Gumport, 2000). Such logic further entrenches the view of higher education institutions as corporate enterprises. Universities hewing to industry logic are steered by institutional self-interest and economic goals such as pursuing commercial endeavors in the production of knowledge. Market forces drive their pursuits and they emphasize cost containment, efficiency, and flexible response to rapidly changing environments. Patricia Gumport (2000) notes that a focus on industry logic does not preclude universities from also embracing a social institution logic that encompasses such traditional academic ideals as liberal education, academic freedom, intellectual pluralism, and the preservation of knowledge. However, it does increase the tension between the two logics (Couturier, 2005; Gumport, 2000; Kezar, 2004).

The notion of academic capitalism has further ingrained the depiction of universities as "entrepreneurial capitalist institutions" (Lucas, 2006, p. 258). In their seminal work on academic capitalism, Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie (1997) documented the ways in which institutions and faculty actively pursued greater economic attainment, primarily through an expanded research function. They noted that federal policies, such as the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act, and issues pertaining to resource dependency precipitated such behavior. The Bayh-Dole Act allowed universities and corporations to retain ownership of patents on discoveries made with federally funded research, consequently cementing a profit-making outlook. It is important to note that the majority of universities are not-for-profit institutions, and therefore they are not legally permitted to profit financially in the same way that a corporation is allowed to do so. While any revenue
earned must be reinvested in the institution, it does not preclude a college or university from searching for profitable revenue streams. The reduction in public funding of higher education also led institutions to seek revenue from private sources, such as industry research grants and contracts, tuition, and financial gifts (Hearn, 2006). In an update to the original academic capitalism tome, Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) expanded the inquiry into other domains, such as copyright policies and educational materials. They also implicated additional constituents including students and administrators. In the more recent analysis, the scholars acknowledged that what they term the "academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime" exists concurrently with others, such as the public good or liberal learning regimes. Nevertheless, in the contemporary era academic capitalism is ascendant. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) pointed to the "internal embeddedness of profit-oriented activities" and demonstrated that higher education institutions and the individuals within them have expressly developed organizational structures and networks of actors to foster commercial activities (p. 11).

From the perspective of industry logic and academic capitalism, universities can be expected to pursue money-making opportunities and seek revenue maximization. The non-academic realms of campus services organized as auxiliary units and extracurricular activities, such as athletics, are particularly susceptible to pursuits of cost containment and financial gain. Auxiliary units usually involve activities that impose mandatory fees and/or additional charges at the point of sale. They may be self-supporting or require campus subsidies. These units include services such as housing, dining, bookstores, student unions, health centers, parking, and vending. Douglas Priest, Bruce Jacobs, and Rachel Boon (2006) point out that for reasons including greater efficiency, management of costs, and added revenue sources, universities often outsource or privatize these services to large corporations that specialize in the specific activity
(e.g., Sodexo for food and facilities, Barnes & Noble for bookstores, Google for email). As a result of these business and revenue-motivated decisions, various corporate brands and their merchandise populate college grounds, thereby contributing to the visualization of campus as a marketplace for goods. Additionally, members of an academic community are increasingly exposed to the bottom lines of for-profit vendors (Kniffin, 2000; Huber, 2000; Ruben, 2000).

Murray Sperber (2000) dates the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics back to an 1852 crew race between Harvard and Yale. He claims crew was a popular and highly commercial sport, but it was the arrival of football onto the campus scene that changed the game. Football's advent in the late nineteenth century engendered immense institutional passion, spirit, and loyalty amongst students and alumni (Lucas, 2006; Rudolph, 1962/1990). The trends of the last few decades suggest that university athletic programs, especially the high-profile sports of football and basketball, are now big business and have become so immersed in economic gain that they have perhaps lost sight of educational values (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Sperber, 2000; Zimbalist, 1999). Despite the lure of millions, William Shughart (2010) finds that very few athletics programs actually generate a profit and most end up requiring institutional subsidies. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) also point out that while the all-school contracts that universities enter into with corporate partners such as Nike and Adidas help to increase an athletics program's monetary value, such agreements also allow athletic teams and campuses to be branded by corporate trademarks. For example, the contracts require players, coaches, and other athletic staff members to wear gear that prominently displays the corporate sponsor's logo at all athletic events and prohibits them from wearing products that bear another company's logo.

The language and practice of branding is another development in the last several decades that has intensified the commercial and corporate environment of higher education. Amidst
changing enrollment patterns, competition from for-profit providers, and declines in public expenditures, Eric Anctil (2008) explains that many colleges and universities developed more robust marketing and advertising agendas. He notes that as the efforts "became highly organized and tightly controlled" by marketing departments that were set up "to create, maintain, and promote a school's image" (Anctil, 2008, p. 30), the notion of an institution as a brand has become pervasive (i.e., the UCLA brand, the Harvard brand). The fixation with branding has also led to wholesale makeover, as in the case of Beaver College in Philadelphia. Determined to remain a competitive institution and to shed the double entendre of its name, it transformed into Arcadia University in 2001 (Kirp, 2003).

The view of institutions as brands drives commercial revenue-seeking. Douglas Toma, Greg Dubrow, and Matthew Hartley (2005) rationalize that "like businesses, colleges and universities must work hard and smart to build themselves as brands" (p. 27). What Burton Clark (1972) once characterized as organizational saga, the "collective understanding of unique accomplishment in a formally established group" (p. 178), has been transformed by the din of academic capitalism into something that colleges and universities can leverage to build their "brand equity," a sort of je nais se quoi associated with an institution's "image, identification, values, investment, reputation, status, and prestige" (Toma et al., 2005, p. 31). A university's name, logo, seal, and mascot also represent the institution's trademarked identity that companies can license to create consumer products. Through lucrative licensing agreements, universities can generate revenue by selling institutionally branded products such as "athleisure" wear (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 257). The various university emblazoned products are frequently available for purchase on campus in student unions.
Students as Consumers

The industry logic of universities propels the perception of students as consumers (Gumport, 2000). The idea of academic consumerism is perhaps traceable as far back as the late nineteenth century with the introduction of an elective system that "…moved the individual to the center of the educational universe…" (Rudolph, 1962/1990, p. 305). The option to select subjects of study rather than forcing classical academic rigidity permitted a newfound freedom of student choice in curricular matters. Since the mid-twentieth century, the student as consumer narrative began gaining steam due in part to changing demographics, funding mechanisms, and attitudes (Williams, 2013). In the few decades after World War II and bolstered by scores of war veterans and a large college-age "baby boom" cohort, higher education in the United States expanded tremendously in mission, size, and enrollment (Geiger, 2005; Thelin, 2004). Federal policies such as the 1944 GI Bill and provisions in the 1965 Higher Education Act and its subsequent reauthorizations encouraged participation in higher education and broadened access through financial aid programs (Gladieux, King, & Corrigan, 2005). The portability of aid made available by the GI Bill, then later the Pell Grants and Stafford loans, enabled greater student autonomy in matters of college choice and universities responded accordingly. For instance, Thelin (2004) notes that institutions' deliberate attempts to woo veterans through programs and promotional materials helped the GI Bill gain momentum. He gives the example of a glossy 1945 Harvard brochure:

Harvard recognizes that the veteran of this war will expect something else from education than the ordinary peacetime student. Clearly the man who has been making life and death decisions at sea, in the air, and on the ground has other ideas than the man who comes
The last sentence suggests an eagerness to appeal to students' sensibilities and their ability to choose where they could deposit their financial aid. The capacity for choice possibly established a sense of consumer power, especially during a post-war period that witnessed a palpable shift to a social and cultural life characterized by an ethos of consumption (Cohen, 2004). By the 1970s, business professor A.R. Krachenberg (1972) was calling on colleges and universities to be more explicit and sharper about marketing higher education to its student clientele.

In the current era of academic capitalism, institutions increasingly view students as sources of revenue. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) explain that this pursuit manifests itself along three dimensions: colleges and universities engage in marketing and admissions practices that foster their economic interests, they endeavor to attract more privileged segments of the student market, and they draw attention to the allure of consumer capitalism and consumption practices. Such endeavors have facilitated the notion of students as consumers and the efforts are reflected in the ways that colleges and universities market themselves to prospective undergraduates. In a content analysis of viewbooks (i.e., the slickly produced brochures that colleges and universities use for student recruitment), Hartley and Christopher Morphew (2008) identified six thematic areas contained within their pages: institutional context/campus features, academics/faculty, co-curricular opportunities, admissions and financial aid, value of an education, and purpose of higher education. While the range of higher education considerations are addressed, they noted that much attention in the viewbooks was given to the out of class experience. They found that "co-curricular activities are clearly presented as a primary consideration in choosing a college" and the message being conveyed is that collegiate life is "fun" (p. 680). The viewbooks also
promoted a privatized view of attending college, placing emphasis on the individual benefits of higher education rather than societal ones. Hartley and Morphew concluded that colleges and universities are essentially "selling to prospective students in the same way that print ads, billboards, and television screens do: This product will make you happy, meet your every need, help you succeed—even make you rich" (p. 688).

The rise of enrollment management since the 1970s concomitant with an increased understanding of the college choice process have exacerbated the concept of students as consumers (Coomes, 2000). Students seeking higher education now do so in market-driven ways. Various scholars examining the college-going process have fostered a greater understanding of the many variables involved in the decision to pursue higher education and the selection of schools (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000; DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2006; Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith, 1989; Manski, & Wise, 1982; McDonough, 1997; Paulsen, 1990; Perna, 2006). Patricia McDonough (1994) demonstrated that in the ritual of determining where to go to college, the process has been commoditized and high school students have been "socially constructed as college applicants" (p. 443). In essence, college applicants are the commodities that enrollment managers seek out and "college knowledge" (i.e., college choice and admissions information) is the commodity that college applicants seek to consume. A commercial admissions sector including enterprises such as standardized test preparation and tutoring, private college consulting, financial advisors, and mass media resources (e.g., magazine rankings and college guidebooks) has arisen to provide students with the information and tools necessary to choose a suitable and preferred school (Liu, 2011; McDonough, 1994; McDonough, Ventresca, & Outcalt, 2000). However, it should be noted that the commercial admissions sector disproportionately tends to benefit students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds as these
students are more predisposed to a college-going culture, and they are more likely to have the financial means to purchase services that help to leverage their opportunities (Buchmann, Condron, & Roscigno, 2010; McDonough, 1994; McDonough, Antonio, Walpole & Pérez, 1998; McDonough, Korn & Yamasaki, 1997). Nevertheless, the entrepreneurialism of enrollment managers and college knowledge merchants capitalizes on the perceived high-stakes of college choice and seems to have augmented a consumer-oriented perspective towards college admissions.

Joanna Williams (2013) argues that the construction of students as consumers is also driven by the perspective that the purpose of higher education is to generate human capital and foster social mobility. This instrumental view of college as career preparation frames higher education as an investment that yields greater economic returns and thereby encourages academic consumerism. The function of a college degree as a credential that generates higher incomes is often reaffirmed by reports from think tanks such as the College Board, Brookings Institution, and Pew Research Center that call attention to the growing economic disparities between college graduates and those without higher education degrees (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013; Haskins, Holzer, & Lerman, 2009; Pew Research Center, 2014). The focus on monetary benefits is also reflected in the changing trends pertaining to reasons for college attendance. For example, in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's annual survey of college freshmen, the number of students reporting that being able to make more money was a very important reason in deciding to go to college has dramatically increased from 44.6 percent in 1971 to 72.8 percent in 2014. Similarly, students today are much more concerned with the goal of being well off financially than they were in the past: 42.2 percent in 1966 compared to 82.4 percent in 2014 (Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Santos, & Korn, 2007; Eagan, Stolzenberg, Ramirez, Aragon, Suchard,
Furthermore, 67.4 percent of students surveyed in 2014 agreed with the statement: "the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power" (Eagan et al., 2014). The desire for greater financial wealth coupled with a strong post-1970s resurgence of practical arts – occupational fields designed to educate students for jobs (e.g., business, education, engineering, nursing, public administration, and others) – seems to privilege the career utility of higher education (Brint, Riddle, Turk-Bicakci, & Levy, 2005). In this environment, students behave more as consumers of academic services rather than matriculate as members of an academic community (Gumport, 2000).

In the quest to enroll more academically able and financially privileged students, colleges and universities have further enabled the consumerist desires of students. This has involved the use of merit aid to essentially "buy" more traditionally academically talented students, as well as the gravitation towards offering "luxury services or high-culture consumption" on campuses (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 298). With respect to the former, institutions employ financial aid as a tool for revenue and enrollment management in an effort to recruit and retain desirable college applicants (McPherson & Schapiro, 1998). In turn, some students may use their student aid offers as bids against other institutions to shop for the best aid package prior to deciding which offer of admissions to accept (Clark, 2007). In terms of the latter, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) explain:

> Institutions increasingly foreground the consumption character and attractiveness of higher education. The emphasis is not on education but on services that all of us consume in daily life, from communication and dining services to shopping and residential facilities to services surrounding leisure activities and entertainment. (p. 297-298)
The focus becomes on what can be described as the "semiotics of college life" (Shumar, 1997, p. 126). Admissions brochures with their attractive images of the college experience and bookstores that have transformed into specialty retail shops are examples of the institutional market response to the consumer expectations of campus life (Shumar, 1997).

**Captive Markets and Consumption**

As colleges and universities recruit students by appealing to their consumer sensibilities, a new normal develops where state-of-the-art recreation centers, mega-student unions, and luxurious residential compounds become the standard. In a competitive environment, institutions are then compelled to differentiate themselves with more and more grandiose offerings. According to a recent *New York Times* article, the most current trend is to transform part of campus into something akin to an aquatic theme park (Rubin, 2014). Universities are building resort-style amenities complete with lazy rivers and zip lines. Jacob, McCall, and Stange (2013) found that increases in consumption amenities expenditures had a positive enrollment response, particularly with less academically inclined and high socioeconomic status students. While they used spending on student services and auxiliary enterprises as a proximate measure for consumption amenities,² meaning that what constitutes a consumption amenity is more than just fancy water features, their research affirmed that some institutions, particularly less selective ones, faced greater incentives to spend more on consumption amenities because they would enroll more students. Although not all consumption amenities expenditures are solely for the sake of keeping pace in the resort-style arms race, it is clearly money being spent on auxiliary

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² "Spending on student services includes spending on admissions, registrar, student records, student activities, cultural events, student newspapers, intramural athletics, and student organizations. Auxiliary expenditures include operating expenditures for residence halls, food services, student health services, intercollegiate athletics, college unions and college stores." (Jacob et al., 2013, p. 20).
facilities as well as extracurricular rather than instruction-related services and activities (Curtis & Thornton, 2014; Desrochers & Hurlburt, 2014).

For the sector of colleges and universities actively engaged in marketing a consumer-oriented collegiate lifestyle, considerable institutional expenditures are devoted to nonacademic personnel and activities. In a Delta Cost Project report examining college spending trends over a ten-year period, 2001-2011, Donna Desrochers and Steven Hurlburt (2014) showed that spending on student services had outpaced spending on instruction. At public research universities, spending on instruction increased 4.4 percent while spending on student services increased 16.4 percent over the decade. At private research universities, the increases in instruction and student services spending were 18.7 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively.

While expenditures on student services and amenities has increased at a higher percentage than instruction, the relative amount is still lower. According to Jacob et al. (2013), in 2007, the ratio of amenity to academic spending across approximately 1,300 four-year public and private higher education institutions ranged from 0.26 to 0.80, with an average of 0.51 (i.e., for every dollar spent on amenities, two were spent on academics). With the space and character of campuses and facilities being shaped by the current generation of millennials entering college and their consumer sensibilities (Lewis, 2003; Rickes, 2009), it is not surprising that the expenditures on consumption amenities for some institutions might edge closer to every dollar spent on instruction.

Since the physical environment of a campus along with the quality of its facilities can have an impact on student recruitment and retention (Reynolds, 2007), institutions might choose to spend more on consumption amenities to enhance their offerings. Richard Vedder (2013), an economist of higher education, suggests that some colleges and universities are wrapped up in an
"Edifice Complex" and are taking on more and more institutional debt to finance the construction of luxury facilities such as residence halls, recreation centers, stadiums, and student unions. Abundant examples found online under such headlines as "The 25 Most Amazing Campus Student Unions" or "The Coolest College Recreation Centers in America" would certainly suggest that campus extravagance is not in short supply (Best College Reviews, n.d.; Lange, 2014). As a recruitment tool, these types of amenity spaces resemble "cathedrals of consumption." George Ritzer (2010) explains that in order to attract consumers, these spaces need to be "magical, fantastic, and enchanted settings" and as they draw in more consumers, "their enchantment must be reproduced over and over on demand" (p. 7). Such reasoning would rationalize the lazy rivers, climbing walls, and gourmet food options being incorporated into campuses in an effort to entice students to their institutions.

Once students enroll, they are further commodified by the very institutions that sought them. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) claim that institutions are not just passively fulfilling the desires of the student population, but rather, they are actively engaged in leveraging resources and revenue from them. As a captive market, the aggregate of students' attention, influence, and buying power can be sold to the highest bidder. Slaughter and Rhoades suggest that this encourages institutions to join forces with corporate enterprises, such as through exclusive beverage and apparel contracts, to take advantage of their students' captive market potential. There has even been a call to align student affairs practice with the constructs of academic capitalism (Hirt, 2007). Research examining the role of revenue generation within student affairs affirms that departments are feeling pressure to find new financial sources and consequently are having to use the access to students as leverage (Carducci, 2010; Lee & Helm, 2013; Willis, 2014). Jenny Lee and Matthew Helm (2013) characterize this phenomenon as student affairs
capitalism and define it as "the reorientation of student affairs professional practice towards the financial interests of institutions" (p. 292). However, rather than being motivated by profit-maximization, the push into student affairs capitalism may be the result of professionals simply trying to fulfill their responsibilities in light of budgetary constraints (Carducci, 2010; Lee & Helm, 2013). Examples of revenue generating activities in student affairs include charging fees for services, program sponsorship, partnerships with for-profit companies, donor development, and marketing/branding initiatives (Carducci, 2010).

The partnerships with private sources and development of corporate sponsorships have contributed to the commercialization of student activities and the promotion of consumer capitalism on campus. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that far from being "empowered customers," they see students "more as targets for consumer markets and as captive markets being socialized into consumption-focused capitalism" (p. 280). For example, large retailers such as Target capitalize on the spending potential of college students by holding welcome week shopping parties that are officially sanctioned as university events by student affairs departments (Singer, 2011). Companies targeting the youth market in efforts to develop brand loyalty have also set up pop-up stores on campuses, and Amazon recently opened its first staffed campus store at Purdue University (Etherington, 2015; Saranow, 2008). The focus tends to be on undergraduate students, but the idea of a captive market can also extend to other constituents such as graduate students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and public aficionados of any institution(s).

In an era steeped in commercialization and consumer culture and with cohorts of students that have been bred to buy since infancy populating campuses (Schor, 2004), seeking out the university market can be a lucrative endeavor for companies. David Morrison (2004) values it at
$200 billion and as an insider who has almost two decades of direct experience, he offers a guide on how to capture the campus crowd and leverage its spending power. He seems unabashed about taking advantage of the higher education market and there appears very much to be a sense of glee in his descriptions of the revenue potential. Using the bookstore as an example, he suggests there are two main reasons why it is a "welcome distribution channel":

In many instances, the key behavioral driver is simply the need (or desire) for immediate gratification or convenience...[and] the bookstore benefits from the three most important principles of real estate: location, location, location. Often, however, another underlying dynamic is at play. If the Bank of Mom and Dad happens to be footing the bill for bookstore purchases, many students don't really mind being ripped off (the market's words, not mine) despite lip service to the contrary. Many students may say otherwise; however, seasoned marketers and researchers know that what a consumer says and what a consumer actually does may not be one and the same. (pp. 59-60)

Although the target is primarily the undergraduate segment, he also accounts for the pre-college market, the alumni network, and even the mainstream public through its athletic loyalties. As far as other campus constituents, he writes that "graduate students typically demonstrate a greater level of sophistication (but not always)" and views administrators and faculty as "gatekeepers" who have been "coerced" into a "Big Mother" role in "maintain[ing] institutional academic and aesthetic integrity" and "protect[ing] students in a largely maternalistic manner" (p. 119).³ Morrison is a seasoned marketing consultant so the tenor of his declarations is perhaps expected. He may view administrators as a hurdle to overcome in reaching the campus population, but academic and student affairs capitalism implicates them as willing participants in the promotion of consumerism.

³ "Big Mother" is Morrison's cloying play off George Orwell's Big Brother.
The commercial undertakings of universities suggest that they help to structure and encourage consumerist behavior (Miller, 2005). Critics of corporate incursions into educational institutions lament the replacement of democratic and civic ideals with commercial and consumer ones. Giroux (2009) likens universities to "becoming licensed storefronts for brand-name corporations – selling off space, buildings, and endowed chairs to rich corporate donors" (p. 674). Benjamin Barber (2002) argues that companies are effectively "creating a venue in the middle of campus for what is not education, but an acquisition-of-brands learning" (p. 25). Both warn against the ramifications of giving spaces of higher learning over to corporate interests and ways of operating. They contend that universities have a significant role in shaping students' identities and values and developing them as global citizens, and when campuses align themselves with companies whose bottom line interests may conflict with educational goals then they have sidestepped their public duty. Giroux (2009) notes that what is missing "is any perspective that, at the very least, university administrators, academics, students, and others exercise the political, civic, and ethical courage needed to refuse the commercial rewards that would reduce them to becoming simply another brand name, corporate logo, or adjunct to corporate interests" (p. 675). With student affairs capitalism and the commercialization of student activities on the rise, universities are allowing companies to advertise and sell their wares on campus through various channels such as student newspapers, televisions in common areas, building bulletin boards, email, faculty professorships, licensing, naming rights, scholarships, student unions, and campus quads (Meyer & Esposito, 2009). In doing so, universities seem to be participatory conduits for facilitating consumer capitalism and encouraging a branded consumer identity. As Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) note, "universities have a (somewhat)
hidden extracurricular course of instruction in consumption capitalism and as a milieu of use for technologically sophisticated corporate products" (p. 19).

Marketing consumer capitalism in a university setting helps to reinforce a consumerist ideology that places high value on the acquisition of material goods. According to Joel Spring (2003), some of the basic tenets of this ideology include viewing equality as "equality of opportunity to pursue wealth and consume" and valuing work for its ability to produce the wealth needed to "consume an endless stream of new products and new forms of commodified leisure" (pp. 5-6). Additionally, there is the recognition of inequality as a "social virtue because it motivates people to work harder" (p. 6). These ideas contribute to what Veblen (1899/2000) called "conspicuous consumption" and the notion that the goods and services consumed are a signal of social status and prestige. Veblen used this expression in his explanations for the patterns of behavior exhibited by a new class of wealth and leisure to counter the traditional notion that consumption was about utility maximization. In this sense, it is fashion rather than needs that drives consumption. However, Jean Baudrillard (1969/2000) would argue that even "needs" are ideological constructions that signify some type of functional, economic, symbolic, or sign value. For Baudrillard, it is the sign value of an object that defines consumption, but even basic school needs such as a notebook has a sign value if, for instance, it is adorned with a university logo. The notebook example is a rudimentary one that belies the complexity of Baudrillard's conceptualization of "needs," but the core of Baudrillard's argument is that the construction of a myth of needs powers consumption, which is the driving force in capitalist society. He writes, "Thus it should not be said that 'consumption is entirely a function of production': rather, it is consummativity that is a structural mode of productivity" (p. 74, 4 Functional – the instrumental or practical value of an object (e.g., a car is for transportation); Economic – the market value (i.e., its commodity value); Symbolic – the gift exchange value (e.g., a wedding ring is a symbol of a relationship); Sign – relational value (e.g., a diamond wedding ring signifies taste, values, social class).
emphasis in original). Not all consumption may have conspicuous intents, but through spaces such as student unions and the goods contained therein, universities help to shape the consumptive practices of its constituents.

The dimension of campus consumption is one of the less explored aspects of academic capitalism. Jennifer Croissant (2001) contends that the dynamics of campus life and institutional relationships with vendors are also changing within the commercial and corporate climate of universities, yet researchers have largely overlooked them. She notes that although the non-academic domains may not be a pressing central concern, they are nevertheless important to an institution's overall image. By welcoming private and corporate partnerships onto campuses, colleges and universities are effectively endorsing select companies and supporting consumer materialism. Deron Boyles (2007) argues that "consumer materialism engenders passivity and homogeneity and renders mute any questioning or analyzing of the ideological, symbolic, and practical consequences of neoclassical economics and commercialism" (p. 544). He suggests that consumer expectations become normalized, businesses become viewed as allies because they are offering revenue support, and there is a lack of critical transitivity. Boyles believes critically transitive action is essential to engaging students and faculty in discussions about, for example, "the motives for market hegemony in schools" and "the limits and possibilities of commercialism" (p. 545). In an era wherein consumption amenities gain prominence, structures such as student unions can serve as natural sites for thinking about these debates. Because student unions exist within temporal campus communities and often evolve to meet the current demands and desires of the constituents they serve, these spaces and the people responsible for them might offer some insight into the institutional connection with consumption capitalism and consumer materialism.
For those involved with student unions, the principal deliberations in their early history centered on establishing a philosophy of a union and defining its identity, purpose, and structure. Porter Butts's (1971) historical anthology on the subject of student unions through the 1960s, *The College Union Idea*, provides a view into their development as administrators sought organizational clarity. The second edition of Butts's work, edited by Elizabeth Beltramini, Mark Bourassa, Patrick Connelly, Robert Meyer, Sue Mitchell, Jeannette Smith, and TJ Willis (2012) updates the tome through the 2000s and serves as the most comprehensive record of the evolution of student unions in the United States to the present day. In keeping with the anthology's organization by decades and use of primary source excerpts, below is a brief overview of the main debates concerning the history of student unions.

In the 1920s and 30s, those involved with student unions focused on defining them as community spaces that were devoted to "a comprehensive and well-considered program for the social life of the University" (Butts, 1971, p. 23). The emphasis was on students' leisure time and the aim was for facilities and programs "to make leisure as satisfactory and as productive as possible" (p. 24).

By the 1940s, the goals of unions as community centers unifying the campus remained, but there was an increasing appreciation for arts programming (e.g., music, drama, dance) and calls for developing a concept of social education that included "a concern for personal social competence" and "the making of effective citizens" (p. 49). There were also attempts to define a union generally as an organization of students, faculty, and alumni serving as an "informal educational medium for individual and group self-discovery and expression," and as a building that is "the physical instrument for implementing the objectives of the organization and
facilitating a community life" (p. 54). Since their early history, student unions have been defined both as a physical brick-and-mortar facility as well as an abstract concept in which to fulfill a purpose (i.e., an organized union of students working to create and provide for the social life of a campus community).

The issues of the 1950s concerned governance, (de)centralization, and naming. There was some discontent over the issue of student self-government, though it still held that "one of the central enterprises of the Union is to give students the opportunity and responsibility of planning their own community programs…" (Butts, 1971, pp. 79-80). There were also debates regarding whether there should only be one central union or several separate centers scattered across campus. Finally, there was questioning of whether the label student union was too restrictive and not representative of the larger community it encompassed.

The 1960s seemed to be a time of union identity crisis and laments over being marginalized on campus. The major turmoil in this decade grew from the student politics of the era, as unions became targets of attack by student activists who perceived them as being part of the university establishment. This perception developed because whereas student unions originally functioned "under a student or student-faculty governing board, largely independent of college direction…[they had] been placed under the supervision of deans of students, business managers, directors of auxiliary enterprises…" (Butts, 1971, pp. 142-143). There was also displeasure over being categorized an auxiliary enterprise because "conceived in these terms, what chance has the union got to enter into the minds of its planners and overseers as an educational force that requires educators on the staff…” (p. 95). However, there was reaffirmation that "union" was the appropriate nomenclature because it meant "joined together
for mutual benefit" whereas "center" was too generic, overused (e.g., research center, medical center, health center), and disconnected from its history (p. 95).

