

**THE HISTORY OF THE STUDENT SENATE
OF ALFRED UNIVERSITY**
and its correlation with national issues

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ABSTRACT

The Student Senate has been the student government of Alfred University for 94 years. In this thesis, I will show through a historical record of Student Senate how national issues correlate with Senate's structure and its issues. The Senate has changed much over the last century, but so has society. Different eras of the past Century have affected the Student Senate and the culture of the student body.

This report will begin with the founding of Senate in May 1906 and will continue with its navigation through the Century. It will review the impact of the World Wars on Alfred and on Senate's leadership. The thesis also examines the Civil Rights movements on campus and the protests during the 1960s and 1970s. It specifically assesses administrative and faculty power through Senate's history and the impact this had in shaping Senate issues.

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Founded May, 1906
PRESIDENTS

1907 Harry W. Langworthy
 1908 William V. Bragdon
 1909 F. S. Rogers
 1910 Ford S. Clarke
 1911 J. W. Jacox
 1912 Benton B. Bean
 1913 Walter G. Karr
 1914 Frank Maxon Hill
 1915 James T. Pitts
 1916 Merrill M. Groves
 1917 Edward E. Saunders
 1918 Clifford M. Potter
 1919 Donald Hagar*
 Wayland Burdick
 1920 John W. Clark
 1921 Boothe C. Davis, Jr.
 1922 Stanley Banks
 1923 Robert Campbell
 1924 Earnest Eaton
 1925 F. Hamilton Whipple
 1926 Chester P. Lyon
 1927 Donald E. Steams
 1928 Ross W. Robbins
 1929 Daniel G. Klinger
 1930 John E. McGraw
 1931 James F. McFadden
 1932 Sidney R. DeLaney
 1933 Edwin Claire Green
 1934 Edgar King
 1935 Charles Riley
 1936 Patrick J. Tisi
 1937 George S. Gregory
 1938 Raymond Baschnagel
 1939 John L. Dougherty, Jr.
 1940 Richard L. Callista
 1941 Charles Rosenberg
 1942 Ralph Rhodes
 1943 William Schuster
 1944 Robert S. Mayer
 1945 Doris Hill
 1946 Mae Barrus
 1947 Barbara Guillaume
 1948 Kenneth Goss
 1949 John Jones
 1950 Daniel E. Foster
 1951 G. Paul Baker
 1952 1952F. Stanley Higgins
 1953 Ruth Smith
 1954 Marlin Miller
 1955 Stanley Small
 1956 Allen B. Potter
 1957 Erford E. Porter

1958 James Sproul
 1959 Nancy Cashimere
 1960 Henry H. Nester
 1961 Jerome T. Pearlman
 1962 Alex M. Zoldan
 1963 Fred Silverstein
 1964 Thomas A Syracuse
 1965 William D. Vanech
 1966 Howard A. Wiener
 1967 Warner Dailey
 1968 Roger Auerbach
 1969 Charles R. Peyton
 1970 Donald Cooper

STUDENT ASSEMBLY

1971 *Scott Van der Hoef, Chairman*
 1972 *James Simermeyer, Chairman*
 1973 *Benjamin Ostrer, Chairman*
 1974 *George Karras, Chairman*
 1975 *Harris Kershner, Chairman*
 1976 *David Chesnoff, Chairman*
 1977 Jeffery Lerman
 1978 Robert Cahn**
 Mark Brostoff
 1979 Mark Brostoff
 1980 Stewart Rosen
 1981 John Walter
 1982 Larry Teta
 1983 Glenn Niles
 1984 Deborah Sheridan
 1985 Carole Hansen
 1986 Andrew Burns
 1987 Andrew Burns
 1988 Amy Neubecker
 1989 Edsel David
 1990 Jose Rivera
 1991 Darrvl L. C. Moch
 1992 Christina Ruf
 1993 Ronald S. Little
 1994 Aaron J. Kessler
 1995 Desi Rivera
 1996 Jacob Cooper
 1997 Zachary Hampton
 1998 Christina M. Lombardi
 1999 Michael J. Pellicciotti
 2000 Carlos Pearce
 2001 Seth Mulligan

* Resigned, served in the US Navy

** Resigned, did not return to Alfred University

I. Introduction

I served as Student Senate president from February 25, 1998 to March 3, 1999. Through my tenure, I began to respect the purpose of Senate and its autonomous position as the voice of the student body. I also saw the usefulness of the organization. Through my time as president, and my previous term as vice president (the position that was then called Executive Vice President,) our Senate had tremendous administrative support. For both our initiatives and requests, we were effective because the Administration respected us as the representative voice of the student body.

When I began researching the history of Senate, I was amazed to see how it has changed over the years. It started as an organization virtually administered by the faculty and evolved into a group in conflict with the Administration during the 1960s and 1970s. I came to believe that there was a correlation between the activities, management, and issues of the Senate and national issues and opinions at that time.

Most of the facts used to compile this history have been received through articles and contributions from the *Fiat Lux* (the Student Newspaper of Alfred University,) the *Kanakadea Yearbook*, and first-hand accounts. These accounts include communication with numerous former Senate presidents from the last 50 years. This information has been invaluable to the completion of the project.

Michael J. Pellicciotti, Class of 2000

II. Foundations of Senate (1896-1906)

It all began in April of 1896 by a resolution of the Alfred faculty. The students on campus had been requesting more say in the judicial matters of fellow students, and faculty were willing to grant some autonomy. The Resolution allowed for a formation of a Student Committee on Self-Government.

The purpose of this committee is to consider offenses against the good order of the University in such cases of dishonesty in school work as may be referred to it by the President; and any matter affected the general interest of the University in which the Faculty may ask their judgement (Minutes, Committee on Self-Government, 1896).

The *Progressive Era* that spanned nationally from 1895 to World War I caused a growth in student rights and freedoms. As the nation allowed more rights to workers and women, students were more willing to request power and to challenge why they did not have say in their own issues.

Student autonomy was still limited and would be for about another 20 years. Students did not head the Committee. University President Boothe Colwell Davis served as an ex-officio member, there were three Senior Class offices, three from the Junior Class, two from the Sophomore Class, two from the Freshmen Class, and two students from the Alfred Academy (Minutes, Committee on Self-Government, 1896). Punishment could be levied when at least seven members from the committee voted in favor (Constitution, Committee on Self-Government, 1896).

