How Oberlin Works

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to fill a need for a written exposition of Oberlin's system of governance. Students have an intrinsic interest in certain issues relating to the college's governance, but too often they do not have an adequate knowledge of how the system works. Often the result of this ignorance is frustration and anger - frustration over not knowing whom to turn to for information, and anger over the perceived indifference or elusiveness of administrators.

This booklet attempts to help, but not by providing a nuts and bolts guide covering every detail of the college's governance structure - a task beyond the scope of this project. Instead, we attempt to provide a broader viewpoint - looking at the overall structure of the college.

This booklet is arranged in four sections, corresponding to the four main groups involved in the governance of the college - the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and students. The Board is the first to be discussed, because all authority derives from them. Next comes the administration and the faculty, which are each responsible for different aspects of the college's governance. Finally, the students' role in the operation of the college and their system of self-governance is examined.

Since this document is aimed chiefly at students and their need to express constructively their opinions, we have tried to identify the key people and offices to whom students can direct their questions or opinions.

In order to provide more information about the college's governance structure and where to go to find answers to questions not addressed in this work, an annotated bibliography closes out this booklet. Because of the limited scope of this project, this may be one of the most important sections.

This edition was revised in 1991 as a Winter Term project by Matthew Lindemann '93 with the support of the Secretary of the College.
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees occupies a special place in the governing of Oberlin because it is the only legally recognized authority of the college. Oberlin exists as a legal entity through its charter, granted by the State of Ohio in the form of "An Act to incorporate the Oberlin Collegiate Institute," passed by the state legislature on February 28, 1834. This Charter gives the Board of Trustees the authority to perform the usual functions of a corporation - "to sue and be sued, to plead and be impleaded, to acquire, hold and convey property, real and personal."

Since this charter is granted by the State of Ohio, it may be revoked by the State at any time. This right is laid out clearly in section 8 of the charter - "The legislature shall have the right to amend, or repeal this act when they deem it necessary..."

This right is restricted, however, by the next phrase of Section 8; "Provided, that no fund or property belonging to said institution shall ever be by law appropriated to any other purpose than those named in this Charter."

There have been attempts made to repeal Oberlin's Charter. "In the period from 1837 to 1843... four unsuccessful attempts were made to repeal the charter of the Institute, "(Fletcher, p.442) all because of Oberlin's reputation as a "hotbed of radicalism." Because of Oberlin's notoriety, a bill to increase the number of trustees from twelve to eighteen was voted down in January of 1837. The incorporation of the town was denied later "because the name was 'Oberlin' and that you are considered especially friendly to blacks." (Ibid.) In addition, three times in the early 1840's the legislature refused to incorporate Oberlin literary societies because of the college's reputation and because it was thought that the literary societies were abolitionist societies.

The right of the State to repeal Oberlin's charter has not been tested since 1843. At present there are few grounds on which the state could legally revoke the charter, as long as the college is operating within the boundaries of the law and its charter. If, for instance, the college were to move from Oberlin to Cincinnati, it would be in violation of the charter, which clearly states that "said institution shall remain where it is now located in Russia, Lorain County."

Presently, the Board "consists of twenty-seven trustees together with the president of the college who is ex officio a member of the board. Membership is divided into:

A) six groupings of four trustees each, elected for terms of six years, with one group elected annually. One of this group is elected by the alumni of the College, the remaining three by the Board; and

B) one grouping of three Class Trustees, one from the class most recently graduated and one from each of the two preceding classes; each Class
Trustee is elected for a term of three years.

Because the Board is legally responsible for the proper functioning of the college, it must approve all major decisions, especially those involving the expenditure of money. Thus the yearly budget, changes in endowment and investments, and many personnel decisions must be approved by the Board.

Legally, the Board has responsibility for all aspects of the College. In practice, however, the faculty is responsible for the academic affairs of the college (including control over educational matters and hiring new faculty), and has been since the Finney Compact of 1835.