The discontent with being "thought of as merely an auxiliary enterprise" led to reaffirmation in the 1970s of the comprehensive purpose of student unions as "a social and cultural center" (Butts, Beltramini et al., 2012, p. 165). Far from being just a "place to eat and meet" student unions deal "broadly with the constructive employment of student time outside the classroom, [such] that it represents an experience in a way of living" (p. 159). The turbulence of this decade also led to some calls for the union to be more engaged with the social and political movements of the time, and to think more deeply about the diverse student populations being or not being served and how to "bring together as many interest groups as possible on a common meeting ground" (p. 166). Another issue brewing was the growing perception of the "college union as a money-maker" and the "new emphasis on revenue generation," thus beginning the "transformation from college union to commercial union" (p. 167).

The tension between auxiliary enterprise versus educational mission continued into the 1980s with a growing debate about the merits of outsourcing versus self-operating. Perhaps because of the apprehension of being pigeon-holed into an auxiliary, there was a call to "contend for a role of more transcendent importance" (Butts, Beltramini et al., 2012, p. 188). Affirming the idea of the union as the "hearthstone" of a campus, there was emphasis on community building and the "triangular relationship among union building, university community, and the larger community of citizens" (p. 185). More weight was also given to the union's significance in student development and campus multiculturalism, with the highlight that unions "must be forerunners" in developing "an environment conducive to fulfilling the multidimensional needs
of the community" (p. 190). Another concern this decade included the union's responsibility in addressing the rise of alcohol consumption on campuses.

The rampant organizational restructuring of the 1990s led to many campuses separating the union's business/service components from their student activities/development functions, thereby leading to the "impression that a union is no longer considered part of the cocurricular education, but instead is some sort of amorphous conglomeration of profit centers and cost centers" (Butts, Beltramini et al., 2012, p. 217). These developments led ACUI to reaffirm the mission of the college union as an integral educational complement. The decade also brought continued emphasis on building community and the myriad ways in which student unions advanced community via services, programming, facilities, and architecture. Underscoring the idea of "form and function" and an "architecture of community in action," there was a growing interest in developing "town square" type unions to showcase their campus importance (p. 212). Administrators also began amplifying the student union as a "marketing tool" since it is one of the buildings "most students and parents ask to see" (p. 221). The rooting of the union as a revenue generator since the 1970s led to sustained examination in the 1990s of balancing commercial and educational needs. Amidst a campus generation demanding "convenience, service, and multiplicity," and along with the economic realities of having to produce income, a "strong retail emphasis" evolved as "retail enterprises in the union are seen as a way to create positive revenue streams, while reacting to the broadening needs of the campus community" (p. 219). While the drum beat of the union's mission oriented values remained steady, the bass line of commercial values had also grown louder.

The chorus line in the 2000s was that of reasserting the relevance of student unions and communicating its role. The changes in union structure and culture and the "continual evolution
toward viewing the college union as a revenue-driven auxiliary" rendered it "more and more
difficult to tell [its] story" (Butts, Beltramini et al., 2012, p. 229). There was also a sentiment that
more than other facilities on campus, the union "must constantly reinvent itself to keep pace with
evolving services and programs" (p. 234). Emerging trends in the new century included building
an online presence, establishing satellite or mini-unions, and incorporating sustainable practices
so that "the college union can be a living model for all of sustainability design" (p. 239). The
focus on grand architecture such as sweeping glass atriums led to some criticism that the union
had become "extroverted to the point of exhibitionism" and had "assumed something of the
impersonal quality of a visitors' center at a national park...whose task it is to orient strangers" (p.
230). Finally, the union versus center nomenclature debate was revisited. While there was now
wider acceptance for the use of center, there were also passionate pleas that "'center' implies only
a place" whereas "union best expresses the philosophy that the union building, organization, and
program exist to serve the entire institutional community" (p. 243, 244). As the 21st century
progresses, there remains a paramount call to "advocate for the college union idea" and to re-
establish a strong commitment between the union and the educational mission of colleges and
universities (p. 247).

While the original conception of the student union as a space for organized political
debate outside the confines of a prescribed curriculum has increasingly ceded to a multipurpose
retail and activity center often intended to serve the entire campus community, discussion
concerning its educational purpose and aims remains a key consideration for practitioners. Three
publications in particular inform the conversations: "The State of the College Union" in the
*Journal of Higher Education* authored by Butts (1951), *The College Union in the Year 2000* in a
special issue of *New Directions for Student Services* edited by Terrence Milani and J. William
Johnston (1992), and *The State of the College Union: Contemporary Issues and Trends* in another special issue of *New Directions for Student Services* edited by Tamara Yakaboski and Danielle De Sawal (2014). Now known as a legend in the union profession, Butts (1951) offered a reflective account of what he viewed were the positive and negative developments within the field in the prior 25-years. Expounding on various subject matter including union planning, leadership, educational functioning, administrative attitudes towards the union, and student self-government, Butts's central focus was to advocate for what he believed was vital to union success.

Drawn primarily from a practitioner perspective, union directors and student affairs administrators in Milani and Johnston (1992) articulated the changes and trends they believed campuses should consider as the twenty-first century neared. The topics addressed included the impact of technology in the design and delivery of programs and services (Levitan & Osteen, 1992; Milani, Eakin, & Brattain, 1992), internal and external funding structures (Bookman, 1992; Milani et al., 1992), aesthetics and design of facilities (Yates, 1992), programming for diverse populations and emphasis on civic service and the arts (Levitan & Osteen, 1992; Milani, 1992; Milani et al., 1992), professional development of union administrators (Preisinger & Wilson, 1992), and renewed attention for the union's co-curricular responsibility in conjunction with the academic mission of institutions (Levitan & Osteen, 1992; Johnston, 1992; Milani et al., 1992). The special issue provided a close look into the current and future relevance of student unions.

Published in the year of ACUI's 100th anniversary, Yakaboski and De Sawal (2014) continued the union profession's ambition of self-examination from both a practitioner and an academic perspective. In addition to re-exploring the role of the college union within a
contemporary context (Rouzer, De Sawal, & Yakaboski, 2014), the contributing authors to the issue reflected on the changing student demographics and the importance of serving diverse student populations (Banks, Jr., Hammond, & Hernandez, 2014; Rouzer, De Sawal, & Yakaboski, 2014; Yakaboski & Perozzi, 2014), discussed student engagement and learning and community building (Lane & Perozzi, 2014; Rullman & Harrington, 2014), and provided an overview of unions with or without physical space at small colleges with enrollments of 5,000 students or less (Crone & Tammes, 2014). Other articles in the special issue offered recommendations for improving fundraising and developing student philanthropy (De Sawal & Maxwell, 2014) and addressed technological advances in relation to facility operations, campus bookstores and retail, and marketing (Taylor & Steele, 2014). In the final chapter, De Sawal and Yakaboski (2014), both professors of higher education and student affairs, pressed the need to develop research-based evaluations and assessments in order to evidence the union's importance to student learning and engagement. They stressed that providing data substantiating how the college union idea aligns with the academic mission of institutions would enable this professional area of practice to continue and expand in the future.

Research involving the student union as an empirical subject of study consists mainly of a handful of dissertation studies. De Sawal and Yakaboski (2013) found that between 1981-2011 there were 23 doctoral dissertations and three masters theses about student unions that addressed five main topics: personnel (Kirkland, 1989; McIntosh, 2011; Mitura, 1984; Morton, 1999; Opatz, 1982; Potts, 1999; Sanchez, 2000; Swanka, 1997), union facility (Baird, 2008; Lieberman, 2002; Marshall, 1988; Sturdivant, 1984; Towns, 2005; Turk-Fiecoat, 2011), administration/management (Carr, 1994; Costantino, 2000; Danals, 2001; Freitag, 1984; Marshall, 1995; P-Blum, 1994), student involvement (Higbee, 1981; Morrell, 1989; Riepe, 2011;
Wendell, 2010), and organizational leadership (Mironack, 2003; Payment, 2003). Secondary
topics included: student satisfaction, programming, and governance. Between 2012-2014, an
additional six dissertations addressed union facility (Harrell, 2012; Janisz, 2014; Robinson, 2012;
Tierno, 2013, Willis, 2014) and student involvement (Ducatt, 2014).

Of the dissertation studies, four in particular inform the context of this study: Costantino
funding levels on the authority of union governing boards, Andrea Costantino (2000) found that
in unions with governing boards, a large proportion of their funding came from student fees. She
also found that unions reliant on a higher percentage of student fees had more students
participating on the boards, but that there was no relationship between the proportion of fees and
the perceived level of authority of the governing boards. In other words, unions with more
student fee support had boards with more students, but those boards had no more authority than
unions with less student fee support. The boards examined in her study ranged in level of
authority from advisory to complete control. In her discussion of implications for future research,
Costantino called for more research on union governing boards that looks at variables beyond
student fee support, such as the organizational structure of student unions as well as divisional
goals and objectives.

Using the framework of academic capitalism, Thearon Willis (2014) looked at student
union revenue generation and its relationship to student satisfaction with the union overall, its
educational and community building contributions, and its general value. His study affirmed the
presence of 14 market and market-like behaviors and activities consistent with academic
capitalism in union operations: advisory boards, contracts and agreements, donor development,
extended managerial professionals, fee-for-service, grants, mandatory student fee,
marketing/branding initiatives, outsourcing, partnerships with for-profit companies, program sponsorship, rental of facilities or equipment, sales of products or services, and strategic enrollment management. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) describe market-like behaviors as competition for external money and market behaviors as for-profit activity. Willis (2014) found that there was no relationship between the union's level of engagement with academic capitalism and student satisfaction. He did find, however, an institutional effect with reporting line and satisfaction: unions reporting to business and finance divisions had higher measures of student satisfaction than those reporting to academic or student affairs divisions. He cautioned that this finding was exploratory and recommended that future studies should take into account the union's organizational relationship to the institution.

Drawing upon the expertise of student union directors, Michelle Janisz (2014) examined the current and future state of the union with respect to the following dimensions: purpose and mission; services, programs and amenities; attributes that contribute to union success; and barriers to union effectiveness. Her findings affirmed that unions remain committed to building community, providing an ever-changing array of services and amenities, improving physical and personnel capacities, and identifying and overcoming physical, knowledge, financial, and political constraints to accomplishing their mission. Based on her findings, she extended the work of Humphreys (1946) and Stevens (1969) and their delineation of various stages in the history of student unions: debate (1815-1894), club (1895-1918), campus democracy (1919-1929), community recreation (1930-1945), educational (1946-1956), personalization (1957-1966), and humanization (1967-1979). She proposed two additions: consumerism stage (1980-2014) and innovation stage (2015-?). Her future research recommendations included institution-
specific studies to provide rich, thick data that would further validate the campus importance of student unions and their contributions to the educational mission of colleges and universities.

Krista Harrell (2012) explored how "green" student unions influenced students' environmental attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. She found that unions exhibiting green initiatives and practices had a positive impact on students' understanding of energy efficiency, recycling, composting, environmental sustainability, and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) features. Her findings suggested that the physical presence and operations of a student union can influence the knowledge and awareness of progressive environmental initiatives, as well as contribute to student learning and engagement on the topic. Her study demonstrated that student unions have the capacity to be learning laboratories and spaces for multi-dimensional educational connections.

Student unions have evolved over time and it would appear that those charged with their oversight, whether students, faculty, or administrators, have shepherded the changes with debate and deliberation of myriad issues. The educational purpose of unions has been of core importance, although it has faced increasing tension with the auxiliary environment in which unions currently exist. Under the influence of academic and student affairs capitalism and with amenities and activities that feed our consumer culture and consumption habits, how might student unions continue to advance an educational objective? Harrell's (2012) study is one example of how it might be accomplished; this study is another. Within the context of a commercial and corporate environment, the perception of students as consumers and their collective value as captive markets, and the convergence of student unions as sites of consumption, this study examined the current structure and operations of three student unions and dovetailed it with emerging trends related to a critical pedagogy of consumption. In doing
so, this study addressed the recommendations for future research from previous dissertation studies (Costantino, 2000; Janisz, 2014; Willis, 2014). Additionally, this study contributes to the extant literature on student unions.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework underlying this study drew from consumer culture theory, ethical consumption, and critical pedagogy of consumption. Together, these three perspectives provided a coordinated focus for the subject of inquiry. In this section, I present an overview of each area and discuss how it guided the research.

**Consumer Culture Theory**

According to Eric Arnould and Craig Thompson (2005), consumer culture theory (CCT) "refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings" (p. 868). It is not a unified, grand theory, but rather is a helpful heuristic for understanding the ways in which social actors engage in and derive meaning from consumption and marketplace behaviors. The benefit of CCT is that it moves beyond the notion of consumption as an instrumental economic exchange guided by utility and rationality and accentuates consumption as social and cultural practice informed by different logics. It also gives due consideration to the contexts in which consumption occurs (Sassatelli, 2007).

Other consumer culture scholars have suggested similar comprehensive approaches to the study of markets, consumption, and culture. Mike Featherstone (2007) identifies three primary perspectives that highlight the multifaceted ways of understanding consumption. The first view, which he delineates "the production of consumption" (p. 14), suggests that consumer culture is a
consequence of an expanding capitalist production of commodities. This in turn has escalated the
growth of material culture via an abundance of consumer goods and sites for consumption.
Economic motivations (e.g., the acquisition of capital) on the part of capitalist institutions create
the conditions for the construction of consumer desires and structure our consumption of
commodities. For example, Apple produces and markets iPads, which in turn fuels our consumer
appetite and leads a consuming public to proclaim, "I must have an iPad!" In terms of the student
union, the foray into academic and student affairs capitalism necessitates that union overseers
create the conditions for continued revenue generation. From a production of consumption
perspective, this would necessitate stocking more and more consumer goods to entice the campus
community to buy, hence the turn towards a retail emphasis in the union.

In addition to considering how economic structures shape consumer practices, it is
important to bear in mind the influences of social relations and individual desires. Featherstone's
(2007) second view, "modes of consumption" (p. 16), draws attention to a sociological focus on
how individuals build social bonds or distinctions through consumer goods. This understanding
also accounts for how access to and knowledge of different goods structure our taste,
satisfaction, and status. Roberta Sassatelli (2007) identifies this view as a "positional logic" and
uses it to counter the economic propensity to perceive consumption through a rational or
irrational dichotomy (p. 53). Moving from notions that, on the one hand, cost-benefit
calculations drive consumer decisions, and on the other hand, consumers engage in impetuous,
purposeless actions, she notes that a positional stance considers how consumers use commodities
to demarcate social boundaries and hierarchies and to display status. Purchasing and showing off
luxury goods and brands is a prominent example of this. Historically, the student union may have
been a simple expression of an active extracurricular program. In its contemporary form as a
consumption amenity and marketing tool, the union itself can be construed as a signal of status for colleges and universities and a means to showcase state of the art functions and designs. If the institutions in a college's or university's peer group all have gleaming student unions, then decision-makers at the campuses without union facilities or with seemingly more lackluster ones would feel compelled to make similar capital investments to improve their student unions.

Beyond building social relationships and signaling status through consumption, there are other communicative aspects. Featherstone (2007) identifies a third perspective as "consuming dreams, images and pleasure" (p. 21). Here the emphasis is on the emotional and aesthetic gratification of consumption. Drawing upon Walter Benjamin's analysis of mid-nineteenth century Parisian department stores and arcades, Featherstone explains that these sites allowed for the creation of "dream worlds" and displays of commodities and images designed to propel a desire to experience and consume those worlds. Consumption would thus become a lifestyle, an everyday pursuit mediated by advertising, marketing, and expanded sites or "cathedrals" of consumption (Ritzer, 2010). Within the student union context, these facilities and those who govern and manage them are complicit in carrying forward this third perspective. As sites of consumption, student unions encompass a space for encouraging consumerist activities.

In keeping with a holistic strategy, Sharon Zukin and Jennifer Maguire (2004) suggest that researchers study consumption as an institutional field. For Zukin and Maguire, the field approach entails that we recognize consumption as "a set of interconnected economic and cultural institutions centered on the production of commodities for individual demand" (p. 175). They further specify their preference to "locate consumption at the junction of changing social structures and cultural practices" (p. 192). Along these lines, this study positioned student unions as spaces of consumption. As Harrell (2012) demonstrated, student unions can serve as sites for
constructing shared ideas about a way of campus life and campus community. By examining how student unions play a constitutive role in advancing consumption, this study considered the ways in which student unions serve as sites that "both socialize and serve consumers" (Zukin & Maguire, p. 76) and the ways that greater critical thinking about consumption behaviors and practices can be promoted.

**Ethical Consumption**

Whether framed as political consumerism, conscious consumption, radical consumption, conscientious consumption, critical consumerism, or ethical consumption, the idea of using individual buying power to collectively effect change for the greater good has gained sufficient mainstream momentum (Littler, 2009). Jo Littler (2009) explains that the various terms have different emphases and roots, but in the present, "ethical consumption" tends to be most commonly used in public discourse. She notes that while the term ethical consumption can be "relatively fluid and contested" (p. 7), in general it reflects the practice of making socially-minded purchases of goods that have been produced through non-exploitive means. For added precision, this study drew on Margaret Willis' and Juliet Schor's (2012) definition:

...any choice about products or services made as a way to express values of sustainability, social justice, corporate responsibility, or workers' rights and that takes into account the larger context of production, distribution, or impacts of goods and services. Conscious consumption choices may include forgoing or reducing consumption or choosing products that are organic, eco-friendly, fair trade, local, or cruelty-free. (p. 162)

Although Willis and Schor prefer the term conscious consumption, their characterization captures the values and practices of ethical consumption that informed this study.
The tenets of ethical consumption were once considered to be alternative consumer practice, but they are increasingly in vogue in contemporary consumer culture. Willis and Schor (2012) suggest that in the present era of "a corporate and elite-dominated state, using market-driven consumer campaigns to achieve sustainability and social justice goals has become a popular strategy of progressive social change organizations" (pp. 160-161). Michele Micheletti (2003) proposes that globalization, free trade, and climate change are driving forces for the trend towards political consumerism. Facilitated by Internet campaigns and social media, he notes that consumers today are becoming more informed about the politics of products that companies are no longer able to hide. The practices of organized boycotts and buycotts are gaining more visibility and mobilizing a wider audience. Buycotts – the notion of voting with your dollars – increasingly encourage consumers to buy specific products and brands aligned with the values of ethical consumption, a practice reflected in the axiom "shop for a better world." While such an approach to consumption does entail a perpetuation of materialism and consumer culture, the intent is to at least minimize the negative consequences.

**Critical Pedagogy of Consumption**

In examining the connection between student unions and consumption, this study engaged a critical pedagogy of consumption (CPC) to explore the education and learning potential embedded within contemporary student unions. CPC is an emerging agenda that incorporates the transformative ideals of critical pedagogy into a new form of consumer education. As Sandlin (2005b) explains, "consumer education can be reframed as a political site wherein learners are taught particular ways of relating to consumer culture and capitalism – where they are constructed to have particular reactions to consumption and consumerism" (p.
By integrating the ideals of critical pedagogy, Sandlin suggests that consumer education can be a locus of social change.

Taken together with consumer education, critical pedagogy encourages individuals to question the values and assumptions that underlie consumer capitalism and to consider the ways that consumer culture reproduces social inequalities. A goal is to illuminate the taken-for-grantedness of everyday consumption activities in order to reveal the complex social, cultural, economic, and political relationships that lie beneath. For example, purchasing a college-logo sweatshirt is perhaps something that many do without giving it too much thought (possibly with the exception of considering the price tag). From a CPC perspective, the considerations prior to purchase might include whether the garment company engages in fair labor practices, whether wearing such an article of clothing is a source of school pride or free institutional advertising (or both), or whether the potential profit gained from sales would be equitably distributed amongst workers or held as executive bonuses. Thought might also be given to the facets of the natural environment involved in the production of a commodity's material existence (i.e., what types of resources – animal, plants, minerals – went into it its manufacture). These types of deliberations suggest the possibilities for individuals to be more cognizant of the consequences of consumption.

In many ways, CPC is an extension of Julie Ozanne and Jeff Murray's (1995) call for consumers to be more "radically critical or reflexively defiant" (p. 516). Enshrouded by the landscape of consumer capitalism, they believe it is necessary to empower consumers to reconsider their relationships to the marketplace and to seek out new consumption styles. By impressing upon consumers to take into account the social conditions and power dynamics of consumption, Ozanne and Murray are questioning the status quo of consumer capitalism.
Although a more critically conscious approach to consumption may not necessarily result in the rejection or transformation of consumer capitalism, it at least ought to provoke a second thought of its effects.

The CPC position extends beyond merely encouraging individuals to think twice about their consumer habits. For Sandlin, Kahn, Darts, and Tavin (2009), creating and enacting CPC also entails a call for educational activism that helps to illuminate the myriad theoretical and practical implications of such a movement. To extend this agenda, Sandlin et al. (2009) urge educators and researchers to more thoroughly consider the connections between consumption, education, and learning in their work and practice. The anthology of studies and critical essays in Sandlin et al. (2010) began this exploration. Although not all the works utilized CPC per se, their analyses and themes fell under the umbrella of CPC and included such diverse topics as the connection between schooling and consumerism (Spring, 2010), ecopedagogy and green consumerism (Kahn, 2010), popular culture and lifestyle consumption including McDonald's (Kincheloe, 2010), Barbie (Steinberg, 2010), and cosmetics (Kenway & Bullen, 2010), resistance and contestation of consumption through adult education, art education, and visual pedagogy (Clover & Shaw, 2010; Darts & Tavin, 2010), and a complete rejection of consumer capitalism (Farahmandpur, 2010; Scatamburlo-D'Annibale, 2010).

This study incorporated overarching concepts from CCT, ethical consumption, and CPC to inform the exploration of student unions and their unique position as spaces of consumption and education. Although CPC does not necessarily advocate for an ethical consumption agenda, this study purposefully examined how CPC worked in concert with ethical consumption. It considered how spaces within our institutions of higher learning can foster or hinder critical consumer education and promote ethical consumer practices. One caveat is that ethical
consumption exists within and accepts global consumer capitalism, whereas CPC can lead to a turn against it. Nonetheless, for this study, CPC’s focus on illuminating the social and political ways in which an ideology of consumerism constructs our consumption behaviors and practices dovetailed well with the values and goals of ethical consumption.

The conceptual framework that informed this inquiry and analysis allowed for an acknowledgement that we live in a consumer culture driven not just by economic rationality but also social and cultural practice. By looking at student unions specifically, this study examined how and whether these sites can be or are already a part of the intersection of critical pedagogy and consumption along three dimensions: the messages and values that student union spaces communicated, the possibilities for creating democratic and sustainable spaces in places seemingly inundated by materialism and consumption, and the extent those responsible for the governance and administration of student unions considered the underlying social, cultural, economic, and political relationships that accompany the consumption activities they oversaw and promoted. The aim was to consider and understand both the institutional and individual responses to consumption as mediated by student unions.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

The changes to colleges and universities resulting from commercialization and academic capitalism have been significant in elevating the corporate, private, and consumer attitudes towards higher education (Bok, 1998; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The present inquiry aimed to foreground the impact commercialization and academic capitalism has had on the campus life domain of higher education. Guided by the following research questions, this study aspired to extend the discussion into a consideration of how campus consumption amenities, specifically the student union, can serve an important and critical educational mission:

1) What is the contemporary structure of student unions?
   a) What is their relationship to the university?
   b) How are they governed?
   c) How are they funded?

2) How do student unions contribute to a critical pedagogy of consumption?

3) What are student union overseers' perceptions of ethical consumption and its practices?

In this chapter, I outline the specifics of my research design and methods, including paradigms, research strategy, role of the researcher, methods of data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

Research Paradigm

Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1998) define paradigm as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 195). In examining student unions and considering their potential as space for fostering a critical pedagogy of consumption, I positioned my study
within a constructivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln specify that a constructivist ontology is relativist and its epistemology is transactional and subjectivist. In other words, from this perspective, the reality of a world and our knowledge within it is locally and specifically constructed and interpreted by the actors of that world. According to John Creswell (2007), in the constructivist worldview, "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things" (p. 20). In this regard, knowledge assumes the form of subjective experience and the goal is to understand and appreciate a phenomenon. As this paradigm suggests, my study privileged a subjective perspective and did not attempt to make claims to empirical objectivity. A constructivist paradigm also allows for the legitimization and advancement of research that is particular and provisional. While I sought to somewhat distance myself from the object of analysis, the student union, and to explore its significance from multiple perspectives, I made no claims towards providing a dispassionate inquiry of their relevance and form. Rather, I aimed to engage a particular understanding of the student union as a marker of commercialization and consumerism within campus life.

**Research Strategy: Case Study**

A case study research strategy is an approach particularly suited to investigating contextualized contemporary phenomena. The provision of a natural setting and the opportunity to focus on relationships and processes, as well as utilize multiple sources and methods of data collection are further strengths of the case study approach (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case study methodologists note that case studies can be single-site or multicase; exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory (Yin, 2003); instrumental or intrinsic (Stake, 1995); particularistic or heuristic (Merriam, 1998). I situated my study along a heuristic dimension
(heuristic meaning "serving to find out" [Eckstein, 1975, p. 104]). Sharan Merriam (1998) suggests that heuristic case studies "illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known" (p. 30). According to Harry Eckstein (1975), the essence of a heuristic case study is "to stimulate the imagination toward discerning important general problems and possible theoretical solutions" (p. 104). By positioning the commercial and corporate landscape of student unions and their potential for encompassing an educational purpose as a heuristic study, my investigation aimed to contribute to the theoretical and practical development of a critical pedagogy of consumption. In this regard, my project also fell within what Robert Stake (1995) describes as an instrumental case study. That is, I used campus student unions as a context for further examining the issue of commercialization in higher education as well as promoting a critical understanding of consumption practices.

My dissertation was a multisite case study with the student union as the main unit of analysis. Following what Robert Yin (2003) describes as an embedded case study design, the subunits of analysis included the group of individuals responsible for overseeing student unions, documents that provided details of student union operations and practices, and student union websites. Three universities served as the sites for my data collection – University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); California State University, Fullerton (CSUF); and California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Consistent with common forms of data for case study and qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Yin 2003), the data sources for this study included observations of student unions, archival documents, web information, and interviews with members of student union boards of directors and management staff. By collecting data from more than one site, the objective was to elicit the most relevant examples of student union
commercialization and potential for pedagogical transformation. Multiple sites allowed me to
gather a variety of perspectives and experiences from actors across institutions in order to
determine best practices and to create a composite case study of student unions as spaces for
fostering a critical pedagogy of consumption.

**Role of the Researcher**

Qualitative research guides impart the need for addressing the role of the researcher and
reflecting upon the ways in which the "personal-self" becomes entwined with the "researcher-
self" (Creswell, 2003, p. 182; Maxwell, 2005). From my perspective, research is personal and
therefore, it necessarily follows that my own history, interests, background, and experiences will
inform the way I approach my study and the way I view and interpret the data collected. As such,
it is important to disclose how my personal narrative shaped and influenced my study.

This present study derived from my long-standing interest in campus life. I am an
admirer of college and university campuses, including their design and aesthetics. Upon my
arrival at UCLA as a graduate student, one of the things that immediately struck me was the
student union, which I found to be disturbingly commercial, corporate, and shopping mall-like.
While this may not be unique to the UCLA campus, it certainly prompted my interest to examine
its manifestation in greater detail. The initial spark for research led me to conduct a small-scale
study in the 2007-2008 academic year that investigated graduate student perceptions of campus
commercialization. Some of the findings from that study touched upon notions of commercial
spaces shaping consumption habits and attitudes towards corporate social responsibility. For
example, some students I interviewed for the study stated that they believed campuses should vet
the labor and environmental practices of the companies with which they intended to enter into a
commercial relationship. Another finding from the study concerned the ways in which
commercial spaces in student unions could be leveraged, as one of my interviewees suggested, "to develop business relationships with small mom-and-pops, with communities of color, with low-income business leaders from low-income communities" (Liu, 2009, p. 25). There appeared to be social justice implications within this statement, albeit still within the confines of commercialization, and it led me to think more about how spaces such as student unions could serve a greater purpose beyond my initial rudimentary dismissal of them as mini-malls. From there I resolved to extend my small-scale study into a larger dissertation thesis that built on the findings from that study.