Over the next ten years, the Committee judged student cases referred to it by faculty. One example includes two students in March of 1897 who without faculty approval left Alfred. Another, in the same month, is the case of Richard L. Carter. Professor Coon referred the case to the Committee because Carter had “skipped class without excuse 14 times.” The Committee originally recommended University suspension for Carter. Carter then pleaded with the Committee for reconsideration and “stated if they allowed him to return, he would make up his work where he left it and would in the future regard the laws of the college.” The Committee readmitted Carter for the next semester, provided that he make up all work and apologize to Professor Coon for his lack of respect to his authority (Minutes, Committee on Self-Government, 1897).

Despite this growing autonomy by the students in judicial matters, the faculty still had supreme control of all disciplinary matters. The decisions made by the committee, though usually accepted by the faculty, were in an advisory capacity. The rules of the University were still developed by the faculty. In 1906, the students requested more authority.

III. The Beginning of Student Senate (1906-1917)

In May 1906, a committee formed by members of the upper classes was organized to develop increased rules for self-governance. The committee not only “formulated the present rules but submitted to the student body resolutions which provided for the election of a Student Senate with prescribed powers and duties.” The student body unanimously approved the new organization (*Kanakadea*, 1909).

The purpose of the Student Senate was to furnish a visible organization that should represent the crystalized [sic] feeling of the student body in its relations with the faculty and dealings with its own individual members. It was to act as a mediator between the students and the faculty, whereby each should come to appreciate the point of view of the other, and thus to prevent misunderstandings and discourage knocking. It was also to be the court of last resort in deciding under class contests, interpret and apply campus rules, call mass meetings and co-operate with the Athletic Association and other student organizations to arouse college spirit and put college functions on a firm basis (Kanakadea, 1908).

This was the first time that students, though limited in power, had their first true self-governance. They empowered themselves to not only interpret campus rules, but to develop them. Senate was developing policy related to freshmen responsibility, an honor code, and Alfred University traditions. It was also responsible for enforcing its rules.

Independent learning was being accepted nationally as an alternative to traditional education (Montessori, 1995). This might have influenced the continued faculty support for students to manage their own affairs. The founding of Senate was the unanimous desire of the student body to gain knowledge through more independent education.

The Senate was beginning to become more important on campus. Though almost all students concurred on the organization's premise, the student body did not agree how it should be run. Senate still was mainly a judicial body, and faculty developed most of the rules Senate enforced. Senate would not reform itself for another five years. On March 18, 1914, Senate President Frank Maxon Hill spoke on March 18, 1914 about what he saw as the object of student government.

We have student government, and whatever is done must be done by the students as a whole. The conclusions therefore naturally follows that the responsibility falls on the students at large, especially the upperclassmen. Thus the standard of the school is just what we are willing to make it...To accomplish this, cooperation with the faculty is indeed needed, but its success depends in a great measure upon the conduct honor and character of each individual making up the student body. (Fiat Lux, pg. 6, 03/24/14)

Hill's efforts led to a new Senate constitution that year. Senate began to develop many more rules; most involved interclass contests and an honor code. The new document stated that "the Student Senate shall have the power to take cognizance of violation of the Campus Rules and shall be a court of last resort in the interpretation of these rules" (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 7, 05/12/14).

Senate President Hill also established "a standing committee of the faculty comprised of those who know how to meet the students on equal footing, and whose representatives should interview the Senate and offer their advice to it in private, thus removing the grounds for the present tendency to complain of student government with faculty control" (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 03/24/14).

At this point Senate also stopped referring its recommendations to faculty and began to inflict its own punishments to violators. Most of these penalties were directed to underclassmen. For the first years of the government only the junior and senior representatives were allowed to vote in Senate. A few years later a Freshmen/Sophomore representative had been given a vote, though he or she was clearly outnumbered by the

other members of the Senate. Senate was still essentially an opportunity for upperclassmen to monitor freshmen in their compliance of Honor Code regulations and to make sure that underclassmen paid homage to juniors and seniors. As such, the organization remained not accepted by the entire student body, especially underclassmen, in setting policy.

In May of 1915, the *Fiat Lux* reported a need to “take further steps toward a solution of the self-government problem” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 05/12/14). In September of the same year the *Fiat Lux* paraphrased the new Senate President Merrill Graves as saying that “everyone must sometimes learn to resign themselves to authority, and that these rules not made merely to show authority of Student Senate, are one step towards that end” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 08/31/15). The ominous World War would allow these sentiments to be accepted.

IV. World War I and its impact to Campus (1917-1920)

Throughout the war years, the majority of male students at Alfred University were associated with military service in one way or another. In 1917, there were about 20 students in the graduating classes during the war. Even President Donald Hagar went into the US Navy and became the first Senate president, and only one of two in its history, to resign (*Kanakadea*, 1919). As more veterans returned home, the college experience changed (*Kanakadea*, 1919). Students, especially those who did not serve duty, were more serious with their studies and less likely to participate in social activities

(*Fiat Lux*, 1919). The attitude toward campus rules also changed. Senate, as the administrator of the Honor Code and Campus Rules, was affected.

One veteran in May of 1919 commented on the need to be stricter with governing laws for the student body. He also specified the need to be more authoritarian with the freshman and that the upperclassmen should not give in to freshmen requests for fewer rules by the Senate (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 5, 05/20/19).

(I wish) to back up the fundamental democratic principle that majority rules – that one fourth of the population of the world can't tell the other three-fourths what they must do or put up with. But now, when many of us have been released from service and are back in our little democratic world, our college commonwealth, are we going to put aside the application of those principles for which we fought...Remember that in the Great War force was resorted to when persuasion was in vain. (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 5, 05/20/19)

These sentiments were similar to the thoughts of many veterans returning home. They had just exposed to an arena with strict rules and order. They expected discipline and appropriate behavior when they returned to the United States. The spread of the Bolshevik revolution that began in 1917 and socialist sentiments of the time also caused many citizens to accept authoritative policies and actions from their government (Rayburn, 2000). The Student Senate operated in a similar manner.

The Senate was respectful to returning veterans. It sponsored events related to the War, like in December of 1919 when it authorized and sponsored a Red Cross Benefit Social. Senate was also more authoritative than any other time in its history. Freshmen could not

assemble or wear certain clothing without prior permission from the Senate. In December of 1919, two women were banned from future events if they refused to apologize to the student body for not wearing their freshman caps. At the same meeting, Edward Boyd was charged with smoking on campus grounds and eventually dismissed after he refused to admit to the violation (*Fiat Lux*, pg.1, 12/09/19). Also, fraternities and other social groups could only have entertainment with Senate permission (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 04/06/20). No other time in its history was Senate as authoritative and no other time in its history would its actions be so blindly accepted.

