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Managing collegiate organizations through the strategic use of language: An exploratory analysis of argumentation in organizational decision-making

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University of Hawaii, 1992

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by

Jonna Davis Zane
DEDICATION

To my husband, Milton, who encouraged and loved me when the words wouldn't come, and I wanted to give up.
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This research project could not have been undertaken without the cooperation of the presidents, academic deans, directors of the degree completion programs, faculty members, and administrators of the colleges in which it was conducted. I am deeply grateful to these individuals and to the consultants to the colleges who generously contributed the time and information which made this study possible.

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ABSTRACT

The study responded to the need to find new management strategies to cope with the challenges facing contemporary collegiate organizations. A rhetorical perspective on organizations and management was used as a theoretic framework to support the idea that the strategic use of language is a powerful form of symbolic action used by managers to influence decision making. It was proposed that the analysis of argumentation in organizational decision making could provide new insights into how managers obtain the cooperation and control necessary to achieve their objectives. To explore this idea, a comparative analysis of how managers in two small colleges used language to influence the decision to initiate a controversial Degree Completion Program (DCP) on their respective campuses was conducted.

The investigation employed an interpretive design. Naturalistic methods guided data collection and processing and established the trustworthiness of the study. Methods for the analysis of argumentation were used to describe, interpret, evaluate, and compare the communication among decision makers about the DCP. The influence of socio-political factors on the argumentation also was systematically examined and described.

The study concluded that argumentation is a prevalent and important form of communication in organizational decision making. In the process of argumentation, there was an interplay of symbolic and instrumental actions as managers used their knowledge of socio-political circumstances in their colleges to enhance a logical or objective
position on the issues. An openness to argument by all parties facilitated communication among decision makers which culminated in a reasoned decision to initiate the DCP.

The findings of the study suggested that managers who are skilled in argumentation possess an important means of influencing organizational decisions. Management theory needs to explain how managers use argumentation as a form of communication to achieve organizational objectives. The rhetorical perspective on management and associated methods for the analysis of argumentation adopted in the study facilitated the conceptualization of management as a communication process and the comparative analysis of communication data. Future research in educational administration needs to explore further the efficacy of rhetorical theory and methods to generate new insights into the management of collegiate organizations.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables ......................................................... xi
List of Figures .......................................................... xii
Preface ................................................................. xiv

Chapter One: The Strategic Use of Language as a Form of Symbolic Management ................................................. 1

- The Need for New Management Strategies in Collegiate Organizations .......................................................... 2
- The Use of Language as a Form of Influence in Organizations ........................................................................... 6
- Studies of Language in Management Research ........................................................................................................ 11
- A Rhetorical Approach to the Study of Language in Organizational Decision Making ................................................. 22
- Problem Statement .................................................................................................................................................. 33
- Limitations of the Study ............................................................................................................................................ 34

Chapter Two: An Interpretive Methodology for the Analysis of Argumentation in Organizational Decision Making .................. 36

- A Symbolic View of Organizations ......................................................................................................................... 36
- An Interpretive Perspective on Organizational Research .......................................................................................... 39
- Design of the Study .................................................................................................................................................. 41
- Introduction to Merton and Woolman Colleges and the Degree Completion Program .............................................. 46
- Factors Pertaining to the Selection of the Research Sites and the Conduct of the Study ........................................ 48
- Data Collection Procedures ....................................................................................................................................... 50
- Data Analysis Procedures .......................................................................................................................................... 54
- The Case Reports ................................................................................................................................................... 60

Chapter Three: The Argumentation Over the Degree Completion Program at Merton and Woolman Colleges ......................... 61

- The Decision Forums and Chronology of Events in Merton College .................................................................... 61
- The Decision Forums and Chronology of Events in Woolman College ................................................................... 65
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Issues</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Consultants' Arguments</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Argumentation in Merton College</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Argumentation in Woolman College</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of the Argumentation in Merton and Woolman Colleges</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Conceptualizing Management as Communication</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Argumentation Influenced the Decision to Initiate the Degree Completion Program in Merton and Woolman Colleges</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Implications of the Study</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Implications of the Study</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Managing Collegiate Organizations</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Statement</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Permission to Reprint Figure 1</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Interview: Introduction and Topics</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Merton College List of Documents</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Woolman College List of Documents</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: List of Documents Pertaining to the Challenge to the Degree Completion Program at Woolman College</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summary of the issues pertaining to the proposed Degree Completion Program at Merton and Woolman Colleges</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Relationships among the elements of any argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Primary Argument from authority favoring the initiation of the Degree Completion Program in Merton and Woolman Colleges through a contract with the consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Resource Sub-Argument which reasoned from the authority of statistical and survey data that Merton and Woolman Colleges should initiate a Degree Completion Program as a strategy for increasing enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Program Sub-Argument from authority that the initiation of the Degree Completion Program would establish Merton and Woolman colleges as leaders in innovative adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The argument from correlation shown in Warrant 1 and the argument from authority shown in Warrant 2 that the Merton faculty could design a Degree Completion Program without entering into a consulting agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The argument from circumstance that if a consulting agreement is signed the faculty will not be able to control the quality of the Degree Completion Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The vice president's argument from generalization that faculty would control the design of the curriculum of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) at Merton College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The argument from analogy that the Degree Completion Program curriculum met the requirements for student contact hours per credit when time spent in field-work and independent research assignments were counted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The argument from generalization that Merton's Regional Accrediting Association would approve the inclusion of fieldwork and independent research assignments in the calculation of student contact hours per credit required in Degree Completion Program courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The argument from classification that the degree offered by the Degree Completion Program was academically inferior to other baccalaureate degrees offered by Woolman College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I learned the power of language in management while serving as the first director of an accelerated Degree Completion Program (DCP) for working adults at a small, liberal arts college. The program was embroiled in controversy from the start. Both faculty and the college's regional accrediting agency were suspicious that the DCP was a hastily conceived administrative effort to fill the treasury of the impoverished college rather than the altruistic endeavor to meet the needs of a growing nontraditional student group as was claimed. Among the most disputed aspects of the program were that it entailed an expensive implementation contract with consultants from the entrepreneurial college which developed the curricular model, and it offered adult students the opportunity to have their life and work experiences assessed for potential degree credit.

What ensued from the controversy was an internal, often heated debate between the administration and the faculty over the merits of the DCP and a larger debate between the college and the accrediting association over the college's right to initiate it without the association's approval. I was in the middle of the debate for about two years. My directive from the administration was to implement the DCP notwithstanding the opposition. Needless to say, the job was a balancing act among competing interests, and negotiation and persuasion were the primary activities in which I engaged. In retrospect, management activity in the debate over the DCP issues reflected a fascinating blend of carefully planned strategy to develop academic
legitimacy for the DCP and tactical maneuvering to ensure that the message would be heard amid the fray.

The intensity of my experience as director of the DCP and the demands of the position far exceeded my preparation for educational administration, even though I had completed the coursework required for a doctorate in the field. The question for me was why the gap? What was missing in my training, or, conversely, what did I know as a result of my experience that might help close the gap between the theory and practice of educational administration? It was in my attempt to respond to these questions and put into perspective my personal experience, that the concept of management as a rhetorical process took shape, and this study of argumentation in organizational decision making was born. To my satisfaction, the study demonstrates in a limited way that when the language of management is the focus of investigation, the well-worn assumption that management is accomplished through communication acquires new meaning, and the practical implications for managing are nearly self evident.

The report of the study of argumentation in organizational decision making which follows, asked how managers in two small liberal arts colleges, similar to the one in which I worked, used argument to influence the decision to initiate a DCP on their respective campuses. The immediate purpose of the research was to obtain insight into the forms of communication that produce an optimal balance between management's need to obtain the cooperation and control necessary to achieve collective action and the need to encourage the diversity of opinion which contributes to organizational vitality and effectiveness.
In order to accomplish the research objective and answer the question, it was necessary to develop the concept of management as a rhetorical process and adapt methods for the analysis of argumentation to the organizational decision making context.

