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ABSTRACT

In January 1972, 3,320 faculty members and administrators at 12 urban multicampus community college districts were asked to indicate their perceptions of the distribution of decision-making authority and influence among six organizational levels (the board of trustees, the district administration, the unit administration, deans, department chairmen, and faculty members) with regard to five broad organizational functions (professional personnel management, student personnel management, budgetary management, program development, and community services management). Respondents were also asked to indicate their perceptions of organizational effectiveness. A response rate of 60 percent was obtained. Conclusions indicate that: (1) these 12 institutions are not highly centralized and they differ primarily in the patterns of centralization/decentralization within their units rather than between units and the district office; (2) neither a highly centralized nor a highly decentralized distribution of authority is a primary determinant of effectiveness; and (3) there is a great increase in effectiveness if participation in decision-making is simultaneously increased for staff members at all hierarchical levels. Appendices include characteristics of the 12 institutions studied and graphs illustrating the patterns of organization, authority, and effectiveness discovered. (DC)

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CENTRALIZATION/
DECENTRALIZATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
IN URBAN MULTI-UNIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEMS

A Summary Report

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RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN CENTRALIZATION/DECENTRALIZATION AND
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN URBAN MULTIUNIT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEMS

Decision-Making in Multiunit Community College Systems

Discussions among administrators of multiple site community college systems often concern the question of how best to organize these institutions. The goal sought stresses maximum utilization of size and resources of the whole system while it simultaneously strives to provide each of the multiple units enough autonomy so that they can realize the advantages of a smaller, single-unit college.

A great deal of divergent opinion has been focused upon the merits of "centralization" versus "decentralization," these terms being used to conceptualize differences in allocation of control and authority over decisions made within multiunit college systems. Most often, centralization is presumed to be characterized by a greater amount of decision-making at the district level; decentralization is presumed to entail more decision-making within the separate units. In addition, units themselves can vary in the extent to which decisions are generally made by their chief administrators as contrasted with deans, department chairmen, or faculty members. In this sense, individual units of multiunit systems might themselves be more or less centralized or decentralized. Centralized/decentralized decision-making between the district office and component units is considered as "system-wide"; centralized/decentralized decision-making between unit chief administrators and other administrative and faculty levels within individual units is called "intra-unit."

Advocates of centralized multiunit administration generally stress greater economy, uniformity of decisions, and responsive service supposedly attainable through centralized management. The additional economy is to be obtained because centralization is expected to require fewer administrators, avoid duplication of facilities and equipment, and improve coordination of program planning. Uniformity of decisions is sought with regard to admissions standards, program requirements, academic standards, and maintenance. Responsiveness is believed to result because a strong district administration can more readily

perceive overall needs and immediately authorize action without having to convince other organizational levels.

Decentralization is said to enhance flexibility, curtail bureaucracy, provide a more creative work environment, and improve the responsiveness of units to local needs. Flexibility and responsiveness are both supposed to be attained by authorizing administrators in each unit to respond to the particular needs of their immediate staff and surrounding community. Thus decentralization is expected to facilitate decision-making by persons who, because of their proximity to the situation, are more sensitive to changing local conditions. Proponents of decentralization also believe that in a democratic society more widespread participation in decision-making will provide a more efficient and creative work environment for the total staff.

Focus of the Study

In January, 1972, a study was conducted through the Center for the Study of Higher Education, University of Michigan, which examined several aspects of these complex questions concerning multiunit community colleges. The study was an effort to clarify some of the issues involved and to suggest guidelines based upon a careful, though admittedly preliminary, examination of a sample of multiple site institutions.

Patterns of centralization/decentralization were measured, identified, and analyzed. The aim was to examine relationships among these patterns and to draw from them information about what actually was taking place and suggestions about how improvements might be attained. The strategy was to provide information to guide selective adjustment of patterns of influence and authority among various organizational levels so that effectiveness of the multiunit community college system might be increased. This study did not presume to recommend adoption of either a highly centralized or a highly decentralized administrative posture either by an individual community college system or by multiunit community colleges in general. Specifics about the study are described in Appendix A.

Measurement of centralization/decentralization

The relative centralization of multiunit systems was measured in terms of the distribution of influence and authority among six organizational levels:

1) the board of trustees, 2) the district administration, 3) the unit administration, 4) deans, 5) department chairmen, and 6) faculty members. The distribution of influence and authority was measured with regard to decision-making associated with each of sixteen activities common to most community colleges selected so as to be generally representative of five broad organizational function areas: 1) professional personnel management, 2) student personnel management, 3) budgetary management, 4) program development, and 5) community service management. These activities were grouped into four empirically derived activity clusters which are illustrated in Table 1. A more extensive discussion of this clustering process appears in Appendix B.

TABLE 1
EMPIRICALLY DERIVED ACTIVITY CLUSTERS

Descriptive Cluster Identification	Activities Included
Faculty-Oriented Activities	1. Recruitment of new faculty members 2. Assignment of faculty to units 4. Evaluation of faculty for promotion, tenure, or merit increases
Department-Oriented Activities	7. Formulation of teaching loads and schedules 10. Determination of policies to govern admission to specific certificate programs 13. Deletion of courses/programs 15. Initiation of new transfer programs
Unit-Oriented Activities	12. Preparation of the academic request budget 14. Initiation of new community service programs 16. Initiation of new occupational programs
System-Oriented Activities	3. Transfer of funds from one academic program to another 6. Development of criteria for admission of students 8. Coordination of efforts to promote the college with the community 9. Alteration of priorities within operating budget categories

The pattern of centralization/decentralization within a multiunit system was characterized, then, by the distribution among six organizational levels of influence and authority over decision-making associated with sixteen representative activities. Specifically, three facets of centralization/decentralization were measured for each activity: 1) control distribution--the average amount of influence exercised by members at each organizational level, 2) control level--the extent of influence exercised by all members throughout the system,¹ and 3) authority location--the organizational level which generally holds authority to make binding decisions regarding a particular kind of activity. For the most part, these three facets of centralization/decentralization were measured for the entire system. Some additional consideration was given to the same facets of centralization/decentralization within units.

Measurement of effectiveness

Measurement of organizational effectiveness necessarily involved application of value judgments to the problem of defining what constitutes effectiveness. The traditional strategy has been to measure the effectiveness of an organization by the degree to which it realizes its goals. In an effort to move away from complete dependence upon goal-measurement, the present study measured effectiveness in terms of 1) responsiveness--the flexibility with which the community college system responds to expressed needs and pressures from its students, faculty members, and from various agencies within its surrounding community, and 2) efficiency--the extent to which the institution possesses attributes conducive to effective operation regardless of the particular goals sought: a high degree of social integration among members at different levels; a positive social climate characterized by prevailing attitudes

¹ Administrators in both industrial and educational enterprises have historically regarded retention of control by upper echelons as an essential prerequisite to successful management of multiunit institutions. Yet a large body of research indicates that simultaneous increases in control exercised by more than one level are not only possible but desirable. The basic premise is that both the distribution of control among various organizational levels, and the total amount of control exercised by all members of an organization, are independently variable. Consequently, the average amount of control exercised by all members can be separately measured, and may have an independent and potentially important effect upon organizational effectiveness. In the present study this facet of centralization/decentralization patterns was identified as the "control level" of an organization, and was measured in addition to control distribution and authority location.

of trust, commitment to district goals, teamwork, and interaction among members; and a high degree of capability to accomplish organizational activities.

Patterns of Centralization/Decentralization

Contrary to the prevailing conventional expectations, the evidence shows that these multiunit community college systems were not highly centralized in the sense of district versus unit control. Those activities oriented primarily to the entire system (see Table 1) were controlled by unit rather than by district administrators. Further, a great deal of influence and authority was exercised over most activities by the various administrative levels within the component units. For the most part, the greatest amount of influence upon activities oriented primarily to a given organizational level was exercised by the next higher level. Consequently the faculty emerged as far less influential upon decision-making than other professional members of these organizations.

The twelve institutions differed primarily in the patterns of centralization/decentralization within their units rather than between units and district office. Differences among systems were greatest for control and authority over faculty-oriented activities. In general, the location of authority tended to be somewhat higher for all activities than the location of greatest influence. These findings are analyzed in greater detail in Appendix B.

From an administrative point of view, a sufficient amount of control and authority seemed to be lodged within the units to ensure their ability to respond to internal needs and pressures perceived by those involved in the local situation. Closer examination, however, indicated that those most directly charged with the actual instructional process--faculty members, and in some cases department chairmen--did not exercise a very great amount of influence upon decision-making associated with any of the sets of activities, including those concerned primarily with instruction of students.

Patterns of Effectiveness

Staff members in the twelve institutions generally reported that their institutions were quite responsive to the expressed needs of students and faculty members. On the other hand, many reported less than adequate mechanisms for receiving and processing timely information about changing needs. Over half

of the participants in the study reported that methods and policies for assessing the quality of instruction were unsatisfactory.

A surprising number of staff members at all levels reported a very low level of trust within their community college. Most respondents reported that faculty members and administrators within the units were generally responsive to changing needs, and receptive to new information. On the other hand, more than one-fourth of the participants regarded their district administrators and trustees as unresponsive, and generally inaccessible to members at lower hierarchical levels. Differences were found among individual institutions; these are described in greater detail (without identification of individual systems) in Appendix C.

Relationships Between Patterns of Centralization/ Decentralization and Patterns of Effectiveness

The most conclusive findings

Organizational effectiveness is enhanced by achieving a carefully formulated balance among various patterns of centralization/decentralization rather than by adhering to either extreme. Institutions which rank high on all measures of effectiveness tend to have certain patterns of centralization/decentralization in common.

None of the "most effective" institutions ranked as either the most highly centralized or most highly decentralized.² This relationship entailed whether centralization/decentralization was measured system-wide or within the component units. Findings showed that the most advantageous pattern of centralization/decentralization varies for sets of activities which generally affected different dimensions of the organization--the faculty, departments, units, or the entire system.

The most effective institutions had relatively large amounts of control concentrated at the level most affected, or at the next higher level, for faculty-oriented and department-oriented activities. On the other hand, the greatest concentration of influence upon unit-oriented and system-oriented activities was at the unit administration level. Authority in these institutions was generally located at least one level higher than the location of greatest influence. Although a moderate degree of decentralization of authority

Appendix C, Figure 22 shows institutional means of an organizational effectiveness index, the average of the four responsiveness indices and the three efficiency indices.

over most activities was found to be advantageous to the unit administration, it appears equally important that authority over activities which have broad impact throughout the system be retained at the district administration level.