V. The Roaring 20s (1920-1930)

The 1920s ushered in an environment of many national changes; prohibition, anti-immigrant laws, and a *laissez-faire* capitalism all changed the social environment in the United States. Of all the national transformations, the hands-off mentality of the nation had the greatest effect on the Student Senate. It quickly and dramatically modified the attitudes of the student body from the previous decade. Senate quickly found itself as an autonomous organization. The faculty and administration did not interfere with it to the same degree as in previous decades. The 1922-1923 Senate was proud of this free operation.

Alfred is one of the oldest colleges in the country to boast a successfully operating student government, a matter which has been a source of no small degree of pride to the alumni and friends of the institution. The best testimony to the character, integrity, and good will of the vast majority of Alfred students is to be found in the fact that the faculty has not found it necessary to interfere with student

government of affairs as it has taken place in this college. This organization for the management and regulation of student affairs, by the students themselves, has resolved itself into a smoothly running system, where little friction occurs, and where the agitation at hand is threshed out to a successful conclusion, within a short period of time. (Kanakadea, 1923)

The Faculty at the time was behaving similar to the national government in a *laissez-faire* management style. Senate's own actions, however, also correlated with this leadership style.

Senate was far less authoritative in their actions than even five years earlier. Each year during the decade, Senate increasingly let students be their own moral compass. They expected that students would be accountable to the Honor Code and responsible without Senate scrutiny.

There is no elaborate display of authority on the part of those who have represented or now represent the several classes of Senate...It has stood for the safeguarding of individual and group interests, and for the promotion of the spirit of co-operation and helpfulness so necessary in the progressive life of a broad and open-minded, clear-visioned student body..." (Kanakadea, 1924)

The women's suffrage movement during the early part of the decade had an impact on Senate composition. Although women had consistently been elected to serve in the Senate, there was not a representative to address the issues of women. In the 1924-1925 term, Senate added to the class representatives a Women's Student Government (WSG) representative. The WSG had been responsible for maintaining "their social relations,"

and with the Senate constitutional change, also guaranteed a women's voice in the Student Senate (*Kanakadea*, 1926).

Also at this time Senate continued to take less action in student life, and consequently began to lose power in these affairs. It defined itself in 1926 as a group that should "preserve and regulate beneficial customs and traditions of Alfred, to have charge of and control all college elections, and to assume, whenever expedient, the control of student affairs" (*Kanakadea*, 1926). Throughout this period, more student organizations were forming and more students were enrolling in the University. This caused Senate to be more of an association that oversaw organizations. Consistent with the hands-off mentality of the time, Senate had given to smaller groups with more narrowly defined interests much authority. For example, the Men's Interfraternity Council and Women's Interfraternity Councils were formed to self-govern the Greek system. Soon most of the campus were members of Greek houses, and their issues would be the campus issues. This would cause a gradual shift in Senate power from class representation to Greek representation.

VI. The Depression and Big Government Spending (1930-1940)

In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt easily won the presidency over incumbent Herbert Hoover. A depression was raging nationally, and citizens were looking for relief. Roosevelt and his administration began to propose many bills as a form of recovery to the Nation. Alfred University quality of life was not affected by the depression to the same

degree as most United States citizens; the student body was still mostly comprised of people who could afford college tuition. The national mentality of big government spending, however, did affect the structure of Senate.

Up until the early 1930's the Senate did not allocate funds to organizations. The hands-off approach of Senate in the 1920s when it empowered many organizations and developed new ones caused Senate to now administer many clubs and organizations. It needed to find a way to fund them. In the early 1930s, Senate levied a student tax to every member of the student body for campus activities. The mission of Senate had changed.

The function of Senate is to allot funds to student organizations, to manage student elections, to maintain Alfred's traditions and customs, and to improve the standards of extra-curricular activities.
(Kanakadea, 1937)

Senate had relinquished, during the previous decade, almost entirely, judicial power. It had commissioned the Campus Court in 1925 and empowered the Footlight Club in 1929 to be responsible for managing the freshmen (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 09/08/29). There were now many new groups on campus.

In 1932, Senate reorganized itself as the head of a Student Association. This was a bureaucratic organization of athletics, the many new clubs, the campus court, and the Greek system. The *Kanakadea* reported that this was "reorganized to meet the existing problems of campus." It continued, "The Campus at this time was ruled by fraternity

politics and this resulted in general discontent among the student body” (*Kanakadea*, 1939). There was little central oversight of these different groups. This bigger governmental system was seen as a way to remedy the concerns.

Under this new system, like the national government, Student Senate began spending much money. By 1937, it was giving over \$800 to organizations. By the end of the decade, it was spending almost \$1000. Even the Editor of *Fiat Lux* was receiving a \$150 stipend (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 05/16/33).

As Senate grew bigger, the Greeks exerted complete control of the body. Individual classes no longer had issues for Senate discussion; Greek houses were the representative bodies. Senate was reorganized in 1932 and was represented entirely by the fraternities and sororities on campus, only two students were allowed to represent the “independent,” non-Greek portion of the student body. By 1935, 63% of the student body were in Greek societies (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 02/26/35).

Although the Senate seemed to have completely transformed from its structure of World War I, the war years were fresh in minds of the student body. The campus had little interest in fighting again. As conflicts emerged in Europe, the student body did not want to get involved. Senate examined the issue in 1933.

A letter from the Student Committee for Freedom in Education from the University of Cincinnati was presented by the president [Sidney R. DeLaney]. This committee is seeking the cooperation of every college campus against the Hitler movement in Germany. Great antagonism

has been exercised against the Jewish race, and it is widely felt that measures should be taken to prevent further persecution. No action was taken upon the matter [by Senate] (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 05/16/33)

Only a few weeks earlier, the *Fiat Lux* did a study on students' views on war and peace. Most students said that they would support and fight in a war if America was invaded or American interests were threatened; some felt there was no use to war and it was a waste of life and resources; and almost all saw no need for war at that time (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 03/7/33)

During a time of a more liberal attitude toward individual rights and freedom, the upperclassmen were losing much of their authority over the freshmen class. Franklin Roosevelt argued in his 1933 Inaugural Address for individual fundamental freedoms. He “offered an alternative vision of a new order, one predicated upon hope, rather than fear, opportunity rather than enslavement, free expression rather than repression, and cooperation rather than domination” (*The Four Freedoms*, 2000).