The Finney Compact established the principle of faculty self-governance at Oberlin, "part of an elaborate understanding extracted from a reluctant Board of Trustees which resulted in the agreement of Charles Finney to come to Oberlin; the agreement of the Tappan brothers to provide the college with critical financial support; the agreement of Asa Mahan, John Morgan, and the Lane Rebels to come to Oberlin; the agreement of the trustees to a policy of colorblind admissions; and a granting to the faculty of a decisive role in the internal management of college concerns." (Blodgett)

At Oberlin, the faculty's control over educational matters is set down in the Charter and Bylaws of the College which entrust the General Faculty with the "management of the internal affairs of the college. (Bylaws, Section XV,2)

Each of the divisional faculties (the College Faculty and the Conservatory Faculty) is in turn responsible for the internal operations of their respective divisions. All of this is examined in the section on Faculty governance.

The Bylaws represent the common law of the institution. The Board of Trustees creates the Bylaws and can amend or suspend them whenever it chooses. However, although the Trustees have the authority to change the Bylaws, they are not capricious in their actions. Changes to the Bylaws occur regularly, but these changes are usually minor. Major Bylaw changes are not normally undertaken without widespread advance discussion.

Much of the work of the Trustees is accomplished in its committees, such as Budget and Finance, Student Life, Development, Investment, Nominations, and Academic Affairs. Further information on most of these committees can be found in the Charter and Bylaws of the College.

The Executive Committee has a special function. Its membership includes the President, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and the chairs of the other Board
Committees. "It meets, when necessary, in the intervals between meetings of the Board and has the full powers of the Board at such meetings except those involving amendment or suspension of the Bylaws" (Committee Book). The Executive Committee generally meets one month before each scheduled Board meeting.

Although the Executive Committee acts with the full authority of the Board, it is careful in the use of that power. Only routine or urgent matters are generally considered; controversial matters are put off when possible until the full Board can deliberate. The Executive Committee provides continuity and a means of quickly dealing with urgent matters; it is not, nor is it intended, a substitute for the full Board.

Perhaps the most important committee of the Board, however, is Budget and Finance. This Committee superintends the general policies of the college with regard to its financial affairs. Although the Vice President for Finance does much of the budget preparation, the Budget and Finance Committee has ultimate authority in recommending an annual budget to the full Board. On the recommendation of this committee, the Trustees as a whole determine the tuition and fees, set salaries, act on the budget, and authorize major expenditures.

Since the Board has only four meetings each year -- at which they review a wide variety of matters -- great emphasis is put on the work done in committees. The full Board meetings are more than just a formality, but expectation is that debate on issues will take place in committee meetings. Debate takes place in the full board meetings, but generally debate is over the merits of proposals made by a committee, and alternative proposals are generally not discussed. Trustees interested in an issue attend the committee's meetings and work through differences there.

The fact that the Board meets only a few times a year also influences the amount of autonomy that the faculty and administration have. It would be virtually impossible for the Board to concern itself with the everyday operations of the college or with personnel decisions that must be made even if it wanted to. The Board tends to leave the administration and the faculty to their own devices -- at which times, the Board's approval is simply a formality. If, however, the Board feels that problems are present or developing within the administration or faculty, it may step in. The Board will not likely overturn a decision that has been made through the proper channels, but it might suggest that the decision-making process itself may need to be examined.
THE ADMINISTRATION

The administration at Oberlin has much power, as it does at all large institutions, especially in the general running of things. It does not, however, have great power over educational policies or academic personnel matters, which are handled by the deans, divisional faculties and the divisional faculty councils. Much unnecessary frustration is felt by students because they don't know what issues fall under the authority of which administrator.

In this section, a description of each senior administrative position is given with an emphasis on getting past its official powers and responsibility. Effort was taken to get a feel for the positions and the actual powers and responsibilities of each office.

The President

The best known, yet least understood, job at Oberlin is that of the President. The position is given broad powers under the Bylaws. She is the chief executive officer of the College and is ultimately responsible for the effective administration and operation of the school - yet the president's powers are circumscribed by tradition and political realities. Students often suppose that the President has much broader powers than she actually has.