In an effort to look beyond the façade of student unions, my dissertation study endeavored to understand them as a cultural representation of consumer capitalism and to infuse into this analysis some pedagogical significance. As the research plan for my study began taking shape, I became aware of an opportunity to apply for a position with the association that oversees the student union on my campus. It was an interesting prospect that I felt would enhance the dynamic of my study. Recognizing the chances were slim that I would be selected and unsure of the impact it would have on my dissertation, I nonetheless applied to become a member of the Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA) Board of Directors. The ASUCLA Board of Directors is a student-majority board responsible for the fiduciary and management oversight of various campus services and enterprises that fall within its purview (e.g., student union, bookstores, restaurants, trademarks & licensing, etc.). After applying, the tides were in my favor. In June 2010, I began my two-year tenure as a graduate student board member, and in June 2012, I was reappointed to the board for another two-year tenure. During the four years of my service on the

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5 ASUCLA is an independent, not-for-profit campus organization that oversees the Undergraduate Students Association, Graduate Students Association, Student Media, and Services & Enterprises operations which include the Student Union, Event Services, UCLA Store, UCLA Restaurants, UCLA Photography, and Trademarks & Licensing.
board, I held the following positions: member of the student union master plan initiative ad hoc committee, August 2010-May 2011; chair of the services committee, August 2010-August 2012; vice chair of the board and chair of the executive committee, August 2013-December 2013; and finally chairwoman of the board, December 2013-August 2014.

During the data collection and preliminary data analysis phases of this study, I served in the dual role of board member and researcher. In this regard, I was a complete member researcher (CMR) – someone who is a full member in the research group or setting (Anderson, 2006). As a board member, I had insider access and privilege to conversations, documents, reports, and the general inner-workings of ASUCLA. While my board experience offered invaluable insight for my study, I did not leverage this access in order to avoid researcher conflicts of interest and to prevent jeopardizing my fiduciary duty as a board member. For example, I did not use ASUCLA documents that were not public record, nor did I interview any individuals who were active board members. I also completed the data analysis and narrative of findings after my board service. Further details involving my CMR status with respect to data collection and analysis are in the next sections of this chapter.

**Methods of Data Collection**

**Sites of Study**

In identifying potential sites for my study, I followed a purposeful logic that sought information-rich cases for study. With a purposive sampling strategy, "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). I also followed Stake's (1995) guidance that case selection should be done to "maximize what we can learn" (p.
4). For practical reasons, he also recommends selecting sites that are receptive to being subjects of inquiry and that allow for convenient access.

Given that the core foci of my study was commerce and consumption, I was interested in selecting sites that had a commercial objective. There are student centers and resource spaces on campuses that may have comparable community and student-centered purposes as student unions, but these types of spaces did not fit the foci of this study because they are usually academic or student affairs departmental spaces and not separate revenue-generating entities. Based on the information-rich criteria, I sought sites that contained a mix of food, recreation, programming, and retail. Due to its visible manifestation of commercial and corporate influences, UCLA's Ackerman Student Union was an ideal site for my study. Preliminary research and personal experience indicated the student union was overseen by ASUCLA's student-majority board and was governed independently of the university. A brief review of the ASUCLA mission and core values also suggested there was fruitful data to be collected that addressed the consumption issues that my study highlights. My status as a graduate student on the campus also allowed for convenient access. For these reasons, UCLA served as a rich site for data collection.

Initially, I planned to pursue this study as an in-depth, single-site case study with UCLA and the ASUCLA board of directors as the focus. After unsuccessful negotiations with the board to proceed with this approach and upon further consideration of my research objectives that took into account board feedback, I decided to move forward with a multi-site design. This avoided potential conflicts of interest with conducting insider research and allowed for greater assurance of protecting participants' anonymity. On the basis of maximizing what can be learned about student unions and using public universities as a control, I then chose three additional sites that
had preliminary similarities in structure yet offered enough differences to understand the
diversity of landscapes – University of California, Irvine (UCI), CSUF, and CSUN. Like UCLA,
these three are public universities in Southern California which allowed for convenient
researcher access; they each have large student unions; and their student unions are also overseen
by student-majority boards. The UCI Student Center Board oversees the UCI Student Center, the
Titan Student Centers Governing Board oversees the CSUF Titan Student Union, and the
University Student Union Board of Directors oversees the CSUN University Student Union.
Access to UCI was facilitated by a classmate who had connections to UCI staff members who
could assist with introductions to student union gatekeepers. Access to CSUF and CSUN and
their respective union boards were facilitated by contacts I had from ASUCLA who had direct
connections to appropriate gatekeepers. I successfully negotiated access to all four campuses and
was able to proceed with data collection.

After reviewing the data I had for UCI in context with the data I had for the other three
sites, I decided to omit UCI from the final analysis. I did this for two reasons. First, the data I had
for UCI (interviews, meager website) were not as robust as the data I had at the other three sites
(interviews, extensive websites, meeting agendas and minutes, financial statements, and
governing documents). For this reason, I did not feel I could write a substantive case study about
UCI. Second, the structure at UCI was completely different from the structure at the other three
sites. Unlike the other three sites, UCI was not an independent entity and had an advisory board
rather than a legally-defined governing board. While this could have served as an alternative
model to include in my study, the lack of organizational data, such as governing documents and
financial statements, meant that there was not enough organizational transparency. For this
reason, I felt it was not productive to include UCI alongside the other three cases. Instead, the
three sites of CSUF, CSUN, and UCLA served as a "collective case study," and the data collected across the institutions "maximized what we can learn" about student unions and the possibilities for promoting critical consumer education (Stake, 1995, p. 4).

**Interviews**

Within student union governance there is a small group of individuals with the decision-making ability to affect what the larger university population has access to and experiences in terms of union facilities and programming. Given this type of influence, interviews were important for understanding the connection between board members' roles and decision-making and the structure and impact of their organizations. Interview participants were initially recruited through the main contacts I developed during site access negotiation (see Appendix A for recruitment letter). On the basis of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007), I sought to interview student union governing board members and executive management staff. Board members provided overarching and strategic oversight of the organizations. Executive management staff were responsible for the day-to-day operations of student unions. They were also actively involved with ongoing board activities and could offer on-the-ground perspectives that board members might not consider.

Across the three campuses, I conducted interviews with 41 individuals: 11 at CSUF, 16 at CSUN, and 14 at UCLA. Prior to the interviews, I reviewed the Research Information Sheet detailing the purpose and procedures of the study with participants and provided them with a copy of it (see Appendix B). The boards were all student-majority so they were the largest interview constituent (N=25), but I also secured interviews with faculty, administrative, and alumni representatives that served on the boards and management staff (N=16). The board participants at CSUF and CSUN were primarily current or immediate past members at the time
of data collection. Given my active membership on the ASUCLA board at the time, the board participants were former members whose service ranged from the mid-2000s to the time of data collection, with the exception of one participant whose service was in the late 1990s.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted over the summer of 2011. They were one-on-one, lasted 30-90 minutes with the majority in the 45-60 minute range, and took place in person or over the phone. Some of the interviews were done by phone because participants were out of town. For each interview, I completed a Participant Information Sheet that recorded logistical information about the interview, participant identifiers such as position and length of service, a self-selected pseudonym to be used in the findings narrative, and my preliminary impressions during the conversation (See Appendix C). The conversations focused on four main topic areas: participant's governance role and experience, general purposes and features of student unions, community and commerce goals, and consumer considerations (see Appendix D for interview protocol). I selected these topics in order to elicit data that would develop rich and full answers to the study's guiding research questions. Although the interview protocol served as the organizing framework for the interviews, the specific questions posed in each interview varied slightly, reflecting the participant's organizational role and responsibilities as well as my progressive knowledge and understanding of the inquiry at hand.

All interviews were recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. The pseudonyms of the participants by campus are listed below to serve as a reference point for the narrative of findings in chapters four and five (see Table 1). In order to best protect their anonymity since board membership and management positions are a small cohort relative to a university's population, I do not disclose their specific role (e.g., board member versus management staff;
student, faculty, administrative, or alumni representative), nor do I provide any demographic information that could be used to identify them.

Table 1. Participants by Campus

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>CSUF (11)</th>
<th>CSUN (16)</th>
<th>UCLA (14)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Brad</td>
<td>AJ</td>
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<td>Barbara</td>
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<td>Charlotte</td>
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<td>Jack</td>
<td>Dolores</td>
<td>Jonathan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Elise</td>
<td>Julia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Emory</td>
<td>Justin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>Lily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Raj</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Ray</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Sharon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Randall</td>
<td>Susie</td>
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<td>Sonia</td>
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<td>Tom</td>
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The interviews shed light on the various considerations student union overseers bear in mind when making plans for their organizations. They also provided a means for exploring the extent to which overseers articulate or deliberate concerns regarding campus consumption practices and outcomes. Furthermore, the oversight of student unions by boards with rotational membership suggested that student unions do not evolve in a vacuum absent input from various campus constituents.

Documents

To further understand student unions and their contemporary landscape, I supplemented data collected from interviews with organizational documents. The documents I obtained were public records and almost all of them were available on the respective student union websites. I
reviewed agendas and minutes from board and committee meetings, governing and policy
documents, financial statements and audit reports, annual reports, organization charts, and the
student union websites themselves. The materials available online dated back to 2010 at CSUF,
2009 at CSUN, and 2003 at UCLA. In addition to the electronic documents, participants at
CSUN provided me with board orientation documents and access to meeting minutes dating back
to 1971. Although the policy documents and audit reports at UCLA were public record, they
were not available online. However, since I had access to them through my ASUCLA board
membership, I was able to include them.

Data from the documents and websites were instrumental for developing the case
narratives of each site. The documents were important for understanding the overall structure of
the organizations, their operational activities, and their board priorities and goals. The websites
provided information about what each institution conveys about its student union to the general
public and helped to illuminate how a union's online visage cohered with its physical facilities
and board endeavors. The materials were an invaluable source of triangulation and allowed me to
dentify congruencies and discrepancies between the institutionally recorded data and the data
gained from and the individual perspectives and experiences of research participants.

Observations

Following Michael Angrosino's (2005) statement that "social scientists are observers both
of human activities and of the physical settings in which such activities take place" (p. 729), I
also gathered data via observations of the student union facilities. Given my status as a UCLA
graduate student and ASUCLA board member, I was naturally most intimately acquainted with
the student union at my home campus. Nonetheless, I had the opportunity to formally tour and
casually wander around the student unions at the other two campuses as well, which allowed for
visual and spatial orientation of my sites of study. I recorded my observations as descriptive and reflective field notes. I also took a few photographs of the different spaces. Given the size of the physical structures and scope of facilities I visited, the field notes, images I captured, and photographs available online allowed me to revisit the student unions during data analysis without having to physically return to the sites. The observations allowed me to further understand the contemporary landscape of student unions and assess their potential to serve as spaces for promoting critical awareness about consumption issues.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study followed the premise that data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not discrete steps in qualitative research. Rather, they are interconnected and often occur simultaneously (Creswell, 2003). Following the example of a data analysis spiral wherein the researcher proceeds analytically in a circular fashion rather than a fixed linear process, I engaged the following procedures: organizing and preparing the data, reading through all the transcripts and documents to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning, beginning detailed analysis with a coding process, using the coding process to generate a description of the setting and participants as well as categories for analysis, writing a narrative of the findings replete with representative quotes, and linking the data to the literature reviewed and pulling in additional literature as needed (Creswell, 2003).

The data management portion of the analysis phase involved organizing, preparing, and reading through the data. With the interviews, I submitted the audio files to transcribers who then produced verbatim transcripts. I subsequently emailed them to all the participants for member checking to give each person the opportunity to review their transcript and to provide any additional comments or to clarify anything previously stated (see Appendix E). I also reviewed
all of the transcripts while listening to the audio files to ensure that there were no errors in transcription. This process allowed me to clean the transcripts and make margin notes where needed about the tone and tenor of the interviews that a transcriber without first-hand knowledge of the conversation may not have been able to interpret. With the documents, I catalogued them by date and type and noted the ones that included events participants had referred to in their interviews. Beginning with the data collection phase and continuing through analysis, I also regularly wrote research memos with notes about interview first impressions, data management logistics, reflections on emerging themes and trends in the data, and preliminary interpretive findings.

The coding portion of the analysis phase involved immersing myself in the data in order to identify key constructs for coding. The initial stage of coding was to discover, name, and categorize the themes that emerged from linking data collected to the research questions and conceptual framing of the study. To facilitate the coding process, I utilized HyperRESEARCH (version 3.5.2), a qualitative research software. I added codes and subcodes as necessary throughout the process. As patterns emerged, I refined the code list, clarifying, collapsing, or eliminating codes as appropriate and continued this process until there was a coherent code structure for thematic analysis. I coded the transcripts for one site at a time which enhanced my sensitivity to the unique contextual dynamics of each case study institution.

The interpretive narrative portion of the analysis phase involved looking for common patterns and differences among the data as they related to the contemporary structure of student unions, the considerations that influence the overseers of student unions, the relevance of student unions to consumer culture, and the potential of students unions as spaces for a critical pedagogy of consumption. To organize the findings, I first developed a descriptive narrative of each site
that provided rich details of the structure and strategic priorities of each campuses' student union (chapter four). I then constructed a collective analytic narrative focused on how the theoretical understanding of this study manifested in a concrete and tangible context (chapter 5). After completing the narratives, I asked a colleague with deep professional experience in the student union field to provide an expert review of the chapters for "accuracy and palatability" (Stake, 1995, p. 115). The colleague serves as executive director of a student union at a large university in the Midwest and is a member of ACUI. In particular, I wanted to ensure that the narrative in chapter four provided a credible and reliable account of students unions and their structures.

**Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

Qualitative research experts argue that positivistic notions of validity are inappropriate for evaluating the rigor of studies guided by constructivist paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Lincoln and Guba (1986) assert that the criterion of trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, is the appropriate evaluative measure for research that recognizes the fallibility of positivistic constructs such as value-free, objective truths, and singular realities. They stress the importance of establishing research soundness without adhering to traditional notions of validity. For Lincoln and Guba, credibility addresses the extent to which a thorough understanding of the research setting has been achieved in order to produce believable findings; transferability speaks to the applicability of the research findings to other settings; dependability addresses the capacity for others to reach similar conclusions consistently; and confirmability speaks to whether the data and interpretations can be corroborated by multiple sources.

To ensure trustworthiness, I undertook a number of the recommendations put forward by Lincoln and Guba (1986). For credibility and confirmability, I engaged in data collection over a
prolonged period of time and ensured triangulation of data and findings through multiple methods and sources of data collection, as well as member checks of interview transcripts and expert review of findings. To establish transferability and dependability, I provided detailed descriptions of the research sites and presented findings narratives that incorporated quotations and excerpts from the interviews and documents, as well as included photographs. I also worked consistently throughout the research process to refine my interpretations as I learned more about each site, and I sought feedback from my academic colleagues to ensure that I implemented a sound research design.

In addition to trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggest that the criterion of authenticity, which includes fairness, ontological authentication, educative authentication, catalytic authentication, and tactical authenticity, are even more relevant for research that privileges the socially constructed nature of interpretation. They define fairness as "a balanced view that presents all constructions and the values that undergird them" (p. 79). As Lincoln and Guba recommend, I ensured that there was fairness in my access negotiations by being upfront about my research interests and my dual roles as board member and researcher. Though no one questioned my tandem status as researcher and board member, I still assured them that they were free to withdraw their participation at any time and that they were free to choose not to answer any particular question. I also took care to protect participants' confidentiality and will not include any identifying information in any report, papers, or articles based on data collected for this study. Additionally, the procedures I employed to establish trustworthiness were also important for achieving fairness.

As I proceeded with my study, I also bore in mind Lincoln and Guba's (1986) recommendations for authentication. In terms of ontological authentication, they suggest that the
research inquiry ought "to raise consciousness, or to unite divided consciousness, likely via some dialectical process, so that a person or persons (not to exclude the evaluator) can achieve a more sophisticated and enriched construction" (p. 81). Regarding this endeavor, I approached my interviews as "dialogical conversations" and recognized that the interviews were not just a means of information-gathering, but rather, were a way of generating meaningful discussions about my research topic (Manning, 1997, p. 105). Educative authentication is similar to the ontological perspective, but places a bit more emphasis on a participant's capacity for greater awareness and appreciation of one's own and others' opinions, judgments, and action (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 81). This was reflected in participants' comments during our conversations that this study helped illuminate and validate their own roles and responsibilities with respect to student unions. With catalytic authentication, "inquiry, and evaluations in particular, must also facilitate and stimulate action" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 82). On this point, Kathleen Manning (1997) suggests that "research cannot only be an intellectual exercise, but must be worthwhile to, among others, the respondents who shared their knowledge, stakeholders, practitioners, and other researchers" (pp. 108-109). Here, I believe my research will illuminate operations for the participating sites, inform practice in the student union field, and contribute to advancing a critical pedagogy of consumption within higher education. Finally, in terms of tactical authenticity, I remained aware that the participants in my study were not subjects; rather, they were collaborators in the research process with status equal to the researcher. Additionally, the data and findings that resulted from my study are not proprietary, and I took care to not only attribute ideas accordingly, but also to protect participants' anonymity. By remaining cognizant of the different criteria discussed and incorporating the various procedures delineated throughout the research process, I achieved a substantive level of trustworthiness and authenticity with my study.
CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY OF STUDENT UNIONS AT THREE CAMPUSES

Just as the landscape of higher education institutions is vast and varied, so too is the landscape of student unions. Although there are similarities in function and purpose, I found differences in organizational structure, governance, funding, and strategic priorities for each of the three campuses in this study. These differences reflected the variable ways in which universities demonstrate their commitment to campus community, as well as the understanding that governing boards have regarding their oversight responsibilities. The various approaches in turn influence the messages and values that student union spaces communicate. In this chapter, I present the findings from each campus as individual cases. In areas where I quote participants, I refer to them using their chosen pseudonyms. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I will not identify whether they are management staff or board members or which constituency they represent (e.g., undergraduate student, graduate student, administrator, faculty, alumni). The narratives of these three cases provide insight into the varying environments of student unions and their centrality to community and commerce on campus. Before presenting the cases, I offer a primer on auxiliary organizations in order to illuminate the differences in organizational structure and institutional control that I found at the campuses.

What is an Auxiliary Organization?

Auxiliary services have become part and parcel of colleges and universities. According to the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), "An auxiliary enterprise exists to furnish goods or services to students, faculty, staff, or incidentally to the general public, and charges a fee directly related to, although not necessarily equal to, the cost of the goods or services" (1999, para. 11). The key feature of auxiliary enterprises are that they are managed as largely self-supporting activities. NACUBO gives the following as examples of
auxiliary enterprises: residence halls, food services, intercollegiate athletics (only if essentially self-supporting), college stores, faculty clubs, faculty and staff parking, and faculty housing.

The public university system in California extends the NACUBO definition and provides added detail of what constitutes an auxiliary enterprise. California has a three-tiered public higher education system that includes the 10-campus University of California (UC) system, the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system, and the group of 112 community colleges. According to the UC Office of the President (UCOP), "UC uses the term 'auxiliary enterprises' to refer to certain commercial-type activities that serve faculty, students, and staff including certain activities that could be seen as competing with local businesses" (2010, p. 2). The UCOP's non-exhaustive list of auxiliary enterprises includes: housing operations, non-housing food service operations, parking operations, bookstores, student centers/-unions, and child-care centers. Unlike the CSU system, UC auxiliaries are not separate legal entities.

The CSU system encompasses the most clearly articulated organizational framework for its auxiliary enterprises. According to the CSU Office of the Chancellor, the CSU "established a network of supplemental services that complement the core academic programs at each campus and provide the full range of educational experiences expected by its students" (Auxiliary Organizations of the CSU, n.d., para. 2). The organizations in this network are separate legal entities and are non-profit. They are controlled by separate governing boards yet they enjoy close campus links. The activities of the CSU auxiliaries fall within these functions: student self-governance; student body center/union/recreation center; externally-supported research and sponsored programs, including workshops, institutes or conferences; commercial services such as bookstores or food service; and philanthropic activities, including acceptance of donor gifts. The Auxiliary Organizations Association (AOA), which serves as the main resource and
coordinating body for the auxiliaries of the 23-campus CSU system, describes auxiliaries as "private entities nestled within the framework of a public structure" (CSUAOA, 2014, para. 2). As evidenced by the wide ranging services and functions that auxiliaries encompass, whether it be bookstores and dining, student government, or student unions, a significant infrastructure exists to market to and serve all those who interact regularly or incidentally with university campuses.

California State University, Northridge

Located in Southern California's San Fernando Valley, California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is a four-year, public university with a fall 2013 enrollment of 38,310 students. It is one of 23 campuses in the CSU system. Undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2013-14 academic year was $6,525, of which $512 was the Student Union Fee. The CSUN student union is one of five non-profit, 501(c)(3) auxiliary units and is officially incorporated as the University Student Union, Inc. (USU). The other auxiliary units include: The University Corporation (TUC), Associated Students (AS), North Campus – University Park Development Corporation, and the CSUN Foundation.

USU Organizational Structure

First opened in November 1977 and officially incorporated in 1978, the USU is both an auxiliary corporation of the university as well as a department in the Division of Student Affairs. Natasha indicated that as "a hybrid model of in-between corporate and student affairs," this structure allowed the USU "to be very nimble" and "to reallocate [its] resources in ways that can help it continue to function." While the USU enjoys a degree of independence from the university, its link to student affairs is also, as Frank stated, for "ensuring that there's sufficient

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6 All tuitions and fees reported are for California residents. Nonresident tuitions are substantially higher.
fiscal oversight" and that there is operational consistency with university priorities and requirements of CSU system executive orders dealing "with fiscal issues or operating agreements."

The close tie to student affairs is not merely a managerial structure, but also a purposeful relationship wherein USU is fully enveloped within the fabric and goals of student affairs. The person responsible for managing all USU operations and its personnel is the USU Executive Director. As stipulated in the USU bylaws, administratively the executive director reports directly to the vice president for student affairs.7 Beyond a reporting hierarchy, Frank stated that a main purpose for the cooperation is to ensure that the USU "is a part of the mission of the student affairs division." Dolores affirmed that it is important for auxiliaries such as USU "to be part of something larger because [otherwise] sometimes they operate kind of as an island out there by themselves." She continued that it is helpful for those involved with the USU to "feel like [they] are part of the institution because overall, ultimately [their] job is to help students realize their educational goals. ... So if [they're] part of the group that does it, it makes it a lot easier to collaborate." The expressed belief that USU exists in tandem with student affairs set it apart from the other campuses in this study. As compared to the other sites, it demonstrated a high level of commitment from the university that its student-related auxiliary services be woven into the foundation of its students' education.

The USU organization is divided into the following major areas: Finance and Business Services, Marketing and Programs, Operations and Services, Student Recreation Center, Human Resources, and Administration and Governance. The buildings of the USU include the Sol Center, Northridge Center Complex, East Conference Center, Southwest Addition, and the

7 According to the most recent organizational chart, the executive director reports to the associate vice president for student life (AVP) who in turn reports to the vice president of student affairs. At the time of the interviews, the AVP position was vacant.
Student Recreation Center (SRC). Altogether, the facilities include a typical assembly of meeting rooms, event space, food facilities, department offices, services space, lounges, study rooms, and health and recreation amenities. The mission of the USU is "to foster the achievement of students' educational goals by facilitating a strong connection between students and their campus community." In addition to its link to the student affairs division, the USU has an operational relationship with the TUC and AS auxiliaries. TUC is responsible for the bookstore, campus dining, licensing, real estate, and sponsored programs. AS is "the official seat of student governance for the campus." The USU receives a 1% commission from all campus food service and catering sales in an arrangement with TUC that dates back to 2003. Prior to transferring the delegation to TUC, USU operated its own food service. AS leases office space from the USU for its operations, and a number of AS student government leaders also serve as members of the USU governing board or on its committees and vice versa, though not usually at the same time. The AS president or her designee also serves as a liaison to the USU board. Both USU and AS are under the auspices of student affairs, while TUC reports directly to the university president.

Student unions are often hubs of dining activity and as such the oversight of food service can become a matter of contention. Of the campuses in this study, UCLA is the only one in which the student union governing board maintains current operational and financial oversight for the food services in its own and other campus facilities. At CSUN and CSUF, a separate auxiliary corporation or department has that responsibility. However, the transfer of food service functions is a fairly recent development at CSUN. Minutes from a November 1999 board meeting record board members debating the pros and cons of consolidating its food service with TUC's operations. Given the community that a student union primarily serves and because there is often a loss of flexibility to make changes when an entity no longer has operational control of
a service area, the USU board sought "assurances that, if unified a) policy/procedural changes would still occur without a lot of red tape, and b) there would remain a commitment to student development to insure [sic] that the interest of students remains protected." As the history of the Great Butter Rebellion of 1766 at Harvard College foretold (Morison, 1986), concerns over food service are no small matters to students and the duration of negotiations seemed to reflect that. Despite the trepidation of relinquishing its food service rights, the USU board finally approved the consolidation in October 2003. Whatever the initial hurdles, Dolores acknowledged that the agreement has worked well because the USU has "been continuing to generate more money since [TUC] has taken over, so it's really been a good relationship." According to USU annual audit reports, commission income has grown from $39,360 in 2005-2006 to $150,129 in 2012-2013, a 281% increase over eight years.8

USU Governance Structure

While the organizational structure represents where a university situates its student union, the governing board structure determines how those responsible for the union's oversight understand their roles. At CSUN, the USU is overseen by a student-majority Board of Directors (USU BOD) comprising 16 voting directors: 10 students, one faculty member, one staff member, the university president or designee, the vice president for student affairs or designee, one alumni representative, and the USU executive director. The executive director is appointed by the president of the university at the recommendation of the USU BOD and the vice president of student affairs. In addition to the 16 voting members, the AS president or designee is a non-voting member and serves as a liaison to the USU BOD rather than as a formal director. The officers of the USU BOD include the chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer. The chair and

8 Although minutes show that the agreement with TUC for a transfer of food service operations was approved in 2003, the first time that commission income is recorded in the annual audit report is 2005-2006.
vice chair must be student directors, and the executive director serves as both the secretary and treasurer. The inclusion of students, faculty, staff, high-level administrators or designees, and alumni seems to be the typical board composition, as the student union boards at CSUF and UCLA also include these constituents.

According to USU bylaws, directors are elected or appointed to serve on the USU BOD. Student members must run for a seat and are directly elected by the student body to serve two-year terms. When there are mid-year vacancies, students are appointed through an interview process and must be approved by the sitting board. The staff representative is nominated through a petition process and then selected by the board. The faculty representative is selected by the board from a list of nominees forwarded by the university faculty senate's executive committee. The CSUN Alumni Association appoints the alumni representative. These three non-student directors also serve two-year terms. Students-at-large who are not directors are permitted to serve on USU BOD committees.

Members of the USU BOD and at-large students serve on one or more of its five standing committees: audit, facilities and commercial services, finance, personnel, and retirement plan. According to USU bylaws, the audit committee is responsible for selecting the independent auditor and conferring with the auditor to ensure that the USU's financial affairs are sound. The facilities and commercial services committee is responsible for recommending policies pertaining to USU facilities, meeting services, and commercial services. It is also responsible for approving new commercial operations in the USU. The finance committee is responsible for recommending fiscal policies and reviewing the USU's financial statements, investments, annual budget and capital expenditures, cash reserves, and the results of annual audits. The personnel committee is responsible for recommending personnel policies and employee handbooks. It also
provides assistance to the executive director with hiring full-time staff members. The retirement plan committee is responsible for retirement-plan policies and administrative actions.

Student unions, especially at large public universities, are often big multi-function, multi-facility enterprises. Those who oversee student unions are usually responsible, either with direct decision-making authority or in an advisory capacity, for multi-million dollar operations. According to the CSUN USU website (http://www.csun.edu/usu), to be a member of the BOD is to [emphasis in original]:

Start *Living the Matador Life* by making decisions to benefit the entire student body, building a network of professionals and promising students, enhancing your leadership skills, and learning how a multi-million dollar organization operates.

The obvious benefits of serving on the BOD include leadership development, networking, and being an agent of change, but the motto "Living the Matador Life" also draws attention to the multi-million dollar financial scope of responsibility. This is a significant duty that tends to steer the USU BOD towards a corporate governance atmosphere. Participants including Tom and Elise, for example, both noted respectively that the USU "runs more like a corporation" and is "very professional and very corporate." As someone who believes in unions as potential spaces for social change, Elise also lamented that the "corporate feel" and "structure for everything" led to her feeling "restricted to stick to the status quo and look at the bottom line."