Chapter One documents the research problem and develops the idea that the strategic use of language to influence decision making is a form of symbolic management. Studies of managerial language are reviewed in order to provide justification for a rhetorical approach to the study of communication in management contexts. The Crable (1967) model of argumentation as a form of communication is proposed as a conceptual framework for the analysis of argumentation in organizational decision making.

Chapter Two describes the interpretive design of the study which focused the investigative effort on obtaining an understanding of the DCP decision making from the point of view of the participants and on learning how multiple perspectives among decision makers interacted to produce organized action over an extended period of time. The naturalistic methods used to collect and process data and the critical methods used to analyze it are discussed in detail.

Chapter Three presents the results of the analyses in a case study of the DCP decision making in each college. The cases include the chronology of events leading to the decision to initiate a DCP, the issues, the argumentation over the issues, and the influence of the socio-political context on the deliberations. A comparative analysis of the argumentation between the colleges concludes the Chapter.
Chapter Four draws conclusions about the influence of argumentation on organizational decision making based on the results of the study. In summary, the implications for theory, research, and practice in educational administration are discussed in terms of the new insights they offer on organizational management.
CHAPTER ONE: THE STRATEGIC USE OF LANGUAGE AS A FORM OF SYMBOLIC MANAGEMENT

Management is accomplished largely through communication. For example, the governance of the university has been called "governance by conversation" because critical matters such as the form of the curriculum and the size of the budget are the subject of thousands of hours of consultation and conversation before a final decision is reached (Mayhew cited in Tierney, 1983, p. 177). Although the majority of university presidents and other academic managers, like their counterparts in business, spend most of their time engaged in communication about a range of activities, there have been relatively few efforts to conceptualize and study management as a communication process (Dill, 1984; Gronn, 1983). The problem which is the focus of this research is the need to examine how managers in collegiate organizations use language strategically to influence organizational decision making.

Chapter One develops the idea that the strategic use of language is a powerful form of symbolic action available to managers of collegiate institutions who are seeking to cope with changes in the composition of the student body and a corresponding shift in educational focus. It is proposed that the adoption of a rhetorical perspective on management can open new possibilities for research and practice. A review of the studies of language in management research included in the Chapter shows that the rhetorical analysis of argumentation in decision making provides insight into how managers achieve cooperation and control in a
turbulent environment. In response to the need to build on current research, a model of argumentation as a form of communication (Crable, 1976) is proposed as a methodological framework for the study of managerial language in organizational decision making.

The Need For New Management Strategies in Collegiate Organizations

Those who would be managers in colleges or universities are confronted with an interesting dilemma. Academia has been idealized as an "Athenian democracy of professional scholars who know each other and share a bundle of values and aspirations which they practice in their institutional lives" (Keller, 1983, p. 30). According to the vision, collegiate institutions are or should be free societies "unburdened by political interference, business practices, or worries about market conditions, finances, and competitive forces, so that the scholarly community can point the way to ever higher levels of reasonableness and civilized life for all of us" (Keller, p. 30). However, powerful forces have emerged to challenge the traditional vision of collegiate organization. The specters of competition, bankruptcy, demographic shifts, public regulation and technological advance haunt higher education and portend environments of increasing complexity and turbulence (Cameron, 1984, pp. 384-386; Glenny, 1980, pp. 363-380; Keller, pp. 3-26; Young, 1987, pp. 48). The manager's conundrum is how to achieve effective action and ensure institutional survival in the context of the competing ideological and pragmatic realities extant in the college and university environment.
Keller (1983) has argued that strong management initiative is essential if collegiate institutions are to surmount the problems which face them. According to Keller, managers in contemporary colleges need to abandon traditionally passive administrative roles in favor of proactive styles and embrace new technologies which facilitate forecasting, planning and rational decision making. Traditional models of collegial governance are outmoded in Keller's view and should be replaced with new forms of "participative" governance in which faculty serve as "advisors" to top management (pp. 61-62).

Few would argue that management practices need to be improved if colleges and universities are to reverse the trend toward decline. However, adopting instrumental strategies which have proved effective in business organizations may not suffice in colleges where faculty governance traditions continue to be idealized. The complexity of the issues and the relationship between management and faculty is illustrated well by the experience of many institutions which have attempted to develop a new student market by initiating adult and continuing education programs.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (Watkins, 1989) reported that there is a growing number of adults over the age of 25 who are seeking college degrees. Accompanying the trend has been phenomenal growth in continuing education departments of colleges and universities (Nicklin, 1991). Economic factors such as a decline in the number of students of traditional college age (18-24 years) and a corresponding demand for education to prepare for jobs were cited as among the important reasons for the new trend in enrollment. While adult students have been
welcomed by institutions facing declining enrollments and shrinking budgets, there also have been problems in serving them effectively.

Adult students present unique challenges to traditional policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, and academic programming (Peterson, 1981). Advocates of educational reform have proposed non-discriminatory admission policies with respect to age, cooperative educational programs with business and government, crediting of extracollegiate learning, standardized, modular curricula and nontraditional criteria for grading and awarding degree credit. In an effort to boost enrollments and remain solvent, top management in many colleges has hired consultants to assist in developing and marketing accelerated degree completion programs which incorporate many of the proposed academic and student service reforms (C. Scarlett, personal communication, November, 1990). Their efforts frequently have generated intense ideological and political conflict between conservative faculty who question the quality and entrepreneurial basis of nontraditional degree programs and campus progressives who defend them (Gamson, 1989; Rockhill, 1983, p. 238).

The debate over service to adult students reflects ideological issues and political struggles which instrumental strategies such as planning, mobilizing resources and rational problem solving alone are unlikely to resolve satisfactorily. Emerging is an alternative approach to management which focuses on its symbolic aspects. The symbolic approach assumes that instrumental activities are influenced in important ways by the ideologies, shared language, ceremonies, and rituals which comprise the cultural context of the organization.
(Chaffee, 1985, pp. 143-137; Pfeffer, 1981a). A primary function of managers from the symbolic perspective is to rationalize and legitimate organizational decisions through the use of rhetoric (Pfeffer, 1981a). Rhetoric is "the human effort to induce cooperation through the use of symbols" (Brock & Scott, 1980, p. 16). While symbols may take many forms, in this discussion, rhetoric refers to language which is a structured system of codifiable symbols by means of which people communicate meaning and regulate their activities (Evered, 1983, p. 126). In colleges and universities where faculty must be consulted on academic matters ranging from teaching and research activities to admission policies and industrial grants, symbolic management with its focus on language could offer new approaches to managing in a complex and uncertain environment (Chaffee, 1985).

Pfeffer (1981a) has proposed that research which identifies and describes how managers use rhetoric to influence decision making could contribute to the conceptualization of "management as symbolic action" and form the basis for developing practical strategies which complement instrumental management activities. An interpretive approach to research has been advocated when the purpose of inquiry is to describe and analyze human activity. The interpretive perspective offers an alternative to positivist traditions and typically entails the analysis of qualitative data which are presented in a case study report. However, interpretive research has been criticized on the basis that it is not structured by generally accepted conventions which provide the guidelines for comparative analysis of data and which enable consumers to assess the relevance of the research findings in terms of their
contribution to the larger pool of scientific knowledge about a given subject (Deetz, 1978, pp. 13-15; Everhart, 1988, p. 712). This study adopts an interpretive research perspective, acknowledging the associated methodological concerns, and develops a rationale for using methods of rhetorical criticism focused on the analysis of argumentation to examine the strategic use of language in organizational decision making.

The Use of Language as a Form of Influence in Organizations

A review of the higher education literature on administrative behavior confirmed that a majority of university presidents and other academic managers, like their counterparts in business, spend the majority of their time engaged in communication relevant to a range of human relations, conceptual, and technical activities (Dill, 1984). "Leadership is a Language Game" is the title of an essay by Louis Pondy (1978) in which he discussed the power of language as a tool of social influence. In the essay, Pondy made the point that leaders who are able to put into words what a group is doing create meaning for the group, so that their activity becomes a social fact which then may be exchanged, talked about, modified, amplified and used for internal processing of information. To illustrate the enormous potential for leverage which accrues to those who are able to make sense of things and put them into language meaningful to large numbers of people, Pondy referred to the late Dr. Martin Luther King. He suggested that King's real power was
not only that he had a dream, but that he could describe it, thereby making it accessible to millions of people (Pondy, p. 95).