Specific duties of the President are to preside over the General Faculty and General Faculty Council; to be an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees and the Divisional Faculty Councils and ex officio chair of the Nominations Committee of the General Faculty; to prepare an annual report to the Trustees on the state of the College; to supervise the work of all senior administrators; to be an outside representative of the College and to be responsible for the financial development of the school.

Although the President has authority over many aspects of the college's governance, her effective direct influence is limited. The President has a good deal of influence over such matters as the budget, buildings and grounds, investment and development, but in areas such as the curriculum and faculty appointments, she
has relatively little direct influence.

Although the President has the technical power to allocate and reallocate new or vacant faculty positions and make recommendations to the Board on such matters as tenure decisions, these powers are greatly curtailed by political realities. In matters concerning the academic affairs of the College, the President is more powerful than the average faculty member, as chair of the General Faculty and a member of all three Faculty Councils, and also having the authority to present views and recommendations on any proposal directly to the Board. She does, however, have only one vote. In such matters, the President must rely on the power of persuasion to exercise influence rather than dictating what is to be done.

The Secretary

The Secretary of the College is an office that students generally know little about, but which is important from a student’s standpoint. The Secretary is secretary of the Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee and recording secretary of the General Faculty and the two Divisional Faculties. He is responsible for keeping the records of the Board and the various Faculties.

The best description of the Secretary's office is that it is a conduit of information, especially information flowing to or from the Trustees. The Secretary’s office is responsible for making arrangements for Board meetings and for collecting materials to be submitted for the Board’s approval along with any background material and presenting these items to the Board members before each meeting.

The Secretary's office also sets up and publicizes the informal Campus Trustee meetings, which are an important way the Trustees learn what is on students’ minds. These meetings usually happen on an evening when the Trustees are on campus.

The Secretary also takes minutes at meetings of all three of the Faculties, as well as the General Faculty Council. The Deans of the College and Conservatory set the agendas for their respective Faculties and are responsible for the minutes of the meetings of their Councils. The Secretary’s office also coordinates elections and appointments of the faculty members to faculty committees.

Other duties of the Secretary include: overseeing Commencement activities, keeping track of the various faculty, administration and Trustee committees and publishing this information each year on the college web site.

From a student’s standpoint, the Secretary can be helpful in a number of ways: by sending information to the Trustees, providing names and addresses of Board
members, distributing agendas of the Board's Committees, or by offering suggestions as to what committee of the Trustees, administration, or faculty might handle an issue of concern. In general, the Secretary's office is a good place to start in tracking information about the Trustees or the committees of the College.

The Vice President for Finance

The Vice President for Finance is given responsibility for two related activities as chief budget officer and coordinator of institutional planning. By themselves, these two activities take up much of his time.

The Vice President for Finance is heavily involved in the budget process. Budget formation begins nearly one year before the start of each fiscal year (July 1). Data from other institutions on faculty compensation, student charges, endowment performance, and expenditure patterns, are collected and compared to Oberlin. Prior year's budgets are reviewed and national economic forecasts are evaluated. Early in the fall, a five-year forecast for Oberlin's budget is developed. At the same time, planning guidelines for the next year's tuition, endowment spending, gifts, faculty and staff compensation, and other operating expenses are refined.

Preliminary assessments are discussed with the President, senior administrators, the General Faculty Council (GFC), the General Faculty Planning Committee, as well as with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. At the November meeting, the Board establishes overall guidelines for budget preparation. The GFC establishes a system for distributing the approved faculty salary increases, while academic and administrative departments develop departmental budget requests.

A preliminary budget is presented to the Board at its March meeting when student charges are established and the overall budget approved. Additional refinements are made, and the final budget is prepared for Board approval at the June meeting.

The Vice President for Finance is also primarily responsible for the investments of the College. It is his job to initiate and evaluate investment policy recommendations, monitor investment management performance, and otherwise administer policies and transactions made and directed by the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees. He is responsible for investing the College's operating cash balances, and for the custody of all funds entrusted to him for investment purposes.