A year earlier in 1932, the freshmen had already been looking to have their own set of freedoms. Over the next three years, they would secure some. The upperclassmen had always seen the freshmen rules as a way to monitor a group of incoming students who would respect Alfred traditions only with discipline. These rules included things like opening doors, holding books, and doing personal favors for upperclassmen.

In March of 1932, the freshmen issued a petition to eliminate the Freshmen Rules. Senate reviewed the petition but did not act on it (Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 04/08/32). This independent spirit among each subsequent freshmen class continued for another three years. The Fiat Lux did a sarcastic editorial on the issue in May of 1932.

How anxiously we look to the Alfred of the future, devoid of...tradition. How gladly we welcome the coming of Seniors who shall wear purple hats, a sign of their partnership to the lofty Frosh...Let us bow and make obeisance to King Frosh who has usurped our position, who no longer respect us but demands respect (Fiat Lux, pg. 2, 05/17/32)

The 1936-1937 Senate under the leadership of President George Gregory revised the Freshmen Court and accepted the dissolving of the Campus Court. "Under this system, which abolished the old system of paddling and fining as a means for maintaining discipline it has tried to instill in the Freshmen a realization of Alfred's traditions" (Kanakadea, 1937). Though the Rules would continue, they were not enforced to the same extreme and the punishments would not be as severe.

Franklin Roosevelt also indirectly influenced the way Senate meetings operated. He encouraged public discourse during his administration. He saw it necessary in a functioning democracy.

What was truly novel about the New Deal, however, was the speed with which it accomplished what previously had taken generations... And during the entire New Deal era, public criticism and debate were never interrupted or suspended; in fact, the New Deal brought to the individual citizen a sharp revival of interest in government (An Outline of American History, 2000).

Up until 1937, Senate meetings were sometimes in secret and were causing concern from the student body. A *Fiat Lux* editorial in May of 1937 to the President Raymond Baschnagel's new administration argued for the need for more openness with the students.

The recent Senate shrouded its doings so carefully that it might have been fermenting a revolution for all the students knew about it...it must not be forgotten by the new Senate that they are representatives of the students, responsible to the students, and have no reason to keep their activities to themselves (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 05/04/37).

President Baschnagel was quick to respond at his inauguration at the annual *Moving-up Day*.

Criticize us freely. We invite it, providing it is constructive and justified. When any group of students feel they have a just complaint, may I suggest that you place it in the form of a petition and forward it to the Senate. I assure you that we will give it full consideration (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 05/18/37)

Throughout the decade, Senate changed. It grew in size, changed its structure, and amended its purpose. Another war, however, was going to transform the organization again.

VII. The War Years (1940-1945)

The year 1940 ushered in a sense of anxiety for the United States. Congress had allocated billions of dollars for defense preparations. By the end of the year, the United States placed an embargo on Japan, and Roosevelt suggested drafting 18 and 19-year old men for service. In 1941, the US declared war on the Axis Powers.

Even isolated Alfred University was quickly affected by the world conflict. The structure of the student body changed quickly. Enrollment dropped and the overwhelming majority of the student body were now women. As a result of World War II, Senate began addressing related issues.

The Student Senate, this year, has prided itself on its being able to face the issues brought before it in spite of the difficulties encountered because of the war. Chief among its sponsored activities has been the building of the War Scholarship Fund which was set up by the Senate to help those students, financially, who have to leave school for the armed forces, and who might wish to return to Alfred after the war (*Kanakadea*, 1943).

To raise money for these issues, Senate began selling corsage stamps to those attending formals and coordinating fundraisers. The organization founded a Campus Chest Fund where students were asked annually to make contributions to groups like the Red Cross, U.S.O., and the World Student Service Fund. Senate worked closely with faculty in organizing these fundraisers in a united effort to support war-related matters (*Kanakadea*, 1943). Much like the rest of the United States, Senate was preoccupied with aiding the

war efforts and supporting the troops. While many men were fighting overseas, the War also provided many opportunities for women nationally and on campus.

War very much became a doorway through which women ventured out of the homes where they had been confined. During WWII, women in high numbers were asked to work outside as well as inside of the home. For many women, WWII became a symbol of freedom. It was a time where women were no longer forced into the roles society had created for them. They become free to create their own lives and senses of self. With this increase in freedom also came an increase in equality. WWII gave women the chance to prove they are just as capable as men (*Rosie the Riveter and other Women World War II Heroes*, 2000).

Alfred University provided similar leadership opportunities for women. Doris Hill was the first woman Student Senate president. Elected in the spring of 1944, she represented a Senate that had over half female membership. This administration also amended the structure of Senate in support of the returning servicemen by adding a representative for “the veterans” (*Kanakadea*, 1945). The War had preoccupied the Nation and Student Senate for the last four years, after the war and with the introduction of the GI bill, Alfred University would once again be changed.

VIII. After the War (1945-1953)

The first year after the War, Alfred and the Senate had to adapt. The 1945-1946 Senate under President Mae Barrus, “revised its own constitution in order to allow for more adequate representation, necessary due to the sudden and large change in enrollment.” In the class of 1943, 87 students graduated, by 1948 there were 298 students in the senior

class (Kanakadea, 1943, 1948). Once again a woman headed the Senate, and her administration was beginning to take the steps necessary to prepare for the huge amount of returning GIs. The influx of students nationally and their non-traditional interests would change the purpose of Senate (*Kanakadea, 1946*).

Senate continued to allocate monies to organizations and sponsor student activities, but the student interests were changing, as those attending Alfred were older, more serious students (Baker, 2000). The new students were “almost all married, a serious group intent on catching up with their interrupted career paths” (Goss, 2000). They did, however, want representation in Senate. Fewer students were in the Greek system after the War, and Senate had to accommodate their representation. It changed its structure from one representing the Greek organizations to a system more representative of the entire student body. This included increased representation for commuter students and other non-traditional students (*Fiat Lux, 04/22/49*).

The returning soldiers and their spending resulted in a national post-war economic boom, in Alfred after years of limited funds due to low enrollments, the veterans also allowed for Senate to better fund organizations. The 1948-1949 Senate was a bigger and more active organization and was able to spend more money from the campus tax.

With an all-time record enrollment this year, the problems of student government became increasingly greater. In an attempt to make more effective the Senate's job of soliciting student support for charities, a Campus Chest was organized. An enlarged budget made more funds available to student organizations under Senate supervision (*Kanakadea, 1948*).