The corporate approach of the USU can foster consistent and efficient operations, but it does not define the organization. Dolores emphasized that "we just see ourselves as a service organization and...our foundational leadership model is servant leadership, so we consider ourselves servants first, leaders second. So everything we do is about providing service to other people." While there is substantial fiscal responsibility that board members undertake, the
driving sentiment of serving students resonated the most for participants when reflecting on their governance role. Student board members at CSUN as well as the other campuses in this study often repeated common refrains such as wanting to "represent students" or to be a "voice of the students" or an "advocate of students' needs" or being driven by "what do the students want" or "what is best for the students" when describing their roles and responsibilities. Non-student board members (e.g., faculty, administrators, alumni) recognized the primacy of putting "students first," especially in the context of student governance, but also acknowledged that the perspectives of the constituency they represent added value to board discussions. They also understood their role to "mentor students" and be a "voice of experience."

The idea of service and serving students tends to become an ingrained core value for the individuals serving as board members or working as part of the management team. The student union is a source of pride for the overseers, and the ways that they connect their role and decision-making to the campus community highlight their fiduciary duty of care and loyalty. As Nelly explained, "Within USU, I think we're pretty passionate about what we're doing and it's pretty contagious, so once you get inside the company and you hear people talking, you meet people, you see what's going on, it gets contagious, so you become one of them." Owing to a heavy reliance on student fees for USU operations, CSUN participants also noted the importance of shouldering that responsibility within their governance role. For example, Natasha was always cognizant that "we need to be good stewards of student fee money" and Brad echoed the belief that "because we are funded with student fees," the foremost concern is "to really take care of the students."

The long-term vision and day-to-day operations of student unions are generally under the purview of an executive director and the management staff, but boards such as the USU BOD
maintain an active oversight role through frequent committee and board meetings where members regularly vote on various items usually pertaining to policies, services, and financial matters. The push-pull between a management team that remains fairly steady and a BOD that turns over annually can sometimes lead to tensions in terms of who has overarching authority over the union. Damian explained that he viewed the USU as "a corporation with a board of directors and a management team, and make no mistake, the directors don't report to the management team." He further clarified: "That was always my view of it, but that's not a view that was necessarily shared by the management team and that was a little bit challenging."

Natasha stated that she does not believe the BOD "creates the vision for where [the USU] is trying to go" and that board members are just "the decision-makers at the time for whatever needs to happen with the overall vision" that is set by management. While the dynamic between a transient board and a more consistent management team can sometimes yield friction, it also seems to generate a synergy that enables those responsible for shaping the student union to feel there is a collective sense of duty for ensuring the well-being of the student union and its services and programming, financial health, facilities, and responsiveness to campus needs.

**USU Revenue Structure**

The USU is a predominantly fee-funded auxiliary. According to its 2012-13 audit report, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013, $10.54 million of its $12.95 million total operating revenue came from student fees (81.4 percent). The remaining revenue came from the TUC food service agreement commission and program, rental, and recreation center income. CSUN has the highest union fee of the three campuses in this study (see Table 2). For fiscal year 2012-13, expenses totaled $11.04 million, leaving $1.91 million in operating income. At year's end, USU had a cash total of $7.2 million (see Table 4 for exact figures). The most recent substantial USU
fee increase occurred after the passage of a student referendum. During the Spring 2007 semester, CSUN students voted to incrementally raise USU fees by an additional $25 in 2007-08 to $133 in 2012-13 with a $6 inflation increase annually thereafter in order to build a comprehensive 138,000 square foot recreation center. The SRC facility was a $60 million capital project that opened in January 2012. It is also a department within the USU for which the USU BOD has oversight and budget approval.

Table 2. Student Union Fees for 2013-14 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fee Per Semester/Quarter</th>
<th>Total Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSUN</td>
<td>$256</td>
<td>$512</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSUF</td>
<td>$134</td>
<td>$268</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCLA</td>
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In addition to student fee income, unions also often generate revenue from renting meeting and conference rooms to campus constituents and the general public, leasing space to campus departments and/or commercial vendors such as retail stores, fast food restaurants, ATMs and banks, and charging a fee for events and services. Charlie stated that "rental income is a significant but not a commanding source of revenue" for the USU. In fact, the USU has subsidized retail tenants in the past. Tom explained, "We even provided some breaks, 9 and 3, saying you pay for 9 months, we give you 3 months [rent] free. Well, that would limit the income that we get, but we also understood that our tenant wasn't doing good and as partners we needed to provide some help in some way." Another example of providing rent relief is recorded in the minutes from a board meeting on 26 October 2009. The USU BOD approved a motion to negotiate new fiscal year 2010-11 lease terms for Digital +1 Hour Photo and Cellular Flux, two of USU's retail tenants at the time, "to reflect six months of full rent and six months of 50% rent
reduction." These types of lease terms can be viewed as an effort by the USU to work in partnership with its tenants rather than trying to eke out the most income possible.

While fee revenue allows the USU to offer programs such as Matador Nights, services such as 20 pages of printing per day at the computer lab, and access to meetings rooms and lounge space at low or no cost, the advisability of fees remains a topic of discussion. For example, Randall stated: "I do believe that there should probably be a hybrid model, that student fees are great, but you shouldn't necessarily rely exclusively on those." Other avenues for raising funds that some participants discussed included development and corporate sponsorship. The 18,000 square foot cardio-strength training area inside the newly-built SRC was recently named for a donor who pledged $400,000 for student programs in the facility. Dolores noted that the USU plans to become more active in "trying to cultivate those relationships." Natasha affirmed that the USU has "talked in recent years about more fund development opportunities and how do we align with sponsors and what does that look like." Giving credence to Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) explanation that academic capitalism also includes leveraging a captive student market, Natasha indicated that "the access we have to the students in this campus is a goldmine." She believed that with the opening of the SRC, there might be more solicitations:

There's a lot more precedence in those types of operations for companies and individuals to approach you wanting to have access to your student population...companies wanting to say, "hey, we'll buy all your intramural T-shirts if we can put our name on it" or "we're Gatorade and we want to come hand out blah-blah-blah-blah." And so we're going to quickly need to be savvy about what those opportunities should cost those companies because frankly, we're used to just giving that stuff away for free and saying, "Oh, yeah. Oh, great, now we won't have to buy T-shirts." ... We need to be able to put a dollar
figure on that – not because we want to be greedy – but because we want to be able to leverage that exposure they're getting to the students and be able to give more to the students with that exposure.

The opportunity for more revenue so that the USU "can use those dollars to do more for the students" is the key draw for going down this path, but Natasha also specified that they have not yet developed expertise in seeking corporate sponsorships since they "have the luxury of not needing that to operate."

The USU functions primarily within a fee-funded model and when there are millions of dollars involved and tens of thousands of students who have paid, decision-making accountability is heightened for those who bear responsibility for the student union's well-being and financial affairs. Most participants were quick to rationalize high fees and endorse USU expenditures and held a perspective similar to what Brad acknowledged: "No one's happy to pay a fee, but I think the majority of people do see that this is being utilized for something or services that they can use." Given the multi-million dollar operating budgets, those with oversight duties for student unions are also entrusted with ensuring organizational financial stability and long-term sustainability. Frank suggested that "in the not so distance future," the USU will need to examine its current operating fee to determine whether "it continues to be sufficiently adequate to take care of what [the USU] projects to be the long term expenses." With facilities to maintain, salaries to pay, programming expenditures to cover, and capital investments to fund, union governing boards and management staff are tasked with a high-level of fiscal responsibility. Whether from raising student fees or increased revenue-seeking from external parties, there is usually a persistent belief in more – more funds to do more programs, to offer more services, and to be more responsive to campus needs.
USU Strategic Priorities

Student unions are a mix of service, program, resource, retail, dining, meeting, lounge, and recreational space. They are often ephemeral places that manifest current social, cultural, and political trends. The balance among the different types of space and their configurations usually reflect contemporary needs and desires, and it is up to union overseers to voice and vote on what those are. Whatever is within the union is usually the result of a small group of people making decisions that suit the time. Sometimes the resolutions are mundane, sometimes they are controversial. The decision-making process may often be influenced by factors such as financial considerations, industry best practices, mass media, perceived competition, campus climate, or personal beliefs. While the outcomes can have deep significance for varying communities and regardless of the driving motivation, it is the responsibility of the governing board to understand the stakes involved and thoroughly engage the matter at hand.

Akin to a Tetris puzzle where pieces can fit and cohere in multiple ways, student union space is a flexible and valuable commodity and changes can be quick. Elise likened space within the USU to that of an "apartment complex," explaining that "if we have a space for you, you can come in if you want it and apply for it. We can either not give it to you or we can." The ability to allocate space is a powerful tool for shaping a campus environment and when one's board or management role involves making decisions about space, there can be an elevated awareness of the message being communicated to the campus. Many CSUN participants cited "welcoming," "inclusion," "open," and "safe zone" as what they believed space within the USU should convey.

Space decisions usually involve student union governing boards in a multiple-step process. Using Elise's "apartment complex" analogy, groups must first submit their "application"
and present their case for wanting space at a committee meeting. Depending on the discussion that ensues, the issue will either move to a vote or be tabled for further study. If the committee votes to approve the particular space allocation, the item will then be placed on the agenda at the next board meeting for a full board vote. If the item is also approved at a board meeting, it is then the responsibility of management to carry out the logistics of preparing, and if need be, transforming the space for lease to the new group.

Decisions about available space at the USU during the time of data collection demonstrated its new strategic direction. As leases for tenants such as Sam's Clothing, Digital +1 Hour Photo, and Cellular Flux expired, Natasha explained that the USU is "starting to move from more of a retail tenant base to more of a student services base." This move was partially a response to diminished demand for retail services such as photo finishing and cell phones due in part to the rise of e-commerce, as well as an effort to support requests from student groups. Two decisions in particular by the USU BOD during the 2010-11 year to offer space for an LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) center and a veterans resource center reflect the sentiments of inclusivity and align with the move toward student services. The proposals originated as discussion items in the 8 November 2010 and 29 November 2010 Facilities and Commercial Services Committee (F&CSC) meetings, respectively. With supportive initial response from the committee and additional study by management, the proposals then returned as action items at the 28 March 2011 F&CSC meeting and were both unanimously approved at the committee level. The space allocations were then approved by the full board at the 25 April 2011 USU BOD meeting. Participants spoke positively about the process and were pleased by the show of campus support for these two projects. For example, Jake recalled that "it was really

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9 Depending on the governance structure, the proposal may be discussed multiple times at different committees (e.g., at a services committee that will examine the proposal from a programmatic perspective and at a finance committee that will evaluate the financial feasibility, and if need be, the return on investment of the proposal).
a great meeting. So many students came up and spoke in front of the board and expressed in
sometimes very poignant ways how important these initiatives were to them personally and as a
community in some cases." As Dolores noted, the USU wants "to promote an area and an
environment where people feel free to come in and participate." The affirmative board decisions
to move forward with spaces that would accommodate underserved populations and offer
resources and support is an indication that the voices of the LGBTQ and veterans' communities
had been heard by those with decision-making authority at the USU. The Pride Center opened in
August 2012 and the Veterans Resource Center opened in September 2012.

Not all requests move smoothly through the pipeline. During the 2010-11 year, the USU
also considered a proposal for gender-neutral bathrooms that produced strong debate and resulted
in lack of forward board movement. The proposition met with divergent perspectives that
included considerations for various groups, such as wanting to be supportive of the LGBTQ
community but not wanting to engender discomfort for the religious communities of Muslims
and Orthodox Jews. The discussions on the subject also illustrated the typical service versus
finance seesaw that overseers must balance for all decisions. For example, Elise explained that
while she also needed to see the "numbers" including costs and surveys of how many students
beyond the requesting group actually wanted to see this happen, her initial inclination was to say,
"This is a social change that we need to make. Let's try to be the game changers, let's try to show
the campus that [the USU] is inclusive in this way." Alternatively, Tom was more hesitant and
concerned about financial liability. He wondered if "something could happen inside the
restroom" that would lead to the USU being sued, in which case it would need to "create a
contingency account for any liability that may come up later" that would be cost-prohibitive.
After a review of options for implementation and much discussion, the proposal did not have
sufficient board support to pass. According to F&CSC minutes from 31 January 2011, the issue was sent back to committee for further research on "ADA accessibility [Americans with Disabilities Act], clearer information on multi- versus single-stall facilities, a brief review of any legal considerations, estimations on how many students are likely to be impacted, and greater clarification on likely costs." Throughout the process, Charlie stated that he was pleased the USU BOD was able to "substantively discuss [the gender-neutral bathroom proposal] without getting on a soapbox and taking extreme positions." Randall also had an instructive outlook, noting that "at the end of it a person said, 'it was absolutely the right thing to do, to bring this issue and awareness to the students on our campus,' and it got press in Sundial, our student newspaper, so even though it didn't have the exact outcome that the [petitioner] wanted, it was a process that I think she felt was valuable."

The USU at CSUN is a self-supporting, fee-funded facility that strives to meet the needs of the campus community through its main and satellite facilities. The strong connection to the student affairs department, the USU BOD's belief in servant leadership, and the current priority of shifting away from retail space towards resource centers suggests it is a union focused more on programming and services rather than on commercial opportunities. However, the desire to seek donor and corporate partnerships also suggests that it is moving in the direction of student affairs capitalism. Even so, the USU participants' account of the meaningful discussions that arose at meetings regarding the resource centers and gender neutral bathrooms indicates that the USU BOD also prioritizes socially and culturally important issues and seeks to address them in consequential ways.
California State University, Fullerton

Located in North Orange County, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) is also a four-year, public university in the CSU system. It boasted a fall 2013 enrollment of 38,325 students. Undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2013-14 academic year was $6,186, of which $268 was the Campus Union Fee. CSUF has four auxiliary units: Associated Students, California State University, Fullerton, Inc. (ASI), Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation, CSU Fullerton Auxiliary Services Corporation, and CSU Fullerton Housing Authority. Unlike the USU at CSUN, CSUF's Titan Student Union is not incorporated as its own separate auxiliary but rather is a unit within ASI.

TSC Organizational Structure

First opened in 1976 as the University Center and later renamed in 1992 as the Titan Student Union after an expansion project that approximately doubled its original size, the Titan Student Union is a typical building consisting of student organization offices, study lounges, a food court, and conference center. The Titan Student Union and the Student Recreation Center, which opened in 2008, are "collectively a unit" of ASI. These two facilities, along with satellite operations at the CSUF Irvine Branch Campus and the Irvine Campus Fitness Center, which opened in 2011, are referred to as a group as the Titan Student Centers (TSC). The TSC organization is divided into five main units: Building Engineering, Titan Student Union, Titan Recreation, Program & Student Support, and Administration.

When the student recreation center opened, the Titan Student Union governing board undertook a review of its organizational structure and governance model. Rebecca explained that "the challenge was we had just built the brand new student recreation center and we wanted students to understand that these buildings were both being funded by their Associated Students
fees, and we wanted [students] to see them kind of as one building." She noted that prior to the restructuring, it "was very confusing for students to be able to understand that the Titan Student Union had anything to do with the student recreation center." In an effort to streamline the programmatic connection between the two facilities, the board revised its charter and bylaws to more clearly articulate the operations as a "collective unit" and reorganized under the umbrella TSC banner. The intent was to also emphasize with greater clarity that the TSC governing board provides oversight and direction to the Titan Student Union and the Student Recreation Center.

The TSC is one functional unit in a portfolio administered by ASI that includes student government, a Children's Center, and myriad programs and services. Although ASI is an incorporated auxiliary, it is also considered a department in the Division of Student Affairs. Administratively, the TSC is headed by a director who reports to the ASI executive director who then reports to the vice president of student affairs. While there appears to be an additional reporting layer between TSC and student affairs, as compared to, for example, the organizational structure at CSUN, the relationship to student affairs is no less significant. Indeed, as stipulated in the TSC charter and bylaws: "The TSC Director works closely with the ASI Executive Director, the Dean of Students and the Vice President of Student Affairs to assure the relationship the Titan Student Centers has to the educational program of the University."

**TSC Governance Structure**

At CSUF, the TSC is overseen by a student-majority Governing Board (TSC GB) composed of the usual university constituents found on most student union governing boards. There are 23 voting and non-voting members. The 14 voting members include the ASI president or designee, the ASI board of directors chair or designee, seven students-at-large, one residence hall representative, two faculty representatives, one alumni representative, and one university
presidential appointee. The nine non-voting members (or their designees) include two alternate students-at-large, the vice president for student affairs, the university chief financial officer, the TSC director, the ASI executive director, the ASI leader and program development director, the Titan recreation director, and the Titan Student Union associate director. The TSC GB participates in selecting the TSC director. The officers of the TSC GB are the chair, vice chair for planning, and vice chair for services. Though the charter and bylaws do not stipulate that the officers must be student members, in practice they are.

The members of the TSC GB are appointed or serve by virtue of their offices. Unlike the USU BOD at CSUN, whose students are directly elected by the student body, the at-large student members of the board are appointed by the TSC GB (see Table 3 for structural differences). Students interested in serving on the board submit an application to the TSC GB and are thereafter appointed to vacant at-large positions and serve one- or two-year terms. The other student members serve by virtue of their offices for their respective terms. The university members are chosen by their respective bodies. The academic senate appoints the faculty representatives for two-year terms, the alumni affairs department appoints the alumni representative for a one-year term, and the university presidential appointee serves a one-year term. The other university members and ASI staff serve by virtue of their offices.

Of the campuses in this study, CSUF has the largest governing board for its student union operations. Despite its large composition, the TSC GB is a sub-board within the larger ASI auxiliary. Overseeing the TSC GB and the rest of ASI operations is the 25-member ASI board of directors comprising 18 voting members and seven officers. The overlap in membership of the ASI board chair serving also as a voting member on the TSC GB can sometimes lead to problematic circumstances. Steve commented that in instances where the ASI board chair desires
a specific action be taken, it becomes "a little political when you have the [ASI] chair who wants it and then [the TSC GB] as a sub-board has to report to [the ASI board]...you have to balance that little bit of political-ness." While the ASI board of directors is the overarching governing body and has official budget approval for the TSC, it has delegated authority to the TSC GB for developing and adopting operating policies for the facilities and programs that make up the TSC.

Members of the TSC GB serve on one or more of its four standing committees: planning, services, food advisory, and art acquisition. According to the TSC GB charter and bylaws, the planning committee oversees the budget, allocation of space, and future projects. The services committee oversees the TSC hours of operations, policies, and services/programs. The food advisory committee is unique in that it is not solely a TSC GB committee, but rather it is a university-wide committee that includes members of the TSC GB. This committee is responsible for providing recommendations to the food services director regarding campus food service policies as well as constructive criticism about service quality, menu pricing and variety, cleanliness, and customer service. The art acquisition committee obtains student art for display in the TSC.

Student union governing boards across campuses share similar oversight duties. Comparable to the USU BOD, the TSC GB is also responsible for both union facilities and a new 95,000 square foot state-of-the art recreation center. Its duties also include establishing operating policies, ensuring appropriate accounting and auditing procedures, and preparing an annual budget. At the same time that there are equivalences in scope, there are also differences in the focus given to the board's role. While the USU BOD's "Living the Matador Life" call to board service highlighted its multi-million dollar operation, the TSC GB's purpose, as articulated in the charter and bylaws, underscores its role in bridging connections and personal development:
The purpose of this Governing Board is to establish policies which will assure that the Titan Student Centers are a unifying force between students, faculty, and staff; campus centers for social, cultural, fitness, recreational and intellectual activities and services; places to provide further opportunities to broaden and strengthen interpersonal relationships and self-enhancement within a large urban university; and to provide experience in self-government and civic responsibility.

In addition to gains in interpersonal connections and personal development, service on union governing boards also foster professional development and offer a window into the multifaceted dynamics of overseeing a large organization. In essence, it provides an extracurricular and practical business education. Jeff noted that even the logistical matters of "how meetings should be run, the kind of procedural rules that occur on this sort of board" offers "really good preparation for...people who are going to be involved in settings where they're making big decisions about the future of a business or an organization." Lucy likewise concurred that being on the TSC GB shows her that "if I'm ever going to [be] a manager, if I'm ever going to be a CEO or something like that, a lot goes into it" and so whether it concerns "food or computers...[or] cleaning them and all the jobs that go into the student union" there is a tremendous amount of planning involved.

**TSC Revenue Structure**

Similar to the USU at CSUN, the TSC is a predominantly fee-funded operation. According to its 2012-13 audit report, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013, $6.33 million of its $7.95 million total revenue came from student fees (79.6 percent). The remaining revenue came from rent and dining commissions, ASI fee allocation, interest income, and general revenue from the TSU and student recreation center operations. For fiscal year 2012-13,
expenses totaled $7.82 million, giving TSC an increase in net assets of $128,855. At year's end, TSC had a cash total of $3.63 million (see Table 4 for exact figures).

The centrality of food services within the student union is also apparent at the CSUF campus. Similar to the structure at CSUN, the food service operations at CSUF are managed by a separate auxiliary unit, the CSUF Auxiliary Services Corporation (ASC). The 2013-14 TSC budget narrative stipulates that in the overall campus dining program, approximately 50% of the food service operations are within the Titan Student Union. The ASC pays rent, utilities expenses, and commission to the TSC. Rebecca described the relationship as a "strong partnership" with respect to the revenue sharing, but also noted that despite having a food advisory committee, oversight of dining options within TSC is an area where "student voice has the least input." Charlotte, however, had a different perspective and stated that the food advisory committee "helps to shape and have a voice as to the concepts [the TSC GB] wants to see [and]...the bottom line is, if the board does not want to lease out that space then they don't have to. They can decide, 'No, absolutely not.' They have the final say in what's going in [the food court]." According to TSC financial statements, receivables from ASC to TSC totaled $20,056 and $23,454 for the fiscal year end 2012 and 2013, respectively.

In primarily fee-funded structures, student union governing board members are often challenged with responding to inquiries or justifying decisions about where and how student fees are spent. This is particularly heightened during financially unstable times. At the time of the interviews for this study (summer 2011), the United States was in the midst of grappling with and recovering from the Great Recession. Many participants spoke about being good stewards of fee revenue within the shroud of financially challenging times, so there appeared to be a conservatism to their responses that may or may not be as salient during financially prosperous
periods. For example, Charlotte stated that the TSC GB takes discussions of spending very seriously and is "very conscious of using fees wisely. If we're talking about getting a sign replaced and that sign is going to be $2,000, [we] will talk about spending that $2,000 until it's beating a dead horse." Anthony indicated that the TSC GB was focused "on being transparent with our spending of the students' money, that [students] know where our money's going, that they can pretty much approve of the purchases that we make." He also noted that the TSC GB had "started looking at ways to make that public, whether that was maybe pie charts that showed the breakdown of fees into specific areas. That way students who were conscious of their money and conscious of what the student union was spending on could actually go in and see, 'OK, this is where my money's going'." Given the reliance on student fees, there tends to be a desire for governing boards to convey thoughtful and sound oversight of financial decisions.

As auxiliaries, organizations such as USU and ASI enjoy a degree of independence from general university finances and therefore they are able to respond to the community they serve in timely ways. For example, around the time of data collection for this study, there had been significant state funding cuts to public higher education in California. CSUF had been hit with a $625 million reduction over the 2008-09 and 2009-10 academic years (Barron-Lopez, 2010). Among the impacts of these cuts were reductions to library hours and services that angered many students. In response, the TSC GB was able to step in and offer an alternative. Jeff stated that "leading up to the exam week, [Titan Student Union] will start opening more and that obviously costs more money to keep it open. The students may not be thinking about that who are using it, but the [TSC GB] has thought about it and voted on opening it and spending extra money so that there's a place for everyone to study when they're kind of stressed out and getting ready for exams." At the same time, without an understanding of the complexities of university funding
streams, this action also led some to question university spending priorities. Steve explained that "students don't understand why our facilities are open until – sometimes our union is open until 2am for late night study – but the library closes at 9. Students don't necessarily understand that our union and our facilities are run by a different fee.... They just think of everything as one university but it's not necessarily true like that." Rebecca concurred:

We had a lot of upset, aggravated students because they didn't understand that the funds that were keeping the library open were very different than the monies we were using to fund the Titan Student Union and student recreation center and we really wanted students to know that we were fighting for them and that by extending the hours – we could extend the hours for the Titan Student Union and the student recreation center, but we did not have the power to extend the hours to the library – it was really important for us.

For boards with direct decision-making authority, being able to leverage spending in order to address immediate campus priorities is a valuable privilege.

**TSC Strategic Priorities**

The student unions at CSUN and CSUF are multi-million dollar organizations encompassing hundreds of thousands of square feet. Incorporated into the budgets of these types of large-scale operations are capital expenditures for maintaining and upgrading facilities. They may be routine allocations for line items such as mechanical systems replacement or grounds keeping or they may be considerable capital investments for expansion purposes. The TSC is currently in the midst of planning for a $20 million modernization and expansion of its main Titan Student Union facility. According to the 2013-14 budget narrative, it is a two-phase project with $4.5 million allotted for an overhaul of its heating, ventilation, and cooling systems (HVAC) and $15.5 million for renovation to existing areas and an addition of 17,000 square feet.
Jack noted a trend of seeing student unions and student recreation centers "getting bigger and bigger," but indicated that it is mostly demand driven. For the TSC, Jack stated that "we could expand another pavilion so that we could have even larger events on campus because there's a lot of events that are off in larger hotels because they can't accommodate them here. I mean there's reasons that you could build them. But on the flip side, that's very costly to do."

Large-scale plans for growing union facilities are often funded, at least partially, through increases in student fees (e.g., as was the case at CSUN). Although funding for the TSC project is from its existing reserves, money Rebecca stated the organization had "saved up" over the years, Jessica also noted that in May 2012, the TSC GB and ASI board of directors "approved to ask the [CSUF Student] Fee Advisory Committee if we can put out a referendum asking students to consider adding $30 per semester to the student union fee." Minutes from a subsequent January 2013 TSC GB meeting noted that the university committee did not approve the request and so plans for a fee referendum were dropped. However, future boards may revisit the issue of a fee increase if circumstances warranted it as project planning and implementation progressed.

In addition to the long-range expansion plan and renovation of its facilities to align with 21st century aesthetic and functional sensibilities, the TSC GB has also embarked on a re-focusing of its identity. Marketing discourse including the notion of branding and building brand equity has become so widespread since the late 20th century at colleges and universities (Anctil, 2008; Toma, Dubrow, & Hartley, 2005) that it has also trickled to the governance of student unions. The recent restructuring that brought together the various student union facilities under the broader banner of "Titan Student Centers" was a plan to streamline governance and unify the organizational identity of the Titan Student Union, the student recreation center, and the Irvine campus facility as one entity. That effort also generated a discussion about the TSC brand and

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collegiate branding. Minutes from a 4 May 2011 board meeting indicated that the TSC GB approved a "TSC Long-Term Marketing Campaign" that would "focus on branding the TSC concept" and incorporate a "consistency in the look and feel within the TSC facilities." The campaign would also strive to brand TSC space as a "commercial living room like setting in the public space, where catering and entertainment aren't the main attraction, but are there to facilitate out of home, out of office activities like watching a movie, reading a book, meeting friends and colleagues, and so on." It is also to be a space that is "accommodating consumers outside the home and office becoming a relevant and useful part of their daily lives offering them surprise discovery, empathy and transformation; a place to lounge, hang out, try things out, work or relax." While the Titan Student Union has functioned as extracurricular gathering space since it opened in 1972, the understanding of such a purpose appears now to be subsumed by branding and marketing rhetoric.

The potential future acquisition of property was another latent reason for re-branding the facilities as the TSC. With rapid changes in the textbook market brought about by technological advances including the advent of electronic resources and online competition, many campuses have sought to re-envision their bookstores (Young, 2010). Anthony stated that the TSC GB has talked about what would happen with the CSUF bookstore, which is located next to the Titan Student Union:

There was a point where there was conversation that it might move, it might be in a different location, it might be offered in a different way to students in general, and so if that building were to become vacant, we wanted to be able to take that over...and we didn't want students to say, "hey, I'm going to the Titan Student Union" and the other person go, "OK, so the one with the bowling alley, right?" "Oh, no, the other building."
We felt that if we could go with Titan Student Centers, looking into the future with growth, with space, with acreage all around, students would be able to recognize an area on the campus that was geared towards Titan students, that was geared towards the Titan community.