The role of language in organizational management has been addressed in the literature under various conceptual labels including, "communication, command, control, persuasion, propaganda, hegemony, information processing, bargaining, negotiations, coordination, and feedback" (Tompkins, 1987). Most recently, the views of Pfeffer (1981a, 1981b) on the symbolic aspects of management have prompted interest in how managers use language strategically to achieve the cooperation and control necessary for organizational effectiveness.

The underlying assumption of the symbolic management perspective is that organizations are systems of shared meaning created, in part, through linguistic interactions of their members. Based on this definition of organization, Pfeffer (1981a) proposed that managers have little influence on substantive organizational decisions like the allocation of resources. Rather, he suggested that managers influence how decisions are perceived by rationalizing and legitimating them through the use of political language. In effect, according to Pfeffer, management's function is to facilitate the creation of shared language and meaning around organizational events and actions.

Pfeffer (1981a, 1981b, pp. 179-229) made the point strongly that language is used in the context of organizational politics to influence sentiments, values, and beliefs, and may function to interfere with rational decision processes. The interference with rational decision making occurs when human beings create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability and provide direction in the midst of
uncertainty rather than using rational, problem solving procedures (Boland & Deal, 1989, pp. 150). Pfeffer's concern is that the explanations offered by managers to reduce complexity and rationalize and legitimate decisions may function to create a symbolic sense of control over events which, in reality, continue to be ambiguous and highly complex.

Several authorities have contributed ideas to the concept of symbolic management. Shrivastva and Schneider (1984) have advocated a cognitive approach to the study of management's role in organizational decision making. They suggested that organizations are information processing systems which organize and interpret information selectively through an integrative framework comprised of the values, beliefs, ideologies and assumptions of organizational members. In their view, management's function is to develop the cultural frame of reference through which information is processed. Language and ritual are considered to be important vehicles through which organizational frames of reference are formed.

Smircich and Stubbart (1985) have characterized organizations as "enacted environments" (724) in which the organizational world is an "ambiguous field of experience" (p. 726). The task of management, in their view, is to create meaning by finding connections and patterns in the symbolic and material records of organizational activities. From this perspective, managers are seen as strategists who create imaginary lines between events, objects, and situations so that they become meaningful for the members of an organizational world. The manager's
tools are language, metaphors, and stories out of which the symbolic foundations of organizational structures are formed.

A review of the strategic management literature conducted by Chaffee (1985) indicated that while the interest in an interpretive or symbolic perspective on strategy has been growing among authorities on organizational behavior, its parameters have not yet been defined theoretically nor demonstrated empirically. In fact, Pfeffer (1981a) was cautious in calling for research on the symbolic aspects of strategic management because he was concerned that exposing the power of drama, advocacy, persuasion, and other forms of symbolic action could make those activities "less effective" or "call into question the legitimacy of the administrative activity itself and, by extension, its study and teaching" (p. 48). On the other hand, Smircich and Stubbart (1985, p. 734) have argued that the study of the "enactment" processes of strategic managers may expose assumptions, beliefs and norms which trap people in cycles of unproductive behavior. By displaying the various patterns which managers and other members of organizations use to enact their environments, these authorities believe that it will be possible to alter the range of available choices and facilitate new ways of acting.

Stablein and Nord (1985) have endorsed the view that research on organizational symbolism can provide new insight into the nature of human organization and can open new possibilities for achieving effective action. In particular, they have suggested that the use of interpretive research methods which focus on the analysis of human
interaction have the potential to show how some interests or preferences become institutionalized over others. Their contention is that if the dynamics of interaction among individuals or interest groups can be identified and displayed, then participants can learn to recognize the symbolic controls which are in operation and overcome them. Their concern is that managers will use their knowledge of symbolic controls to strengthen already dominant interests and suppress, rather than enhance, the articulation of multiple perspectives which are essential to the development of creative alternatives for action. In Stablein and Nord's view, research needs to address the question of how managers could use language to free interaction and improve communication rather than control it.

The study of language in organizations is in its infancy. Although empirical studies have shown that managers spend the majority of their time in conversation with others (Mintzberg, 1973; Dill, 1984), few studies have addressed management questions by analyzing linguistic data (Donnellon et al., 1986; Gronn, 1983). There have been two methodological approaches to the study of management through the analysis of the language managers use to accomplish their work. One explored discourse analysis (Donnellon, 1986; Donnellon et al., 1986; Gronn, 1983, Moch & Huff, 1983) while the other adopted a rhetorical approach (Huff, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c). Both approaches reflect efforts to develop methods for conducting management research from an interpretive rather than a positivist perspective.
Gronn (1983) set a precedent for the analysis of linguistic data in administrative contexts when he analyzed the tape recorded conversations of a school principal and his staff as they discussed teacher assignments for the upcoming year. Gronn was interested in learning how administrators establish control through language. Using standard criteria for the transcription and analysis of tape recorded conversations, he examined how lexical choices, word order, and supralinguistic factors such as intonation and vocal emphasis exerted reciprocal influence on the speakers and shaped the course and outcome of the discussions. He also considered the effects of the physical setting and interpersonal factors on the development of the linguistic exchange.

Gronn concluded that "talk" is a key resource in establishing administrative control, but that the power to control emerges in interaction and must be "worked at linguistically and . . . never-endingly as an ongoing everyday activity" (1983, p. 20). In reporting the results of the study, he used segments of conversations to show how the principal and his staff determined who could speak, for how long and with what type of authority regarding the teacher assignments. He also demonstrated how mutual attempts by the parties to persuade or manipulate each other could be seen in the verbal exchanges.

Gronn's (1983) study represented an attempt to move away from static observations of administrative behavior and develop a method for the study of management as a dynamic, interactive process (Gronn, 1982;
1984; Willower, 1983). Levine, Donnellon, Gioia, and Sims (1984) supported the move toward discourse analysis as a methodological approach to the study of organizational management, but were critical of the fact that its use seemed limited to one-shot case studies because of the idiosyncratic nature of the settings selected for analysis. These researchers attempted to develop a method for the analysis of conversation which would enable researchers to identify the commonalities in verbal behavior across settings.

The approach taken by Levine et al. (1984) entailed the adaptation of methods used in cognitive psychology for the analysis of the mental "scripts" which are believed to provide structure and order to human behavior and the analysis of discourse based on speech act theory as described by Searle (1969). Speech acts are social actions manifested through linguistic behavior which perform communicative functions such as promising, warning, stating, or commanding (Levine et al., p. 101).

Using transcripts and video tapes of 96, simulated, performance appraisal interviews between practicing managers and their subordinates, the researchers listed the speech acts used in the interactions and attempted to identify the common script which might be directing the flow of the interviews. Observations were coded numerically and subjected to computer analysis which mapped the verbal behaviors of the managers and subordinates according to their common salient features. The method was complex and the researchers did not suggest that it be developed further. However, the study successfully called attention to the existence of cognitive and linguistic metatheories from which
criteria to guide the comparative analysis of managerial behavior across unique settings might be derived.

Another study based on speech act theory was conducted by Moch and Huff (1983). These researchers were interested in examining how power relationships emerge and are maintained as an aspect of organizational structure. Moch and Huff argued that in addition to the authority to control certain resources which accrues to managers by virtue of their position or expertise, managers also create and maintain power by defining problems, diagnosing their causes, and mandating certain behaviors in ambiguous situations. Specifically, the researchers identified and examined "blaming rituals," called "chewing ass out" by those involved, which were used by a manager in an organization to secure cooperation and control of his subordinates (Moch & Huff, p. 295).