The Vice President for Finance also oversees non-academic support for the College. It is, in effect, his responsibility to keep the college running smoothly and efficiently. He chairs the College Committee on Shareholder Responsibility, the
College Benefits Committee, and the Architectural Review Committee (ARC).

The Director of Facilities is directly responsible to the Vice President and works closely with the ARC because this committee must approve any major aesthetic changes on College grounds. The Director of Facilities also oversees the work of the offices of Purchasing and Auxiliary Services, Buildings and Grounds, and Environmental Health and Safety.

**The Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs**

The Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs supervises the fund-raising activities and coordinates the alumni activities of the College. He oversees the work of the Director of the Alumni Association, which plans activities for alumni including reunions at the College each year with the purpose of keeping alumni in touch and involved with the College.

The Vice President also oversees the Development staff, whose job it is to raise money through contributions. Within this office are two subdivisions, the Oberlin Fund, which deals with smaller donations used to help cover the annual operating expenses of the College, and Major Gifts and Gift Planning which handles larger contributions used for such purposes as scholarships, endowment, and new buildings. This Vice President works closely with the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees on the development of fundraising policy and capital campaigns.

**The Dean of Students**

The duties of the Dean of Student Life and Services are implicit in the title: he/she is responsible for administering policies affecting the welfare, conduct, and discipline of all students and for the administration of dorms and dining halls. Broad policies are recommended by the Student Life Committee, of which the Dean of Student Life and Services is a member. In effect, the Dean oversees all non-academic services that deal directly with student services – Student Union, Multicultural Resource Center, Residential Education, Student Health, the Counseling Center, and the Office of Safety and Security.

**The Deans of the College of Arts & Sciences and Conservatory**

The Dean of the College and the Dean of the Conservatory are the heads of their respective divisions. Each is the executive officer of his division, chair of the Divisional Faculty, member of the General Faculty Council, and ex officio chair of the Divisional Faculty Council and the Nominations Committee of each Divisional Faculty. The Deans generally chair faculty meetings and set the agendas for the meetings of the Divisional Faculty and its Council.

The language used in the Bylaws to describe the duties of the Deans is broad and
somewhat vague. They are given "general charge of the interests of [their] division," and are required to improve the policy and practice of their divisions when necessary, to study the problems of "collegiate or musical education respectively and of keeping abreast of the general progress in the field concerned"; and to collect significant data concerning the work of the Division, "especially with reference to the effectiveness and economy of administration, the conditions and results of teaching, and the scholarship, life and interests of the student body."

The Bylaws state that the Deans are responsible for the "supervision of the routine administration and the necessary clerical work of the Division." Much of the work of the Deans takes place outside of the view of the students. Many do not realize, for example, that the Dean has more influence and power than the President over academic matters (curriculum, salaries, faculty appointments, etc.). Often the President is approached on matters over which she has little direct influence (such as curricular concerns, and matters regarding tenure and reappointment) that would be better handled by the Deans through their divisional faculty councils or committees.

THE FACULTY

Since 1835, when Charles Finney persuaded the Trustees to accept what became known as the Finney Compact, the academic affairs of the College have been entrusted to the faculty. This includes curriculum; faculty hiring, promotion and tenure; and at least an advisory role in budgetary and administrative matters. At Oberlin, the principle of faculty self-governance has been vigorously upheld.

Three Faculties share the duty of self-governance - the College Faculty, the Conservatory Faculty, and the General Faculty. As the names imply, the College and Conservatory Faculties are made up of all the professors of each respective Division along with certain administrators (President, Secretary, etc.). The General Faculty is composed of the members of the combined College and Conservatory Faculties, most senior administrators, and certain members of the Administrative and Professional Staff, such as librarians. Each Faculty also has a number of students who also serve on various Faculty Committees. These students have the full rights of other members to vote and make motions.