As Anthony further explained, the logic was that by calling all the facilities "student centers," there would be "more of a subliminal message," particularly when paired with "having different colored tiling or different transitions [in a similar design] so that as people walk from building to building, they could go, 'OK, I'm still part of the student union. I still see the connection'." The intention was to have an aesthetic plan and unified name in place to not only streamline current operations but to facilitate any future additions such as incorporating the bookstore space into the TSC portfolio.

The TSC branding priorities also sought to encompass the larger CSUF identity. Steve lamented that "when you enter our facilities, there isn't anything that really screams Cal State Fullerton. You don't get that spirit and pride anywhere in our facilities." In discussions about a marketing campaign from a 4 May 2011 board meeting, the TSC GB determined that "students wanted a collegiate experience that featured the University's colors and historical elements that were relatable." The branding effort included installing wall murals in the Titan Student Union and student recreation center that would evoke a sense of school pride, additions that Steve enthusiastically endorsed. Jessica stated that simple things such as "painting the walls our school colors (white and blue, orange for athletics) or making banners or logos that could withstand time" were accomplishments to celebrate. Charlotte also appreciated the "transformation over the past couple of years" and spoke positively about the TSC "becoming more Titan-pride filled."

She felt that the TSC is "shifting from a place – this sounds bad – but kind of boring to lively. It's
shifting to a welcoming environment and somewhere where you can walk in and see the 
university seal on the wall and...you feel a part of the Titan family or a part of the Titan network, 
other than entering another building." With expansion plans moving forward, developing a brand 
awareness about the student union, particularly for a commuter campus such as CSUF, was 
something TSC participants believed was necessary to rally support for an expensive 
remodeling. The expectation is that the capital investment of expanding the facilities and 
becoming a larger footprint – structurally, socially, and cognitively – would also enliven the 
campus atmosphere and foster a stronger sense of Titan community and identity.

With its assembly of TSC facilities, there is a strong desire for the TSC GB to create a 
sense of unity and cohesion. The focus seems to be on the user experience as well as a branded 
consideration of what the TSC facilities communicate via name and design. The TSC GB’s 
decision to lengthen TSC operating hours in an effort to offer alternative study space due to 
library budget restraints also demonstrates there is a strong belief in supporting the CSUF 
community of students during challenging times. With a $20 million capital project in 
development, the TSC also appears poised to claim a larger campus footprint, thereby 
intensifying the expansion of campus consumption amenities but also addressing demand for use 
of TSC space and modernizing the user experience.

**University of California, Los Angeles**

Located in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, University of California, Los 
Angeles (UCLA) is a four-year, public university in the UC system. It had a fall 2013 enrollment 
of 42,190 students. Undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2013-14 academic year was $14,227, 
of which $60 was the Ackerman Student Union Fee. The student union at UCLA is operated and

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10 UCLA includes medical interns and residents (1,395) in its total enrollment figure.
governed by Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA). The historical roots of ASUCLA are grounded with the university's official origins in 1919, an era where the university embraced a hands-off approach to anything other than its role in the classroom. In turn, students formed an association to address various student needs and services. ASUCLA's first endeavors dating back to 1919 included running a student bookstore and food services. In its early history, ASUCLA was also responsible for parking services and intercollegiate athletics until those departments were transferred to the university in 1956 and 1960, respectively. Kerckhoff Hall, UCLA's first student union building opened in 1931, and Ackerman Union, opened in 1961, are the two main student union facilities. In addition to various restaurants, cafés, and stores located throughout various campus buildings that are operated by ASUCLA, there are also satellite student union facilities across campus including the North Campus Student Center, the Court of Sciences Student Center, and LuValle Commons.

ASUCLA Organizational Structure

Billing itself on its website (http://asucla.ucla.edu) as "the nation's largest student association," ASUCLA is an unincorporated, non-profit association consisting of four separate entities: Services & Enterprises (S&E), Undergraduate Students Association (USA), Graduate Students Association (GSA), and Student Media. Each of these entities is governed by its own constitution, bylaws, and oversight authority. Although the four distinct parts make up the whole of ASUCLA, a 2004 report to the Chancellor regarding the association indicated that "most on campus use 'ASUCLA' when the actual intent is to refer only to the Services and Enterprises Division." The other entities are known by their own abbreviations (e.g., USA, GSA). Since the student union facilities and various commercial ventures at UCLA fall under the purview of
S&E, it is the entity of relevance for this study. In keeping with the campus shorthand, I use ASUCLA to refer solely to the structures and strategic priorities of the S&E division.

ASUCLA is a commercial services operation overseen by a student-majority board that generates over $65 million in annual sales revenue. Justin described ASUCLA as "several different businesses" and indeed there are five primary divisions: 1) UCLA Store, 2) UCLA Restaurants, which includes self-operated and third-party operated food services and catering, 3) Services Division, which includes trademarks and licensing, leased operations, and UCLA Photography, 4) UCLA Student Union, and 5) Administrative and Support Services (A&SS). Unlike at CSUN and CSUF where auxiliaries separate from the student union manage campus commercial operations such as the bookstore and dining facilities, ASUCLA directly owns and operates the campus store(s) as well as directly manages or oversees many of the food services on campus. It is also distinct for having direct control over the university's trademarks and licensing program, a responsibility often housed within the athletics department or other high level administrative units such as business affairs.

Many participants often referred to the unique structure of ASUCLA. According to Gabriel, ASUCLA is "considered an independent body" and is recognized for "being one of the last, if not the last, kind of student-run organizations at this kind of level with its magnitude." Susie similarly noted that ASUCLA "encompasses more than a lot of other student unions do and it's one of the few that continues to be by students and for students." Further, unlike the reporting requirements that are specified for the USU executive director and the TSC director in their respective bylaws, the ASUCLA executive director does not have a constitutionally stipulated relationship with university administrators. The matter of independence was a strong theme and source of pride that resonated throughout the organization. For example, Sharon stated that in
discussions about the future of ASUCLA: "We talked about it different ways, but in the end we also talked about the number one goal for us, absolute top priority – it's coupled with the fiduciary responsibility – is to keep us independent." Justin concurred that "the fact that we had this pretty unique structure and been able to keep that going for so long was really important."

Although ASUCLA continues to operate as a primarily autonomous enterprise today, it has faced three significant challenges to its independence and student control in its nearly 100 year existence. The first took place in 1933 when students voted to yield financial authority and management to university administrators in exchange for a loan to cover deficits accumulating since 1928 (Ackerman, 1969; Johnson, 1948). The terms for financial assistance from the university also stipulated the creation of a seven-member Board of Control composed of the student body president, two other students, two faculty, one alumnus, and the university assistant comptroller who maintained veto authority over all financial decisions.11 ASUCLA returned to financial solvency in 1940. In 1949, the university agreed to eliminate its veto power and cede financial management to the Board of Control, thereby enabling ASUCLA to reclaim its independence. ASUCLA would regain its student-majority governance in 1956.

The second challenge occurred in the early 1970s when the Regents of the University of California passed a resolution in May 1972 to integrate ASUCLA and other Associated Students in the UC system into the administrative framework of their respective universities. ASUCLA retained legal counsel to fight the action and through the eventual development of the "1974 Statement of Understanding of ASUCLA Relationships with the University," (SOU) it was able to maintain "maximum feasible operating and decision-making freedom" whilst also

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11 The 1922 and 1923 university yearbooks recorded the existence of a three-member Board of Control composed of the student body president and two other members, possibly another student and one faculty member. The 1924 yearbook indicated that a Finance Board had replaced the Board of Control. The 1941 yearbook referred to the Board of Control established in 1933 as having replaced the Student Finance Committee.
acknowledging its interdependence to the university. The SOU also restored veto power and assigned it to the university chancellor, though any veto would be limited only to any action inconsistent with the terms of the document.

The mid-1990s brought a third period of turmoil for ASUCLA and arose from the confluence of a sharp decline in revenue, required and costly seismic upgrades, and an expensive building renovation and expansion. Faced again with insolvency and significant ongoing capital needs, ASUCLA accepted a $20 million loan from the university with strings attached. The "1996 Advance Agreement" for the loan imposed a number of structural changes to ASUCLA's governance and financial oversight, including the removal of the two undergraduate student association and graduate student association presidents from the Board of Control and the adoption of an annual budget and five-year forecast subject to the Chancellor's approval. In spite of the multiple challenges and with recognition that there is a symbiotic relationship with the university, ASUCLA has maintained its essential character as a sovereign, self-sufficient, student-majority governed operation since its inception nearly a century ago.

Unlike the student union auxiliaries at CSUN and CSUF, which are also considered departments in their respective universities' student affairs divisions, ASUCLA is not (see Table 3 for structural differences). While there are no direct reporting requirements between ASUCLA and student affairs, members of ASUCLA do meet each academic quarter through its Joint Operating Committee (JOC) with high-level university administrators including the vice chancellor of student affairs, the administrative vice chancellor, and the chief financial officer. The JOC meetings were implemented as a condition of the 1996 advance agreement. An organizational chart on UCLA's student affairs website (http://www.studentaffairs.ucla.edu) also
indicates there is a dotted line relationship between ASUCLA and the vice chancellor of student affairs.

Despite the dotted line and efforts by university administration, both in the past and currently, to create tighter coupling to the university (Weick, 1976), participants often stressed that ASUCLA's autonomy and independence are at the core of its identity and operations. Sharon noted that this has allowed ASUCLA to "change things more quickly and in more positive ways without that kind of stuck-ness, without that kind of torpor" that mires universities. At the same time, Gabriel noted that ASUCLA "takes the responsibility of working collaboratively within [its] environment seriously" and believed that "every decision that was made was filtered through a lens of how can this better the overall campus environment...and oftentimes it was a decision that was made not just based on the union itself, but really the interaction and interplay with what's going on in the main campus." Certainly ASUCLA would and could not exist without UCLA, and though its organizational structure is, according to Alan, "not necessarily the norm or even the model," it works for them and "the thing that's really good about it here is that the students really have the power with it and I think that's something to be emulated."

**ASUCLA Governance Structure**

Similar to the USU at CSUN and the TSC at CSUF, ASUCLA is overseen by a student-majority Board of Directors (ASUCLA BOD). This is the renamed governing body formerly known as the Board of Control. The ASUCLA BOD is composed of 14 members: four undergraduate students, four graduate students, two alumni, two administrators, one faculty member, and the executive director. Of the 14, only 10 are regular voting members. The executive director does not have a vote, and three members – one each from the undergraduate, graduate, and alumni representatives – serve as alternates and vote at board meetings only in the
absence of a regular voting member from their constituency. The alternates have full voting
privileges when serving on any standing or ad hoc committees. The officers of the board include
the chair, vice chair, and secretary. The chair and vice chair positions alternate between a regular
undergraduate and regular graduate student member of the board; each serves half a year before
switching. The secretary is a regular non-student member.

The members of the ASUCLA BOD are appointed by their respective representative bodies. Specifically, undergraduates are appointed by USA, graduates by GSA, alumni by the
UCLA Alumni Association, administrators by the chancellor, and the faculty member by the
academic senate. Students and alumni members serve two-year terms and administrative and
faculty members serve three-year terms. Oftentimes, graduate student, administrative, and
alumni members of the board may be reappointed for multiple terms and as such some members
may serve 4-6 years and on rare occasions even more than a decade. This has the benefit of
allowing for governance stability because as Jonathan noted for many board members, "your first
year, you're barely getting used to it and you're figuring out your actual roles and which are
realistic and which are not...so the first year, it goes a little fast because there are a lot of things
to grasp." The comfort and knowledge of what serving on a board entails increase in subsequent
years.

Members of the ASUCLA BOD serve on four standing committees: executive, finance,
personnel, and services (see Table 3 for a brief overview of the structural differences at each
campus). According to the ASUCLA bylaws, the executive committee acts in place of the board
as needed between board meetings and consults with the executive director as requested. The
executive committee also serves as the board nominating committee and board conduct
committee. The finance committee reviews budgets and financial statements, selects the auditor
and reviews the audit report, and reviews expenditures exceeding certain thresholds. The personnel committee manages the executive director's annual evaluation, reviews the bonus/incentive compensation policy, and negotiates renewals and/or amendments to the executive director's contract with prior approval from the board. The services committee is responsible for reviewing policies, programs, and space allocations pertaining to the use, planning, and construction of ASUCLA facilities. The committee also reviews the services offered by ASUCLA and recommends new ones and/or changes to or elimination of existing ones. Finally, the services committee is responsible for carrying out the association's policy on social responsibility and policy on sustainability. After the various committees review items as delegated, all recommended actions are forwarded to the full board for its response.

The governing power of the ASUCLA BOD is codified in its constitution. AJ summarized it as falling into three overarching areas of oversight: "Number one, make sure that [ASUCLA] is making the money. Number two, make sure that [it is] following university rules. And number three is to make sure that it's providing a good environment for students." With respect to its governance ethos, there is a strong emphasis on the legal duty to act in the best interest of the association and the students it serves. As Alan explained, "One of the very first things we learn when we get on the board is a general understanding of what our role is as a board member, what responsibilities we have, what power we have and what we don't have, and what it means to have a fiduciary responsibility to [ASUCLA] above really anything else that you are doing." Julia similarly noted that "you're there as a representative, you're not there for your own personal interests. It's a constant reminder you have to give yourself." While Kevin suggested that being entrusted in a position to "make the best decisions for [students]" can come across as "kind of paternalistic," that is what being a fiduciary requires.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Department</th>
<th>Year of Inception</th>
<th>Governing Body</th>
<th>Voting Members</th>
<th>Seating of Board</th>
<th>Standing Committees</th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Primary Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSUN</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>USU BOD</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Elected or Appointed</td>
<td>Audit Facilities and Commercial Services Finance Personnel Retirement Plan</td>
<td>(5) Chair Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer</td>
<td>Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSUF</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>TSC GB</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Planning Services Food Advisory Art Acquisition</td>
<td>(4) Chair for Planning Vice Chair for Services</td>
<td>Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>ASUCLA BOD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Executive Finance Personnel Services</td>
<td>(3) Chair Vice Chair Secretary</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For those who do not have prior experience with serving on a board for a commercial, albeit non-profit, enterprise, being attentive to the business aspects of governance can be a pressure that can sometimes lead to tensions between the student members of the board and the non-student members and/or management staff. As Jonathan stated, "Unfortunately, you can't just shout out and say, 'We should do this, this, and this.' You have to plan ahead, think about it. It's the business side of it, and that's what a student needs to get accustomed to when they come in and most of [them] don't have a business education or [know] how to run a company." Ray suggested that "sometimes in running a $75 million a year corporation, it behooves the board to have a breadth of knowledge and a scope of experience" that the non-student members have. While those less familiar with board service or business savvy may not have a wealth of understanding, AJ stated that management staff "babied it down" and "made it seem very easy for [students] to make the decisions, say yes or no." Although it was "simplified" and "explained pretty well," he also noted that it was important to "make sure that whatever [was] being told is the right stuff" to ensure that the ASUCLA BOD was not "just saying yes to everything."

The mix of experience levels, backgrounds, and constituent interests of those who oversee ASUCLA operations, services, and finances can be beneficial for assuring the fiduciary duty of loyalty and care beyond business concerns. Sharon declared:

I think in the past people always thought that this is perfect for people who do econ or just business. And it's like, "Actually, no." That is not the case because, in fact, it's the large range of issues, it's actually you've got to have someone who can see in a very 360 way about these things, if that make sense, and not necessarily the people who are in econ or who have their [business administration degrees] are necessarily the people who are the right people for this work.
As a governing body, Sarah asserted the board's figurative powers: "Symbolically, I think the board plays a large role in shaping the student union because I think it exists almost as – I can't think of a nicer way to word this – but forcing function for management to really remember that they need to think about student needs." Susie emphasized that "by having the students in charge, you ensure that the values of the students are well-represented" and in return "the students also learn a tremendous amount about what it means to have to be a decision-maker, that when somebody makes a decision that isn't the one that you want, it's not because they're bad and evil, it's because they had to balance other perspectives." Though there may be internal tensions at times between the different constituents that govern and manage ASUCLA, the weight of fiduciary obligation combined with a long history of it being an independent, student-run organization has enabled it to be, as Sharon stated, "more nimble" and to "actually get things done faster" than if ASUCLA were more entwined with the bureaucracy of the university.

A final feature about the governance structure of ASUCLA is the formidable impact that organized individuals or groups can have on the association's business operations. ASUCLA's direct management of commercial activities, such as food service and the campus store, renders it open to being petitioned for specific action by various lobbying groups. The association has a Policy on Social Responsibility (PSR) stipulating that any UCLA community member may bring forth a PSR item at a services committee meeting. The policy also outlines the process in which the committee and the board will address the PSR issue. In the recent past, student activists have brought to the board's attention issues concerning workers' rights and unfair labor practices of vendors doing business with ASUCLA. Several participants referenced the times that the ASUCLA BOD voted to terminate its food service contract with Taco Bell (October 2004) and to not renew its apparel licensing contract with Russell Athletic (April 2009). Justin suggested
that a reason why student activist groups will bring forth an issue is because the ASUCLA BOD is "actually accessible," as opposed, for example, to getting a meeting with the chancellor. He also noted that since the students involved in campus activism are members of multiple student organizations, various groups "know that the [PSR] process is available to them" and so it is an "appealing route" to take. While it may be the case that strong student activism can influence ASUCLA operations, the decisions appear to be short-lived. Taco Bell returned to the campus in September 2005 and minutes from a July 2010 board meeting publicly acknowledge that the licensing relationship with Russell was renewed. However, it is also possible the action taken by ASUCLA fostered more responsible conduct by the companies. The Taco Bell and Russell Athletic controversies are relevant to the critical pedagogy of consumption framework of this study and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

**ASUCLA Revenue Structure**

Since its inception, ASUCLA has been a predominantly self-supporting association. Unlike its fee-funded peers USU and TSC, ASUCLA operates nearly entirely on a revenue-based structure. Until a student referendum passed in Spring 2005, ASUCLA's student union fee had been $7.50. The referendum approved a $12 annual increase in the fee until it reached $55.50 in 2009-10. Thereafter, the fee adjusts for inflation every three years and currently stands at $60. According to the association's 2012-13 audit report, for the fiscal year ended July 31, 2013, ASUCLA reported $71.41 million total revenues and other income and $71.35 million total expenses and interest expense, resulting in an increase in net assets of $58,400. Notes in the audit report stated that $2.9 million of student fees were recognized as other income which amounted

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12 Contract approvals are done in executive sessions and proceedings are not publicly disclosed, so it is unclear when the relationship with Russell was officially renewed.
to approximately 4.1% of its total income. By comparison, approximately 80% of the USU's and TSC's revenues come from student fees. At year's end, ASUCLA had a cash total of $11.5 million (see Table 4 for exact figures). Not including the student fees, ASUCLA’s total revenues derive from four divisions (FY 2012-13): UCLA Store ($48.04 million) UCLA Restaurants ($15.34 million), Services Division ($3.5 million), and UCLA Student Union ($1.55 million). Managers at board retreats referred to the UCLA Store as being the "financial engine of the association," though declines in sales in the last few years have led to a reassessment of that sentiment and consideration of alternative strategies in the association's long-term planning.

Table 4. Student Union Financials 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Union Fee Revenue</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Operating Income</th>
<th>Cash Reserves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USU</td>
<td>$12,948,660</td>
<td>$10,540,000</td>
<td>$11,035,791</td>
<td>$1,912,869</td>
<td>$7,214,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC</td>
<td>$7,952,033</td>
<td>$6,325,000</td>
<td>$7,823,178</td>
<td>$128,855</td>
<td>$3,631,106</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASUCLA</td>
<td>$71,406,038</td>
<td>$2,898,000</td>
<td>$71,347,638</td>
<td>$58,400</td>
<td>$11,540,665</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASUCLA's long history of relying on revenues for its operations and survival, along with its various periods of financial and existential struggles appears to have left lasting words of caution to those who oversee it. Almost all of the participants indicated that the association's "financial sustainability" was a predominant concern in governance. Alluding to the association's past, Raj declared that "if you know about the history here, we've faced bankruptcy a couple of times at ASUCLA, so I know that's always on the mindset of how we're going to maintain our efforts." As Gabriel simply stated, "Generating revenue factored into every decision we made.

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13 In addition to the $60 Ackerman Student Union Fee, there is a $113 Ackerman/Kerckhoff Seismic Fee to fund debt service for seismic renovations for the two buildings. The seismic fee is assessed by the university and is not included in ASUCLA financial statements.

14 According to the audit report, the total revenue and other income figures are $68,438,227 and $2,967,811 and the total expenses and interest expense are $70,935,251 and $412,387.
because ASUCLA is a self-supporting organization so without the generation of revenue it would not exist." At the same time Gabriel noted that producing income is fundamental, he also maintained that it was all in service of students and that any financial returns would further benefit them, a sentiment encapsulated in ASUCLA's motto, "It All Comes Back to You." Although "revenue generation was necessary," Gabriel also claimed that board members "took great pains to ensure that they were very responsible toward the students," and "it was also important to ensure that [ASUCLA was] appropriately charging students for the services that were delivered and that whatever surpluses were there were re-funneled back into the services that are provided to students or other organizations on campus." Kevin similarly acknowledged that the board "had every incentive to raise money as fiduciaries for the students in order to maximize the effectiveness of what [ASUCLA] could provide the students as a whole. ...So revenue generation was important, but always in the back of our mind it was for the benefit of the students." He further stated, "We're not trying to charge more in order to make a profit. We're charging more to cover costs and then anything on top of that is to be reinvested for the students' benefit."

The obligation to secure a balance between the financial needs of the association with the interests of the student body, more or less a seesaw flanked by money and mission, is one that resonates to the core of ASUCLA. Sarah explained that revenue "is certainly central to the union's purposes and goals, not as an end in and of itself, but as a way to support other mission priorities." Similar to most self-sustaining, non-profit organizations, there exists what Chloe described as a "creative tension in the model" and what Susie depicted as "the constant push-and-pull of [the] board." Susie elaborated:
I felt [the] main purpose was to balance the mission of the organization with the need to keep it fiscally healthy and they're sometimes in conflict, especially with the do-gooder outlook of most of the people on the board. Probably every student member wanted to make sure that the organization is as much for students as possible. If there's a problem, OK, but it does have to make money or we can't do anything for students.

Striking the desired balance may mean that certain initiatives and changes are, as AJ described, "a little bit harder to do" because of the quantification that things "have to make financial sense." However, this inherent tension does not preclude those overseeing ASUCLA from making more service-oriented choices, such as the decision in the 2007-08 academic year to lower textbook prices, which, while a service for students, also corresponded to less revenue for the association.

The constant mission versus money discussion is also built into the ASUCLA governance structure. For any capital expenditures over a certain financial threshold, Kevin explained that the finance committee is "in charge of evaluating purely from a financial perspective and budgetary perspective and whether or not [ASUCLA] could afford it or [if] it was a good investment." The services committee, in contrast, is tasked with addressing decisions under the fundamental principle that student use and student services will be given highest priority. Items are introduced in committee and a recommendation made before being forwarded to the board for a vote. There can be times when an item may be recommended for approval by the services committee that is also recommended for rejection by the finance committee, thereby leaving the full board puzzled as to the best action to take. This happens infrequently, but when it does the item is usually sent back to committee for further review and consideration.

The weight of ASUCLA’s past financial challenges and the dependence on self-generated revenues as opposed to a windfall of annual fees appears to have fostered a more commercially-
oriented outlook. Lily explained that "there was a constellation of reasons for every single
decision" being made but that "usually what it really came down to was what's financially
feasible, what makes monetary sense for the goals that we want to have?" Susie indicated that
"there was never a business discussion that didn't also take into account the mission and there
was never a discussion about what we should be doing for students that didn't also have to do
with, 'Well, how do we pay for that?'" The emphasis on the association's continued economic
security is deep-seated. At the same time, the desire to put service above financial outcomes is
ingrained in comparable measure. Indeed, a blurb from the 1925 university yearbook proclaimed:

    Each of the enterprises – conceived, established, and operated by students of the
    University – has proven itself to be an unqualified success. This success is not judged
    from a financial standpoint – it is merely fortunate that they have been self-supporting.
    Profit, needless to say, has been but an incidental item. The factor considered uppermost
    was not whether or not each of the enterprises would pay, but was, instead, the
    continuance of the lofty tradition of Californians to serve. (emphasis in original, p. 71)

As Justin affirmed, "Certainly if we were just worried about money we would have shut down
most of what the student union does because a lot of it is a money loser, but again, the point of
[ASUCLA] being there is to provide services to students." Therefore, while fiscal responsibility
"was a very common concern," Justin suggested that it was "enmeshed in with all the other
values" that those responsible for ASUCLA's oversight "individually and collectively held."

**ASUCLA Strategic Priorities**

The governing boards and managers of student unions endeavor to fulfill the community,
programming, recreation, and retail needs of a campus. As a group, they have a hand in
contouring the campus experience based upon the decisions they make concerning the student
union facilities they oversee. The decisions may be small in scope, such as changes to a union's operating hours, or they may be financially mammoth, such as capital expenditures in the double-digit millions for a renovation or expansion project. In terms of its student union operations, ASUCLA faced strategic challenges similar to those at CSUN and CSUF with respect to its facilities, space allocations, and services offered. However, unlike its USU and TSC counterparts, the extension of ASUCLA beyond the student union and into ventures such as trademarks and licensing, food services, and campus retail resulted in more varied strategic priorities.

The authority of using UCLA's campus name, unofficial seal, trademarks, and logos for commercial purposes is delegated by the university chancellor to the executive director of ASUCLA (Abrams, 2006, Blackman, 1998). This delegation of authority has allowed ASUCLA to develop a trademarks and licensing program (ASUCLA T&L) and to retain the revenue generated from it.15 ASUCLA T&L includes a domestic licensing program, which is represented by the Collegiate Licensing Company, and an international licensing program. Amidst the rapid internationalization of higher education in the last few decades (Altbach & Knight, 2007) and to leverage added revenue from a global market, ASUCLA has endeavored to expand UCLA's visibility as an internationally-recognized clothing and lifestyle brand. Aligned with the notion of building brand equity (Toma et al., 2005), ASUCLA has extended that into the retail market with "UCLA Clothing," a special collection clothing line that "captures the aspirational nature of the UCLA brand and epitomizes the U.S. collegiate lifestyle" ("The UCLA Brand," 2013). ASUCLA T&L, in partnership with international licensees, has also established UCLA-brand retail stores in Australia, China, Europe, India, and the Middle East (see Figure 1). There are plans for

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15 Per certain licensing agreements, ASUCLA T&L must also share revenue with the athletics department.
expansion into other international markets, such as Brazil and South Africa. In an article from *UCLA Magazine*, the ASUCLA T&L director explained the international licensing program strategy: "We're not competing for shelf space with Stanford, Berkeley, USC and Michigan. We're competing with Ralph Lauren, Diesel and Abercrombie & Fitch" (Jensen, 2012). In addition to the revenue opportunities, the intent of the program is to market an international lifestyle and fashion brand whilst also promoting the image of UCLA as a "world class university" (c.f. Altbach, 2004).

The international branding effort is a somewhat unique venture that is not on the agenda of most student union overseers. Rather, more commonplace priorities involving space,
programs, services, and third-party tenants generally occupy a governing board's time. For those with authority over ASUCLA, nine core values serve as guideposts across the spectrum of decisions being made on behalf of the organization. The first, "Our Independent Bookstore," highlights the firm belief that the UCLA campus store remain an ASUCLA-operated business and not be outsourced – as many colleges and universities around the nation have done – to third parties such as Barnes & Noble and Follett. With the next two, "Campus Partnerships" and "Championship Service," the former focuses on campus collaborations in service and programming and the latter on the retail customer service experience. The fourth, "Your Student Association," underscores the strength of student leadership and the association's student-majority governed business model. The next one, "ASUCLA Benefits U," is a consumer loyalty rewards program. The fifth, "Building Toward the Future," indicates that capital investments are facilities and service enhancements, as well as contributions to the overall campus infrastructure. Sixth is "Employee Investment" which draws attention to ASUCLA being the campus's largest student employer and emphasizes its student-centered approach to the professional development of student employees. The final two, "The Greater Good" and "Target Zero Waste" affirm the association's stance on social responsibility and sustainability and are discussed in further detail below.