With these funds, Senate was getting involved with national and international issues. Senate founded the Campus Chest and helped fund causes like *Books for Belgium*, the World Student Service Fund, and the Red Cross (Goss, 1998). Senate began sponsoring a war orphan and provided financial aid to a young *Displaced Person* continuing his studies at Alfred University (Kanakadea, 1952). It also supported student contributions to *Radio Free Europe* (Smith, 2000).

The influence from veterans who had a more global experience made the isolated Alfred University student body more interested in all-inclusive harmony. The United Nations (UN) was formed in San Francisco 1945, and in Alfred for the next 10 years, students would continue to support similar themes for inter and intra-school communication and accord. The 1948 Kanakadea spoke about these accomplishments from Senate.

Membership for Alfred in the National Student Association was ratified, problems of student relations with faculty administration and village were discussed, and plans were made for the Student Government Conference. (Kanakadea, 1948).

This was an era when people realized a need to protect human rights and improve civil rights. In 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt headed a UN committee examining human rights; in the same year President Harry Truman integrated the United States Armed Forces. The students at Alfred University were also beginning to fight for the rights of the individual. In 1948, the Student Senate led a boycott of Mord's Barbershop in town "in response to his refusal to cut the hair of the Jamaican seminary students resident at the time" (Goss,

1998). This was the beginning of Senate's work on civil rights that would continue over the next 15 years.

World War II had a profound impact on Alfred University and Student Senate. It changed the structure of the student body, increased the school's size, and changed students' outlook on global issues. Both the school and organization grew stronger as a result.

IX. The 1950s, Civil Rights, and an Interest in Politics (1953-1963)

By the 1950s, the Senate president was being elected by campus-wide election instead of by Senate vote for the first time. This changed Senate's entire operations and increased the power of the presidency. It also caused Senate to become a more political organization.

After *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, America began seriously to confront civil rights violations, specifically segregation. Women's liberation was also becoming more accepted, and more people were getting involved in politics. Alfred was affected by all of these national attitudes.

During the decade, women continued to take leadership positions in Senate and two more women were selected as president. Ruth Smith was elected in a campus-wide election in 1952 and Nancy Cashimere was in 1958. Women were also assuming non-traditional

roles in Senate administered clubs and organizations. A *Fiat Lux* editorial examined the situation in 1956.

Are the women beginning to take over activities like hiking, camping, canoeing, mountain climbing—activities to which they have only recently (and reluctantly) have admitted by males...What's happened to outdoor man? (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 3, 10/09/56)

Beginning in 1956, Senate and the student body began aggressively to address issues related to civil rights and individual freedoms. Shocked by human rights violations in Hungary, Senate continued to sponsor a Hungarian student to study at Alfred. The Hungarian Revolution was also commonly mentioned on campus during 1956. The *Fiat Lux* examined the need for students to be attentive to international issues in Hungary and Israel.

The important question is one of moral responsibility. Do we have the right to incite these people to act for the course of freedom only to let them down when they need us most (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 10/08/56).

Discrimination was first publicly discussed in late 1956 during a meeting of students, faculty, and the Interfraternal Council. Students argued that current discriminatory clauses in Greek membership by-laws were unacceptable. Greeks responded that it would be difficult to amend the by-laws because it would be hard to contact all of their alumni for the necessary 2/3 support. One student responded to that with the statement, “it is never too comfortable when one wants an ideal and has to stand up to hardships” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 12/11/56).

These feelings among the student body and Senate throughout the decade spurred interest to fight for civil rights for all Americans. Marvin Bell, the Editor of the *Fiat Lux* in 1957, commented on this issue.

The real battle going on in the world today is not with Communism or Russia. It is one of discrimination and is being fought within the confines of our own nation: on college campuses, in front of high schools, on buses, before congressional committees...You'll never have democracy with legal segregation (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 11/05/57)

Though supportive in principle, the administration was conservative throughout the decade (Small, 2000). As such, students were independent in their planning and leadership on these issues (Pearlman, 2000).

In February of 1956, Senate voted to send a letter to President Oliver Carmichael of the University of Alabama stating its opinion on segregation at that school.

Dear Mr. Carmichael:

On behalf of the student body of Alfred University, I would like to inform you on our position regarding segregation—more specifically the problem of segregation at the University of Alabama.

Fortunately, we have no problem regarding segregation at Alfred University. Therefore, we realize your position is certainly not enviable. However, we do congratulate all those opposed to segregation.

The students of Alfred University possess a firm belief in the Constitution of the United States and the rights of the individual citizen. We believe that every individual—regardless of race, creed or religion—possesses equal educational, as well as religious and legal rights. In accordance with our beliefs, we are definitely opposed to racial segregation in any form.

We hope you will be able to settle this issue in the best interests of all concerned.

**Allen B. Potter, President
Student Body
Alfred University**

(Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 02/21/56)

In 1955, Senate rejoined the National Student Association (NSA), a group of student governments from around the United States. Student Senate initially joined to learn from other schools how to increase student voting and fight apathy on campus. It gradually became a more liberal national organization used to fight discrimination (Fiat Lux, pg. 3, 02/26/63).

NSA began supporting the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and as a result, so did Student Senate. SNCC was a group in Georgia fighting for Civil Rights. In 1961, President Alex Zoldan encouraged Senate to give funds and moral support to SNCC (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 01/16/62). This led to the planning of a campus rally in support of national Civil Rights. When the campus and Senate began to closely examine its own discriminatory policies on campus, however, the purpose of the rally was changed.

Lambda Chi Alpha and Kappa Psi Upsilon both still had discriminatory membership criteria in their constitutions requiring a “belief in Christian principles” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 01/16/62). Senate began to address the issue. Within a month, though, the rally was called-off when President Zoldan proposed a new amendment to the Senate by-laws that empowered Senate “to review and to veto any rule, law or provision of any other student organization.” The amendment also requested that the organizations with discriminatory

clauses present to Senate regularly their actions to improve their policies (Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 02/16/62).

This was one of the greatest achievements by Senate during the Civil Rights Era. It was mentioned in the New York Post, and the Faculty passed a resolution in support of the Senate actions (Fiat Lux, pg. 3, 02/16/62).