It is generally agreed that persons who are experiencing a situation tend to differ in their perceptions of it and that these perceptions may differ from reality. Nonetheless, people's views of events within a multiunit community college system are likely to influence other events, including some which are reflected in the effectiveness of the organization. An important determinant of organizational effectiveness is the extent to which faculty members and administrators at various levels perceive a well-defined control and authority structure. When members at various levels agree more fully on the amount of control each organizational level exercises, and on the location of authority, the institution operates more effectively. In other words, the more effective institutions tended to be those in which various members as well as each administrative unit had a clear understanding of the authority and responsibilities of the others. A well-defined and generally accepted control and authority structure is conducive to greater organizational effectiveness even if members do not generally agree that the structure is ideal.

The most conclusive finding was that organizational effectiveness is enhanced when all staff members in either an entire system or a single unit exercise, on the average, a greater amount of control over decision-making. The implication is that there is a great deal of advantage in simultaneously increasing the participation in decision-making by staff members at all hierarchical levels. This finding helps explain why neither a highly centralized nor a highly decentralized distribution of influence or authority is a primary determinant of effectiveness. The most important determiner of effectiveness is not who has power in relation to whom, but rather how much influence everyone in the organization feels he has.

The level of control in an organization can vary independently from the way in which it is distributed among various organizational levels. Further, since the total amount of control in an organization can be increased, the influence exercised by lower and upper echelon members can be increased simultaneously. More specifically, administrators can increase organizational effectiveness by maximizing the amount of control each organizational level exercises over a set of activities through application of participative management techniques. Administrators of these institutions would be well-advised to

investigate means whereby they can effect an increase in the control level which members at all organizational levels perceive.

A great deal of organizational research and writing has been directed toward the apparent association between the extent of participative management (as indicated by the average level of control within the organization) and organizational performance. One prominent advocate of these management techniques is Rensis Likert.³ Likert recognizes the difficulty of bringing about rapid changes within a complex organization, but nonetheless suggests several procedures whereby increased participation can be attained: 1) increased use of group decision-making and group methods of supervision and evaluation at all levels; 2) group participation in goal setting, both for the entire organization and for its component units; and 3) increased stress upon the use of supportive personal and professional relationships between members of higher and lower organizational levels, particularly those which are more widely separated. Most members of the organizations studied in this research project were less than satisfied with the extent of their involvement in joint administrative/faculty decision-making, with the quality and amount of upward and downward communication, and with the degree of openness they experienced when seeking to present new ideas to members at higher administrative levels. From all indications, these institutions can profit from careful examination of opportunities for increased participation in decision making.

The initial effort to increase effectiveness should be directed toward providing shared leadership with regard to those activities which have their greatest impact upon the system as a whole. Although it was found essential that the greatest amount of influence be exercised by unit administrators, it is equally apparent that effectiveness will be increased if other levels are given increased influence as well. Even faculty members are more concerned that all levels share a greater amount of influence upon system-oriented activities than that the faculty be given a greater amount relative to the other levels. Among the four sets of activities, faculty-, department-, unit-, and system-oriented, members at all levels were generally most concerned that the average level of control over system-oriented activities be increased.

³ See Rensis Likert, *The Human Organization: Its Management and Value* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 47-132.

By far the strongest relationship was found between control level over system-oriented activities and the effectiveness of organizational performance.

Specific findings about efficiency

Of the three aspects of centralization/decentralization measured (control distribution, control level, and location of authority), the most important determinants of organizational efficiency were the average level of control throughout the organization over system-oriented and faculty-oriented activities. In each case, a higher level of control was associated with greater organizational efficiency. A particularly strong relationship was found between the average level of control over system-oriented activities and the extent to which members report that their community college district is a good place in which to hold their own position. On the other hand, the social climate within the individual units was most affected by the level of control within units for department-oriented and unit-oriented activities.

Efficiency is maximized when the distribution of influence over all four sets of activities is moderately decentralized, with the greatest concentration somewhere within the units. However, the optimum location of authority is at least one level above that which is most affected by each set of activities. Location of authority at a lower level was shown to be strongly dysfunctional. The location of authority and the distribution of influence need to be clearly differentiated. The ideal pattern appears to entail greater decentralization of influence than authority, together with a generally higher average level of control throughout the entire system.

Specific findings about responsiveness

Among the facets of centralization/decentralization measured, those most likely to affect the responsiveness of an institution to pressure from external constituencies are the distribution of influence upon faculty and department-oriented activities, and the system-wide level of control over unit-oriented activities. Similarly, the distribution of influence upon department-oriented activities is most likely to affect responsiveness to internal pressure from students and faculty members. Responsiveness also was greater in institutions with 1) a higher level of control within units, 2) a highly decentralized distribution of control between unit administration and other levels within the units, 3) a higher system-wide level of control over all activities, and 4) location of authority over faculty-oriented activities at a relatively lower organizational level.

Greater responsiveness to external needs, aside from those expressed in pressure upon the institution, was found in organizations which had a higher level of system-wide control for department, unit, and system-oriented activities, together with a somewhat decentralized location of authority over system activities. Greater responsiveness to internal needs was related to a highly decentralized system-wide control distribution for unit and system activities, a higher system-wide level of control for all activities, and a higher level of control within units for faculty-oriented activities.

Conclusion

Patterns of centralization/decentralization in the twelve multiunit systems studied showed that none of these institutions are highly centralized with regard to comparison between district office and component units. In general, the greatest concentration of influence for most activities was at one or more organizational levels within the units. The district office appeared to be more concerned with coordinating than controlling the various units in these systems. In this respect, all twelve multiunit systems are comprised of a loosely federated cluster of semi-autonomous units. The real issue concerning centralized/decentralized patterns of decision-making may focus less on the relationship between the district office and the units and more on that which exists among organizational levels within units.

There is strong evidence that patterns of control and authority over some activities are best more centralized, and over others are best more decentralized. Faculty members and administrators generally agreed, for example, that while a more centralized decision-making structure for system-oriented activities was perfectly logical, control over faculty-oriented activities should be more decentralized. The traditional question of centralization versus decentralization is apparently best replaced by more careful consideration of the optimal patterns of control and authority over different sets of activities. Effectiveness is most likely to be maximized by efforts to simultaneously increase the amount of control exercised by more than one organizational level. Techniques of participative management are introduced as one means of directing this kind of change effort.

This research has demonstrated the complexity of relationships among patterns of control, authority, and effectiveness in urban multiunit community colleges. Findings underscore the fallacy of seeking to establish patterns which represent one extreme or the other.

Although the researchers are interested in the practical administrative problems encountered in these complex institutions, they are fully aware that findings to date are of greater theoretical than practical interest. This report is intended to serve primarily as a status report of apparent relationships, rather than as an attempt to provide prescriptive solutions. Perhaps the greatest success of the study thus far has been in clarifying some of the questions which must be asked in order to achieve greater understanding of administrative structure in multiunit community college systems.

In the meantime, the most conclusive finding from this research is that efforts to improve the organizational effectiveness of multiunit community college systems can productively be concentrated upon development and implementation of strategies for increasing the extent to which staff members at all levels participate in shaping the organization and directing its activities. Results to date indicate that this kind of management posture will optimize the efficiency of multiunit community college systems.

April 29, 1974.

John A. Jenkins
Joseph G. Rossmeier

APPENDIX A

Characteristics About the Sample of Multiunit Community College Systems and the Respondents

The population of thirty medium-sized urban multiunit community colleges

The thirty medium-sized urban multiunit community colleges in the United States enrolled in 1971-1972 nearly a half million students, or approximately twenty percent of all students attending community colleges. These thirty systems contained eighty units or campuses. Over sixteen percent of all faculty members teaching in community colleges in 1971-1972 were associated with one of these thirty multiunit systems. These representative figures indicate the extent of impact which these multiunit community colleges have upon the overall community college movement in the United States.

The twelve multiunit systems studied

The study dealt with a nationally representative sample of twelve urban multiunit community college systems (See Table 2). Within the twelve participating institutions, information was requested from 3,320 faculty members, department chairmen, deans, unit administrators, and district administrators. The findings presented were based upon perceptual data from questionnaires returned by approximately sixty percent of the faculty members and administrators and by data obtained from published documents.

TABLE 2

THE TWELVE MULTIUNIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEMS

Coast Community College District Costa Mesa, California
Cuyahoga Community College District Cleveland, Ohio
Macomb County Community College District Warren, Michigan
Maricopa County Community College District Phoenix, Arizona

TABLE 2. continued...

Metropolitan Community College District Kansas City, Missouri
Montgomery College Rockville, Maryland
Peralta Community College District Oakland, California
San Diego Community College District San Diego, California
Seattle Community College District Seattle, Washington
State Center Community College District Fresno, California
Tarrant County Junior College District Fort Worth, Texas
Washington State Community College District Five Everett, Washington

The twelve multiunit community colleges included in this study operated thirty-five separate campus or college units in 1971-1972. Between 1969 and 1972 the average system had increased by 2.9 units. During this same period headcount enrollment had increased by an average of 33.6 percent. Increases in enrollment within single institutions ranged from 2.3 to 59.6 percent. In October, 1971, these twelve institutions enrolled slightly more than 40 percent of all full- and part-time students attending medium-sized multi-unit community colleges. These systems employed 44.1 percent of all part-time and full-time faculty members and 40.6 percent of all full-time administrators associated with the population of thirty multiunit community colleges.

Over 90 percent of the administrator and faculty respondents indicated that their ethnic background was white; values ranged from 83.2 percent to 96.1 percent among the institutions. In only one institution was the number of black respondents over 10 percent; the average was 3.8 percent. The male-female ratio of respondents was almost perfectly constant for all twelve

institutions--approximately three times as many males as females.

Over 50 percent of the respondents had been affiliated with their institution for less than six years. Nearly 60 percent had been in their present position for less than five years. The largest percentage of faculty members (31.3) had come to their present positions from elementary or secondary school positions. The next largest percentages had been previously employed in business or industry (19.6) or enrolled as full-time students (16.5). Almost none had previously taught in two- or four-year colleges or universities. An overwhelming majority (17.3 percent) of faculty members reported having the master's degree; 11 percent reported having a doctorate or professional degree.

Almost three times as many respondents reported living within the district of their community college as opposed to living elsewhere. In three of the twelve institutions over 85 percent of the respondents lived within the district.

APPENDIX B

Patterns of Centralization/Decentralization Among the Twelve Multiunit Systems

Distribution of control

The evidence indicates that unit administrators in all twelve systems exercise a great deal more influence upon ongoing decision-making and hold a greater amount of authority than do the district administrators. While there were differences from one community college system to another, the more pronounced differences were found within the component units (campuses) rather than between central district and unit administrations. In comparison with the various administrative levels, faculty members were found to have little influence in any of the systems.