In the mid-2000s, ASUCLA adopted two policies prioritizing a focus on ethical and environmental business practices: "Policy on Social Responsibility" in May 2005 and "Policy on Sustainability" in July 2006. The first policy is primarily a procedural one that articulates a formalized process for evaluating whether there are services, products, or policies that may breach ASUCLA's commitment to ethical and socially responsible business practices. When issues of concern are brought to the board's or management's attention, there is an obligation to
evaluate the complaint along several criteria. These may include ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and university policies, determining whether there are discriminatory employment policies, evaluating workplace safety, assessing whether there is respect for legal labor union activities, the environment, and basic human rights, and considering any other practices that may not "reflect the social and ethical standards of the Board or the campus community." Ray noted that "the board took the social responsibility part of their commitment very seriously" and a "great debate" would usually ensue. ASUCLA's affirmation for socially responsible practices is also demonstrated in an earlier policy adopted in August 1997, the "Anti-Sweatshop Policy/Demand for Manufacturer and Retailer Accountability." This policy outlines circumstances that would lead ASUCLA to reconsider its business relationship with companies with poor workplace conduct and conditions.

The purpose of the ASUCLA sustainability policy is to establish an ongoing commitment to ecological health, economic viability, and community welfare through education, business operations, and community involvement. The policy includes guiding principles and an implementation framework that focuses on areas such resource conservation, sustainable capital projects, community education, and civic participation. The policy also serves as a mandate for the association and those who oversee it to prioritize sustainability practices in its long-term planning and daily operating decisions. The revenue structure of ASUCLA may entail that income-producing activities take center stage, but the social responsibility and sustainability policies suggest that ASUCLA has an obligation to engage beyond mere revenue-seeking. Sharon emphasized the association's non-profit status and noted that "there's a triple bottom line" wherein the bottom line is "not just about money." Referring to a concept coined by John Elkington, the triple bottom line and its corollary the 3Ps – people, planet, and profit – are
frameworks that measure a company's performance and value along economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Slaper & Hall, 2011). In chapter six, I extend the discussion of social responsibility and sustainability in relation to the critical pedagogy of consumption framework and provide examples of these concerns as navigated by overseers of student unions.

The revenue and commercially driven operations of ASUCLA seems to shape much of the organization's identity. At the same time, there is also due focus given to more socially-minded purposes and responsibilities through its core values and policies. The participants' accounts of ASUCLA reveal the association's tightrope balance between mission and money and its strong emphasis on social responsibility and service as well as financial stability and continued independence. ASUCLA's long history and nearly centenarian status appears to be a testament to its ability to evolve and remain relevant within the continuously changing landscape of higher education.

**Chapter Summary**

The findings presented in this chapter established that the student unions at CSUN, CSUF, and UCLA are similar yet distinct. Most of the commonalities appeared across the organizational and governance structures. All three were governed by student-majority boards and all three were inextricably linked to the university with respect to oversight and operations. Across the spectrum of responsibilities and decisions, there was a seemingly embedded moral authority of serving students and acting in their best interests while acknowledging the call to align the organizational functions with the larger needs and goals of the university. The greatest differences found among the three sites were along the dimensions of revenue structure and strategic priorities. While all three student unions and their respective governing boards, USU BOD, TSC GB, and ASUCLA BOD, were large, multi-million dollar operations, the reliance on
being a fee-funded or revenue-funded organization shaped the extent to which income-producing activities took center stage. By comparison, ASUCLA was a more extensive enterprise than its USU and TSC counterparts. The varying strategic priorities at the three campuses included a shift toward resource centers, capital expansion, development of brand identity, international licensing, and a focus on social and environmental responsibility. The findings herein revealed that student unions are responsive and reactive organizations that exhibit community, commercial, and consumer values. The following chapter presents findings that further speak to the kind of connections and engagement that student unions can engender and discusses the opportunities for pedagogical value.
CHAPTER 5: STUDENT UNIONS AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF CONSUMPTION

As established in chapter four, student unions encompass varying organizational, governance, and revenue structures. The board members and management staff responsible for their oversight also implement different strategic priorities to suit particular goals and needs. Distinctions aside, the overseers of student unions in this study generally aspire to cultivate an environment that offers their respective campuses a practical and welcoming space, an interlacing of the student union as facility and community. The overarching desire is to establish the student union as a resource of vital importance to a university community, as well as to encourage active use of its programs and services. In turn, there exists within student unions the potential for moments of pedagogy. The idealized centrality of these entities to the everyday hustle and bustle of a university means that these pedagogical opportunities can have some bearing on anyone who traverses a campus, students and non-students alike. Drawing upon the conceptual framework, which incorporates ideas from consumer culture theory, ethical consumption, and critical pedagogy of consumption, this study acknowledged the prevalence of commercial activity associated with food and retail within student unions and specifically examined pedagogy in relation to an ethical consumer context. In this chapter, I discuss various ways in which student unions and their overseers engage organizationally and individually with a critical pedagogy of consumption (CPC).

Organizational Engagement

As loci of consumer activity, student unions are well-situated places for examining consumption values and practices within an educational environment. In their articulation of ethical consumption, Clive Barnett, Paul Cloke, Nick Clarke, and Alice Malpass (2005) suggest there are two dimensions of practice to consider. The first is an organizational dimension which
they refer to as "governing consumption." The second, which I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, is an inter-subjective dimension which they deem as "governing the consuming self." In efforts to encourage consumers to adopt ethical consumption practices, Barnett et al. explain that policymakers, organizations, and businesses govern consumption by employing various strategies "to regulate the informational and spatial contexts of consumer 'choice'" (p. 31). The aim is to structure consumer options that prioritize values such as personal and environmental health, fair labor practices, and anti-pollution behavior. In the context of this study, I found that student unions and their overseers have the capacity to govern consumption towards these objectives. In doing so, student unions can serve as spaces for fostering CPC in two ways. First, there is internal engagement of CPC through the governing board's decision-making process. At committee and board meetings, board members and management staff discuss and take action on consumer-related items. In the course of meeting, there is debate and consideration of ethical consumption values. In theory these discussions can have broader campus reach as all the meetings are open to the public, but they are rarely attended by persons not on the governing boards. Second, there is external engagement of CPC as a result of action taken by the board because the outcomes of those decisions may structure the spatial environment and draw the attention of the wider campus community. In this study, I found student unions advanced CPC internally and externally across three primary domains – food, fair labor practices, and facilities.

Food

The importance of food to the student union is both a matter of convenience and control. The accessibility of student unions and the availability of dining options allows thirsty and hungry patrons to quickly and easily satiate themselves. The centrality of food to student unions
is oftentimes also rooted in their governance. At the campuses in this study, ASUCLA directly operates many of the food services housed within its facilities so there is significant board input regarding the direction of the food services program whether in-house or through third party vendors. At CSUF and CSUN, other auxiliaries are responsible for campus food services, but the TSC GB and USU BOD still maintain some input through their food advisory committee and facilities and commercial services committee, respectively.

Student unions are home to myriad food and beverage operations ranging from national fast food chains to seated casual dining to grab-and-go kiosks. Perhaps due to the ubiquity of fast food chains on campuses, these restaurants tend to serve as flash points for discussions encompassing a CPC focus. Two brief examples from CSUF and UCLA involving Panda Express and Taco Bell, respectively, and one extended example from CSUN concerning Chick-fil-A offer insight into how occasions for input into campus food operations can provide opportunities for CPC action.

**CSUF TSC and Panda Express.** The CSUF Auxiliary Services Corporation (ASC) operates all of the campus dining facilities. However, since a number of their locations are housed within the student union, the TSC GB does exert some influence over the options. In considering new tenants to replace some of the older restaurants, Anthony explained that the TSC GB was "unanimous in the thought that we wanted a popular name in the food court to draw students over. The biggest reason was to help bring more students to the student union."

When it was determined that Panda Express would be opening a location in the TSU food court, a CPC opportunity presented itself. Known for their use of Styrofoam containers, Rebecca stated that this "was immediately brought to [the board's] attention by students." Jeff further noted that "one of the contingencies that the chair of the board was able to negotiate was that if [Panda
Express] was to come to Cal State Fullerton, [the chair] wanted to make sure that they used recyclable packaging...so she was actually able to negotiate with them and to convince them to use biodegradable packaging." The restaurant opened in the TSU in the Spring 2011 semester. Through internal engagement with the board, the ASC, and Panda Express, the decision to eliminate the use of Styrofoam had positive campus and environmental impacts. As Jeff commented, "I feel like that was a really huge benefit to campus life that the board in general, and especially the student who was chair, made a huge difference in improving."

**ASUCLA and Taco Bell.** In the early 2000s, as the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) call for a Taco Bell boycott grew louder, the issue made its way onto the ASUCLA BOD's agenda. The dispute was over the poor working conditions and extreme low wages of tomato farm workers in Florida, which the CIW believed that Taco Bell and its parent company Yum! Brands had the responsibility to remedy (CIW, 2004). Since there was a Taco Bell on campus operated by ASUCLA, other campus student groups first brought the controversy to the board's attention and petitioned it to take action against the restaurant. Susie explained that the concerns brought forth were centered on the claim that "tomato farming was being done under slave labor type farm conditions" and that ASUCLA could be "influential in getting [Taco Bell] to change some of its practices."

The ASUCLA BOD engaged with the CIW/Taco Bell issue over the course of several services committee and board meetings. Sharon recalled that "high level corporate types and other people showed up to give testimony, which was kind of fascinating." She also conveyed that it was difficult to communicate to the student constituency that the board needed to make decisions "not in a vacuum" but rather "in a very deliberate way" and that the board "wants to hear what everyone [has] to say." Minutes from a 30 July 2004 board meeting indicate that a
member of ASUCLA's executive management met with a Taco Bell representative and stated that "everything that Taco Bell is doing is a direct result of ASUCLA's actions" He also communicated that "Taco Bell is making an effort to help the workers because they want to remain on the UCLA campus."

After nearly a year of deliberations, the ASUCLA BOD ultimately reached two counteracting resolutions. Sharon stated that the board "did kick Taco Bell out" but they also "did bring them back." At the 22 October 2004 board meeting, board members approved a motion to not renew Taco Bell's contract upon its expiration on 31 October 2004. The vote was five in favor, one opposed, and two abstentions (Bishop, 2004). By September 2005, however, the franchise was back on campus (Servin, 2005). According to *Daily Bruin* articles, the campus newspaper, the board felt comfortable entering into negotiations with Taco Bell for its return because in March 2005 the company reached an agreement with CIW regarding the tomato labor dispute (CIW, 2005; Lee, 2005a, 2005b). Minutes from a 15 April 2005 finance committee meeting indicated that in addition to a franchise agreement, "a provision regarding Taco Bell's continued accord with CIW would probably be included in a separate agreement." The efforts of an external workers' rights organization that eventually led to the involvement of campus student groups, the ASUCLA BOD, and corporate representatives is an example of how CPC is enacted in a student union setting.

**CSUN USU and Chick-fil-A.** In January 2011, the fast food chicken chain became embroiled in the marriage equality debate through a franchise's decision to sponsor a marriage seminar being held by the Pennsylvania Family Institute, an anti-same-sex marriage organization (Severson, 2011). The seemingly local decision spurred greater public scrutiny of Chick-fil-A's corporate values and brought the company's support of anti-LGBTQ organizations into the
national spotlight (Allison, Maza, & Schwen, 2011). The controversy also sparked a number of student-driven petitions to remove the chain from their college campuses (Kingkade, 2012). Although CSUN does not have a Chick-fil-A, the brewing issue still reached the campus. According to Natasha, "the Chick-fil-A thing came up at a USU board meeting" and led to board action regarding the company and the proposal of developing a "conscious consumerism program."

Formal USU board discussions regarding the Chick-fil-A controversy originated at a 9 April 2012 facilities and commercial services committee (F&CSC) meeting. Committee members discussed the appropriateness of accepting free product/coupon contributions from the fast food chain. According to the meeting minutes, there was acknowledgement that "the USU should be a place that encourages a free exchange of ideas that may be different from your own – with tolerance espoused as a virtue, even if of intolerance." The committee also noted there was a "differentiation between the business of Chick-fil-A – selling sandwiches and making money, and the activities of the WinShape Foundation." The foundation is a charitable organization created by the founder of Chick-fil-A. It receives considerable funding from the Chick-fil-A corporation and has contributed over one million dollars to anti-LGBTQ groups (Allison, Maza, & Schwen, 2011). In the course of the meeting, "the committee felt that free Chick-fil-A contributions were appropriate however a contractual agreement with a more pronounced campus physical presence or direct payment for Chick-fil-A goods or services would merit additional conversation."

The initial internal engagement with the Chick-fil-A issue began its transition to external engagement at the 30 May 2012 F&CSC meeting. At this subsequent meeting, committee members motioned "to not actively seek Chick-fil-A services and have Matadors for Equality [a
campus organization] work with USU Events to host conscious consumerism programming."
The plan was to develop a "broad scale educational program that brings about awareness of
different vendors, their community outreach, and monetary contributions." The motion passed
unanimously in committee and would be placed on the agenda at the next USU BOD meeting.
Natasha noted the value of such a program, but that it would "be hard to present the information
neutrally without either promoting a brand or vilifying another."

Through the formalized student union board process, the concerns about Chick-fil-A's
corporate values and how best to address them in a campus environment moved forward to a full
USU BOD review at the 11 June 2012 board meeting. The motion from the F&CSC was put
before the board for a vote. The chair of the committee stated that the motion on the table "was
viewed as a compromise between both positions that allows Chick-fil-A to seek campus
consumers while empowering the campus community to raise its consciousness about
corporations that are opposed to same-sex marriage and decide through consumerism whether to
support such organizations." According to the minutes, meeting attendees proceeded to discuss
"personal beliefs, topic awareness, freedom of speech, and consumer choice." After a failed
motion to amend the original motion by dividing it into two separate parts of 1) not actively
seeking Chick-fil-A services and 2) hosting a conscious consumerism program, the original
motion as passed by the F&CSC was also approved by the USU BOD.

The USU and Chick-fil-A resolution is one example of how a food-related consumption
matter can offer a moment of CPC and lead to wider discussions about social issues. What began
as an internal USU discussion eventually led to board action that endeavored to engage a larger
external audience on the subject of consumer spending as it pertains to social concerns.
Regrettably, this study does not have follow-up data as to whether a conscious consumer program was developed.

The examples from the three campuses in this study show that daily comestibles can offer moments for CPC engagement across subjects such as social issues, environmental awareness, and fair labor practices. In addition to internal board discussions about the concerns and what actions to take with respect to the offending companies, the TSC and ASUCLA boards also engaged directly with the companies in concerted efforts to encourage them to adopt practices that align with ethical consumption values. However, it is difficult to know how much impact their efforts had on Panda Express and Taco Bell given that the companies may have already been working to address the issues regardless of the boards' intervention. Nonetheless, what is clear is that given the importance of food operations to a student union, the pathways for food-related CPC are abundant and compel decision-making that will visibly affect the campus community. These examples of internal CPC engagement by the student union governing boards resulted in external CPC engagement with more environmentally-friendly food packaging, the dismissal, albeit temporarily, of a popular campus eatery, and the development of further CPC educational opportunities through a conscious consumerism event. The decisions give credence to the idea that a significant way to energize a board into action is through its stomach.

**Fair Labor Practices**

Discussions about fair labor practices are another example of CPC in action. This topic was most pertinent to ASUCLA given its direct oversight for the campus store and licensing. Additionally, the importance of workers’ and human rights are embedded into ASUCLA's governance ethos through its Policy on Social Responsibility, adopted in 2005, and its Anti-Sweatshop Policy, adopted in 1997. The latter policy stipulates:
ASUCLA supports the right of individuals around the world to work in a safe and healthy workplace at reasonable compensation. ASUCLA believes that we have the power and responsibility as a merchant of apparel goods to hold manufacturers and retailers accountable for the conditions in which their products are made and to expect that workers are treated with dignity.

Two examples that ASUCLA participants spoke about centered on labor issues with respect to apparel, but as the Taco Bell case indicates, concerns about labor rights can also extend into the domain of campus food operations. The two apparel examples that further demonstrate how student unions engage with CPC involved the Russell Athletic and Alta Gracia companies.

**Russell Athletic.** In 2009, the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) organization actively campaigned to boycott Russell Athletic, calling upon universities to sever ties with the apparel manufacturing company. The controversy stemmed from the company's decision to shut down a factory in Honduras as a result of the workers' unionization efforts, thereby laying off 1,200 factory employees (Greenhouse, 2009b; USAS, 2009). Given ASUCLA's direct purview of the university's trademarks and licensing program, which included a substantial contract with Russell, the ASUCLA BOD was uniquely poised to decide what action it would take regarding the boycott campaign.

With the controversy brewing, ASUCLA began its process of board deliberations. Lily explained that "at first it was sort of a waiting game because a lot of universities were waiting to find out what exactly was going on in Honduras, like how the workers were being treated, what was unethical, was Russell being honest about what they were doing, what they weren't." Justin acknowledged that the issue was controversial because "some people are just fundamentally opposed to unions and union issues and some people are fundamentally just always in favor of
them." Lily noted that pressure for the ASUCLA BOD to take substantive action began to mount when "student groups came and spoke to us about it who felt very strongly that we should cut ties." Minutes from the 13 March 2009 board meeting indicated that members of the Student Worker Front (SWF), a UCLA student group, attended the meeting and requested that ASUCLA "terminate its contract with Russell immediately." According to the minutes, when management asked whether there was an "alternative solution, as terminating ASUCLA's contract could result in more employees out of work," an SWF representative responded that "they would like ASUCLA to pressure Russell into changing its employee practices."

As discussions regarding the Russell issue progressed, there were two main considerations: financial ramifications and ASUCLA's "The Greater Good" core value, which entails that the association "strives to set a standard for social and ethical responsibility" (ASUCLA Core Values, 2014). Ray stated that he was not simply "oh gung ho, let's just give Russell the heave ho" but that he really "had to think through this from a financial point of view and then from a core values point of view." Justin recalled that the financial concerns included questions such as:

- What happens if we go somewhere else? Is it going to be a lower quality product? Is it going to be a more expensive product? Are people going to, if we have to add $10 to the cost of the sweatshirts, which are, if you ask me, already kind of expensive, are people going to keep buying them? How is this going to impact our finances, especially when we were having pretty significant financial problems with the recession and everything?

Lily understood there were important financial issues to contend with, especially with respect to the board's fiduciary duty. In terms of ASUCLA as an association, though, she also felt strongly that "we need to be an ethical organization and we can't just say that we are. [The Russell issue]
was such an opportunity for us to demonstrate that we are and we can't just pay lip service to
that." Julia acknowledged that they "were aware of the complexity of the issue" and that they
"were informed about the issue from both perspectives [the factory and the workers]," but for her
the "one thing that resonated was that we would never be in favor of any kind of human rights
violations."

As the ASUCLA BOD and management deliberated how best to approach the Russell
situation, other universities had begun to sever ties with the apparel manufacturer (Greenhouse,
2009a). This intensified the pressure on ASUCLA to come to a decision about its own contract
with Russell. Lily stated that "not everybody agreed about what course of action [ASUCLA]
should take and it wasn't even like not everybody agreed…some people just weren't sure what
[ASUCLA] should do." Kevin and Lily both noted, respectively, that after "putting [in] a lot of
time trying to assess that situation" and "a lot of discussion with management" about the
alternatives, the ASUCLA BOD finally decided it would stop working with Russell. The April
2009 decision was to not renew the contract with Russell, which had expired on 31 March 2009
(Thaler, 2009). However, this decision did not preclude the association from choosing at a later
date to resume its relationship with Russell.

According to participants, two outcomes emerged from the controversy and subsequent
decision to end the Russell relationship. First, it spurred ASUCLA to develop its own apparel
program. In the course of discussions with management about alternatives, Lily recollected that
the trademarks and licensing division "created this whole new UCLA exclusive line that
[ASUCLA] was completely in charge of from beginning to end." Branded as the UCLA Gold
Standard collection, it is a "label produced locally for the store" and "was started in an effort to
manufacture in the USA with an eye on fair practices and the economy" ("The Greater Good,"
2014). Second, participants suggested that ASUCLA's ongoing communications with Russell and requests to the company that it remedy its alleged labor violations and then subsequent decision to not renew the company's contract helped pressure the company into compliance. According to Ray, "the bigger effect that we had and the thing that I'm most proud of, I think, is we stood our ground, we stayed true to our core values, but we made the Russell corporation change." Kevin noted that the board's decision enabled it to "satisfy and allay [the student activists'] concerns" yet at the same time it "was able to ensure that Russell complied with [ASUCLA's] expectations for social consciousness." Ultimately, the decision to sever ties with Russell was temporary as minutes from the 30 July 2010 board meeting indicate that ASUCLA had a "renewed relationship with the new Russell program." While it may be debatable as to exactly who – USAS, the collective of universities ending licensing deals with Russell, or ASUCLA – played the largest role in Russell's agreement to rehire the Honduran workers impacted by the initial factory closure and to maintain union neutrality and non-interference with its Honduran factories (Greenhouse, 2009b; USAS, 2009), it seems the aggregate of pressure from all entities at least led to a more fair labor outcome. As Susie acknowledged, companies such as Russell "may still not be totally ethical, but they're working hard to make sure their university merchandise isn't sweatshop produced."

**Alta Gracia.** Founded in 2010 as a subsidiary of Knights Apparel, which bills itself on its website (http://altagraciaapparel.com) as the "top-selling manufacturer of college sports apparel," Alta Gracia is an apparel company that pays its workers a living wage and is committed to high safety and fair labor practices. The company's factory is located in the Dominican Republic and is closely monitored by the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) to ensure
compliance with rigorous workplace standards. Whereas the Russell controversy is an example of CPC via boycott, the Alta Gracia case is an example of CPC via buycott.

ASUCLA began procuring product from Alta Gracia in the summer of 2010. According to minutes from the 30 July 2010 board meeting, ASUCLA management had already "been in conversations" with the company for some time. Retail pricing for the Alta Gracia products would be similar to other items of the same style sold in the UCLA Store. As part of the new product introduction, the apparel would be placed as a collection near the main store entrance and "sales would be monitored to evaluate overall performance." If the product sold well, then reorders would be placed.

As the 2010-11 academic year progressed, the Alta Gracia product and the socially responsible ethos behind the company's founding became a source of more active CPC engagement for ASUCLA. At a 4 February 2011 services committee meeting, the president of the Graduate Students Association (GSA) appealed to board members and management to "expand [ASUCLA's] current relationship with Alta Gracia, suggesting that ASUCLA increase its Alta Gracia product inventory by several hundred thousand dollars and strengthen its marketing efforts to advance sales and boost awareness in the UCLA Store." At the time, management indicated that approximately $16,000 worth of product had been purchased and that there was "a fair amount of inventory remaining." Store managers also noted that the sell-through for products should normally be about 80-90% and that out of five Alta Gracia products on sale in the store, the best selling one was at 60%.

From the ASUCLA BOD perspective, the association supported the mission of Alta Gracia and believed the company's ethical standards aligned well with ASUCLA's core values, but according to participants there were two main concerns that needed to be addressed: product
sales and product quality. Ray indicated that the ASUCLA BOD "had to take a more strategic view about this given [its] fiscal accountability responsibilities." AJ noted that a boost in inventory without a corresponding boost in product sales would not be feasible. Referring to ASUCLA as a company, he stated that the association has "to make sure [sales are] not going to kill the company financially or else there's no company." Jonathan believed that the appeal to invest more money in the Alta Gracia clothing line "was a great cause," but that the product design was "very plain and simple...and not that sellable." He commented that "Alta Gracia needed to work on its designs to be able to compete with the others and that's just the way a business runs." He stated that there needed to be an attractive enough product mix so that "the customer would be able to say, 'You know what? I'll get the Alta Gracia one. I like it just as much as the Adidas one, but it's for a better cause and so I'll pick it.'"

The underlying goal of pursing a relationship with Alta Gracia was to actively support a fair labor apparel company, and the association's CPC engagement on this issue appeared to be from a more business-oriented approach. Minutes from the 4 February 2011 services committee meeting specified three actions that ASUCLA would pursue. First, the association would "increase marketing efforts to highlight product produced by socially responsible factories such as Alta Gracia." Second, an ASUCLA representative would meet with an Alta Gracia sales manager "to discuss the product lines and collaborate on design ideas that would appeal to UCLA consumer tastes." Third, ASUCLA management "would renew efforts to better promote the products in the store and to work closely with the company in procuring future inventory with greater sales appeal."

Despite ASUCLA's stated efforts to strengthen its relationship with Alta Gracia, some students on campus did not feel that such action was sufficient. On 15 February 2011 a group of
about 22 students demonstrated in the campus store to demand that ASUCLA make a larger financial commitment, noting that its initial $16,000 purchase paled in comparison to Duke University's $250,000 order. The organizations represented by the students included GSA, SWF, the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), and UAW Local 2865 (Yonzon & Hsing, 2011). Student members of these organizations also attended the 25 February 2011 ASUCLA BOD meeting to reiterate their appeal for a minimum $250,000 commitment. Ray remembered thinking, "wow, these guys are motivated" and that the students were "locked in" to the $250,000 figure but "did not have really any articulated reason other than the fact that somebody else did it." Jonathan asserted that ASUCLA was committed to putting more work into the Alta Gracia section of the store "to make it more appealing to the community and [was] trying to come up with different strategies to really promote [Alta Gracia's] message" but the ASUCLA BOD and management "didn't find it reasonable to extend the amount of money that [the students] wanted." AJ felt that $250,000 was rather high and would be "a killer of the company," but that there was room to "make some type of deal to keep [the Alta Gracia line] going and to give it a try."

The resolution to the Alta Gracia demands accomplished two aims: increased financial investment by ASUCLA and greater exposure of a socially responsible company. Minutes from the 25 February 2011 board meeting indicated that ASUCLA would purchase $70,000 worth of product, which would put ASUCLA in the top tier of sales (Tier A) and recognize it as a "Factory Partner" of Alta Gracia. There would also be "prominent displays in several areas of the store" and on its website, and if the product sold well "the chance of multiple reorders could raise that total number much higher." This strategy aligned with communications from Alta Gracia indicating it "would prefer not to have a single order so it can sustain employment for its employees year round and not just to fulfill one large order." Acknowledging that ASUCLA has
a responsibility to promote fair labor practices, Ray believed that the association did its "best to try and make [Alta Gracia] as successful as possible."

The contemporary student anti-sweatshop movement has been active since the mid-1990s. Through organizations such as USAS, which was formed in 1997, students have launched national grassroots campaigns to bring attention to and call for remedies to poor working conditions in apparel factories around the world (Featherstone, 2002; Mandle, 2000). College students have also been instrumental in lobbying universities to adopt codes of conduct for trademark licensees and in founding the WRC, a labor rights monitoring organization formed in 2000. There are currently 185 colleges and universities affiliated with the WRC (WRC, 2015). The Russell Athletic and Alta Gracia examples from UCLA demonstrate how the anti-sweatshop work can be augmented by student unions. For universities where the campus store is located within the student union or, as in the case of UCLA, where the association that oversees the student union is also directly responsible for university licensing, the student union can serve as an important site for CPC engagement with fair labor practices.

Overseers of student unions are charged with upholding the organization's bests interests as well as responding to the needs and requests of the community it serves. In the case of ASUCLA and the fair labor concerns, this entailed balancing the fiscal requirements of the association with its publicly stated social and ethical core values. While the work of activists beyond the organization's governance structure were paramount, ultimately it was in the hands of the overseers to find an appropriate resolution. The internal CPC engagement by the ASUCLA BOD, which included communications with the two companies involved, resulted in two external CPC outcomes. The first involved ending a longstanding relationship with a popular apparel manufacturer, which meant that Russell Athletic could no longer produce UCLA
merchandise. This decision was somewhat short-lived as the relationship was reinstated once ASUCLA overseers were convinced that the company had remedied its labor violations. The second and more proactive action was to increase purchase orders from a socially responsible company and feature the Alta Gracia product line more prominently within the campus store (see Figure 2). The idea was that if consumers are going to purchase collegiate apparel, then the preferred choice was to encourage them to buy from a company that engages in fair labor practices and pays its workers a living wage. The enhanced exposure and promotion of the company's practices also helped to foster greater CPC awareness of labor issues among consumers.