Moch and Huff (1983) developed a schema by which to classify utterances made in the course of "chewing ass out" according to their intended meaning as opposed to their linguistic characteristics such as lexical choices or syntax. Both the manager's utterances and the responses of subordinates were classified. The report of the study presented examples of conversational exchanges and interpretive commentary intended to demonstrate how power was achieved through linguistic enactment. The following excerpt from the report is illustrative:

Mngr: Gentlemen, what are the five E's? [silence] Mr. F., what are the five E's?

Dale: Uh ... uh ... (slouching) ... the environment.
Mngr: Yes . . .
Dale: Uh . . . energy.
Mngr: That's two . . .
Dale: Uh . . . uh . . . I don't know . . .
Mngr: (standing and becoming red in the face . . . clenching his fists), I am disgruntled, distended, and filled with disgruntment!!!! (Moch & Huff, p. 304)

Moch and Huff (1983) interpreted the exchange to mean that since few had heard of the five E's, and none were discussed after environment and energy, the manager's intention was neither to inform nor to test, but rather to enact subordination through language. However, they stressed that the success of the ritual required the mutual production of the boss, the recipient of the utterance and the audience. They speculated that the purpose and rules of blaming rituals are generally known by all and that players are motivated to play their part and make sure that their fellows play theirs in order to "cool" the boss and allow him to vent on relatively unimportant matters (Moch & Huff, p. 309). For instance, in the example cited above, the researchers noted that, "Dale took great delight in the manager's 'disgruntment' after the meeting," but appeared "quite serious and embarrassed" at the time the incident occurred (Moch & Huff, p. 305).

The study of the language of blaming rituals showed how a manager controlled his subordinates through verbal intimidation and coercion. However, the analysis also suggested that the subordinates' consent and participation in the language game "chewing ass out" was crucial to its effectiveness. The question which the study raised was how did the
manager and his subordinates reach the unspoken consensus necessary for the creation of an organizational reality in which blaming rituals functioned as a stable and effective form of control?

Donnellon et al. (1986) addressed the issue of how groups make collective sense of their experience in order to take organized action. These researchers assumed that within an organization there will be many different perspectives regarding options for deciding which must be integrated in order for action to be taken. Using a combination of methods for ethnographic description, theoretical sampling, and discourse analysis, such as semantic coding, the investigators proposed to identify the communication mechanisms which facilitated the development of shared meaning and coordinated action among groups holding divergent opinions. The focus of study was a segment of a videotaped simulation of decision making in which undergraduate students enrolled in a course on organizational theory decided how to respond to employee layoffs prompted by resource reductions in a fictitious company.

The students, after some disagreement, interpreted the layoffs as a power move by a rival department to take advantage of the reduction in resources and create conditions which would enable them eventually to replace the employees with members of their own department. After considering several possible responses, the students voted to strike against the company. The analysis of the discussions indicated that four communication mechanisms functioned to move the group toward the consensus to strike. The communication mechanisms included metaphor, logical argument, affect modulation, and linguistic indirection.
Metaphor is a form of speech which asserts that "A" is "B," although "A" and "B" belong to two different categories (Donnellon et al., 1986, p. 48). Examples of the use of metaphor in the student discussions included the assertions that, "Blue Department's action is a power play" (Donnellon et al., p. 47) and "striking is getting revenge" (p. 48). An example of the role of metaphor in reconciling differences was suggested when the reluctance of some group members to strike was overcome by enlarging the strike metaphor to state, "striking is principled behavior" (Donnellon et al., p. 48).

Logical argument was defined in the study as, "sets of utterances that include a premise, an inference, and a conclusion used in the context of disagreement to move another person to agreement through incremental steps" (Donnellon et al., 1986, p. 50). Two opposing arguments asserting reasons for the decision to layoff the employees were advanced. How the disagreement was resolved was not reported, although the investigators noted that neither argument was inconsistent with the interpretation that the layoffs had been inappropriate, a condition necessary to support a decision to strike.

Affect modulation referred to communication behaviors that evoked or altered sentiment in such a way as to cause the redefinition of a situation (Donnellon et al., 1986, p. 50). It included supralinguistic behaviors such as high pitch, fast tempo, agitated gestures and word choices such as "Hitler," "Robin Hood," and "the blister starts to fester" (Donnellon et al., p. 50). Affect modulation was used effectively to heighten support for a strike against the company.
Linguistic indirection was manifested in the use of ambiguous speech forms such as passive voice, intransitive verbs, modifiers, broad terms and ellipses for the purpose of creating equivocality. The transcript of the discussion of the layoff situation showed that equivocality was used by the the leader of the department responsible for the layoffs to hide the real motive for the department's action.

Donnellon et al. (1986) concluded from their study that language provides the communication mechanisms for transcending differences of interpretation among individuals and groups about organizational events and activities. As an example of the analysis of language for purposes of gaining insight into management questions, it provided an indication of the type of linguistic strategies which might be used to influence organizational events and actions. Two studies by Huff examined more closely the role of argument in organizational decision making.

Huff (1983a) examined a series of documents in a university school of business to learn how rhetorical devices, including arrangement, style, argument, and theme were used by various organizational leaders to persuade others to accept their preferred course of action and discourage dissent. The documents covered an eight year period when the department was debating a shift in programmatic emphasis. Based on the analyses, Huff described a "policy level discourse" (p. 180) in which new leaders described their strategy for change in a series of arguments using consistent vocabulary. In an apparent effort to gain recognition from the leader, other organizational members expressed their ideas and reported on their actions pertinent to the leader's goals using vocabulary and themes introduced by the leader. To the extent that the
member's interests differed from those expressed by the leader, new themes and arguments were introduced, but were "packaged" using more familiar terms (Huff, p. 181).

Huff (1983a) concluded on the basis of the analyses that language is used to frame organizational issues in new ways and to reformulate strategies for achieving change in an organization's objectives. She proposed that successful leaders may be those who reformulate potential new directions for the organization using familiar language and themes as a basis for argument.

In a second study Huff (1983c) analyzed the statements of a school superintendent relevant to several decisions of significance to his school district. On the basis of her findings, she suggested the superintendent's participation in discussions with various interest groups could be described as a process of selecting among alternative ways of framing and deciding specific issues. She proposed that the framing process which occurred through the discussions could be interpreted as the construction of trial arguments in which the superintendent sought to find an argument strong enough to warrant his commitment and action. In subsequent, related research, Pondy and Huff (1988, p. 190) expanded on the concept of issue framing and outlined the Emergent Policy Reframing theory of organizational change to account for the process by which organizational members perceive their situations and then reorganize their perceptions as conditions change.

An important aspect of Huff's (1983a, 1983c) studies of issue framing was the use of a rhetorical approach to examine how managers used arguments in the administrative process. Arguments serve both
rational and political functions at the same time (Crable, 1976; Weaver, 1970). On the one hand, an argument has a formal structure and its quality may be evaluated by examining the type of reasoning or logic which supports it. On the other hand, the function of an argument is to persuade others to act in a preferred manner, thus it often serves a political purpose. Huff's analyses of argument in two management contexts established a precedent for extending classical rhetorical methods to the study of how managers use language strategically to influence organizational activities. However, she did not develop a comprehensive methodological framework by which future research could be guided.

Implications for Research on Language in Management Contexts

The studies summarized in the preceding review had in common the objectives of learning how language is used to accomplish management objectives and finding a methodological approach by which communication data can be systematically analyzed and interpreted. Although conducted under different circumstances using different approaches, all the studies indicated that language is a powerful force in shaping organizational reality. The implications of the research are that managers use language as a strategic tool, but that the power to control or influence is achieved in transaction with those who are the targets of the influence attempts.

The rhetorical approach to the study of language as a form of influence on organizational processes may offer an advantage over the
discourse analysis approaches. The studies employing methods for conversation analysis (Gronn, 1983) and the analysis of speech acts (Levine et al., 1984; Moch & Huff, 1983) were successful in showing how meaning and action were constructed through communication, but they did not provide insight into how either managers or subordinates might alter the conversational exchange to facilitate more effective communication patterns. The use of argument, however, was shown to function as a communication mechanism to facilitate the achievement of concerted action (Donnellon et al., 1986; Huff, 1983a; 1983c). The classical discipline of rhetoric offers heuristic procedures for argument which could be useful for both the analysis and the facilitation of group interaction and problem solving in organizational decision making (Enos, 1985; Tompkins, 1984, p. 677; 1987). It remains for researchers to demonstrate empirically how arguments function as a form of influence in management contexts, and how argumentation can be used to facilitate organizational effectiveness.