Within each community college system the influence exercised by various organizational levels was compared separately for different activities. It was discovered that in all the institutions similar groupings of activities could be identified for which the distribution of influence was similar. Activities with similar patterns of influence did not necessarily originate from the same function area (e.g., budgetary management, professional personnel management). Instead, the sets of activities tended to be those which generally were of greatest concern to one particular dimension of the community college—the faculty, the departments, the units, or the entire system. For convenience in referring to these sets of activities which have similar patterns of influence, each is characterized by a descriptive title which indicates its principal orientation: 1) faculty-oriented activities, 2) department-oriented activities, 3) unit-oriented activities, and 4) system-oriented activities. These sets are summarized in Table 1. Graphic displays of these sets of influence patterns are presented below in Figures 1-4.

Figures 5-12 illustrate for each institution the control distribution for each activity set. The mean control distribution across all twelve institutions for each activity set is also given.

Not unexpectedly, the trustees were found to exercise a relatively small amount of influence upon ongoing decision-making in comparison with administrators and faculty members. More surprising was the fact that district adminis-

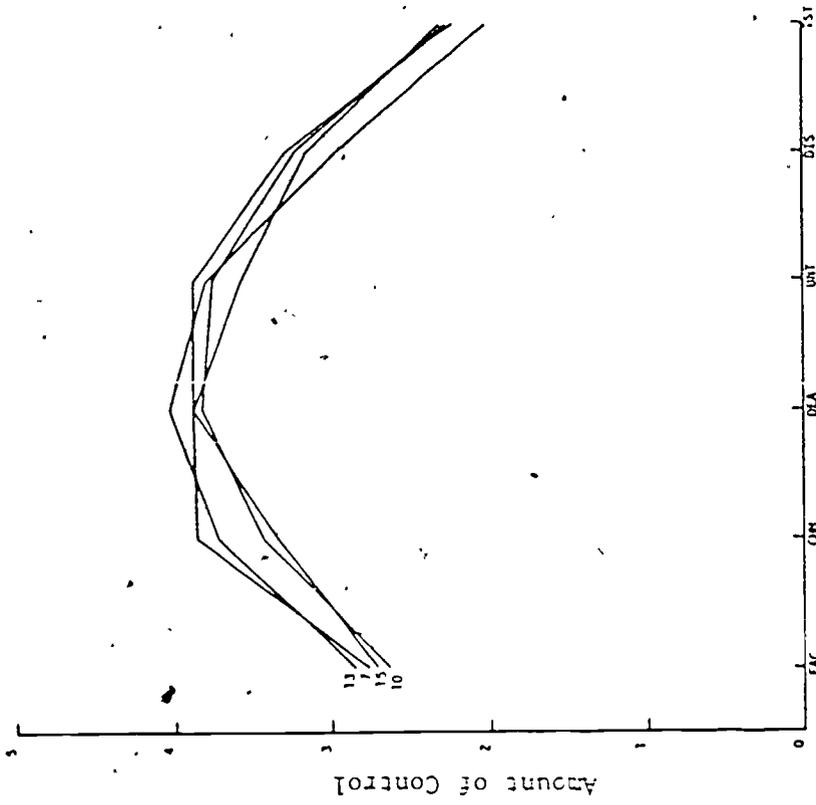


Figure 2. Activity control profiles for department-oriented activities

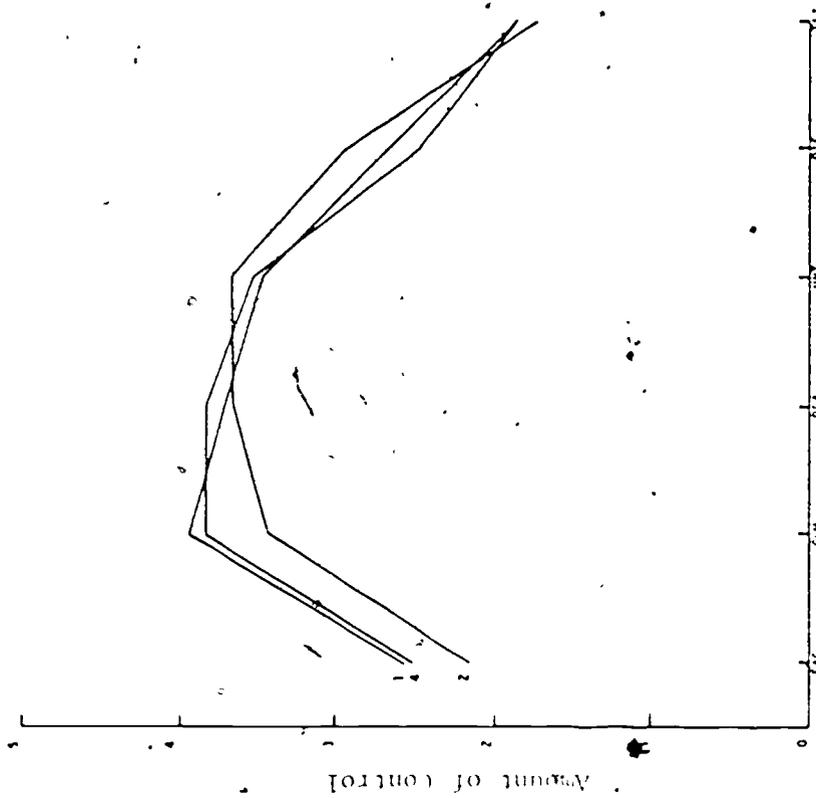


Figure 1. Activity control profiles for faculty-oriented activities

This small graph shows a single profile with a peak at OM (~2.8) and a dip at DCA (~1.8).

Unit	Amount of Control
FAC	1.8
OM	2.8
DCA	1.8
DIS	2.8

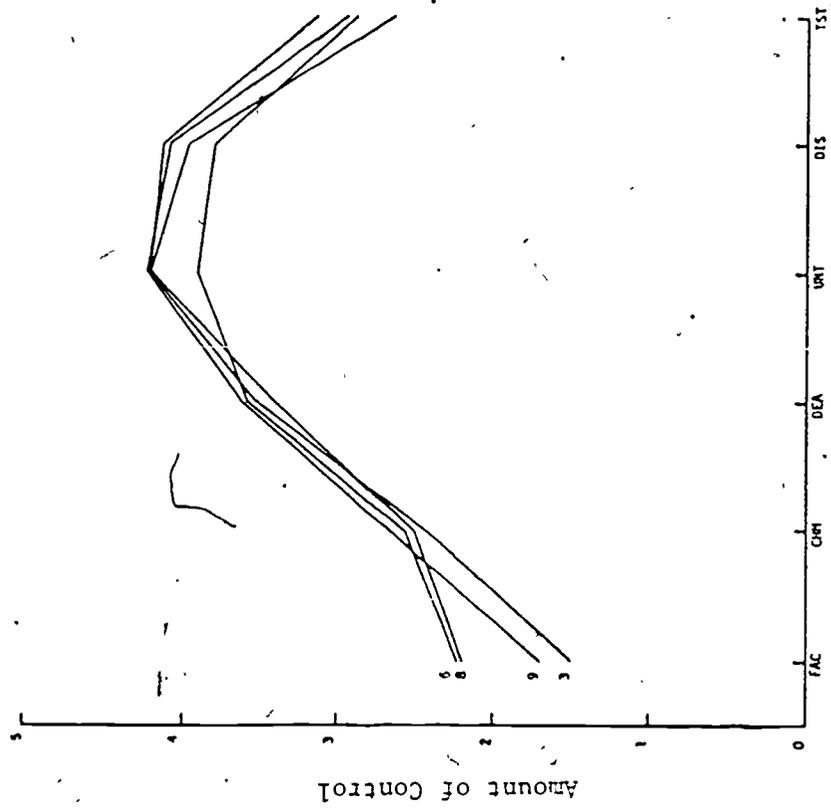


Figure 4. Activity control profiles for system-oriented activities

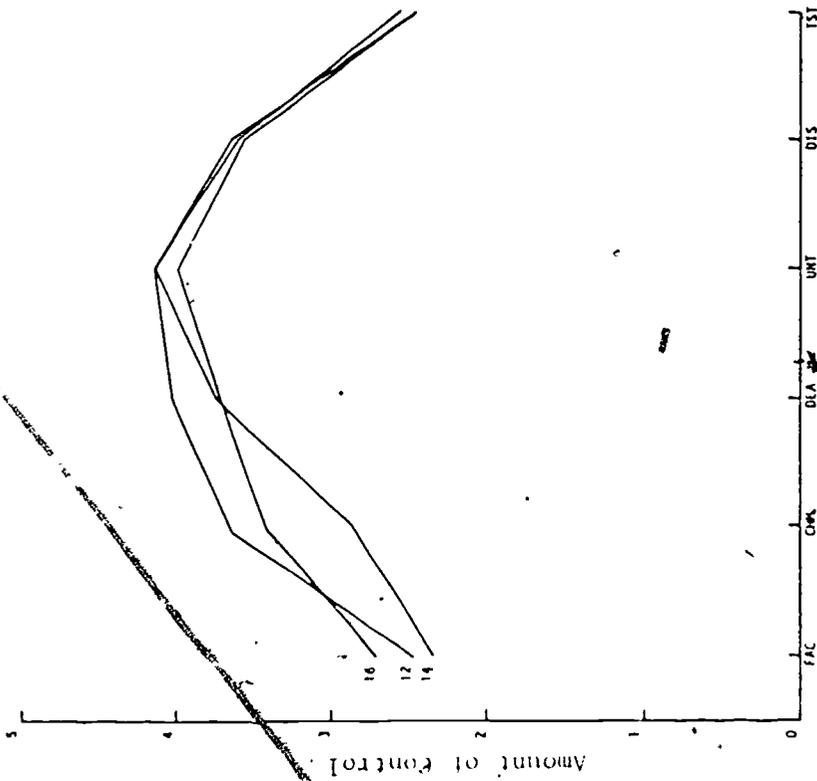


Figure 3. Activity control profiles for unit-oriented activities.