Figure 2. Alta Gracia Display inside UCLA Store at Ackerman Student Union

Photo credit: Amy Liu
Facilities

The student union is a typically high traffic facility and is therefore well positioned to foster CPC engagement on environmental issues. With several hundred thousands of square feet for multiple uses, student unions tend to encompass a large campus footprint. Amidst growing environmental awareness about the limits of our planetary resources and the consequences that arise from unchecked human consumption, participants across all three campuses demonstrated that these concerns are being taken seriously and measures are being implemented to address them. The participants spoke about three main environmental topics related to the facilities of their respective student unions: sustainability, green initiatives, and LEED certification. The examples they share offer an illustration of how student unions can encourage environmental CPC.

Sustainability Speak. In the contemporary era, use of the word sustainability is fairly common in business, education, and lifestyle spheres. The term is usually employed to articulate an approach to the desired relationship between the global environment and humans with respect to ecological resources, development capacity, and social and economic longevity (Brown, Hansen, Liverman, & Merideth, 1987). The United States Environmental Protection Agency offers a specific working definition (EPA, 2015):

Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. Sustainability is both practice and goal, and the EPA articulation provides a helpful understanding of it for the purposes of this study.
Participants from all three campuses spoke generally about their respective student union's embrace of sustainability and the endeavors being undertaken to advance such practices. Most individuals expressed enthusiasm for their organization's efforts. For example, both Maria (CSUF) and Dolores (CSUN) voiced that "we're really big on sustainability" at their respective campuses. Julia (UCLA) noted that "sustainability was not a new conversation" as there was already a lot of "positive momentum in that direction." Though ASUCLA was the only organization to have a formal policy on sustainability, participants from all the campuses stated that conversations about the topic included discussing ways to prevent waste, brainstorming about how to improve sustainability in the union, and incorporating sustainability as a requirement in the request for proposals (RFPs) for construction projects. ASUCLA's policy, which was approved in July 2006, includes a statement of purpose, guiding principles, and an implementation framework outlining the following areas of focus: resource conservation; capital planning, construction and purchasing; leadership, community education, civic participation; transportation; economic development indicators; and broad-based continued review. Regarding the educational component, Justin (UCLA) conveyed that the idea is "how do we help educate students about sustainability while they're throwing away their can?"

Being a responsive organization to the community and to the bottom line were also driving forces for these student unions' turn towards sustainability. Nelly (CSUN) indicated that seeking sustainable practices was "not necessarily to do whatever I think is important, but to do what students think is important." Framing it from an enterprise perspective, Jonathan (UCLA) remarked that "since we're a company, a business at the end of the day, we have to meet those needs and demands from the public about sustainability issues." For Dolores (CSUN), it was also a matter of addressing contemporary trends: "If we're going to be a world-class university
student center, you can't be world-class if you're operating in the 1960s. We have to be ahead of the curve, not behind it, or at least as close to it as we can be." Financial reasons were also a motive for embracing sustainability. Sharon (UCLA) suggested that "the sustainability thing is really obvious because in the end it saves [ASUCLA] scads of money, whether it be recycling, whether it be food, whether it be energy." Kevin (UCLA), however, disputed that sentiment and indicated that "sustainability can sometimes cost more" but that it was not a huge concern because "everyone wanted to be sustainable and valued that priority." The main outlook for pursuing sustainability was as Gabriel (UCLA) and Russell (CSUN) maintained, respectively, "it all comes back to this whole concept of responsibility" and "it's the right thing to do...[and] as you do the research, you realize it's really smart."

**Going Green.** In addition to general statements embracing sustainability, participants offered specific examples of the ways in which their respective student unions implemented green initiatives. Similarities across campuses included waterless urinals, energy efficient lighting, improved recycling efforts, elimination of Styrofoam, and installation of hand dryers. Other initiatives included replacement of ketchup and mustard packets with high-volume pumps, compostable eating utensils, and green cleaning products for custodial teams. Reasons given for these types of efforts included greater ecological awareness and general organizational improvements. For example, Jack (CSUF) commented that it was important to "make sure that we are leaving as small a footprint as possible of what we're doing," and Alan (UCLA) noted, "the next wave of activity really came with the need to modernize a lot of the facilities and that was done with an eye towards being more green."

With respect to the environmentally conscious measures taken, participants offered various reflections that illustrate how a green CPC can be encouraged. Steve (CSUF) good-
naturedly recalled that one extended discussion the TSC GB had concerned light bulbs. He stated, "I'm sitting through this meeting like, 'Why are we talking about light bulbs?' This is boring. But I thought about it and was like, 'You know what? Out of all those 35,000 students, who actually gets to listen and get a presentation about this?'" He noted that an outcome of the meeting and what is a significant goal for governing boards is "making small decisions [that] make a big change." Jeff (CSUF) pointed out that "most of the stuff that gets discussed by the board primarily affects the campus community" including several decisions regarding "what conservation measures are taken." Raj (UCLA) spoke about the need to procure less harmful cleaning agents and suggested that "if you think about it, [custodial crews] are working on a cloud of invisible fumes around them of cleaning products. How productive is that on the physiological perspective of the human experience?" He further stated the importance of "bringing in chemicals that are less toxic" so that there is less damage to human health and ecological conditions because "when we dump it, it's not going to pollute the water."

A key feature of going green was the opportunity for educating the larger campus community about environmental concerns. This included the student union's role in initiating green practices and communicating both the benefits of those efforts as well as the reductions in ecological footprint (see Figure 3). Charlie (CSUN) noted that because a goal for student unions is "to influence what current students do and how they do it on campus...they have a responsibility to show some leadership" with respect to progressive environmental efforts. Lily (UCLA) stated, "I think it's cool when a campus can heighten people's awareness of what's happening to the Earth. If the campus can actually be a leader in raising people's awareness, I think that's a good thing done through these kinds of initiatives." Several participants also spoke about the significance of not only creating greater awareness but also influencing behavior. For
Figure 3. CSUN USU Green Facts

USU Green Facts

- **Hand Dryers**
  Hand dryers reduce paper waste in restrooms and help save trees.
  The USU saves 1,500 linear feet of paper a year from using hand dryers.

- **Waterless Urinals**
  The USU has 40 waterless urinals throughout the facility and saves approximately 330,240 gallons of water a year.
  The use of waterless urinals saves enough water in two years to fill an Olympic-size swimming pool.

- **Filtered Water Bottle Refill Stations**
  This filtered refill station saves you money and allows the reuse of water bottles.
  On average 60 million water bottles get thrown away in the United States a day. Help reduce this by reusing your water bottles.

- **Natural Light**
  The SoCal Center’s use of natural light reduces the building’s overall energy consumption.
  The SoCal Center’s natural light design helped the building become 28% more efficient than 2006 LEED standards. LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council [http://www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

- **Green Carpet Standard**
  The USU has implemented a Green Carpet Standard for all new and replaced carpet.
  Our green carpet standard is 100% recyclable so it does not have to be thrown away in a landfill.
  The carpet is 100% PVC (polyvinyl chloride) free to assure safety for human health and the environment.

- **Motion Sensor Light Switches**
  Motion sensor light switches are used throughout the majority of USU facilities to reduce energy consumption when a space is not occupied.

- **Fuel Cell Heated Pool**
  The USU pool is connected to the campus hydrogen fuel cell, which uses the recycled heat to warm the pool water.

- **Drought-Tolerant Plants**
  Through the use of drought-tolerant plants that are native to California, the USU is able to use less irrigation water every year while maintaining an attractive facility.

- **Light Emitting Diode (LED) and Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) Fixtures**
  The use of low-efficiency halogen lighting has been eliminated from the USU facilities with the transition to higher efficiency Light Emitting Diode and Compact Fluorescent light fixtures.

- **USU Computer Lab Print Management**
  The USU Computer Lab has implemented a print management software program to reduce a large amount of paper waste from duplicate or accidental printing.

- **Battery Collection Station**
  A battery collection station has been established to properly recycle batteries that are hazardous waste and cannot be thrown into a regular trash bin.

- **Running Track and Wood Floors From Recycled Materials**
  The running track and wood floors in the new SRC contain a significant amount of recycled content.

- **Roof-Mounted Solar Panels**
  The SRC will utilize roof-mounted solar panels to offset total building electricity usage.

- **Recycled Power From Aerobic Equipment**
  With the latest technology in aerobic equipment, when students exercise in the new Student Recreation Center they will recycle power back into the building.
  More information on this technology can be found at [Bike & Run: A Renewable Energy Revolution](http://bikenrun.com/).

- **Duplex Printing as Default**
  The Computer Lab at the USU has implemented two-sided printing with the default setting of “duplex-mode” on all of its printers.

Source: [http://www.csun.edu/usu/go-green](http://www.csun.edu/usu/go-green)
example, Justin (UCLA) and Dolores (CSUN) described simple efforts, respectively, such as "how can we help educate students about environmental responsibility through the kind of trash cans that we have or signage that we have around the trash cans" and how best to "educate people about what they should be recycling and why they should be recycling." Lily (UCLA) explained that the intent was to help "people think before they act a little bit to actually decide what their priorities are...which I think is a good skill for people to have in the world." Using utensils as an example, Justin (UCLA) believed that by spending a bit more money on sustainable packaging, "perhaps [ASUCLA] could influence student trends as they say, 'Oh, this is a fork made from potato, and this is a compostable plate from bamboo,' that might help influence their decisions outside of the union." He also suggested that "by making [ASUCLA] suppliers carry [sustainable] product and we can buy it from them...it might help create a demand [for] more sustainable products." The consensus seemed to be that if the student union did its part to go green, then the community would ideally follow suit.

**LEED Pride.** A defining point of pride in the sustainability movement is the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification program. Administered by the US Green Building Council, LEED is a pathway for "green building leadership"(USGBC, 2015b). In order to achieve LEED certification, new construction and renovation projects must satisfy various building prerequisites. Points are then awarded for completion to attain one of four certification levels – certified, silver, gold, and platinum. The credit categories in which points can be earned include: location and transportation, materials and resources, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, sustainable sites, indoor environmental quality, innovation, and regional priority (USGBC, 2015a). The LEED program strives to encourage environmentally responsible building and development in order to achieve goals such as energy conservation, water
consumption reduction, indoor air quality improvement, better building material choices, sustainable innovation, and financial savings.

The campuses in this study each had a specific building overseen by the student union governing boards that had achieved LEED gold status: the two student recreation centers (SRC) at CSUN and CSUF and the Court of Sciences Student Center (CSSC) at UCLA. The CSUN SRC and the UCLA CSSC were under construction at the time of participant interviews and both opened in 2012; the CSUF SRC opened in 2008. When talking about sustainability, many participants spoke proudly of their LEED gold certified buildings. At CSUN and UCLA, participants noted that achieving LEED status was a specific goal during the development and construction phases of their respective projects. Jake (CSUN) stated that this "was an absolute requirement in terms of the new building," and Charlie (CSUN) recounted that the architects had told them from the beginning that "they had a lock on silver level" but that they then "made a few tweaks along the way and managed to get LEED gold." Julia (UCLA) declared that "trying to shoot for [the CSSC] to be a gold LEED building was very admirable," and Lily (UCLA) recalled that "making sure that [the CSSC] was a green building and being able to demonstrate that was one of the important priorities for [ASUCLA]." The CSUF SRC and CSUN SRC websites (http://www.asi.fullerton.edu/src; http://www.csun.edu/src) also visibly proclaim their LEED status and green building features. The websites outline the specifications that allowed the SRCs to achieve their LEED certification, such as solar paneling, natural lighting, low flow and waterless plumbing fixtures, recycled products, and energy efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Posting information online is another format in which student unions can communicate a green CPC, helping to disseminate eco-friendly information to the public while also demonstrating their environmentally conscious commitments (see Figure 3).
Student union facilities exemplify the ways in which internal CPC engagement will directly manifest in external CPC engagement. Such small and mundane board discussions about light bulbs, cleaning agents, or recycling signage translate into environmentally favorable outcomes for the entire campus community and also contribute to reducing the university's overall ecological footprint. They also provide those who are privy to the conversations an educational opportunity to understand the technicalities of implementing green initiatives and the challenges involved with sustainability efforts. These are learning chances that many individuals otherwise may not occasion to have. The decisions made and strategies undertaken by the governing boards and management staffs will then impact the overall campus in small (e.g., hand dryers instead of paper towels in lavatories) and large ways (e.g., substantive energy consumption reductions and cost savings). While the general public may not even notice these contributions or merely take them for granted, they are still the beneficiaries of such actions. However, by presenting eco-friendly information in various formats – at meetings, online, via public signage, or through official certifications – the goal is to convey an environmental CPC that becomes part of the everyday discourse.

**Individual Engagement**

The findings in the previous section demonstrate an organizational dimension of CPC, detailing the ways in which student unions can "govern consumption" (Barnett et al., 2005) by prioritizing ethical consumption values. Since student union overseers engage organizationally with CPC, they are also well-situated to connect with CPC individually. Within the realm of ethical consumption, Barnett et al. (2005) suggest there is an inter-subjective dimension as well, a means to "govern the consuming self." They explain that this facet involves individuals making conscious consumer choices that seek out ethical consumption practices and incorporating those
decisions into their daily lives. For some participants who have the decision-making authority to advance CPC at the organizational level, they also embrace CPC at the level of their own personal choices. For other participants, though they may support CPC organizationally, they do not necessarily engage with it individually. In this study, I found three overarching themes guided individuals' engagement of CPC – cost concerns, cause-related preferences, and structured choices.

Cost Concerns

In matters of consumption, financial considerations are usually key to the decision-making process. For some participants, cost concerns are paramount and eclipse their individual CPC engagement. Celia (CSUF) noted that for her, "cost has to be the first concern" because she is "on such a limited budget." She explained that she would like to practice ethical consumption but she "goes really for what is cheapest and what I can afford, and sometimes they don't always match up." Similarly, Ray (UCLA) considers himself "an environmentalist" but that he can only be "as sensitive as my pocketbook allows me to be sensitive to these issues." For Lucy and Justin, it was a matter of economic decision-making. Lucy (CSUF) maintained that "I do what I can, I recycle at home, and I think that's good enough instead of spending six dollars for a recycled cup [i.e., reusable coffee mug]." Justin (UCLA) stated, "I would say that I'm fairly socially responsible, but with a strong dose of practicality. Generally, the socially responsible choice is more expensive – otherwise it would probably be the only option – so I have to weigh the marginal costs and benefits." He tended to not buy a lot of consumer products and instead focused his CPC on healthier and organic food choices.

In addition to cost concerns, participants expressed other rationales regarding their lack of individual CPC engagement. These included the inability to make a difference, anti-trend
perspectives, and simple indifference. On this last reason, Anthony (CSUF) plainly declared that he is "not an active seeker of knowledge." Gabriel (UCLA) was more diplomatic and indicated that he was certainly in favor of things such as sustainability and fair trade but asserted, "Now, would I not buy a Russell T-shirt from Sport Chalet because of things that are going on in factories? Probably not. That's probably not where I'm going to be, but that's me." For Damian and Frank, it was about not going along with ideas they considered trendy. With respect to CPC related issues, Damian (CSUN) stated that "these are things that people of my generation are concerned about" but he felt that "not a lot of people who are overly concerned about these things actually really understand what's going on. ...Personally, I don't believe in much of that stuff. That's just me." Frank (CSUN) also understood it as a generational issue, but did acknowledge that institutionalization helps to affirm practices:

I'm the kind of person that doesn't like reacting to trends. When something picks up a momentum of that kind, it seems almost in some ways fabricated…our blue books now have to be green because we can use the blue book to convey the green message. I understand all of those things because they become things around which a current generation of students develops a lot of passion and begins to help to identify its group message to the institution, but I keep those things in stride because so often they just disappear. I think there are some things that have been done in a policy way like the LEED program and those kinds of things that now have been embraced as a part of building codes or policies or procedures. When things begin to have those kinds of elements to them, then certainly you're taking cognizance of them.

Frank and Damian's concerns that CPC may merely be a trend also extends into questions of its efficacy in supporting change. For example, while Susie (UCLA) is a proponent of ethical values
in the apparel industry, she lamented that there is a "real feeling that this is a huge and almost impossible issue to really tackle in a forthright and honest way because you might go, 'Oh, well, we won't buy this because you make it in this place where it's a sweatshop,' but it's a multinational corporation and a global world and probably everybody's a little bit tainted." Justin likewise voiced some cynicism and suggested that perhaps "good practices are in place because it saves the company money or is just some inexpensive green-washing."

Participants cited cost concerns, lack of interest, resistance to what seems trendy, and scope of effectiveness as reasons for not engaging with CPC or for doing so on a guarded basis. These sentiments may also be ones that cross the minds of those who are stronger advocates of CPC, but they may not be as pronounced. Further, some participants may not practice CPC individually, but that does not necessarily mean they do not support the values or aims behind it. This would explain why some might strongly support organizational CPC, but not practice it at the personal level. It is also worth noting that it may not be practical or feasible to always be mindful of CPC for every consumption choice. Nonetheless, the following sections will delineate the ways in which participants do deliberately consider CPC.

**Cause-Related Preferences**

An example of active engagement with CPC involves making consumer decisions based upon various causes that individuals support and that align with their personal values. Some of the personal values that participants cited as being influential in their daily decisions related to food, fair labor, and waste avoidance. For example, Jeff (CSUF) noted that when it comes to seafood, "If I'm eating that, I want it to be something that's sustainably harvested and not polluting the environment." His conviction was driven by his "interest in [a] sustainable lifestyle and conservation." Maria (CSUF) asserted that she was "against sweatshops and those
companies that support sweatshop industries" so she tried to be aware of where the clothes she
bought were coming from because "they could be using child labor or abusing just basically
anyone's rights." She recalled that one of the student organizations she was involved with had
received donations from Forever 21, a young adult clothing store known for its trendy styles and
low prices, which she knew had been implicated in sweatshop labor conditions (Li, 2012). In an
effort to bring attention to her labor concerns, she felt compelled to voice to the group, "No, this
is wrong. We can't be using these shirts even though they're donated." For Steve (CSUF), his
cause was to minimize waste. He explained, "Looking at my bin of scratch paper, I try to print a
little bit smarter every day. Double-side things. If I print things by mistake, it goes in a scratch
paper bin. If I print out a document that doesn't necessarily need to be as formal, I'll print it on
the other side of the paper. I'm not wasting a ream of paper." For these individuals, certain
sensibilities such as an awareness of food sourcing, labor practices, and paper resources
contributed to their CPC engagement.

Another facet of cause-related preferences pertained to individuals' support for or
avoidance of various companies. Participants in this study described boycotting one brand over
another and boycotting others in response to health research, LGBTQ, and workers' rights issues.
For example, Charlotte (CSUF) indicated that "if a company is supporting a cause" that she cares
about, then she would be more likely to back that company. She stated, "I'm a big proponent of
breast cancer research so if I see a label on [a product] and I know that by buying Quilted
Northern toilet paper, I'm supporting breast cancer research, I would rather spend the extra
quarter to buy that toilet paper than to buy a cheap[er] brand." At the same time, the flipside of
company support for causes also holds. For example, in an effort to demonstrate his displeasure,
Kevin (UCLA), "didn't go to Target for a year and a half because [of its] corporate donations to a
lot of anti-gay organizations." Citing her "morals and opinions about certain companies," Julia (UCLA) recounted, "For a very long time I didn't drink Coca Cola, for example, because I was aware of [its] infringement on worker rights in certain countries." Kevin and Julia both also lamented the difficulty of keeping up with boycotts of companies whose positions did not align with their values. Kevin noted that this type of purposeful decision-making is "something I aim [for] as a socially conscious human. It definitely comes into play in my daily life with everything I do." However, he also acknowledged that there is inconsistency: "Sometimes if I'm craving a burger I'll go to McDonald's even though I don't really like a lot of what they're doing for the environment. But I really want that burger. So, I am not as principled as I want to be." During her anti-soda company period, Julia pointed out the dilemma of avoiding large corporations:

It's kind of hard when you start to realize that basically everything is part of the Coca Cola Corporation or everything is part of the Pepsi Corporation. You're basically boycotting 50 brands like Nestle and Coke and Pepsi and all these other things. So it's kind of overwhelming in the sense that you can't possibly survive in the world in which you are still a consumer and you're not consuming from these companies ideally.

Despite the challenges, Julia "still makes a very, very, very big effort to be very conscious of the things that I consume." These comments suggest there is not always a bright line for cause-related preferences, but that individuals are cognizant of how they can use their consumption choices to make a statement, thereby employing CPC on a personal level.

A third feature of cause-related preferences is the consumer consciousness that it engenders and the ways in which that awareness can become ingrained in everyday practices. When certain CPC issues receive press, some participants indicate they are more likely to then follow suit. For example, Rebecca (CSUF) stated that although "I may not be the one out there
actually doing that research," when a company's practices become "something that is widely
talked about in the news or something that I've heard about on fair labor or something like that, I
definitely take that into consideration and that does impact my consumer choices." Greater
visibility of CPC movements can also help to encourage changes in practice. Maria noted that
"making the choice of going green myself is something I'm starting to do because of those trends
that I see." Even practices that are now common continue to gain traction. For Mark (CSUN), the
fact that there are "recyclable bins everywhere" on campus serves as a reminder to him to
continue the practice when off campus: "I can recycle for myself because I drink a lot of soda
and water at home. I can recycle and get change for it [i.e., cash redemption value for bottles and
cans] and, you know, why not help out?" Practices and habits of mind that have achieved
widespread consciousness, such as recycling and being more environmentally aware, have
helped to move CPC into the mainstream.

**Structured Choices**

For individuals who may not engage CPC on a regular basis with respect to their
consumer choices, they will do so on occasions when their attention is drawn to CPC-related
goods. A prominent example of this phenomenon is the Fair Trade movement. By offering
discrete product or vendor choices, individuals are encouraged to incorporate a CPC perspective
into their regular consumption practices. Fair Trade is defined as:

> A trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater
equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better
trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers –
especially in developing countries. (WFTO, 2011)
Grassroots movements such as Fair Trade Campaigns (FTC) enlist the help of towns, universities, congregations, and schools to launch Fair Trade outreach and awareness programs. Institutions that are recognized by FTC have embedded Fair Trade practices and principles into policies as well as their communities' social and intellectual foundations. Fair Trade labeling on products assures consumers that those items have been grown, harvested, crafted, and traded in a manner that not only improves the lives of the producers and artisans, but also in ways that safeguard the environment.

In terms of this study, Fair Trade was most relevant to ASUCLA since it had the appropriate channels to procure Fair Trade products to sell on campus. More specifically, it offered Fair Trade coffee options in the various coffeehouses that it operated across campus and had been doing so since 2001 (Rico, 2001). Chloe (UCLA) explained that UCLA was a "fairly early adopter of Fair Trade coffee" and while it was not feasible to only offer Fair Trade blends, ASUCLA "adopted the policy that it would offer several Fair Trade options of coffee everywhere that would be priced higher and then it would be up to the consumer to vote with which one they purchased." As far as her own purchase habits, she stated, "I'm not the kind of person who does extensive research on companies or products, but if I'm aware of a choice, like if I had a choice between Fair Trade coffee and regular coffee, I might make a choice for Fair Trade. But if it's not presented to me, I won't necessarily think of it." Jonathan (UCLA) echoed the sentiment and indicated that socially responsible products "at least get my attention." For him, it is about how the merchandise is presented. He noted there are times when he thinks, "Oh, but it's cheaper just to get this brand instead of the Fair Trade," yet stressed that "if you get somebody's attention and market it [appropriately]," then it would be more persuasive. Lily (UCLA) referenced the informational signs about what is Fair Trade and felt that "it's good for
the campus to be educating people about that kind of stuff, even in small ways" (see Figure 4). Ray, however, straightforwardly commented that "where the rubber really meets the road is, are you willing to put your money where your mouth is?" He expressed that while there may be vocal demand from certain campus constituents for socially responsible products such as Fair Trade coffee, ultimately it hinges on whether or not students actually purchase them because "if the student body in their buying power don't support it," then it becomes difficult to keep offering that product line.

Figure 4. ASUCLA Fair Trade Sign

Apart from Fair Trade offerings, institutions can be important for structuring the sphere of CPC choices in other ways. Participants described organizational undertakings that had influential impacts on their own CPC awareness, such as responsible procurement of inventory and compulsory changes. Regarding the former, Susie explained that "the problem is things aren't labeled 'made by five year old children' and 'made by well-paid adults'" so it can be confusing to determine "what's real and what's rhetoric." That is why she believed stores should
be "at least a step ahead of me because they have more ability to investigate and to make informed decisions about what they purchase." She felt it would be a problem if she had to "look at every label and then look up, 'Is this one OK or is this one not OK?'" Therefore, she "expected [ASUCLA] to handle a lot of that for me" because she did not want to "buy a product made by five-year old children in unsafe conditions, but I wanted to be able to assume that the [UCLA Store] was not going to sell me anything like that." Regarding the latter, Steve used the municipal example of waste management as something that obligated him to change his routine: "It used to be that we dump everything and [the city] sorts it for us, but now we have to sort it personally. I'm a lot more conscious about that because I could've easily just put [all refuse] in one garbage can and still throw them out in the one bin, but I'll legitimately – like when I clean my room – go through my stuff and sort through paper and plastic and trash in another." Whether it is a consumer's expectation that a company take retail responsibility or a city's expectation that its citizens take personal responsibility, the idea is that institutions can help to structure behaviors and practices.

Institutions engaging in good faith efforts to promote CPC values can elicit positive responses from individuals who may then be encouraged to amplify their own CPC engagement. For example, Lily explained that she tries to be as sustainable as possible in her own practices, but that she "won't necessarily choose one place over another because one is sustainable." However, if a place is sustainable, she does appreciate it and "might spend a little bit more money because they have greenware." Referring to the paired clusters of trash and recycling cans located throughout campus with signage proclaiming "Zero Waste by 2020," Jonathan stated, "Oh, UCLA is trying to do something to meet these sustainability, greater good [goals], so I should at least try and help them out a little bit." He noted that it does not take much effort to be
cognizant about which can is the appropriate one to use. For Maria, her sentiment was that if she felt cared for by the student union, then "it makes me proud to be part of it." If her organization was being mindful of CPC, then she would be inclined to "follow that as well so that we can become a greater community or we can bring that to our own lives and others around us." From being willing to spend more money to embracing and helping achieve institutional goals, these participants' perspectives illustrated some of the ways in which individual CPC engagement is encouraged through organizational influences.

**Chapter Summary**

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrated the ways in which student unions and those who govern them engage with CPC at the organizational and individual levels. Through the board process and as a result of specific actions taken, CPC-related issues and concerns that begin as internal board discussions transition into external engagement for the campus community. Whether it pertains to food, fair labor, or facilities, the authority and capability to "govern consumption" exists within the organizational structure of student unions. Julia's comment is evocative of this dynamic:

> Being on the board did teach me that the student union at UCLA has a lot of power...that being said, I'm not sure if we're making enough demands from the corporations that we provide business to. I mean, it's a give and take. Yes, they're there and they're a necessity and they provide us with goods, but we also provide them with a [student] market that's literally at their hands.

At the same time, those who have the opportunity of serving on governing boards or being employed as management staff may also practice CPC individually by "governing the consuming self" (Barnett et al., 2005). Sometimes there are limitations because of costs concerns. Other
times there is active awareness driven by cause-related preferences and structured choices. Individual CPC action can include making purchases that align with the consumers' personal values, choosing to support or stay away from companies depending on current issues, or having heightened awareness of what might be occurring within the realm of CPC. The findings herein revealed that organizational and individual engagement work in concert to advance CPC values.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Study Summary and Key Findings

In this study, I examined the current landscape of student unions at three campuses and discovered how these sites were leveraged to enact a critical pedagogy of consumption. Specifically, I sought to answer three primary research questions: 1) What is the contemporary structure of student unions? 2) How do student unions contribute to a critical pedagogy of consumption? 3) What are student union overseers' perceptions of ethical consumption and its practices? Using a qualitative and constructivist approach, I aimed to advance an understanding of modern-day student unions and their relevance to pedagogy and consumption. The driving purpose and significance of the study was to respond to important questions raised about marketing consumer capitalism to a captive student market and to address the concerns of placing business and consumer values above educational ones (Boyles, 2005; Farahmandpur, 2010; Giroux, 2009; Molnar, 2005; Shumar, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). More importantly, it was to understand this within the sphere of academic capitalism that has engulfed colleges and universities (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) and to advance the larger research agenda advocated by Sandlin et al. (2009) that strives to bring the sociopolitical contexts of consumption and its intersection with education to the forefront.