Rhetoric: A Powerful Influence on Organizational Decision Making

The use of rhetoric is a powerful political force in organizations. Some critics have suggested that interest in developing the symbolic aspects of management stems from a desire to strengthen the mechanisms of managerial domination and control of organizational functions (Stablein & Nord, 1985, 20-26). For example, Pfeffer (1981a; 1981b) has strongly asserted that managers effectively perpetuate organizational power structures which determine resource allocations by shaping
perceptions about the meaning of decisions so that some groups are persuaded to believe that their interests have been served when, in fact, they have not. Other authorities have noted that managers use language to legitimate their interests over those of opponents (Pettigrew, 1977, p. 85), to obscure rational deliberation about organizational issues (Edelman, 1967) and to "impose a pattern of meaning on ambiguous contexts" (Gray, Bougon, & Donnellon, 1985, p. 89).

Huff (1988) has acknowledged the potential for political manipulation through language, but has emphasized that managers also use rhetoric to facilitate wider participation in the decision making context and the development of multiple perspectives regarding potential courses of action. Her conceptualization of management as a rhetorical process and studies of argumentation led her to conclude that managers "shop" new ideas through the informal political system which reflects diverse abilities and interests of many players in the organization (p. 82). According to Huff, conflict provides the context for a "natural dialectic" in which hostile challenges and debate help managers clarify their thinking and ensure that ideas are reviewed and modified before becoming policy (p. 83).

Huff's (1988) work suggests that a manager's actions are influenced to a considerable degree by the interests and strategies of opponents. Her view is supported by the symbolic perspective on organization and management which contends that organizational reality is a product achieved collectively through social and linguistic interaction among
all members of the organization. Research needs to show what types of communication produce an optimal balance between management's need to obtain the cooperation and control necessary to achieve collective action and the need to encourage diversity of opinion and opportunities for change.

A rhetorical approach which focuses inquiry on argumentation as a particular form of communication has been proposed as applicable to the study of organizational decision making, since decision making provides a forum in which managers and other members of the organization compete for ideological dominance (Huff, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c; Shrivastva & Schneider, 1984, Tompkins, 1987, pp. 70-96; Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984, pp. 369-392). However, the study of argumentation in organizational decision making is still in its infancy (Toulmin et al., 1984, p. 369). Research needs to build on the empirical work begun by Huff and develop a conceptual framework and precise methods to guide the study of argumentation in collegiate organizations in order to facilitate comparative analyses and an understanding of how language functions strategically to influence decision making (Toulmin et al., pp. 369-392).

A Rhetorical Approach to the Study of Language in Organizational Decision Making

A rhetorical approach to management research is consistent with the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm, and techniques for the analysis of argumentation have been proposed as a viable approach to
examining how managers use language strategically to influence organizational decision making. Kenneth Burke (1950/1969) has been credited with extending the traditional focus of rhetoric on literary texts to the experiential world of human action (Brock & Scott, pp. 266-269; Tompkins, 1987, p. 78). The new rhetoric is characterized by a "language/action" approach to rhetorical analysis which asserts that language embodies action as opposed to being merely a tool for reflecting, presenting, or pointing to it (Brock & Scott, 1980, p. 269-273). Relevant to the organizational context, the language/action approach implies that the strategic efforts of managers to explain, justify, rationalize or otherwise influence organizational decisions constitute rhetorical or symbolic acts which achieve tangible results by persuading members to support the organization and its goals.

Rhetorical analysis constitutes a particular type of criticism as rhetoric is concerned with argumentation and efforts to persuade. Rhetorical criticism pays particular attention to the way that language links author to audience in a persuasive situation (Crable, 1976; Huff, 1983; Tompkins, 1987). According to classical rhetorical theory, persuasion involves techniques employed by a speaker in a speech to an audience which may be examined according to standard criteria for the analysis of argumentation. In the organizational context the author may be thought of as a manager and the audience as those who are to be organized or managed (Tompkins, 1984, p. 681). The rhetorical perspective on management emphasizes the human aspects of securing cooperation and control within the organization through argumentation.
Argumentation is at the heart of efforts to persuade and all argumentation is rhetorical. A model of argumentation as a form of communication provides the conceptual basis for the analysis of argumentation in organizational decision making in this study (Crable, 1976).

The Crable Model of Argumentation as Communication

Argumentation may be viewed as a special kind of communication involving the creation of meaning among participants about claims which have been made and the reasons offered in support of them (Crable, 1976, pp. 8-9). Claims are statements or positions that a speaker is willing to defend. Most of the communication in argumentation will focus on presenting and defending reasons offered in support of claims or, from the receiver's point of view, examining and challenging them. The emphasis on reasoning in argumentation distinguishes it from quarreling which may result when claims are not justified as the following example from children's conversation shows:

"I got you,"

"No you didn't,"

"I got you first,"

"You didn't come near me," and

"Mom you saw it" (Crable, p. 10).

Not only do all the utterances in the example function as claims which are unsupported by reasons, but the unwillingness of either party to examine seriously the claims of the other also characterizes
quarreling. When disagreement occurs, rational argumentation is characterized as follows:

Anyone participating in an argument shows his rationality, or lack of it, by the manner in which he handles and responds to the offering of reasons for or against claims. If he is "open to argument," he will either acknowledge the force of those reasons or seek to reply to them, and either way he will deal with them in a "rational" manner. If he is "deaf to argument," by contrast, he may either ignore contrary reasons or reply to them with dogmatic assertions, and either way he fails to deal with the issues rationally (Toulmin et al., 1984, p. 14).

Argumentation as communication focuses on describing and understanding the function argument serves in a wide variety of communicative contexts. The logical form of an argument such as that which guides the preparation of a formal document or oral presentation is not of primary concern. While the basic elements of an argument and their logical relationships continue to pertain, understanding their function means focusing attention on the receiver of the argument as well as the sender. The function served by the argumentation will be determined, in part, by examining how the receiver's orientation influences the appropriate strategies and methods used by the arguer (Crable, 1976, p. 15). Focus on the role of the receiver underscores the transactional nature of argumentation and suggests that organizational decisions produced in an environment of open debate are likely to be both democratic and rational according to the openness to
argument definition. While leaders develop strategic arguments intended to persuade others to adopt a particular point of view or course of action, their arguments will be influenced by their perceptions of the situation and the characteristics of the receivers.

There are many options that arguers and receivers might choose in the course of an extended transaction. However, Crable (1976, p. 109) suggested that making certain choices in response to claims would lead to relatively predictable types of argumentation. The prevalence of acceptances of claims was characterized as an amiable exchange which would lead to the acceptance of the proposed course of action with little discussion. Challenging or questioning claims in order to obtain more information was characterized as a constructive exchange likely to result in a thorough and deliberate analysis of the claim and its support. At the opposite end of the continuum, Crable proposed that argumentation characterized mainly by ignoring, rejecting or countering claims could result in failure to resolve the argumentation, digression to other topics or development of a hostile, unproductive argument or quarrel.

Participants make ethical choices at many points in the argumentation process. Powerful arguments based on fallacious reasoning may be developed; dishonest arguments may be advanced; or arguers may use other forms of persuasion in the pursuit of power and parochial interest. There are no universal ethical standards of argumentation, rather arguers have the responsibility to decide on the purpose of an argument and the methods to be used in presenting it (Crable, 1976, pp. 223-244). However, ethical responsibility also is shared by receivers
who must decide if they will engage in argumentation, what the purpose will be in challenging a claim, how to challenge it and when to accept it. A skillful receiver has considerable control in an argumentative situation since, "he can demand good reasons, examine them, ask for others, ask for relationships between or among reasons, but more importantly, decide when the reasons are good enough" (Crable, p. 236) to warrant acceptance of the claim. The quality of argumentation thus is regulated jointly by arguers and receivers as they interact in a particular situation.