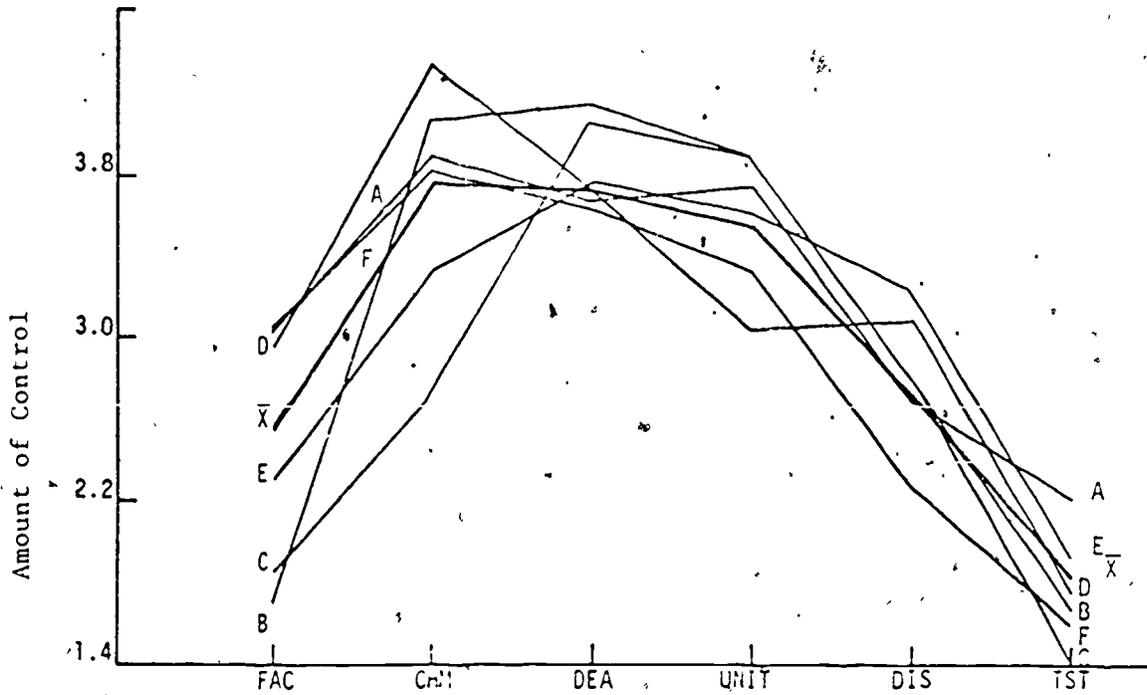


Fig. 5. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the faculty-oriented activities for institutions A through F.

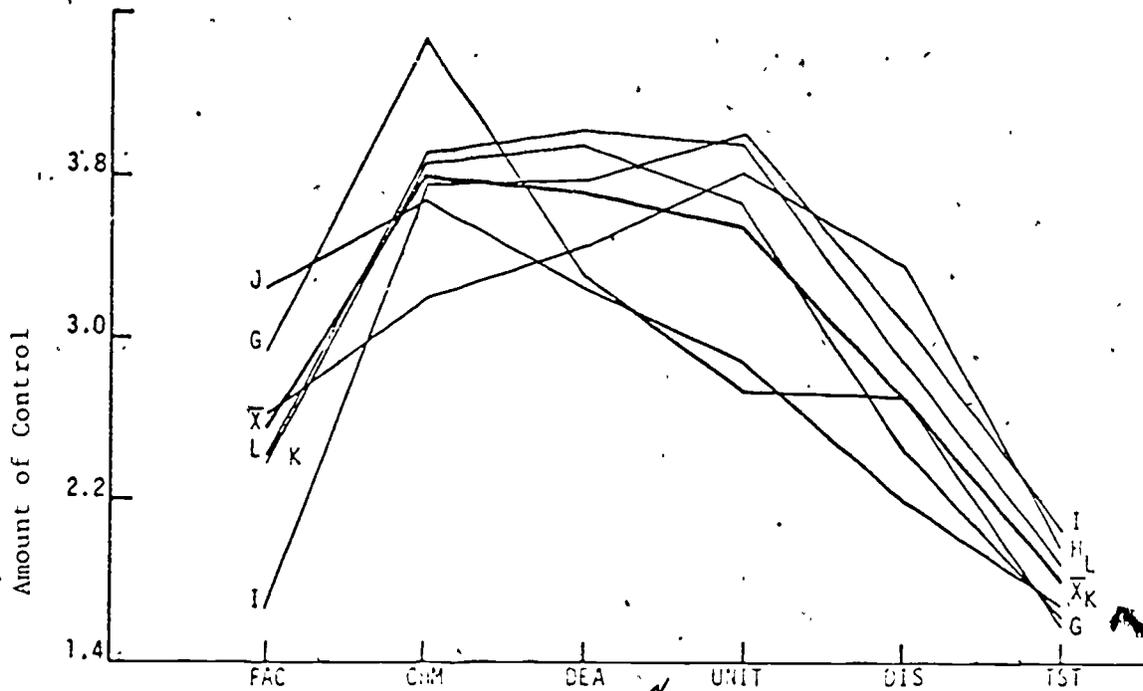


Fig. 6. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the faculty-oriented activities for institutions G through L.

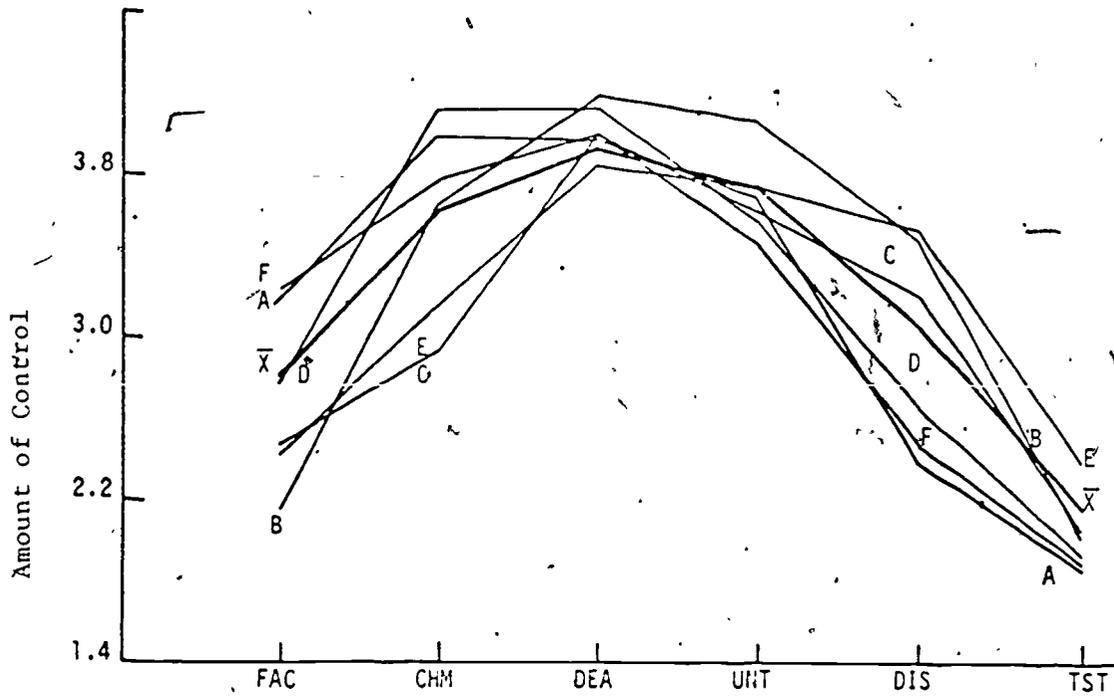


Fig. 7. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the department-oriented activities for institutions A through F.

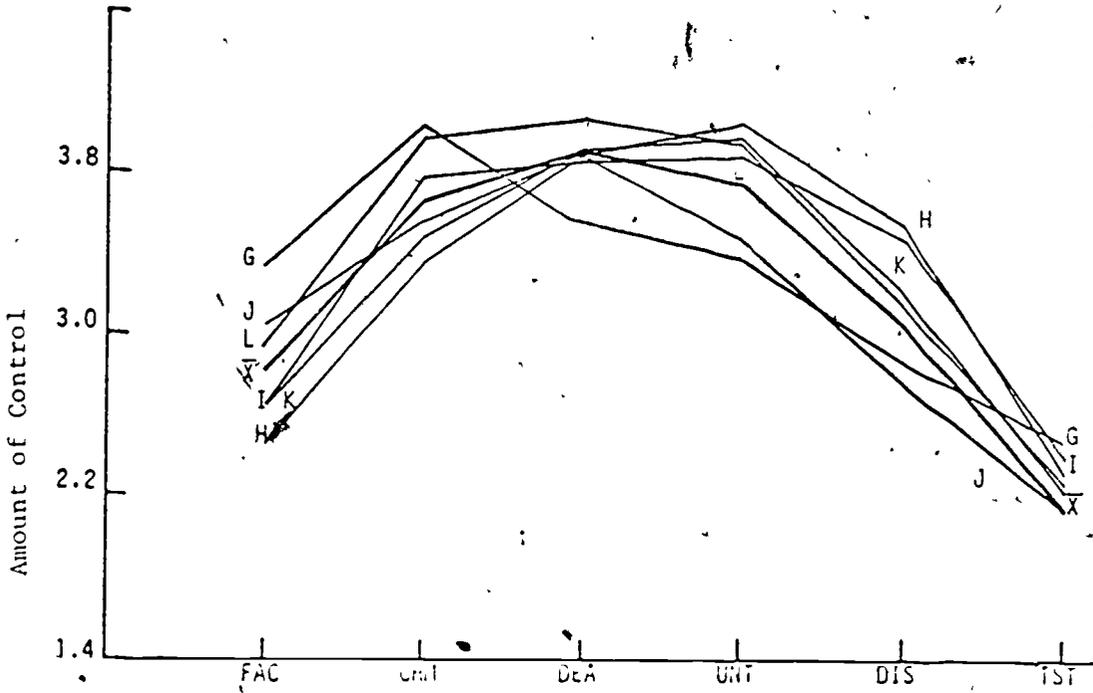


Fig. 8. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the department-oriented activities for institutions G through L.