Senate continued to fight for Civil Rights for the next couple years. In 1962, President Fred Silverstein urged that “Alfred’s students show that they are aware of and interested in events of national and international significance, and to do so by sending messages to those involved in the latest struggle over desegregation” (Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 10/16/62). In response to the University of Mississippi’s refusal to integrate the school by accepting James Meredith, Senate took action. It publicly denounced the actions of the Governor Ross Barnett in blocking the enrollment of Meredith. The Senate wrote the president of their student body urging them to welcome the new student. It also wrote Meredith in support.

To James Meredith:

We, the student body of Alfred University, are aware of and in support of your courages [sic] efforts to obtain an education and would like to extend to you our full support for your success in this endeavor.

**Sincerely,
Student Senate
Alfred University**

(Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 10/16/62)

Senate eventually disassociated itself with the NSA in February of 1963. The dues were getting expensive and some students were feeling “it is morally incorrect to associate the conservatives on campus with the liberal positions of the NSA” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 3, 02/26/63). In its ten-years on campus, the NSA had a major impact on Senate and the student body.

Senate’s actions were a prelude to the Kennedy Civil Rights Era. The initiatives by students were almost entirely from the students. Many times, there was faculty support, but the conservative behavior by the administration was causing tension.

In March of 1962, President Zoldan sent a letter to Edward K Lebohner, Treasurer of Alfred University, after Lebohner allegedly refused to speak with a Senate delegate. The letter, that was printed in the *Fiat Lux*, went on to claim that Lebohner’s “actions obviously indicate a complete lack of faith in the responsibility of Alfred students” (*Fiat Lux*, 03/06/62). A disconnection was beginning to develop between the students and administration. By the end of the decade, it would be a great divide.

X. “The Calm Before the Storm” (1963-1968)

Throughout the early 1960s, Senate had a hard time being heard by the Administration (Pearlman, 2000). Moreover, the Administration was beginning to assume increased authority over student affairs. In September of 1964, the Board of Trustees issued a report announcing that the University would be exerting more power over the Greek

system. In response, the Senate formed a committee to investigate administrative control over student activities (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 10/06/64). Howard Wiener, a future Senate president, was asked to chair the committee and commented on the issue.

The Student Senate as representatives of the student body, express its deep concern over the gradual encroachment by the administration over student affairs outside the classroom (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 10/06/64).

The committee was renamed, the Committee on Student Rights, and began to work to question and challenge administrative action. In November, it organized a Students' Rights Assembly and invited most deans to attend. When only half of the administrators invited accepted, students voiced their dissatisfaction. A *Fiat Lux* editorial commented on the issue a few weeks later.

We hope that the students, through the leadership of (Senate President Bill) Vanech and the Senate, will continue a thoughtful examination of their objectives and continue to work for increased student freedoms...We urge the University, through the Board of Trustees to recognize that the granting of increased student freedoms is completely in keeping with their statement on University charcter [sic] (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 11/17/64).

The Student Rights Committee began presenting requests to the University Administration for consideration. These proposals included allowing all upper division students to be in men's apartments, permitting the serving of alcohol at St. Patrick's Day, and revising the women's visitation hours (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 12/08/64). The administration did not entirely accept the student requests.

Students were becoming less tolerant of administrative responses and dictates. During the previous decade, students were products of the Depression and WWII, and were “grateful to be in college and did little to jeopardize that opportunity by way of rebellion...” (Walsh, 2000). By 1964, however, students were becoming more comfortable with the disobedience seen nationally in protests. When the Administration announced that there would be classes the Monday after Easter requiring students to travel on Easter Sunday, students were in rage. A protest of almost 150 students converged on University President M. Ellis Drake’s house (Wiener, 2000). Senate President Howard Wiener wrote a *Fiat Lux* article with Senate’s position on the issue.

The Senate can agree with the staging of PEACEFUL, ORDERLY, AND PURPOSEFULLY DIRECTED demonstrations as a last resort. But Senate cannot condone cherry bombs. It cannot condone torches and hoods. It cannot condone attempts to damage a vehicle in the streets...I am sure that (the students) will agree that sane, responsible dealings with the faculty and administration are the only way that these ends can be approached (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 04/15/65).

The Administration refused to bend on the Easter issue. “This was still the time of administrative power” (Wiener, 2000). The students, however, were growing more restless. Wiener later referred to this era as the “calm before the storm” (Wiener, 2000).

Senate President Warner Dailey in his campaign for the office stated the need for restraint in dealing with administrators.

It is important that the Senate have the mutual respect of the administration, faculty and students. We must not let the term “respect” bog us down to an ineffective unit, but we can't go wild either (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 03/22/66).

University President Drake announced his retirement in 1967. Before leaving office, he offered a number of concessions to students. This included increased visitation to women's dorms and a personal statement in defense of student rights (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 03/14/67). With more issues being developed related to the Vietnam War and other student rights, however, the students were just beginning their protests.

XI. Protests, Vietnam and Student Rights (1968-1970)

By November of 1968, the Vietnam War had a major impact in shaping Senate issues. Senate was examining current, compulsory ROTC classes for students. The Faculty began ROTC in 1952 as a way to retain students during the Korean Conflict, but because of the course's affiliation with the Vietnam War, most students opposed it. Between War issues and student rights, during this era nationally and at Alfred, student protests reached a new level of radicalism.

Senate argued in 1968 for a student grievance committee. This would serve as an outlet for students to argue their concerns against faculty and administrators. The Faculty narrowly approved this and the proposal for voluntary ROTC (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 02/18/69). The Faculty and Administration were beginning to give some authority to students, but the students still had more issues to address.

In 1969, the Student Senate fought to eliminate curfews for students and began to target parietal rules. In November, two students were suspended from campus when the Student Conduct Committee found them in violation of visitation rules. Senate held an emergency meeting for three hours to debate the issue and how to fight against it. Most students supported a sit-in as a show of support to the violators (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 11/04/69). Any administrative action was now seen as an opportunity to protest.

The President Barbara Bredl of the Women's Student Government, an organization in operation for about 50 years, resigned because of a lack of interest by the student body in the group's issues. Few students attended these meetings to find ways to negotiate for co-educational dormitories. Hundreds of students, however, would routinely attend any meeting that would discuss or encourage the disobedient protest for a cause (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 3, 11/4/69).

In 1970, students went on strike in support of the Vietnam peace movement (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 05/19/70). Student Senate was becoming more of a forum to address these issues. When a matter interested the student body, the meeting was packed; when it was routine business, most Senators would not even attend. In April of 1970, most students no longer favored a representative democracy.