The General Faculty is entrusted with the internal governance of Oberlin. It is also given authority and responsibility for the general welfare of the students and for the regulation of student conduct. While the General Faculty does have ultimate authority over these areas, it designates most of the responsibilities to its various committees.
The most important of these committees is the General Faculty Council (GFC), which is made up of the President, the two Divisional Deans, and faculty members elected by the College Faculty and Conservatory Faculty. The GFC, as the executive committee of the General Faculty, has the authority to act on behalf of the General Faculty on matters within its jurisdiction between faculty meetings. It also acts as an advisory body to the President on budgetary matters and has ultimate authority on appointments and promotions and salary of faculty members. It approves recommendations from the Divisional Faculties and forwards them to the President who brings them to the Board.

The Committees of the General Faculty

Much of what the General Faculty does can be deduced from looking at its various committees. Some of these committees have oversight roles, such as the Library, Religious Life, and Student Life Committees. Others plan lecture series (Haskell, Jaszi, Martin Lectureships), or assist with the internal working of the faculty governance system (e.g., Election Judges Committee).

Many General Faculty Committees have a somewhat limited role to play and have little direct influence on students and their campus recognition is thus fairly low. Other GF Committees, however, have broader mandates. One such committee is the Student Financial Aid Committee, which serves an advisory role to the President and the Director of Financial Aid on matters of policy relating to the financial aid program of the College. The Student Life Committee is a committee with which students should be particularly familiar because it is the responsibility of this committee to keep abreast of developments in student life on campus.

Another very important committee of the General Faculty, although it doesn't deal directly with the student body, is the Planning Committee. It serves as an advisory body in aspects of the budget-making process and in developing long-range strategic plans for the College.

For a complete list of committees and their functions, see the web page for the Secretary of the College

The Divisional Faculties

The decisions made in the divisional faculties are final with regard to educational matters within the academic division. Under the Bylaws, each divisional faculty has the authority to determine the requirements for admission, courses of study, residence and attendance requirements, conditions for examinations, theses and
terms of graduation, and the conditions for any degree other than honorary degrees. Divisional faculties also rely heavily on the committee system.

The Divisional Faculty Councils

Each Divisional Faculty has a Council, analogous to the General Faculty Council. These councils serve as personnel committees for their respective divisions. The College Faculty Council is made up of the President, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and faculty members elected by the teaching members of the College Faculty. The Conservatory Faculty Council consists of the President, Dean of the Conservatory and faculty members elected by the teaching members of the Conservatory Faculty. The divisional Faculty Councils hold the authority of their Division with respect to appointments, tenure, and promotions and salary (subject to review and approval by the General Faculty Council and Board) and act as their executive committees.

The Academic Departments

In the College of Arts and Sciences, much of the important work of faculty governance is carried out by academic departments. Each department is mainly responsible for recruiting and hiring new faculty members. College departments also play a key role in the reappointment and tenure process. The decision-making process for granting tenure to a faculty member starts in the department. The department faculty evaluate candidates and makes recommendations to the Divisional Faculty Council which makes its own recommendation to the GFC. It is, however, at the divisional faculty council that the effective tenure decision is made. It isn't unheard of for the divisional faculty council to decide to overturn the recommendation of the department, but it is uncommon for the GFC or Board to overturn the recommendation of a divisional council.

In the same vein, although the President has the Bylaw authority to present views and recommendations to the Trustees either on her own initiative or in response to Faculty actions, this power has rarely been exercised. The result is that, once personnel decisions are reached in the divisional and general faculty councils, they go to the Board. Although the Board has authority to overturn the recommendation, it rarely does so. The Trustees may, however, let it be known if they feel that a particular case reveals a need to review a policy or procedure.

In the College, each academic department makes decisions over the courses it will offer, the structure of the classes, the requirements for its major and the responsibilities of its professors. Each department is also responsible for letting its Dean know when it needs replacement faculty for professors on leave, or if it needs an additional faculty member. The request is then forwarded to the Educational
Plans and Policies Committee that acts as an oversight committee on curricular matters and as an advisory board to the College Faculty Council on the allocation of faculty positions. The requests for additional staff are studied and then ranked, taking into account how much the department needs the position and how much the college would benefit from awarding a position to that department.