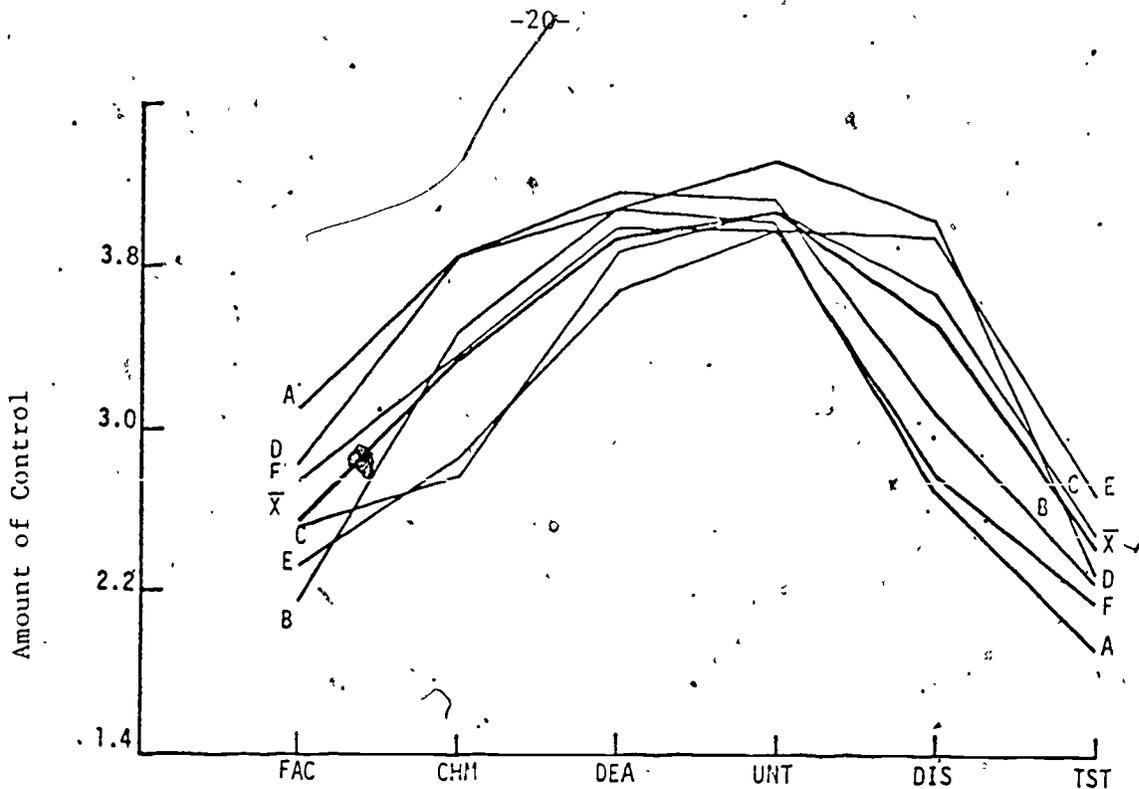


Fig. 9. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the unit-oriented activities for institutions A through F.

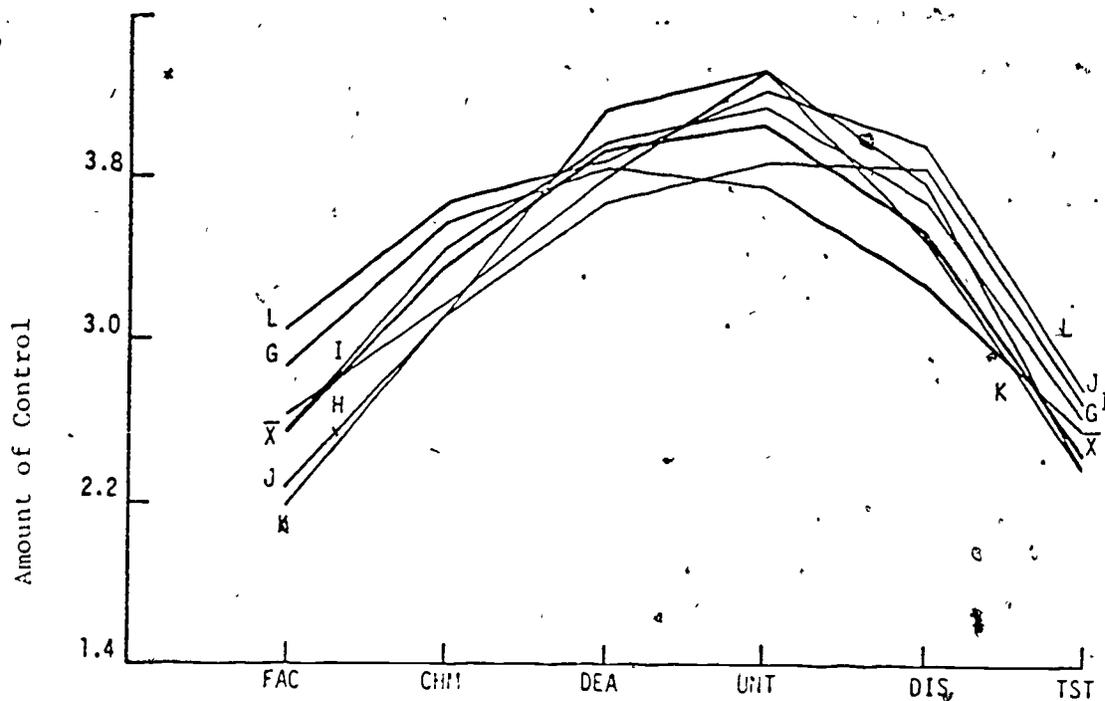


Fig. 10. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the unit-oriented activities for institutions G through L.

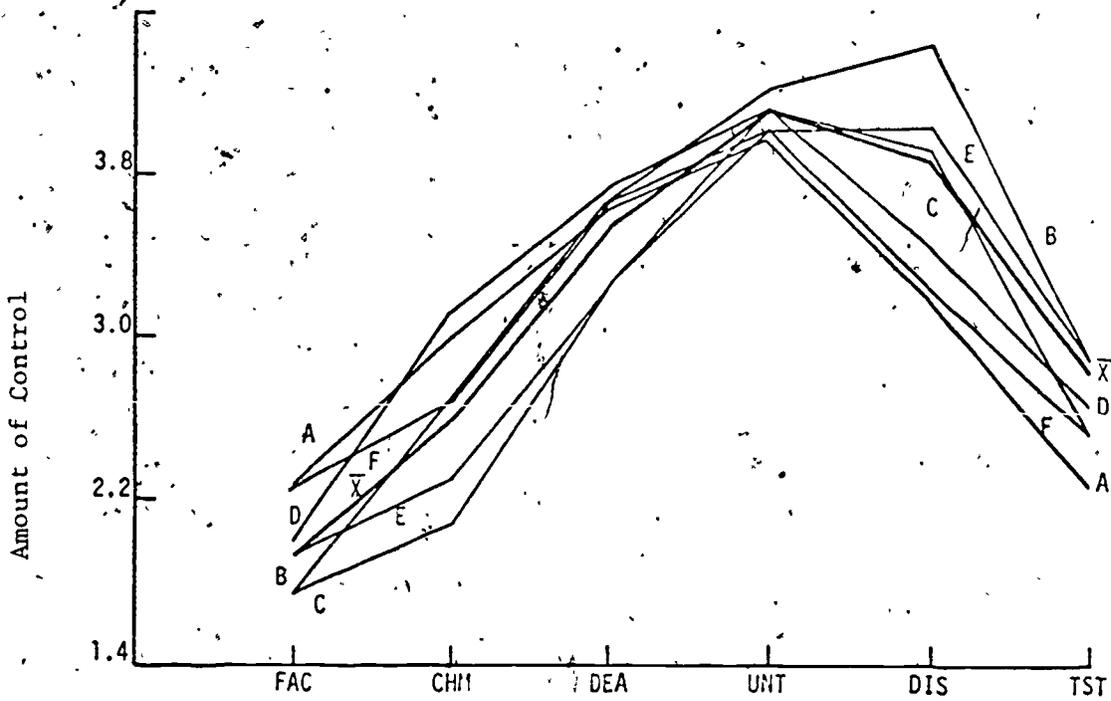


Fig. 11. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the system-oriented activities for institutions A through F.

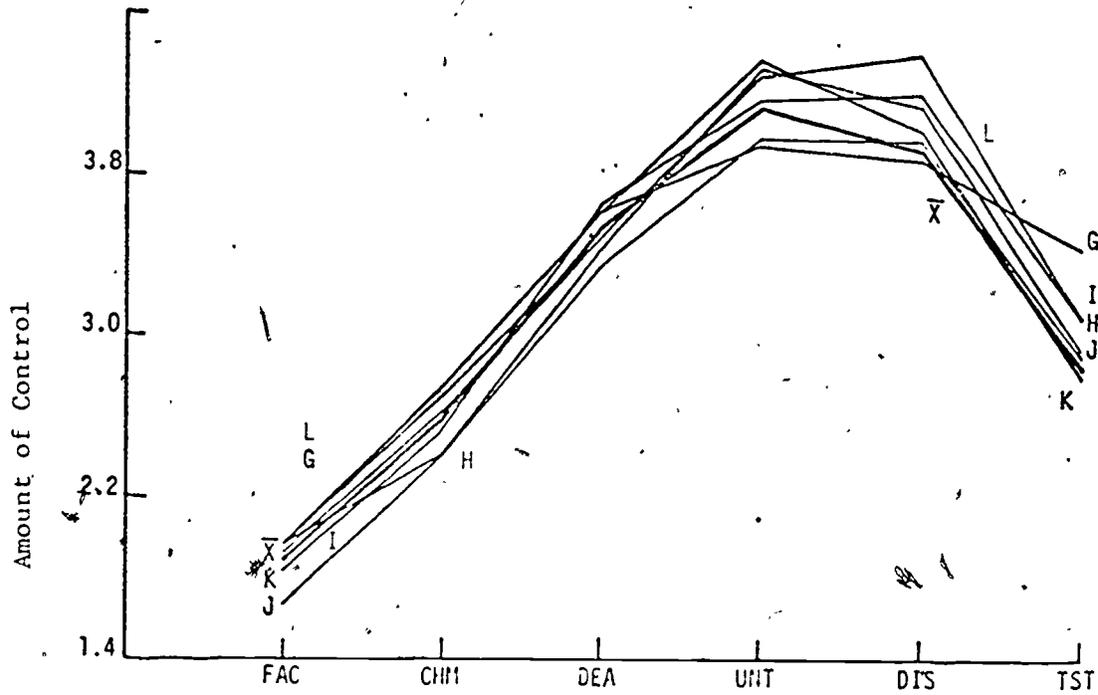


Fig. 12. Patterns of centralization/decentralization of the system-oriented activities for institutions G through L.

trators were found to exercise generally less control than either chief unit administrators or their deans. Viewed from the perspective of district administrators in each system, these twelve community college systems might all be regarded as generally "decentralized," since the greater amount of influence comes from within the component units. From the standpoint of faculty members, and in most instances that of the department chairmen as well, control would be regarded as "centralized." These differences confirm the fallacy of characterizing a multiunit system as "centralized" or "decentralized" without taking into account the relative influence exercised by all administrative levels involved in the operation of the college.

Further differences were found in the pattern of centralization/decentralization associated with faculty, department, unit, and system-oriented activities. Consistently in all twelve systems, the greatest amount of control was found at lower administrative levels for faculty-oriented activities, and at progressively higher levels for each of the other sets of activities. The greatest amount of difference among the twelve systems was found in the distribution of influence for faculty-oriented activities. Only for system-oriented activities did any of the institutions show a highly centralized posture with regard to system-wide centralization/decentralization; in five systems the greatest amount of control over these activities was located at the district administration level. Conversely, a number of institutions were characterized by highly centralized internal relationships within their component units. As will be explained below, the relative centralization/decentralization within units was shown to have a more pervasive effect upon the effectiveness of the entire system than the balance of control between central administration and units.