XII. Student Assembly and Open Forum (1970-1976)

To make student government meetings more democratic, Student Senate reformed in late 1970 into the Student Assembly. In this town hall format, each student represented him or herself, and each member in attendance had one vote. There was no president, only a chairperson who ran the meeting. This was a stark contrast to the strong chief executives of the previous decades. The premise behind the new organization was that if a student was interested enough in an issue to attend, they should have a vote in the matter (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 04/28/70).

The first meeting of the Assembly in the fall of 1970 was a success. There was a strong student turnout, and it looked as if the organization would be effective. By the second meeting, however, the Assembly lost its novelty and student attendance barely allowed the meeting to take place (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 09/22/70). Attendance at the Assembly over the next couple years would rise and fall and a lack of membership eventually led to the organization's collapse. Throughout its existence, however, it addressed many issues related to the 1970s.

When the new student government was formed, it gained almost complete independence from the Administration. The Provost's Office allocated \$5333 per semester to the organization to do with as it wished. For the first time, the Administration would not require the Dean of Students to sign off on expenditures of the student government (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 09/22/70). The students had unified themselves separate from the Administration.

The Assembly quickly began allocating money to causes. It gave \$400 to the Third World Liberation Movement, a group advocating the overthrow of the United States. It also gave \$800 to the Afro-American Awareness Society and allotted \$150 to Youths for Freedom (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 09/22/70). For the next five years the students would fund similar social issues.

Students quickly became interested in arguing for their own particular agendas. Motions for funds were being railroaded as politicking occurred with student groups making supportive agreements with each other so that both proposals would pass (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 04/25/72).

By 1973, the Assembly was in debt \$7,768 from overspending (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 9/21/73). Despite this, it continued to fund organizations and liberation movements of the 1970s. It supported educational sex forums and STD education on campus (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 9/21/73). The Assembly also allocated money for the Gay Liberation Group on campus (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 12/07/73).

The Gay Liberation Group was an organization that was met with some resistance on campus. The allocating of money to the group after a long discussion allowed for it to gain support in the community. The organization continually fought discrimination. In 1974, it wrote a *Fiat Lux* editorial addressing what it believed was the administration not giving full support and proper treatment of a speaker they brought to campus.

We would like to think that this deplorable behavior towards a guest of the University is a resort of mere gross oversight...and not intended as the shocking insult to (the speaker) and the Alfred gay population (as) it appears (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 7, 5/10/74).

During the next two years of the Assembly's existence, it advertised events and speakers related to the American Indian Movement, the Hispanic Alliance, and the Black Student Union (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 5/10/74). The Assembly supported more events radical for its era than anytime in Alfred University student government history.

Women's health care matters were address by the 1974-75 Assembly. This included increased sensitivity with health center physicals involving issues like pelvic exams. The Assembly also began to examine the need for increased security on campus. This included the installation of student security aides. As college students had to deal with safety issues on campuses nationally, "Alfred was forced to recognize that it was not immune from concerns about personal safety and security of property" (Kershner, 2000).

The Student Assembly was successful in representing the sentiments of the student body. It financially supported and crystallized the feelings and issues of the student body. The Student Assembly, however, was not an effective organization. It was not structured to manage the financial responsibilities of such a large organization, and its overspending was not monitored. In 1976, it reverted to the Student Senate.

XIII. Reorganization, Apathy, and Communication (1976-1987)

In the spring of 1976, (future Senate President) Jeffrey Lerman proposed a change to the Student Assembly. Because of anti-government sentiments of the time, apathy was one of the causes that made the Student Assembly ineffective. President Lerman proposed a new student government of a two-branch system with an Executive Branch and a Senate (Lerman, 2000). The student body approved the changes in a referendum with a 57% approval over four other options (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 3, 08/2/76).

The students elected President Lerman to head the new government. The new Senate allowed for more communication with the Administration. Students were still critical of administrative action, but were moving more toward cooperation. President Lerman commented on the issue in his inaugural speech to the student government.

I sense a tremendous feeling of optimism for this government's capacity to accomplish desirable and constructive objectives concerning the present and future well-being for the three main components at Alfred. Those components are: the students, faculty, and the administration (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 11/1/76).

The students selected President Robert Cahn to be the second president under the new government. He resigned in September of 1977 after not returning to Alfred University. The vice president, Mark Brostoff, assumed the presidency (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 09/19/77). Students under the new government were beginning to gain the respect of the administration and were having their concerns remedied (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 10/31/77). In

1978, University President Richard Rose compared the advancements of the new student government to that of the early 1970s. He spoke about how “the radical perspective then was an absolute one that was unrealistic and irreconcilable” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 02/20/78).

The *Fiat Lux* summarized more of his comments at a student government meeting.

Rose said that the student government has more “influence” in administrative policy than in previous years. He cited the change in library hours, student representation on curriculum committees, and the creation of minors as examples of student participation in administrative change...“In a sense I will miss the radicals...it was exciting, but when the demonstration ended, there was no follow-through” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1,5, 02/20/78).

By the late 1970s, Students had unified and recombined the two-branched, executive and legislative, student government into a unified Student Senate. The organization continued to improve relationships with faculty and students (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 11/05/79).

For the next ten years, Student Senate’s main concern was apathy. It was an effective organization; it had administrative support and was successful in dealing with student quality-of-life issues. Compared to the early 1970s, Dean of Students Don King characterized the current student of the early 1980s as self-absorbed (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 12/10/79).

The student of today is self-centered as portrayed by (Dean) King. He is more devoted to athletics than ever. The cost of a college education is worrisome, and there is intense pressure to excel academically. Economic stability is a main concern of students as it affects vocational choices (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 12/10/79).

As the 1980s progressed however, the issues that Senate addressed were more related to helping the environment and other issues. This included proposals like developing recycling programs in residence halls and environmental clean-ups (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 01/28/80). Senate also addressed issues like sexual abuse (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 02/6/81). Senate was beginning to address liberal agendas again but in a more structured, traditional manner than in the previous decade.

Throughout the decade, Senate struggled with student apathy. Students had lost interest in politics nationally and on campus students stopped seeing the organization as representing them. (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 04/12/83). For most the 1980s, it was hard to find candidates to run for the offices. This lack of involvement by students occurred in all clubs and organizations. Senate President Carole Hanson commented on the issue during her campaign for president.

The main reason I decided to run was that I have seen a downward trend of student involvement (in campus activities) since my freshman year...I feel that with good leadership I will be able to improve the present attitude of the student body (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 04/11/84).