Argumentation conceptualized as a natural aspect of communication serves a variety of human needs. As such, winning an argument is not limited to "beating" an opponent (Crable, 1976, pp. 31-33). Rather, winning means having one's goals met, whatever they might be. Those who participate in argumentation for psychological or social reasons, may have their needs met regardless of whether or not the claim is accepted or even seriously examined.

Identification and Classification of Arguments

Arguments consist of claims (C), evidence (E), warrants (W), backing (B) and qualifiers (Q) (Crable, 1976, 1983; Putnam & Geist, 1985; Toulmin et al., 1984). Claims are statements which a speaker wishes to have accepted but which are challenged by the receivers (Crable, 1976 p. 68). In support of their claims, speakers offer evidence which is intended to be acceptable or evident to receivers. Evidence may take the form of an occurrence, report of an occurrence,
object, artifact, or expression of belief (Crable, p. 68). In the development of an argument, a primary concern is that the evidence lead to an acceptance of the claim. The link connecting these elements is the warrant or reason indicating why the claim should be accepted on the basis of the evidence provided (Crable, p. 69). Often, warrants are backed by additional information which is intended to strengthen them (Crable, p. 69). Warrants also may be qualified to indicate how confident the speaker is in the claim, and reservations may enter the argument as a variable that tells the conditions under which the claim may be modified or abandoned (Crable, p. 69). A simple argument may be made more complex when there are two statements of evidence with the same warrant or when two statements of evidence are linked by different warrants in support of the same claim (Crable, pp. 71-72). Figure 1 illustrates the relationship among the basic elements of any argument.

Arguments may be classified and compared on the basis of the reasons used to support them. The Crable model of argumentation describes four generally accepted categories of reasoning.

Reasoning by Comparison: Parallelism and Analogy

Warrants of comparison involve reasoning by parallelism or analogy. A warrant by parallelism assumes that the ideas offered in the claim and evidence are literally similar, so that what is true for one will be true for the other. For example, one might claim that a parliamentary form of government would be good for the United State because a
Evidence = E
Warrant = W
Backing = B
Qualifier = Q
Reservation = R
Claim = C

Figure 1. Relationships among the elements of any argument.
parliamentary government has been good for Great Britain. To connect these ideas by a warrant of parallelism, the arguer could reason that the United States and Britain are alike in so many substantive ways that what is good for one is good for the other. Parallels in the legal systems of the two countries, for instance, could function as one substantive similarity.

A warrant by analogy assumes that the ideas in the claim and the evidence are metaphorically rather than literally similar, so that what is true for one will be true in some respects for the other. Toulmin et al. (1984) provide an example of a metaphorical or figurative analogy:

If you have a well that receives 1,000 gallons of water a day from underground sources, and you remove 1,500 gallons of water a day from it, the well will run dry; if the government receives $500 million a day in social security payments and pays out $600 million a day in benefits, the social security system will also "run dry." (p. 217)

**Reasoning by Grouping: Classification, Generalization and Residual**

Warrants of grouping involve reasoning by classification, generalization, and residual. A warrant by classification indicates that the idea expressed in the claim is in the same group or category expressed in the evidence. Nearly opposite in effect, a warrant by generalization states that the idea expressed in the claim is the culmination of the ideas which were alluded in the evidence. For example, one might claim that advanced democracies function best with a
parliamentary form of government because foreign and domestic affairs as well as social, economic and defense affairs are conducted best with a parliamentary government. A warrant by generalization might connect these ideas by reasoning that since a parliamentary government is best in foreign, domestic, social, economic and defense affairs it must be best in all the affairs of a nation state. Therefore, parliamentary government is best for advanced democracies.

In the previous example, the arguer might have chosen to offer different evidence and connect it to the claim by residual reasoning. For instance the arguer might have stated as evidence that there are only a limited number of forms of government, then proceeded to enumerate them. The evidence would then be connected to the claim by reasoning that since all the types of government mentioned were inappropriate except the parliamentary, it is the form of choice for advanced democracies. Reasoning that all choices except one are inappropriate is an example of a warrant by residual.

**Reasoning by Causality: Correlation, Circumstance and Cause**

Warrants of causality involve reasoning about varying degrees of cause and effect. Warrants by correlation suggest that whatever is in the claim and the evidence frequently occur simultaneously but are not causally connected. For example, given the results of a survey that the incidence of suicide is high among single men does not suggest that being single and male causes one to commit suicide. However, an arguer
might reason by correlation that since the incidence is high, single men are at risk for suicide.

Somewhat stronger than a warrant by correlation is the warrant by circumstance which indicates that whatever is in the evidence may have caused whatever is in the claim to occur or vice versa. For instance, in the previous example, if the survey shows that the majority of the single men who commit suicide also are facing financial bankruptcy, one might make the slightly stronger claim that single males who are financially bankrupt may be prone to suicide.

Warrants by cause assert that what is in the claim or what is in the evidence caused the other to occur. If for example, all single men who committed suicide had been diagnosed as terminally ill; one might claim that in the case of single men, the illnesses were a causative factor in the suicides.

**Reasoning by Authority**

Warrant by authority asserts that a claim is acceptable because of the expertise of the source of the evidence. The certification of the authority evidence might otherwise amount only to an unsupported belief or report of a belief. For example, if one argues that a parliamentary form of government is best for the United States because Professor Jones who is an expert in government affairs says so, then one is reasoning by authority.
The Analysis of Argumentation in Organizational Research

The study of argumentation is a form of rhetorical criticism (Crable, 1976, pp. 48-50). Critical analyses are exemplified by the historical and hermeneutic sciences and involve the interpretation of meaning in communication (Stablein & Nord, 1985, p. 16). The analysis of argumentation in organizational decision making, as in other contexts, considers the socio-political circumstances in which argumentation occurs, the structure of individual arguments, the process by which they are linked to form a "train of reasoning," and the interaction of opposing arguments as claims are challenged and defended (Toulmin et al., 1984, p. 14).

Problem Statement

There is need to develop strategies which will enable managers of collegiate organizations to deal with the symbolic as well as the instrumental aspects of decision making. The idea has been developed that viewing organizational decision making from a rhetorical perspective and employing methods of argumentation for its analysis could provide insight into how managers use language strategically to influence decision processes and outcomes. The purpose of this study is to explore this idea by adapting the Crable (1976) model of argumentation as communication to the empirical investigation of decision making in two, small, liberal arts colleges. The focus of the analysis is on the debate among consultants, top managers and faculty
surrounding the proposal to initiate a DCP for adults on their respective campuses. The following specific questions are addressed:

How did argumentation influence the decision to initiate the DCP?

a. What arguments and counter-arguments were made favoring and opposing the proposal to initiate the DCP?

b. What socio-political factors contributed to the development of the argumentation?

c. How did the argumentation about the DCP compare between the colleges?

Limitations of the Study

This research is exploratory as there is little precedent to guide the design and conduct of a rhetorical investigation into strategic management. Critical methods such as the analysis of argumentation have as their aim the description, interpretation, and evaluation of phenomena not generalization and prediction. The interpretive methodology limits analyses of empirical data to the following activities:

1. Describing the chronology, socio-political context and key actors relevant to the decision to initiate the DCP in each of the two colleges.

2. Identifying the issues, the strategic arguments, counter-arguments, and rebuttals used by management and their opponents to influence the resolution of the issues.

3. Comparing the argumentation between the colleges.
4. Interpreting and evaluating the influence of argumentation on the DCP decision making consistent with the model of argumentation as a form of communication.

While some estimate may be made of the potential of the methodological framework developed for this study as a viable approach to the investigation of language in organizational decision making, its efficacy must be confirmed by future research.
CHAPTER TWO: AN INTERPRETIVE METHODOLOGY FOR THE ANALYSIS OF ARGUMENTATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING

This was an exploratory study of argumentation in organizational decision making based on a rhetorical model of argumentation as a form of communication (Crable, 1976). An interpretive perspective on organization and management guided the research design and selection of methods used in the study of the argumentation in the DCP decision making at Merton and Woolman Colleges. Chapter Two opens with a brief discussion of the symbolic interactionist view of organizations which is the foundation of the interpretive research paradigm, reviews the guiding principles of interpretive investigations, and then presents the design of the study and the methods used for data collection, processing, and analyses.