Location of Authority

The location of authority for the four sets of activities in each institution indicates that all twelve systems studied were generally decentralized in this regard. In all institutions, the location of authority over each set of activities was found well within the component units, rather than at the district administration level, as shown in Figure 13.

It should be observed, of course, that authority as defined in this study indicated "operational authority" over ongoing activities. It is recognized that formal, legal authority in a multiunit community college is a legal right of the trustees, vested in them by an external governmental agency. On the other hand, "operational authority" is informal, though effective, and can be disbursed by the trustees through the district chief administrator to other organizational levels.

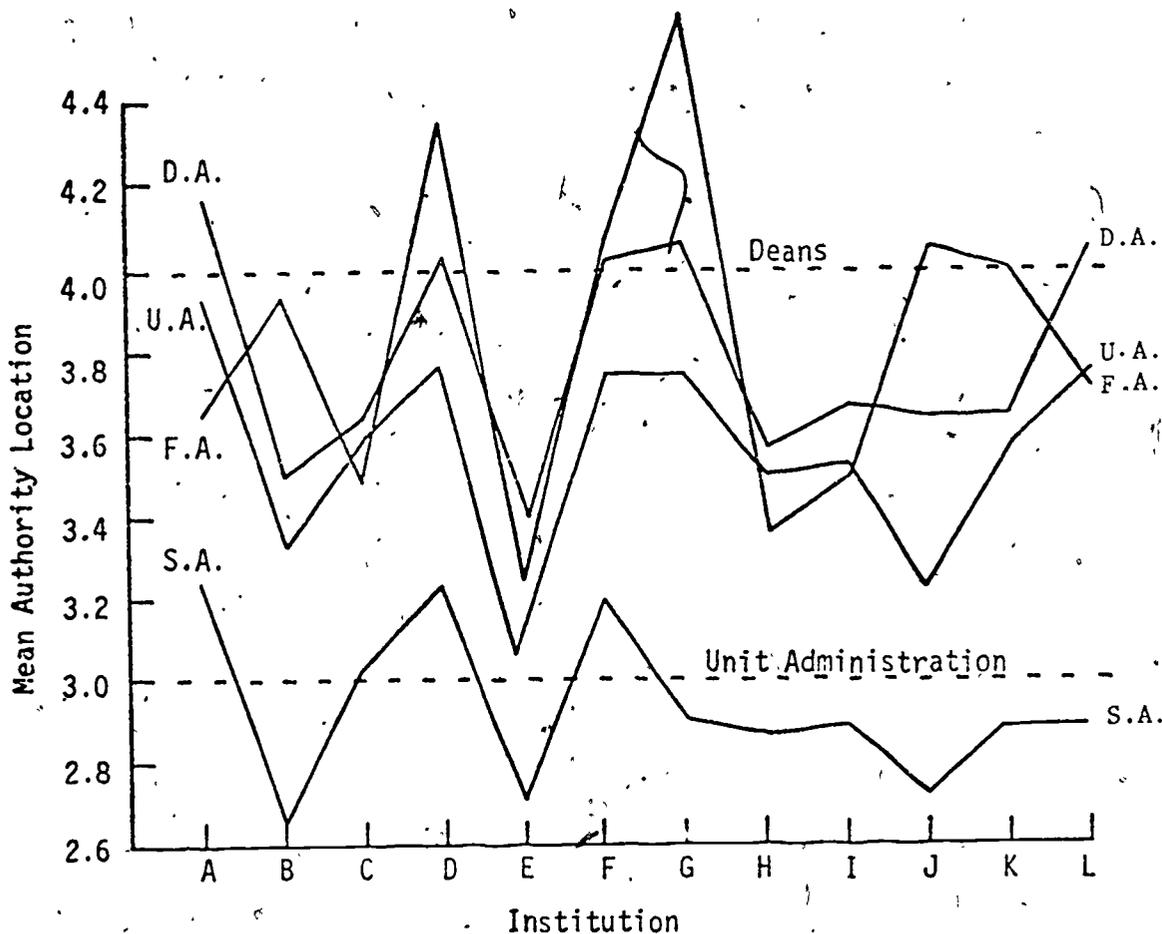


Fig. 13. Mean location of authority for each activity cluster across all twelve institutions.

- F.A. = Faculty-Oriented Activities
- D.A. = Department-Oriented Activities
- U.A. = Unit-Oriented Activities
- S.A. = System-Oriented Activities

Members of these multiunit community college systems tend to identify a single organizational level at which they view the location of authority as appropriate for each of the four sets of activities. It seems from the available evidence that effectiveness is enhanced when authority over each set of activities is located at the level identified as "appropriate" by most members of a particular community college system.

Average Level of Control

A great amount of variation was found among the various multiunit systems with regard to the average level of control measured across the entire system--as displayed in Figure 14--as well as that measured within the component units. When institutions were placed in rank order with regard to their system-wide control levels, it became clear that a high degree of system-wide "decentralization" was likely to be associated with a lower average level of control. On the other hand, a higher control level within units was generally found in systems in which component units operate with a great deal of decentralization of control and authority between unit administration and the deans, department chairmen, and faculty.

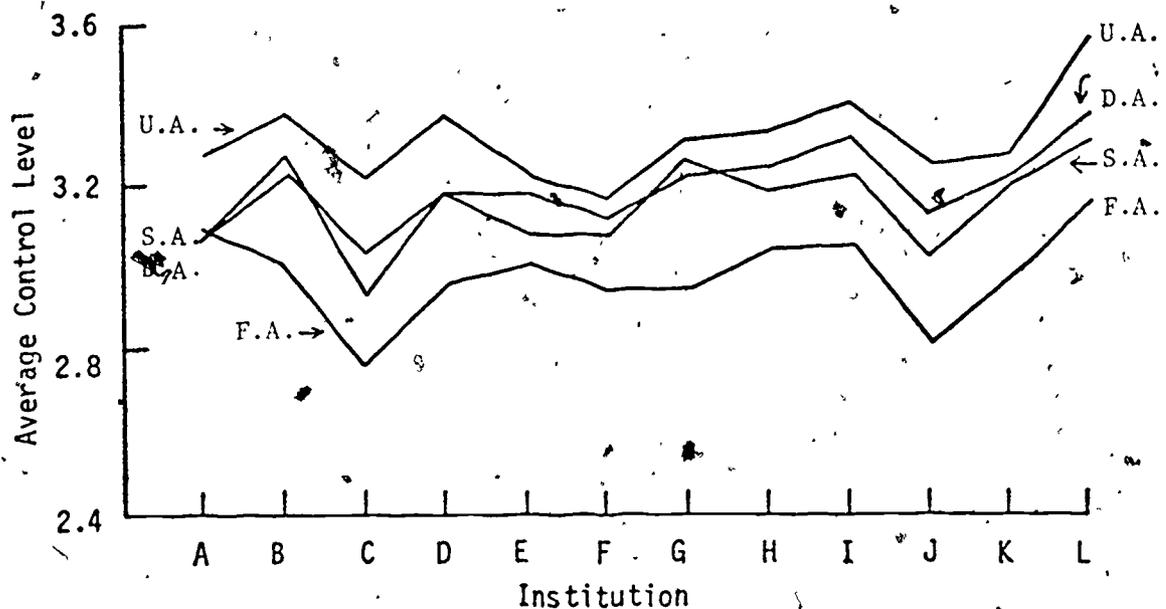


Figure 14. Average level of control for each activity cluster across the twelve institutions.

- F.A. = Faculty-Oriented Activities
- D.A. = Department-Oriented Activities
- U.A. = Unit-Oriented Activities
- S.A. = System-Oriented Activities

APPENDIX C

Patterns of Effectiveness

Indicators of Efficiency

Work capability. Work capability was measured by 1) performance of selected activities and 2) performance by various organizational levels. Members were asked to rate their multiunit system along a four-point scale which ranged from "highly unsatisfactory" to "highly satisfactory." By far the largest percentage of unsatisfactory comments for conduct of an activity was for methods and policies for assessing the quality of instruction. A total of 51.4 percent of the respondents reported that conduct of this activity was either unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory. The greatest percentage of favorable responses (84.0 percent) was for attraction, selection, and admission of students. Relations between each unit and the immediately surrounding community were assessed favorably by 82.0 percent of those responding.

The most unfavorable assessment of an organizational level (28.6 percent) was for the district administration, followed closely by the board of trustees (21.1 percent). Only 14.0 percent deemed the performance of the district administration "highly satisfactory." Figure 15 displays the institutional means on work capability as measured in this study.

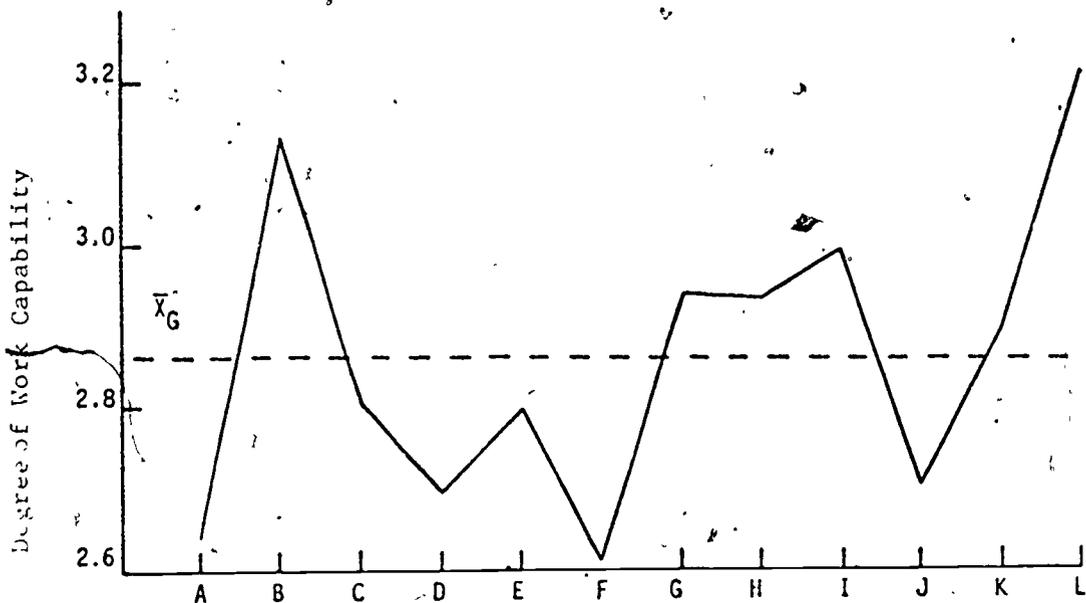


Figure 15. Institutional Means of Work Capability Index

Social climate. Social climate was the atmosphere of trust and positive interaction among members. Of the respondents, 22.9 percent reported a very low level of trust within their community college. Institutional means of this social climate index are illustrated in Figure 16.