When a faculty position becomes vacant through retirement, resignation, dismissal, etc., it becomes open for reallocation. Generally positions are given back to the same department, but on occasion, positions are transferred to another department.
STUDENTS

Just as the College is permitted to exist under a charter granted by the State of Ohio, so does Oberlin’s student government exist under the authority of charter, granted by the General Faculty. In 1997, the General Faculty approved a new "Constitution of the Association of Students of Oberlin College," which set up the present system of student government.

The basic structure of student government is rooted in the Student Senate which can take specific stands on issues or call a student referendum. The Student Senate is the main governing body of the student government and is made up of students elected by the student body.

The Student Senate, as the main governing body of the students, has primary responsibility for organizing referendums, forums, approving charters of student organizations, (in conjunction with the Student Life Committee and the General Faculty), and passing resolutions as it sees fit.

It is the Senate's responsibility to represent students and communicate with the student body, the faculty, the administration, and the Trustees. Senators serve on various GF and administrative committees, the Student Finance Committee, the General Faculty, and on the College Faculty.

The Student Finance Committee

The Student Finance Committee is a very important component of student government because it is this committee that decides how much money student organizations receive. It is also the responsibility of this committee to collect the activity fee, which is the funding for the student organizations, and to hold organizations that receive monies accountable. According to the Preamble of the SFC Charter of 1988, the activity fee is meant to be used for the "creation of social, cultural, religious, and educational activities for the students, for the improvement of student life, and to augment the general student welfare."

The SFC is made up of five full members appointed by the Student Senate, and the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, the latter two without vote. The Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, and a Secretary when necessary, also make up the Student Treasurer's Office, which is responsible to the SFC and does the administrative work of the committee.

Student Appointments Process

One of the most important elements in Oberlin's student government is appointments to General Faculty committees. The Student Senate has responsibility to figure out which committees have vacancies for students and to organize
interviews for these vacancies each semester.

In addition to those committees that help decide college policy or advise on key matters, certain committees serve as the college's judicial system - the Judicial Board, the Community Board, the Mediation Board, and the Hearing Officer. It may seem that there is an unnecessary duplication of duties, but each board has a specific purpose. The Judicial Coordinator, appointed by the Dean of Students, decides to which board a specific judicial case is assigned.

**The Judicial Board**

The Judicial Board ("J-Board") is made up of five students appointed by the Senate who have the authority to impose sanctions up to suspension and dismissal, the school’s most serious punishments. The Judicial Board is intended to be the primary body hearing cases involving student misconduct; members of this Board also hear appeals of hearing officer decisions.

**The Community Board**

The Community Board, made up of three students and four faculty members, hears cases that involve "obstruction or disruption of essential operations of the College," and that involve possible student suspension or dismissal.

**The Hearing Officers**

A hearing officer will hear a case in which the accused has waived a direct appearance before the Judicial Board. Also, the Judicial Coordinator may, in special circumstances, require that a case be assigned to a hearing officer if the calendar or the emergency nature of the case render this necessary.

**The Mediation Board**

The Mediation Board is an alternative to the more formal structure of the other judicial boards. If both parties to a dispute agree, a case will be referred to the Mediation Board Panel that will choose one student and one non-student from the Board's membership to hear the case. The Board does not have the power to impose sanctions but does encourage the participants to voluntarily accept sanctions. If both parties accept the decision, a signed statement is sent to the Judicial Coordinator, but if the judgment is unsatisfactory and the case is not withdrawn it becomes a matter for adjudication. Student members of the Board also serve as members of an ad hoc Judicial Board to hear appeals.
Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Complaints over such matters as sexual harassment and discrimination on any grounds, academics, or housing and dining are each handled according to detailed procedures spelled out in the Student Handbook.

As the first step in dealing with any problem, students should speak to the person(s) concerned as openly as possible about the problem at hand. If this is not successful or appropriate, the student should contact the Office of the Ombudsperson or follow the more formal grievance proceedings.