The key findings from this study suggest that student unions are highly responsive organizations that manifest community, commercial, and consumer values. Overall, for those who oversee student unions, there is often a strong desire to create a sense of ownership for the student union amongst the population it serves. Even when couched in language that seeks to "brand the space," the impetus is to foster a robust engagement with the student union's services and environs. Whether the motivation is merely to elevate the importance of facilities that cost
students multiple millions in fees or to simply facilitate the day-to-day of college attendance with comfort and convenience, there is usually a sincere aspiration to build a stronger community and make things better in order to enhance the college experience. At least for those involved with their governance, student unions are meaningful entities and there is genuine care and forethought as to their purpose and presence on campus.

Similarities in function and purpose across the student unions at the three campuses indicate that these spaces contribute to the vibrancy of campus life. Differences in their organizational, governance, and revenue structures reveal variations in the strategic priorities, oversight, and independence of these entities. For example, the highly fee-funded union at CSUN allows USU the luxury of transforming commercial revenue-generating space into less profitable resource centers; whereas, the revenue-heavy dependence of the union at UCLA and its purview of commercially-oriented trademarks and licensing empowers ASUCLA to internationally launch a lifestyle retail brand. As well, the strong connection to the student affairs departments of the USU and TSC encourages a more holistic student development perspective, while the absence of that tie for ASUCLA and its long history of independence induces a desire to protect its authority. What is also interesting to note is that the student unions are formally organized as separate entities at all three campuses. This legally obliges a fair amount of transparency with respect to finances and operations and enables nimble decision-making by the governing boards concerning the facilities and services.

In line with their decision-making authority, student union governing boards and management staff are tasked with representing the best interests of varying constituencies and groups, the organization itself, and the campus community at large. Members must also seek equilibrium between financial considerations and service-oriented goals. As a generally high-
traffic area of campus, student unions often have valuable square footage available for long-term
lease. Tenants can range from campus departments such as student health and student affairs to
commercial retail vendors selling various products and services. All tenants, regardless of
campus or non-campus affiliation, usually pay rent to inhabit student union-operated space. It is
the responsibility of those who oversee student unions to determine who has access to leased
space that becomes available. Since there is usually more demand for space than there is supply,
the governing board often has a strong, if not final, say in who has the privilege of becoming a
tenant. The mantra of "what the students want" drives these discussions with the possibility of
increased foot traffic and revenue welcomed as additional benefits. At times, the conversations
also consider the social and political values of prospective tenants.

The mixed-use options of student unions, especially when there is a food or consumer
products retail component, and the discussions about services, practices, and potential tenants
indicate that student unions are spaces in which the domains of campus commercialization,
critical pedagogy, and ethical consumption can dovetail to foster a sense of caring and
engagement within and amongst the community they serve. Rocky Rohwedder (2004) uses the
notion of "pedagogy of place" to suggest that campuses offer environments in which "place
shapes mind and mind shapes place" (p. 294). This study looked at the contemporary structure of
student unions and focused on their overseers to explore the pedagogy of place dynamic,
specifically pertaining to the field of consumption.

As places and models of consumption, student unions are well positioned to promote a
critical pedagogy of consumption (CPC) organizationally and individually through the actions
and practices of its governing board and management staff. From an organizational perspective,
there is both internal and external engagement of CPC. Prominent discussion or action items that
appear on meeting agendas pertaining to such concerns as social responsibility, environmental issues, labor practices, and even resource centers or gender-neutral bathrooms reflect contemporary priorities. Sometimes the priorities represent important forces of social change, sometimes they mirror trendy practices, and other times they emerge from organizational restructuring. Whatever the case, the goals and priorities that overseers of student unions undertake have the potential to impact the campus community in progressive and meaningful ways. For example, at USU they endeavored to develop a conscious consumerism program in light of Chick-fil-A's perceived transgressions; at ASUCLA, they sought to offer and highlight product from Alta Gracia, a socially responsible and living wage paying apparel company; and at TSC, they eliminated the use of Styrofoam products by a new restaurant tenant.

From an individual perspective, the student union experience can offer added insight regarding the CPC agency a person has as a consumer through one's purchasing power and the ability to demand socially responsible practices and goods. This might take the form of being conscientious about where retail products come from and the labor conditions involved in their manufacture, being compelled into changing personal practices that align with good environmental habits, or "shopping for a cause" and buying products in which proceeds go to support a worthy cause such as breast cancer research. What is possible is that the symbiosis of organizational engagement and individual engagement on a campus can translate into broader collective caring for others (e.g., workers in Honduras) and shared responsibility for the well-being of not just an organization's profits, but more importantly, its people and the planet.

Critical Reflections

This study has taken a pragmatic approach to understanding consumption on campus utilizing a CPC framework. In doing so, it has accepted that colleges and universities today are
thoroughly branded, corporatized institutions fully engaged with academic and student affairs capitalism. Ardent critics of such developments, such as Stanley Aronowitz, Ramin Farahmandpur, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren, would decry such acceptance and seek to revolutionize these environments. At heart, I agree with such critics, but in practice, I seek to understand and work within the contemporary structure. The idea is to effect small, incremental changes that add up to broader progressive transformations. Therefore, while a revolutionary version of CPC might strive to be more "radically critical or reflexively defiant" (Ozanne & Murray, 1995, p. 516) of global consumer capitalism, the findings from this study advocate for CPC as a framework for developing conscientious awareness of consumption and consumer practices within a university environment.

At the same time, there are two critical points that need to be addressed: the misguided focus on campus consumption amenities and the overconsumption of our times. First, while it is respectable that colleges and universities are focused on sustainability issues by going green and seeking LEED certification for various capital projects, it is still important to question and challenge the merits of consumption amenities in the first place. Although Jacob et al. (2013) find that the amenities contribute to positive enrollments for some colleges and universities, the decision to engage in such an arms race is redolent of imprudent decision-making by administrators detached from the academic purposes of higher education. At heart, I bemoan that our consumer culture has driven institutions to place a premium on consumption amenities at a time when the paramount value of faculty and academic tenure are being eroded. In practice, I search for educational value within the consumption environments that the folly of administrators have wrought. Though, I am also well aware that such "educational silver lining" also substantiates misguided decision-making. In other words, if my study finds educational
purpose for the consumption amenities that exist, then it also provides justification for even more
to be built.

Second, our consumer culture encourages a drumbeat of constant buying, oftentimes in
excess. Wants become (perceived) needs, our appetite for materialism increases, and we find
ourselves in a cycle of constant consumption. Furthermore, companies are hip to changing
consumer preferences and while there may be sincere desires to advance corporate sustainability
and social responsibility measures, a healthy dose of skepticism and critical questioning of such
engagement are still warranted since various corporations' progressive actions may merely be
public relations platitudes. Nonetheless, the goal of CPC as employed in this study is, at the very
least, to encourage individuals to be more socially and environmentally responsible about their
consumer behaviors, choices, and practices. Again, this is a pragmatic approach to understanding
the milieu in which we exist. At the same time, the appeal to personal agency serves to reinforce
capitalist market relations and potentially eclipses the more important goals of social inquiry and
political action. Kahn (2010) warns:

In the form of a feel good catharsis, the take home message of green consumerism is
largely to stop worrying about the big problems and to instead do one's little part for
sustainability through endless repetitions of spending on behalf of "the planetary good."

Of course, it is far from clear how increasing one's acquisition of sustainable
commodities in any way represents real opposition to either a culture defined by
hyperconsumption or an economic structure that demands it. (p. 49)

Indeed, a more radical version of CPC incorporating the voluntary simplicity movement or the
not buying it project (Grigsby, 2004; Grauerholz & Bubriski-McKenzie, 2012) might be
warranted. Despite these critical reflections, the findings from this study still have worthwhile implications for theory, practice, and future research to consider.

Implications for Theory

The findings that emerged from the research questions asked contribute to our increasing understanding of higher education and campus life in an era entrenched in commercialization and consumerism. By illuminating the contemporary structure of student unions, we can further affirm the creep of academic capitalism into student affairs capitalism (Carducci, 2010; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Lee & Helm, 2013). We can see that student unions and their governing boards are implicated in this turn. Student unions encompass considerable campus real estate and the authority that governing boards have over the use and lease of student union space entails that they have the ability and responsibility to shape that space in a way that is meaningful for the campus community. In situations where there is an emphasis on revenue generation or search for new revenue streams, the various tenants, programs, services, and activities within student unions all have the potential to contribute to the "institutional marketing of consumer capitalism" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 298). What is more, decisions about capital expenditures, whether for maintenance and simple upgrades or long-range expansion projects, can perpetuate the idea of the "college as country club" and propagate an institutional "edifice complex" (Jacob, McCall, & Stange, 2013; Vedder, 2013). A key contribution of this study is that it demonstrates how academic and student affairs capitalism dovetails with consumer capitalism in higher education.

At the same time, understanding the structure of student unions and recognizing the processes that governing boards follow for decision-making demonstrates the potential of student unions to serve as educational spaces and foster moments of pedagogy. In their articulation of
CPC, Sandlin et al. (2009) call upon educators to "explore the consumptive aspects" of educational sites and "to explore the educational and learning aspects of various sites of consumption" (p. 119). This study addressed both of these calls to action and it extended our understanding and application of the CPC framework to higher education. First, it targeted a specific consumption amenity, the student union, for examination. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that colleges and universities "increasingly foreground the consumption character and attractiveness of higher education" (p. 297-298). Student unions are a major contributor to that practice and the findings articulated in chapter four regarding the strategic priorities and organizational, governance, and revenue structures of student unions revealed how these consumption amenities gain and retain their significance on campus. Second, this study leveraged the student union as a site of consumption and the findings presented in chapter five brought to light the education and learning possibilities in the domains of food, fair labor, environmental awareness, and social responsibility.

The examples of CPC as navigated by student union overseers affirms that consumption is as much guided by social and cultural practice as it is by instrumental economic exchanges. In our consumer culture, meaning is given to and derived from consumer and marketplace behaviors (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). From a CPC perspective, another contribution of this study is its incorporation of ethical consumption values into the CPC framework and its elucidation that CPC operates at organizational and individual levels. Further, at the organizational point, there are processes to facilitate shifts from internal to external engagement. As evidenced by the reactions and actions taken regarding tomato farm workers in Florida, proponents of discriminatory marriage policies, factory workers in Latin America, green initiatives, and LEED requirements, student unions and their overseers have the agency to enact
progressive change that advocates for values such as corporate responsibility, social justice, sustainability, and workers' rights. Though, the championing of these ideals are often done in balance with the associations' financial outlook. Additionally, the perspectives that overseers individually bring to a board discussion concerning CPC issues and the insight they gain from having considered the debate from an organizational point of view consequently contributes to their own developing or continued individual engagement. Overall, CPC engagement is an iterative process that strengthens as behaviors and practices become mainstream.

Although this study primarily focused on CPC engagement at an organizational and individual level from the perspective of student unions and their overseers, the opportunities for broader campus engagement should also be considered. Greater public awareness via marketing campaigns, such as ASUCLA's Alta Gracia and Fair Trade efforts, web communications, such as the USU's and TSC's information online about the eco-friendly achievements at their recreation centers, and reporting in campus media, such as the student newspaper, about various student union CPC-related issues are examples of how CPC can be conveyed to the wider campus community. While this study did not examine the broader campus's level of CPC engagement, it has shown that community members beyond the realm of student unions and their governors are beneficiaries. Though the community-at-large may or may not engage deeply with CPC, it still benefits from CPC-related decision-making as evidenced by the more sustainable and socially responsible consumer options that are available.

If colleges and universities are to have a role in shaping students' identities and values and developing them as global citizens (Barber, 2002; Giroux, 2009), then that responsibility should also extend beyond the classroom and into campus spaces such as student unions. This study has shown that CPC is an educational agenda that student unions can foster. Through their
management and governance, there exists significant opportunities for questioning the values and assumptions that underlie consumer capitalism and reconsidering the social, cultural, economic, and political relationships that accompany the consumption activities being overseen and promoted. The CPC framework allows for careful thought about how consumer messages and values are communicated and seeks out possibilities for creating democratic and sustainable spaces within sites of consumption, including student unions.

**Implications for Practice**

With perspectives of students as consumers and captive markets proliferating within higher education, there is an urgent need to reconsider such capital-driven sentiments and seek out ways in which these developments can be appropriated for pedagogical purposes. Given that this study has focused on the commercialization and consumerism of campus life, specifically within the realm of consumption amenities, there are several implications for practice that student union professionals, student union governing boards, and student affairs administrators ought to consider.

CPC is a call for educational activism to encourage all learners that traverse a university campus – students, faculty, administrators, staff, and visitors alike – to grasp the consequences of unfettered consumer capitalism and to reconsider their own consumption behaviors and relationships to the marketplace. Various CPC-related initiatives such as sustainability efforts, going green, and LEED certification are already being or have already been implemented at student unions across the country (Stringer, 2008; Stringer, Rudisille, & Harrell-Blair, 2011). The student union professional organization, Association of College Unions International (ACUI), has a sustainability community of practice that provides an organized forum for addressing the trends and best practices in areas including:
• Building maintenance and renovation
• Culture changes
• Educational programming and outreach
• Energy consumption and auditing
• Green cleaning products
• Low-impact dining
• Sustainable purchasing
• Waste management
• Water use

This is a solid foundation for practice and one in which CPC can certainly be easily incorporated into the educational programming and outreach topic. This study has shown that student union overseers have literacy on several of the areas within this community of practice. Whether they had this knowledge prior to their leadership experience with the student union or because of it, the key point from the findings of this study is that the values of sustainability should be formally incorporated into student union governance. Two options for doing so are 1) develop a formal sustainability policy, such as the one ASUCLA has adopted, and 2) include these topics as ongoing agenda items at board and committee meetings. This would ensure that CPC is being engaged at the organizational level.

As the desire for healthier and sustainable food options on campus grows (Barlett, 2011), student unions and their overseers are in a position to facilitate that trend. Although student unions may not always have direct oversight of food operations, this study has demonstrated that they possess a formal means to govern the consumption of food and as such have the agency to promote CPC awareness in the domain of campus culinary options. As landlords for commercial space, student union overseers have tremendous influence over what food providers will be granted tenancy to operate within the student union and its satellite locations. The examples from CSUF and the TSC GB's request that Styrofoam be eliminated and from UCLA wherein the ASUCLA BOD showed signs of solidarity with tomato farm workers suggests that CPC can be
incorporated into the food service decision-making process. A purposeful consideration of CPC within the domain of food would have a substantive impact for the university community since campus dining is one of the main drivers of student union interaction.

Similarly, retail environments within student unions are added spaces for CPC engagement. Although most college stores have been outsourced to private companies (Priest, Jacobs, & Boon, 2006), if they occupy space within student unions, then student union overseers should leverage their privilege as landlords to advocate for CPC-focused consumer products, such as apparel manufactured through fair labor conditions, eco-friendly or reusable merchandise, and Fair Trade products. Further, for student unions that fall under the purview of student affairs departments, the student affairs administrators should endeavor to establish working relationships with their business affairs counterparts in charge of retail or food auxiliary services to ensure that ongoing dialogue occurs in the decision-making process. The TSC GB's food advisory committee serves as an example of how this can be achieved. In this way, student union overseers can advocate for CPC in domains in which they do not have direct authority, but for which they are a significant player given their responsibility as lease-grantors of valuable campus space. It is thus important for student union overseers to vet potential food and retail tenants for CPC-values such as social responsibility and sustainability and to reconsider their tenancy when issues counter to those values arise. This can and should be done regularly at board and committee meetings. The deliberations and outcomes of these meetings should also then be communicated to the broader campus community.

Purposeful consideration of CPC values and practices can also be incorporated into ACUI's administration, finance, and auxiliaries management community of practice. The CPC-relevant knowledge areas within this community of practice include:
• Budgeting and capital planning
• College stores
• Campus services
• Retail operations
• Food service
• Hotel operations
• Contracting and leasing
• Ethics
• Governance and campus relations
• Policies and procedures
• Strategic planning

The possibilities for college stores, retail operations, and food service have been noted above. Additionally, CPC clearly aligns well with ethics. It should also be engaged at the governance and campus relations level. This would entail adopting formal policies and procedures, such as ASUCLA’s policy on social responsibility, and would thereby influence contracting and leasing, as well as strategic and capital planning. Seeking LEED certification for student union construction and renovation projects is one example of CPC in practice within the management and facilities domain. Another CPC-oriented routine to adopt in the area of facilities is to consider the ecological impacts of maintenance practices and – as the CSUN USU has done – to communicate those green facts to the university community through signage and online information to foster greater CPC awareness. The goal is to transition organizational engagement into individual engagement.

The participants in this study exhibited different levels of engagement with CPC from non- and low-engagement due to cost concerns to higher levels of engagement including cause-related preferences and structured choices. With consumer decisions, the economic concerns of costs and prices will persist. At the same time, appeals to fairness and environmental health and presentations of and guidance towards better choices can persuade consumers to reconsider their consumption preferences and habits. What this suggests is that a strong culture of CPC-focused
governance within student unions can work to enlighten student union overseers such that they will absorb those values and develop greater CPC-consciousness. In turn, individuals who undertake an oversight role who are already well-versed or have knowledge of the conscious consumer movement can work to strengthen the CPC strategies and goals of the student union. The key implication is that the organization and the individual proceed in tandem to foster CPC and the associated spheres of ethical consumption and conscientious consumption.

**Directions for Future Research**

This study examined how student unions foster CPC. The organizational and individual engagement findings indicate that student unions are spaces in which the built environment also serves as a learning environment. Similar to Harrell's (2012) examination of "green" student unions and their influence on students' environmental attitudes and perceptions, this study further affirms that student unions are learning laboratories that provide space for multi-dimensional educational connections. Three areas for future research include: student unions in other states and at private universities, student union patrons, and other campus auxiliary units.

This study focused on three public universities in California. Feedback from my expert reviewer suggests that California may be unique in its student union structure. He remarked that few student unions across the country are separately incorporated like the unions at the Cal State universities or have as high a level of independence as at UCLA. It is possible that student unions at other private or non-Californian public universities may not have the same amount of autonomy for decision-making as the ones in this study did. While this suggests that the findings from the institutions in this study can serve as a model for how student unions in the rest of the country can adapt and promote CPC, future studies should investigate the structure of student unions and their governing boards at public universities in other states as well as private
universities in general. The studies should examine how student unions with boards that have codified authority for governance through legal incorporation, bylaws, and/or constitutions compare to those with advisory and/or programming boards. The studies should also consider how the differences impact the potential of the student union to foster CPC. Given their long union histories as founding members of ACUI, several public universities located in the Midwest would serve as exemplary cases: University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, Purdue University, and University of Wisconsin. Possible private universities with unions and boards include Baylor University, Cornell University, Emory University, and Northwestern University.

This study revealed the possibilities for CPC from the organizational standpoint of student unions and the individual perspective of student union overseers. In order to assess the effectiveness of the organizational decisions and messages being communicated and the impact of CPC on the wider community, future studies should endeavor to extend our understanding of individual CPC engagement by gaining insight from student union patrons. This would entail focusing on the community of users, such as students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors, to see if the CPC efforts of student unions and their overseers influence the attitudes, perceptions, and practices of consumers. The studies should examine whether structured choices, such as offering Fair Trade products and apparel made from companies with fair labor and living wage practices, as well as examples and communications about environmental awareness, sustainability, recycling, and other green practices have an impact on patrons. Such studies could also further affirm the findings in Harrell's (2012) study of green student unions. Additionally, the studies should investigate the cost concerns and cause-related preferences of the wider community of consumers, taking care to capture the perspectives of those who have not been exposed or are
less predisposed to the values of CPC. Understanding the sentiments of general consumers would allow student unions and their overseers to strengthen their ability to foster CPC.

Finally, this study focused on one highly visible consumption amenity, the student union. Other campus consumption amenities, auxiliary departments, and academic programs could also serve as viable units of study for their CPC potential. For example, campus areas such as bookstores, dining services, physical plant and facilities management, and residence halls encompass retail, food, and environmental endeavors that are worth examining. Future studies should also explore the potential for research partnerships with academic programs focused on a CPC agenda. Examples at UCLA include the Education for Sustainable Living Program and the Food Studies Graduate Certificate Program. Other university organizations with somewhat different structures and a clear commercial focus that could provide productive findings are student-run campus businesses and university co-operatives. Examples of the former include Georgetown University's The Corp and Rice University's The Hoot and Rice Coffeehouse. Examples of the latter include Harvard University's The Coop and the University of Texas's University Co-op.

As noted in the introduction of this study, Sandlin et al. (2009) challenged educators to explore the intersection of consumption, education, and learning by utilizing the everyday educational and learning sites that they inhabit. Critical pedagogy of consumption is viewed as a generative area of inquiry and advocacy for developing a critical consumer and educational research agenda. This study has endeavored to heed that call and the directions for future research herein will continue to advance this scholarly and practice-based agenda.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Dear [Name]:

My name is Amy Liu and I am a PhD candidate at UCLA. I am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation study about campus student unions. The study looks at the history and purpose of student unions. It also examines the current landscape of student unions and explores how these spaces can provide an educational context for understanding contemporary consumer culture. In order to understand the broader significance of student unions and their educational value, I am interested in your perspective as a board member.

As a current student member of the Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA) board of directors, I recognize the importance of student unions to the campus community. While there may be similarities in the general function of student unions, each campus is also different and your experience at your institution will allow me to gain a more comprehensive view of student unions as social, cultural, economic, and educational space.

Participating in the study would involve an interview lasting approximately one hour. During the interview, I would ask questions about your perceptions of student unions and your role in shaping them, along with questions about the student unions on your campus and how they contribute to a sense of community and public purpose. I would also ask for your thoughts on the potential of student unions to promote critical engagement with consumer issues. With your permission, I would record the interview so that I have an accurate record of our conversation. I would not include any identifying characteristics of the participants in the study, and I would keep your identity completely confidential throughout the course of this project.

If you would like to participate, please respond to this email to set up a time for our interview. I am happy to come to your campus to meet with you. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. If you would like more information about the study before deciding whether you would like to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me at amy.liu@ucla.edu.

Many thanks for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Amy Liu
amy.liu@ucla.edu
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education and Organizational Change
University of California, Los Angeles
Appendix B: Research Information Sheet

University of California, Los Angeles

Research Information Sheet

Campus Student Unions as Spaces for Fostering a Critical Pedagogy of Consumption

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Amy Liu, M.A., a doctoral candidate, under the supervision of Professor Robert Rhoads, Ph.D., from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a member of your institution's student union governing board. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study looks at the history and purpose of student unions. It also examines the current landscape of student unions and explores how these spaces can provide an educational context for understanding contemporary consumer culture.

PROCEDURES

Participating in this study involves an interview lasting approximately one hour. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your perceptions of student unions and your role in shaping them, along with questions about the student unions on your campus and whether they contribute to a sense of community and public purpose. You will also be asked for your thoughts on the potential of student unions to promote critical engagement with consumer issues. The interview will be recorded with your permission and will take place at a time and campus location convenient to you.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research. However, your contribution may provide greater understanding about the broader campus significance of student unions and their educational value. Your participation will also help higher education scholars and administrators to articulate how auxiliary campus operations can contribute to the creation of democratic and sustainable spaces.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive no payment for your participation.
CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. I will not notify anyone that you are participating in this study and the recording of this interview will be available only to me and to a paid transcriber. As a participant, you have the option to review the audio recording of your interview. You will also be given a copy of your transcript and be invited to comment on it. Your name and any identifying characteristics will not be used in any reports, papers, or articles developed from the collected materials without your explicit permission. Rather, I will use a pseudonym of your choice to refer to any data from you included in future publications and presentations.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You may choose whether to be in this study or not. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and remain in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Amy Liu at amy.liu@ucla.edu or Robert Rhoads at rhoads@gseis.ucla.edu at any time.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.
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<th><strong>Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet</strong></th>
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Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Governing Board/Management Staff Role

1) Please describe your involvement with the student union.
   - Please describe your board role and its expectations and responsibilities. Why were you interested in the position? What are the benefits and challenges of your role?
   - On what committees do you serve and what does that entail?
   - To what extent do you feel you have a hand in shaping the union?

Purposes and Features

2) What is your vision of what a student union should be? [BIG PICTURE FOCUS]
   - What are its purposes and goals? Whom does it serve? What does it provide?
   - What message should a union convey/communicate?
   - What is its campus significance?

3) Please describe your student union. [LOCAL CONTEXT]
   - What are the atmosphere and general vibe of your union?
   - What is the campus perception of your union?
   - What do you value about your union? How does it compare to your vision of what a union should be? How does it compare to other unions you have seen/experienced? How does it contribute to your own education?

Community and Commerce

4) What are the sources of funding for your union? What activities contribute to revenue generation?
   - How and to what extent does generating revenue factor into the union's purposes & goals? What strategies have been adopted (e.g., naming rights) to further this?
• What (formal or informal) principles and values guide the commercial activities? What incentives does the union receive from companies/corporations that provide services?

5) What is the union's role to the community (please define "community") (campus and public?)?

• In what ways does your union contribute to a "sense of community"/demonstrate its commitment to the "community"?

• How are you a member of the community? What is your experience with the community? How connected to the union do you feel?

6) What balance should there be between community and commercial/retail in a union? How well does your union achieve that balance? Do the offerings/services that contribute to community and/or commerce overlap? How?

• What sets your union apart from other similar community and commercial/retail entities (e.g., residence halls, recreation centers, dining halls, bookstores) offered elsewhere (on or off campus)?

**Governing Board/Management Staff Experience**

7) During your board tenure, what (prominent/controversial) issues concerning the union have there been? Please describe the issue and the resolution.

• Who was involved with these issues? What were those involved requesting?

8) Can you give other examples of board decisions you had to make? Please describe how you made those decisions.

• What are the most important considerations you have in mind when making board decisions? How do you balance what you feel is appropriate versus what you believe the larger campus wants?
Consumer (and other role) Considerations

9) Now I would like to focus on your personal interactions with the student union in your various campus roles.

- As a student/staff/alumni, what attracts you to the union and why? What troubles you about the union and why?
- As a board member, what attracts you to the union and why? What troubles you about the union and why?

10) Now think about your experience as a consumer, what attracts you to the union and why?

What troubles you about the union and why?

- What consumer trends do you see at your union (e.g., fair trade, sustainability/recycling, green initiatives, corporate social responsibility, menu labeling, social media marketing, increased advertising, labor/living wage practices for workers, philanthropy-connected purchasing, healthy food choices)? What is your understanding of these trends? In what ways do they impact your own choices? In what ways do they impact the campus and/or greater public?

- What considerations do you give to a company's practices/ethics before making a purchase (e.g., apparel, food, books, consumer goods) and/or soliciting a service (e.g., banking, ATMs)?

- Some have suggested that to some extent student unions contribute to the promotion of consumerism. What marketing strategies does your union employ? How do you feel about having consumer goods/services marketed to you? How do you feel about corporate retail services in the union (chains, banks, ATMs, shops)? How do you feel about encouraging students and others to engage in consumer activities in unions?
Appendix E: Member Check Email

Dear NAME:

Thank you for your participation in my dissertation study about student unions. After taking a hiatus from it to teach an undergrad class, I have now resumed work on the study. As promised when we last spoke, attached please find a transcript of our interview last summer. This document is direct from the transcribers, and I have not yet had an opportunity to review it for typos. However, any spelling or grammatical errors will be corrected prior to completion of the study.

Since it has been some time, below is an abstract of my study for your reference. When you get a moment, I kindly ask that you review the transcript. You are welcome to provide any additional comments or to clarify anything previously stated. If you would like to offer further feedback on your transcript, please reference the line number in the left margin and provide your notes to me by July 1st. After that time, I will proceed with data analysis.

If you are willing to answer follow-up questions based on themes that emerged in some of the interviews, please let me know and I can provide the questions via email.

Thank you again for your participation. I look forward to resuming work on this study and will be happy to provide you with a copy of the final dissertation when completed.

Best wishes on your summer and/or post-graduation plans!

Thank you kindly,
Amy

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Amy Liu
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education & Organizational Change
Teaching Fellow, Collegium of University Teaching Fellows
University of California, Los Angeles

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Abstract: This study looks at the history and purpose of student unions. It also examines the current landscape of student unions and their function as centers of community and commerce. Additionally, the study explores how student unions can provide an educational context for understanding our contemporary consumer culture.
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