Social integration. For the most part, members at all levels reported that other organizational levels were at least moderately accessible to them. Of those responding, 81.7 percent reported that levels other than the district administration were generally accessible; 54.6 percent accorded similar rating to the district administration. Conversely, the fact that 45.4 percent of the respondents in units regarded the district administration as moderately or highly inaccessible may warrant attention by multiunit systems seeking to improve the integration of members at all levels. A comparison of institutional means for the social integration index can be made from the graphic display in Figure 17.

Indicators of Responsiveness

Responsiveness in a multiunit community college system is reflected in the organization's ability to respond readily to changing demands of a dynamic external environment and a diversified student population. Responsiveness is also reflected in the ability to respond to ongoing changing community and student needs which are not necessarily brought to the attention of the community college through pressure. Institutional means of four responsiveness indices (responsiveness to external pressures, responsiveness to internal pressures, responsiveness to external needs and responsiveness to internal needs) are displayed in Figures 18-21.

In general, members of the colleges studied reported that their institutions were quite responsive to the expressed needs of students and faculty members; 62.3 percent provided favorable reports of responsiveness to students, and 56.2 percent report favorably the responsiveness to faculty members. Yet more than one-fourth regarded both their district administrators and trustees as somewhat or highly unresponsive to the needs of students. Nearly one-fifth reported that their district administrators and trustees were equally unresponsive to needs of the surrounding community. About 85 percent reported that faculty members and administrators within the units were generally responsive.

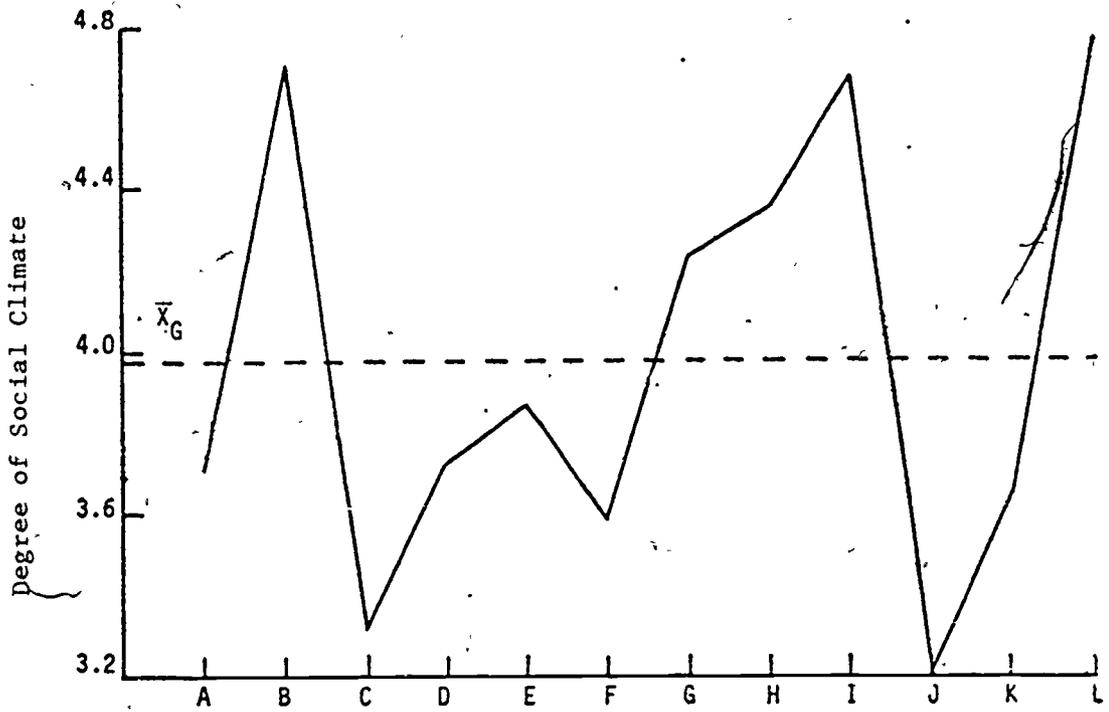


Fig. 16. Institutional means of Social Climate Index.

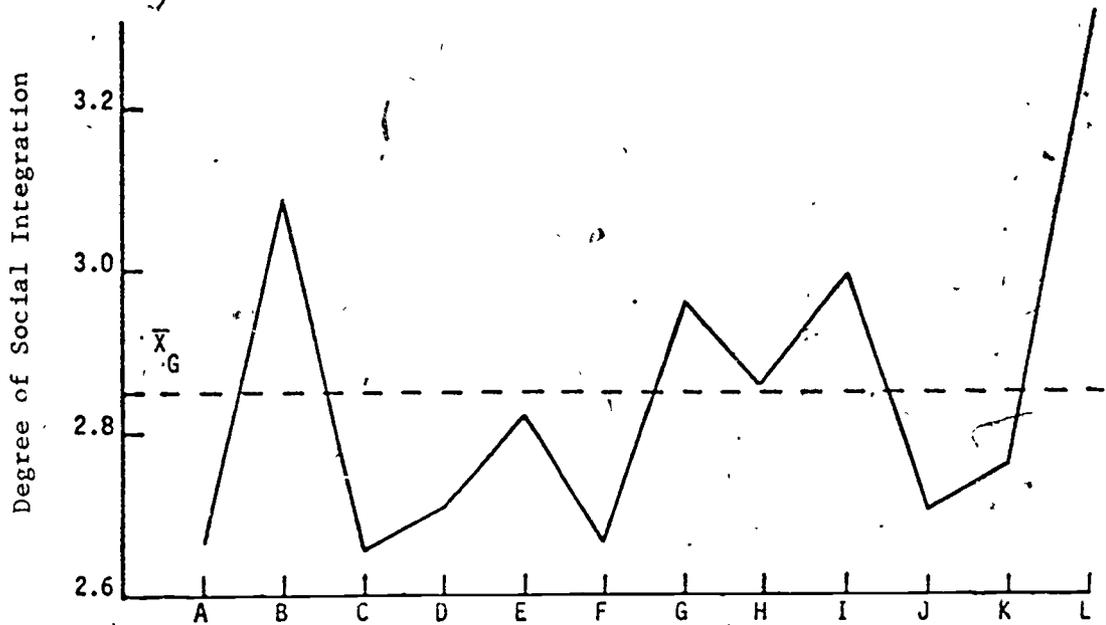


Fig. 17. Institutional means of Social Integration Index.

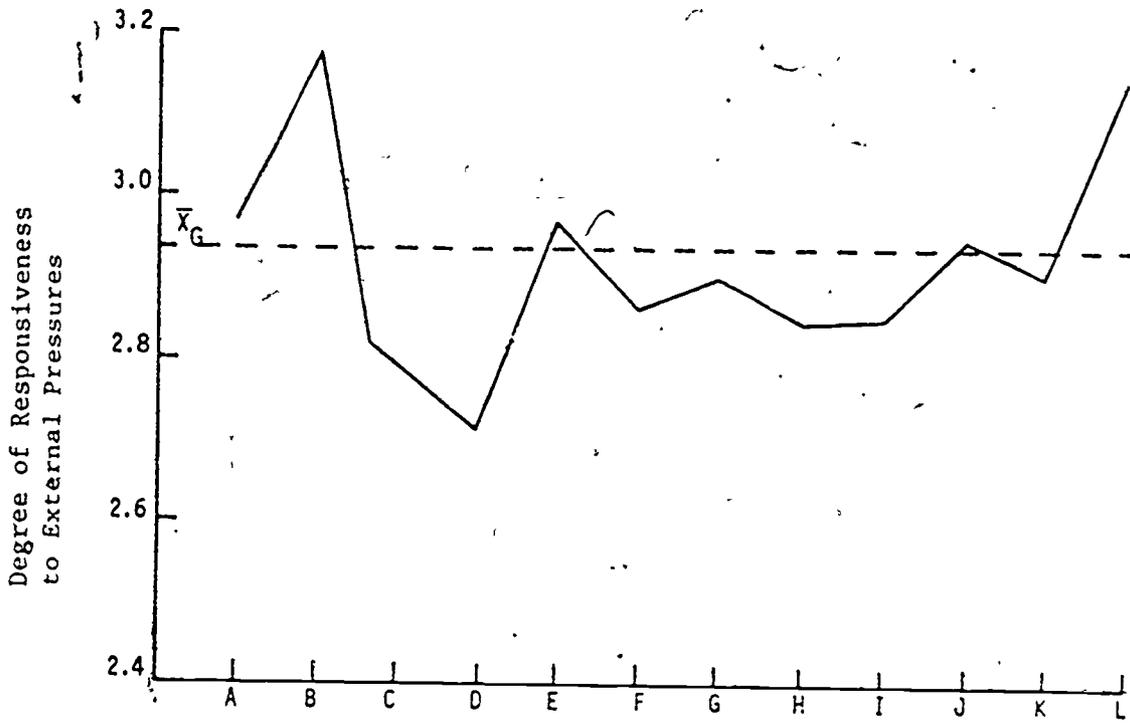


Fig. 18. Institutional means of Responsiveness to External Pressures Index.