A Symbolic View of Organizations

Interest in the symbolic aspects of management and the focus on language as a form of symbolic action derives from the tradition of symbolic interactionism (Evered, 1983, p. 126). Symbolic interactionists assume that humans are qualitatively different from other animals because of their capacity for symbolic communication (Jacob, 1987). According to this view, meaning is a social product achieved through the reflective interpretation of the internal and external stimuli that are present in a particular situation (Jacob, pp. 27-28). The individual and the social context or environment are
considered to be inseparable, and to understand one, it is necessary to understand the other. Evered (1983) summarized the symbolic interactionist concept of organization succinctly:

The "organization" has no objective reality (in the positivistic sense) but rather *is created daily by the linguistic enactments of its members in the course of their everyday communications between each other; that is, by the way in which its members talk, hold discourse, share meanings. The particular language of an organization has embedded within it a categorization and structuring of a world which externalizes itself by being used. The existence of a common language implies intersubjectivity of the inherent world view. The sense of objectivity is, in truth achieved by this linguistic intersubjectivity (pp. 126-127).

The symbolic perspective on organizations was introduced to the field of educational administration by Thomas B. Greenfield (1973, 1977, 1978) whose views sparked a debate which waged in educational journals for several years (Culbertson 1983; Griffiths, 1975, 1977; Willower, 1980). Greenfield argued that organizations are inventions of the human mind and that people and their organizational environments are inextricably intertwined. In his view, organizational members interpret their experiences within a particular historical, cultural, and socio-political context and, in the process, generate an ideological component of the organization. The ideological component was of great interest to Greenfield because he perceived its potential for serving as a powerful mechanism of social control. He challenged organizational theorists and researchers to focus their efforts toward understanding how the beliefs
and ideas of some people come to prevail over others and effect organizational functioning.

Greenfield's (1973, 1977, 1978) challenge presaged current interest in organizational symbolism, the concept of symbolic management, and the development of interpretive research models. Pfeffer (1981a, 1981b) further developed the idea of management as symbolic action and raised issues for research by proposing that the primary function of management is not instrumental activity but is drama and rhetoric used to create, maintain and change the meanings attached to organizational activities. He characterized decision making as a political process in which individuals and groups compete for ideological dominance by calling attention to some aspects of experience and not to others. Effective managers, according to Pfeffer, are strategists who use the power of rhetoric to define, interpret and evaluate reality in a way which persuades others to adopt their perspective and act in a particular manner.

The conceptualization of management as symbolic action raised questions about the best approach to research. Greenfield (1973, 1977, 1978) criticized positivistic assumptions and quantitative methods which dominated research in the field of educational administration and called for a phenomenological perspective on human organization and the exploration of ethnographic, historical, and philosophical research methods. On the other hand, Pfeffer (1981a) found case studies to be "essayistic, conceptual, and not concerned much of the time with developing testable, empirical, predictions" (p. 3). As if in response to the concerns of Greenfield and Pfeffer, an interpretive perspective
on research has been emerging in the social sciences as a basis for the study of how meaning develops in social contexts.

An Interpretive Perspective on Organizational Research

Interpretive research focuses on describing how people make sense of their world through their communicative behaviors (Putnam, 1983, p. 31). Three basic assumptions guide interpretive investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). First, the researcher seeks to understand the organization from the point of view of its members. For example, the personal thoughts and actions of managers are important in developing an understanding of how decisions are made and acted upon. Second, the researcher attempts to learn how multiple perspectives among organizational actors interact to produce organized action. Third, studies are longitudinal in order that "social-political-cognitive-affective processes" may be recorded as they unfold in a particular, historical context (Smircich and Stubbart, p. 734).

The design of interpretive studies is not specified in advance, but emerges as data collection proceeds and the researcher begins to identify patterns in the human interactions being observed. Theory is developed inductively after the data are in and the investigator attempts to synthesize all the available data into a coherent explanation of phenomena (Ventry & Schiavetti, 1980). "Grounded theory," a term attributed to Glaser & Strauss (1967), often is used to describe theory which follows from data rather than preceding them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 204-208).
Naturalistic methods usually are considered most appropriate for data collection and analyses in the interpretive research model. The development of systematic coding and categorization guidelines, triangulation procedures, negative case analyses and external audits by impartial reviewers are methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and their analysis. A case study report intended to improve the reader's understanding of whatever the study is about is the reporting mode of choice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 357-358).

The interpretive approach to research on organization and management offers an alternative to positivist approaches with respect to definitions of the nature of knowledge and the aims of social science research. There are, however, methodological issues which need to be resolved if interpretive analyses are truly to rival positivistic approaches. Interpretive researchers need to develop "rules of evidence" to structure the description, interpretation, and evaluation of qualitative data in order to provide a basis for conducting comparative analyses of their work and making some assessment of its relevance beyond the immediate research site (Everhart, 1988, p. 712).

The concepts of emergent design and inductive theory development preclude the apriori specification of theory and, to some extent, the research problem which structure quantitative analyses. However, the investigator engaged in conducting interpretive research could opt to complement naturalistic methods which guide the collection and categorization of qualitative data by developing critical approaches to their description, interpretation, and evaluation (Deetz, 1978; Hawes,
15-16). In particular, methods of rhetorical criticism have been
proposed as being applicable in addressing questions about the role of
language in organizational decision making (Huff, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c;

Design of the Study

An interpretive perspective on organizational inquiry guided the
selection of methods, data analyses and report of findings in this
study. A combination of naturalistic and critical methods were used to
collect and analyze data on a decision to initiate a DCP in two, small,
liberal arts colleges. Analyses were inductive and described,
interpreted and evaluated the influence of argumentation on the
respective DCP decisions from the data collected at Merton and Woolman
Colleges. Case reports developed for each college present a chronology
of the decision process, analyses of the argumentation, and description
of the contribution of four socio-political factors to the argumentation
process. On the basis of the case reports, a descriptive comparison of
the similarities and differences in the DCP argumentation was made
between the colleges. The purpose of the cross site comparison was to
put the idiosyncratic aspects of the respective decision processes into
perspective and strengthen the conclusions of the study.

The traditional concerns with validity, reliability, and
objectivity were addressed from the naturalistic perspective as issues
of "trustworthiness" (Lincoln & Guba, pp. 289-331). Generalization of
results was treated as a matter of "transferability" of findings (Lincoln & Guba, pp. 124-125).

**Trustworthiness of the Study**

Several strategies were employed to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence which may be placed in the results of an interpretive study in which the traditional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity do not apply (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 289-294). As an alternative to the standards used to determine the quality of research conducted within the positivist paradigm, Lincoln and Guba have proposed that naturalistic researchers employ techniques to increase the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of their findings.

**Credibility**

Credibility refers to how well the investigator has understood and represented the phenomena under investigation and the multiple realities extant in the research context. In other words, are the investigators' descriptions and interpretations credible to those on whom the study focused? The techniques of "triangulation" and "member checks," proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985, pp. 301-316) were used to increase the credibility of this study.
Triangulation. Triangulation of sources was employed in the collection of data. Triangulation is a term used in navigation and military strategy to refer to the use of multiple reference points to locate an object (Jick, 1979). According to Jick, the term first appeared in the social sciences when Campbell and Fiske (1959) used it to propose that multiple methods be employed in the research process in order to rule out methodological artifact as an explanation of results. Denzin (1989, pp. 235-241) expanded the concept of triangulation of methods to include the use of multiple and different sources of data, investigators, and theories as techniques for improving the credibility of research findings.