Hanson's administration worked to improve freshmen leadership so that clubs could improve over the next years (Schaffer, 2000). She also encouraged the student body to use extracurricular activities as an educational opportunity (Schaffer, 2000)

In the spring of 1985, when running for office, President Andrew Burns stated that Senate needed more communication with the student body. He thought that by relaying Senate's

work to the entire student body, more students would get involved in Senate business (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 2, 09/09/85). Senate began being broadcasting its minutes over WALF, in the Fiat Lux, in the residence halls, and through the VAX computer bulletin board (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 5, 02/21/86). When students reelected Burns in 1986, he became the first and only Senate President elected for two full-terms.

For the previous ten years, Senate had been representing the residence halls and Greek organizations. In those years, more organizations had been forming. This was due to student interest and administrative attempts to offer more options to students since the minimum age to possess alcohol changed to 21. Senate was seen as a way to unify these organizations (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 03/25/87).

XIV. More Student Activities and Leadership Training (1987-1990)

Students changed Senate structure again in 1987 as a way to decrease apathy and unify student activities on campus. Students approved a referendum that year that made certain major clubs and organizations voting members of Senate (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 4/25/87). This would serve as the impetus to the development of the current Student Senate. The University became a campus run by different student leaders, representing a diverse group of students and student interests.

President Amy Neubecker began the 1987-1988 school year with a leadership development program to provide student organizations “with sufficient and proper leadership development training opportunities” (DeSanctis, 2000). This was consistent with national trends to develop leadership training workshops within industry (DeSanctis, 2000).

Senate sponsored more campus events and student programming under this new structure (DeSanctis, 2000). The *Fiat* commented on Senate's new organization and purpose of the leadership conference.

The conference provided a forum for student leaders to begin communicating with one another about the goals and purposes of their groups. As the week progressed, leaders became friends and traded ideas about how to enhance the quality of organizations and campus life as a whole (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 09/02/87).

As other campus organizations like *Kanakadea*, the *Fiat Lux*, *WALF* radio station, Student Volunteers for Community Action, Student Activities Board, and Alpha Phi Omega grew in strength through their unity, the Greek organizations were losing their campus presence.

The new structure also made some students see Senate as a money dispensing organization (DeSanctis, 2000). By 1988, it was responsible for allocating over \$100,000. Senate was operating much like a student union and began meeting weekly to accommodate the increased workload (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 02/10/88).

Over the next few years, the Senate would increase its membership as more organizations joined looking for fund allocation. In 1990, University President Edward Coll announced that Senate would begin receiving its funds from a student activities fee included in tuition instead of a direct allocation from Student Affairs. This was similar to how Senate received its funds from the early 1930s to the late 1960s. This time, however, the Administration allocated money to the Senate and to the fund to pay for the soon to be built Powell Campus Center (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 01/31/90). Senate did not receive the entire amount of the student fee. Senate did not challenge this announcement, as it likely would have 25 years earlier.

XV. Diversity and Quality of Life Issues (1990-2000)

By the 1990s, the student body and Student Senate were dealing again with student rights issues. This time, however, they involved diversity and student acceptance.

In 1990, the organization *Supporters and Homosexuals on Campus* (SHOC) was formed to raise awareness of and educate on gay issues. Though most of the student body accepted the efforts of the organization, there were some vocal students in opposition to the events held by the group (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 3, 10/31/90). The organization and their cause gained support over the next couple of years and was renamed Spectrum. Senate recognized and allocated funds to the organization a few years later, in 1996 Spectrum would receive the Most Improved Organization Award (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 8, 04/10/96).

The student body also examined issues related to Native American Rights in the early 1990s. Students began focusing discussion on Native Americans and their ancestors' history. In 1992, Senate sponsored a panel discussion on Columbus Day to bring forth many of these concerns (*Fiat Lux*, 10/14/92). Senate also responded by funding the Native American organization, *Donehogawa*.

Women's Issues Coalition (WIC) began protests in 1992 to demand more protection of students from sexual assaults. They requested better lighting, safe-phones, and increased security on campus. Senate was represented on a committee that examined ways to increase security on campus (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 11/18/92).

Students also addressed issues related to life in residence halls, the health center, and food services (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 6, 11/05/97). President Christina Lombardi commented on the actions of her administration.

We addressed campus safety and beautification...improving the quality of dormitories, improving technology on campus, and improving food services...these issues reflect society's own concern to improve the quality of life (Lombardi, 2000).

The main issue of the 1990s for Student Senate, however, related to racial harmony. In March of 1991, three students were suspended after alleged racial harassment at a basketball game (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1, 04/20/90). In April of 1998, a violent altercation at *Gentleman Jim's* bar in Alfred was perceived to be race-related (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 1,

04/08/98). Students began to examine how to improve relations on campus and in the community.

As a result, a Committee on Racial Equality (CORE) was formed to address issues related to making Alfred a comfortable environment for minorities (Fiat Lux, pg.1, 08/30/98). CORE proposed to Senate a resolution in support of ethnic diversity. The Senate debated the issue and voted it down, however, after feeling that the resolution should also “contain clauses about discrimination based on religion, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities” (Fiat Lux, pg. 1, 04/14/99). Senate agreed to add a diversity mission statement to the preamble of its constitution. The Fiat Lux listed the Executive Board’s rationale behind the preamble.

This is “Senate’s way of making a statement about our acceptance and appreciation of diversity in all its forms.” (*Fiat Lux*, pg. 4, 04/14/99).

Within a few weeks of the debate, Senate sponsored an *Open Student Forum on Race*. This was used as a way for students to openly speak about issues related to diversity. Over 35 campus leaders attended the forum which advertised the continued work by Senate and students to improve multicultural understanding at Alfred University.

Throughout the 1990’s, Senate had to address issues related to diversity and student rights. Nationally during the decade, the riots related to the Rodney King incident and the OJ Simpson trial injured relations among different races. The students must continue

to react to improve this situation. This will remain an import issue nationally and with the Student Senate.

XVI. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to provide an overview of Senate's history, its agenda, and how national issues affected the authority and autonomy of the organization. The thesis was not intended to show necessarily that Senate addressed national topics, but instead it examined how national trends relating to student rights and responsibilities affected the operations, structure and issues of the organization.

To obtain this information, numerous former Senate presidents were contacted.

Throughout the paper, some statements are used to show their feelings at that period, and some are recollections looking back on particular eras. Both accounts are used to provide insight into the thoughts and mentality of Senate leaders.

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