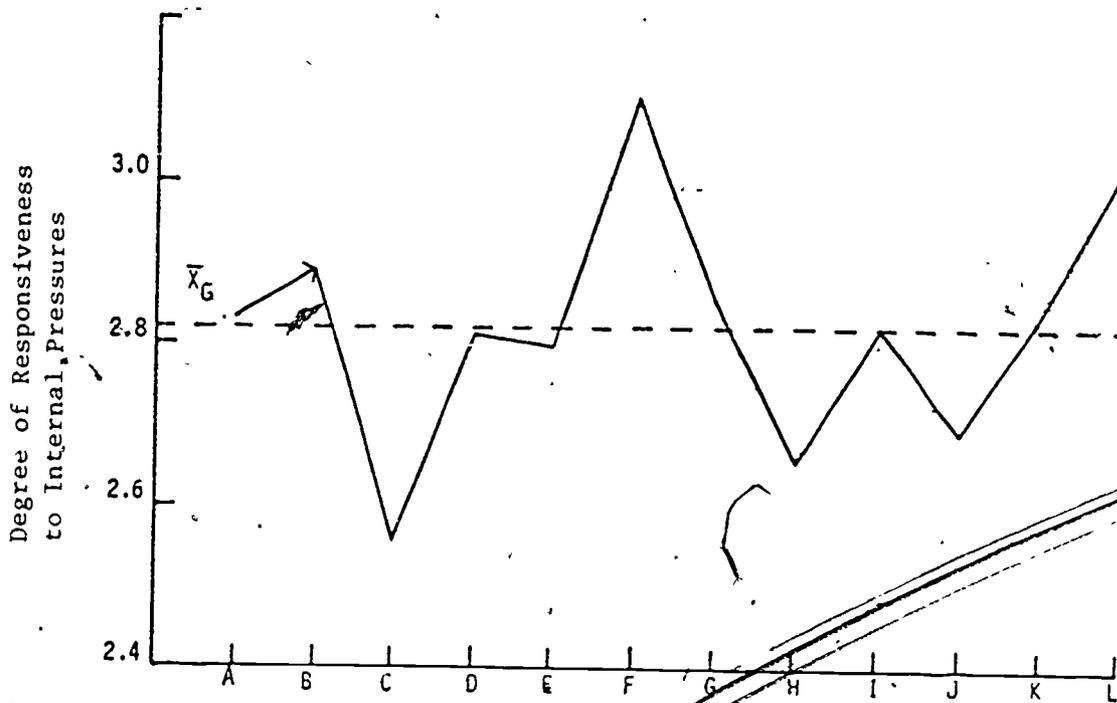


Fig. 19. Institutional means of Responsiveness to Internal Pressures Index.

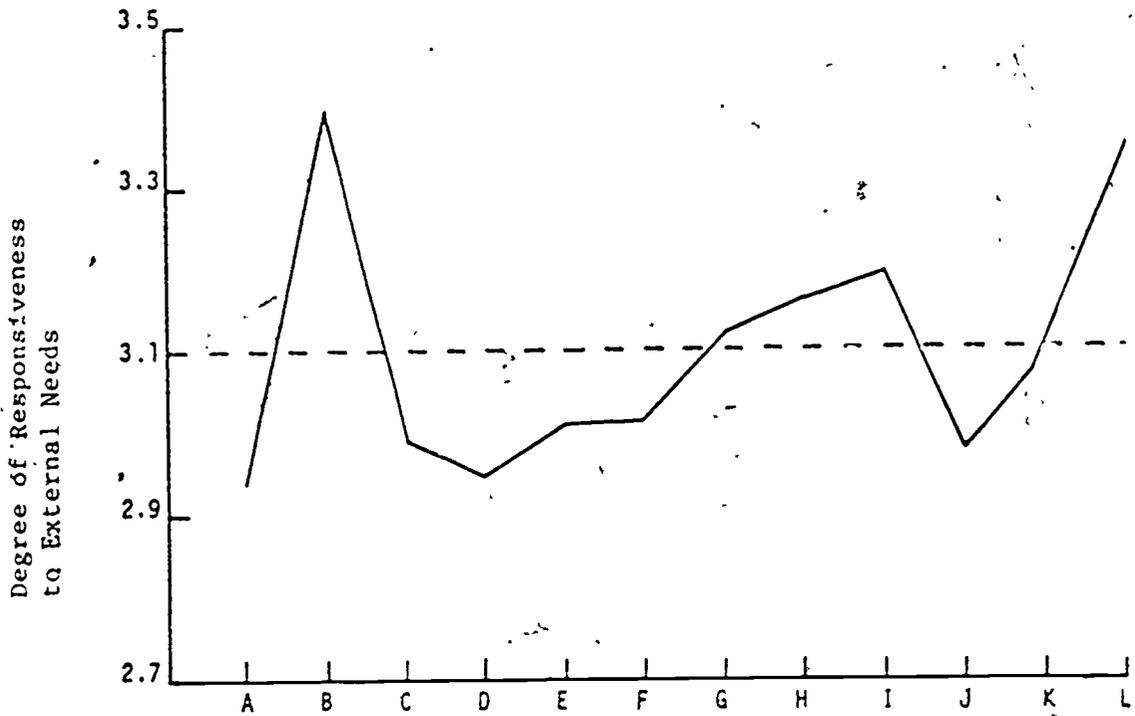


Fig. 20. Institutional means of Responsiveness to External Needs Index.

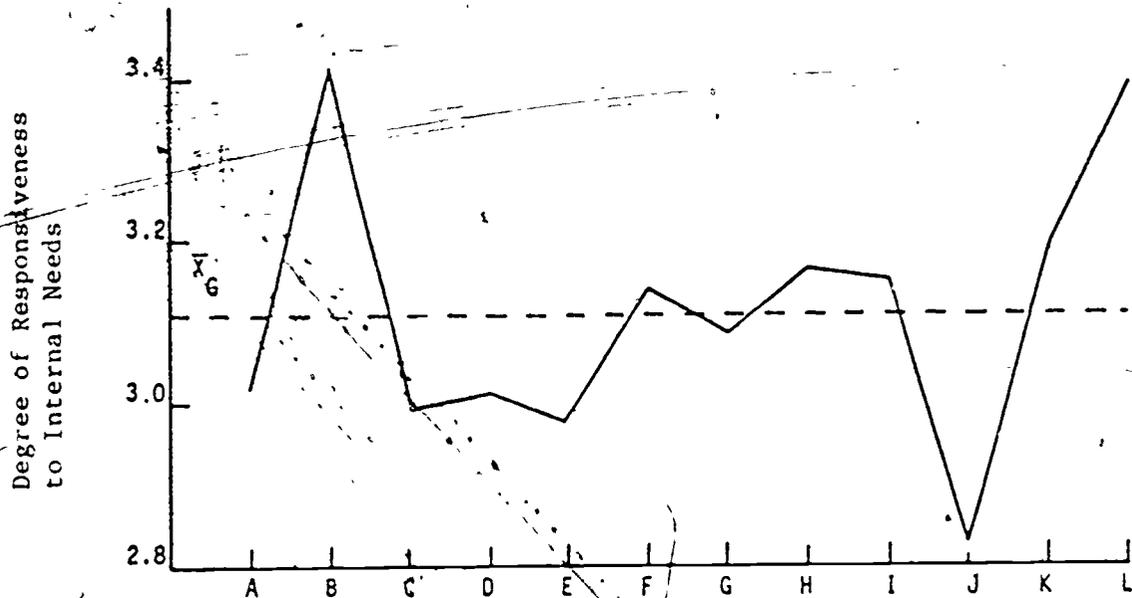


Fig. 21. Institutional means of Responsiveness to Internal Needs Index.

Pressures Reported by Members

Members of these community colleges generally reported little pressure from other schools, either secondary or college level. On the other hand, a large majority perceived "a great deal" of incoming pressure from citizens, the state government, and the federal government.

Over half the respondents reported substantial amounts of pressure from students to change "important policies or practices" regarding racial balance of the student body and admission of students lacking traditional credentials. The impact of these pressures was apparently limited. Nearly two-thirds of the members reported that they had not changed their own attitude toward these problems, and more than 60 percent reported that their work had been unaffected.

Response to Various Sources of Pressure

Differences were reported between responsiveness of these colleges to local pressures and to sources at the state or national level. Nearly one-fifth of the members indicated that their institution "rarely" responds to pressure from local secondary schools. Nearly half stated that their institution "almost always" responds to pressure from the state level, and over 40 percent report similar degrees of responsiveness to the federal government. Apparently these legally constituted agencies are seen as a very real source of pressure, more likely to elicit a response than local schools, businesses, or citizens.

Differences between Faculty Members and Administrators

Members at the same organizational level, but located in different units of the same multiunit system, were generally in agreement about the efficiency of the entire college. On the other hand, faculty members were found to differ substantially from administrators in their reports of system-wide efficiency. Faculty ratings were consistently less favorable, and particularly negative with regard to the social climate, openness of communication among levels, and feelings of trust among members. If these aspects of organizational efficiency are indeed as lacking as faculty members report, it seems unlikely that communication among the various organizational levels will be sufficiently accurate or extensive to convey the negative appraisal to members of the upper administrative hierarchy.

Relationship between Efficiency and Responsiveness of the Systems

Without exception, community college systems which were found to have high rankings on measures of organizational efficiency were also found to be highly responsive to needs of students, faculty, and external constituencies.

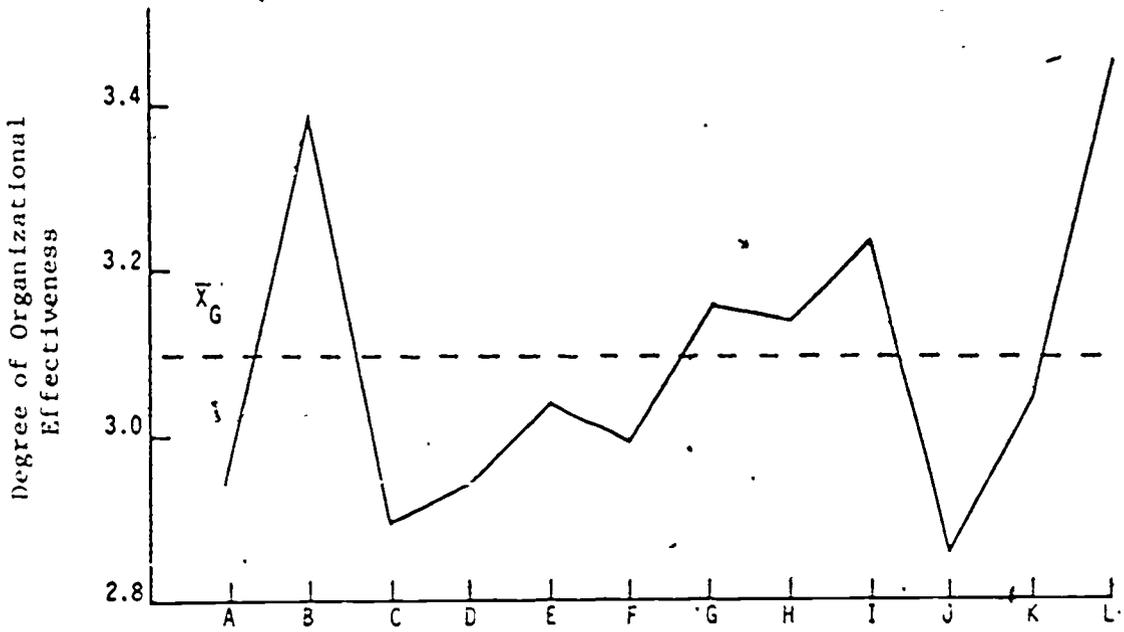


Fig 22. Institutional means of Organizational Effectiveness Index.

A positive social climate and a high degree of integration among members at various levels are highly conducive to responsiveness by all organizational levels:

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