The Honor System

Another one of the procedures deserves special mention because of its unique role - the procedures and policies of the Honor System. The Oberlin Honor System is administered by the Honor Committee that operates under its own charter and appoints its own members. The Honor System has jurisdiction over all work submitted for credit, such as examinations, quizzes, papers, and lab assignments. The intention of the Honor System is to put the burden of honesty in all academic matters on the students themselves. One aspect of this is the requirement that instructors must leave the classroom during examinations and quizzes.

The Honor Committee is responsible for hearing all alleged violations of the honor code, following its own procedures. Decisions made by the committee can be appealed to the Dean of the Division involved. If the accuser is dissatisfied with that outcome, he/she may appeal the decision to the General Faculty Honor Committee which may ask the Honor Committee to reconsider the case. The student Honor Committee does not have the final authority to impose sanctions; all guilty verdicts are referred to the Dean of the Division as recommendations for action.

Through the Honor Committee, then, the students of Oberlin College are responsible as individuals for their academic behavior and as a collective body for punishing those who violate the honor code. The Honor System is an example of the right of self-government granted the student by the GF, which has the bylaw authority to oversee student life. The philosophy behind this is much the same as that under which the Board of Trustees grants faculty the right of government over academic affairs of the College.
CONCLUSION

The system of governance at Oberlin College is quite complex. In many cases, powers overlap and create gray areas in responsibility. Many decisions must be approved by several committees, administrators, and finally the Board of Trustees. To further clear up some of these confusions, here are some tips about the various sections of the system of governance at Oberlin College.

The first place to go with questions or issues concerning the Board of Trustees is the Secretary of the College. The Secretary has contact and familiarity with the Board, and anything that is presented to the Board goes through the Secretary's office.

It is best to address questions about specific administrative issues to the offices concerned. For a general idea of which areas are under whose authority, see the organization chart of the College published annually at the back of the campus telephone directory. It is often best to start as low on the chain of authority as possible when presenting issues to the administration to insure they will be properly addressed.

General questions about the Faculty can be addressed to the respective deans. Most decisions are made in various faculty committees, of which there are many, and these decisions generally are approved at each succeeding step in the governance process.

The Office of Student Life and Services is the first place to turn with questions concerning judicial policies and regulations. For answers to questions about student government, refer to the Senate Constitution or contact a senator or a member of the Student Life Committee.

It is important to realize that the Student Senate has much power and freedom to pass resolutions and that it is a good place to turn if a satisfactory response isn't initially obtained from the appropriate body on a particular issue. Student Senate approval can lend credence to and build support for a given proposal.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The most useful source of information about the college's system of governance is the Charter and Bylaws, available in Mudd Library. The Bylaws are the basic "law" of the institution and contain information on the duties and structure of the Board of Trustees, Administration, and Faculty.

- "Observations on the History of Governance at Oberlin College" by Geoffrey Blodgett. An excellent summary of the historical changes in Oberlin's governance.

- The Secretary of the College web page (www.oberlin.edu/secretary)
  A very important site updated each year by the Secretary of the College listing the Board of Trustees and the members of various committees of the College.

- The Annual Financial Report
  An excellent source of information about the yearly changes at Oberlin. Some reports have more information than others but each contains sections on endowment performance, a balance sheet, and a statement of revenue, expenditures and transfers. Reading the annual report gives a good introduction to the complexities of running and financing a large institution.

- A History of Oberlin College from its Foundation Through the Civil War by Robert Fletcher. (Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1943).
  This two volume work by an Oberlin history professor set a standard for college histories and the best source for information on Oberlin's early history.

- Oberlin College Faculty Guide
  This booklet is given to each faculty member and contains information on appointments, tenure procedures, and promotions.

- Oberlin Student Handbook
  Published by the Office of Student Life and Services, this book is the main source of information about all matters concerning the student body. It contains information about fines, judicial system, dorm regulations, etc. It is distributed to all entering students, and is available at most administrative offices.

- Student Organization Charters
  The Charters for all student organizations are public information and can be inspected at the Student Union Office.