Both documents and personal interviews were used in this study as sources of data regarding the issues, arguments, and socio-political characteristics of the colleges in which the DCP decisions were made. The use of multiple and different sources of data increased the potential for obtaining maximum information about the DCP decision processes and provided a means of verifying data through redundancy of information. For example, the accounts of the DCP decision process obtained from different interviewees were compared with each other and with minutes of meetings in order to identify both consistencies and inconsistencies in the data. The identification of inconsistencies generally was taken as an indication of the need to probe further in order to obtain the most complete, consistently supported account possible of the issues and events surrounding the DCP decision.

Member Checks. Another important technique for establishing credibility of interpretive research is the "member check" (Lincoln &
Guba, 1985, pp. 314-316). Investigators conduct member checks by providing opportunities for participants in the research process to review the data, analytic categories, and emerging interpretations of the events, persons, and relationships which are being studied. In this study member checks were conducted informally during interviews as opportunities arose to clarify information or to "play back" parts of the interview in order to ensure that the investigator had recorded accurately the interviewee's account of the issues, arguments, and context of the DCP decision processes in the colleges. Additionally, the investigator met several times with the DCP directors in each college to discuss and verify her emerging conceptualization of the socio-political factors and arguments which influenced the decision making.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability and confirmability are concerned with the reliability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 316-327). The techniques of triangulation of sources and member checks used to establish the credibility of the study of the DCP decision making also contributed to its dependability, since there can be no validity without reliability. Further, the cross site comparison of the DCP argumentation using consistent criteria derived from the Crable model of argumentation strengthened the research findings. Finally, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba, the investigator established records of the inquiry which would facilitate an independent audit of the study upon its completion.
These records include the raw data, data reduction and analysis products, and process notes pertaining to the conduct of the research.

Transferability of Results

The transferability of results, according to the naturalistic tradition, is a function of the similarity or "fittingness" between research contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define fittingness as follows:

Fittingness is defined as the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts. If Context A and Context B are "sufficiently" congruent, then working hypotheses from the sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context (p. 124).

The investigator's responsibility with regard to transferability is not to transcend the fittingness question through sampling techniques and statistical methods as in the positivist paradigm. Rather, the investigator must provide enough information about the context in which the study is conducted so that others who may wish to extend the results to new situations have a base of information from which to decide whether or not transfer is appropriate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 124-125). The basic information the investigator is obliged to supply is a "thick description" of the transactions or interactions relevant to the research problem and the context in which they occurred (Lincoln & Guba, pp, 125, 362).
Thick description has several characteristics (Denzin, 1989, pp. 159-160). First, in addition to describing the research context, it attempts to interpret and state the intentions and meanings that persons bring to an interaction. Second, thick description traces the evolution and development of the interaction, and, third, it presents the interaction as a text which may be further interpreted by the readers of the research report.

The study complied with the criteria for thick description by portraying the decision to initiate the DCP as an evolutionary process which was shaped by the communication and socio-political circumstances of the decision makers. The case studies and the comparative analyses of the DCP argumentation provided the basis for the investigator's interpretation and evaluation of the strategic influence of managerial language on decision making, and the reader is encouraged to extend them.

Introduction to Merton and Woolman Colleges and the Degree Completion Program

The colleges selected for study were affiliated with religious denominations and were comparable in size. Located in different states, Merton and Woolman Colleges each enrolled approximately 1,100 students. Declining enrollments and escalating costs prompted administrators at the colleges to engage consultants to conduct a study to assess the feasibility of developing a nontraditional degree program for adults on their respective campuses. In each case, the study was conducted over a
period of two days by a team of two or three consultants who presented
the DCP model to faculty, staff, and management and responded to their
questions. Both individual and group meetings were held to provide
factual information about the DCP and to assess the level of internal
uncertainty and support or resistance to the DCP concept among members
of the colleges.

The consultants also conducted telephone and personal interviews
with community and business leaders to ascertain the need for an
educational program targeted for working adults and the potential for
financial support such as scholarships or corporate tuition
reimbursement programs for students. A survey of colleges, universities
and professional schools within a reasonable proximity of the colleges
was conducted to determine what programs were already available to
working adults in the area in an effort to assess the competition to the
proposed DCP. Finally, drawing from United States census figures, the
consultants estimated the location and size of the markets to which the
DCP might appeal.

The DCP which was being proposed by the consultants offered adults
over the age of 25 who had 60 college credits the opportunity to
complete a baccalaureate degree on an accelerated schedule at convenient
times and locations. The DCP's highly integrated components were
adaptable to many settings, and the program was designed to function
independently of other degree programs in the institution in all but the
basic academic standards and requirements. Recruitment and admissions
were carefully coordinated so students were assigned to a class or
"cluster group" which moved as a unit through a sequenced curriculum
comprised of all courses necessary to complete the major in organizational management. The curriculum was comprised of a series of standard "learning modules," which students were expected to complete according to a prescribed sequence and within an accelerated time frame. Seminar style classes were often taught by adjunct faculty who followed a prescribed lesson plan. Course content emphasized applicability to students' work settings and assignments often integrated students' work and life experiences. The assessment of prior experiential learning and granting degree credit for it was an important program option which enabled many of the students to gain additional credits required for graduation.

The results of the DCP feasibility studies conducted at Merton and Woolman were submitted to the colleges in a written report which was viewed as an objective basis for making an informed decision by those involved in the decision process. In each case, the reports recommended that the DCP be initiated with technical support provided for a fee by the consultants. Ultimately, each college followed the recommendation, signed a contract with the consultants and implemented the program. The focus of this investigation was on the issues and debate which were prompted by the feasibility study reports.

Factors Pertaining to the Selection of the Research Sites and the Conduct of the Study

Prior to the study, the investigator was employed as the director of a DCP in a college operating under a contractual arrangement with the
same consultants who served the colleges in this study. She was acquainted on a professional basis with the DCP directors involved in the study, but was not in regular contact with them. One year prior to the research project, the investigator resigned her position and contacted the consultants to propose the project and request their support for it. They agreed and assisted the investigator by providing general information about the DCP in the colleges they served and in making initial contacts with those chosen to participate. The consultants also consented to interviews and provided access to their files on the consultative process in the respective colleges. All participants were aware that each was involved. The DCP with which the investigator had been associated was not included in the research.

At the time of the study, the DCP had been in operation at each campus for at least two years, and most of the administrators and faculty involved in the decision to initiate it were still available for interview. The consultants who conducted the feasibility studies also continued to be affiliated with the colleges, and written summaries of their meetings with administrators and faculty were maintained. Access to these and other records relevant to the DCP was granted to the investigator.

The DCP directors served as informants and assisted the investigator in obtaining permission to conduct the study on their campuses, in making arrangements for site visits, and in becoming immersed in the local context quickly (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 283). Both directors joined their college after implementation of the DCP had begun. It is likely that the directors' previous acquaintance with the
investigator was a factor in their decision to serve as informants. When on site, the investigator checked the accuracy of information and her emerging understanding of the DCP initiation and implementation processes at each college through daily, informal conversations with the informants.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected by the investigator using naturalistic methods including interviews and inspection of documents. Interviews were conducted on site at the colleges and at the consultants' headquarters. Merton College served as the primary research site. Five days were spent conducting interviews at Merton and two and one-half days at Woolman. The designation of a primary site enabled the investigator to sharpen the interview procedures and obtain a broad understanding of the decision process in one institution in order to help focus the shorter visit to Woolman.

At Merton the DCP director scheduled the interviews and at Woolman the vice president of academic affairs arranged them. Most of the documents used in the study were located by the informants and mailed to the investigator prior to the site visits. A few were obtained on site after the investigator became aware of their existence through the interview process. The use of both documentary and human sources represented the triangulation of sources and was intended to maximize the amount of data collected and verify accounts of the decision process through redundancy.
Documents

Documents were gathered and inspected for the purposes of tracing and dating the sequence of events leading to the initiation of the DCP and identifying the issues of concern. The investigator also sought to identify the arguments, and their proponents, offered in support or opposition to the DCP and to gain information about their strategic function in the decision process.

Many of the same types of documents were located and examined in each college. These included the report of the DCP feasibility study conducted by the consultants, minutes of administrative and faculty committee meetings, minutes of full faculty meetings, correspondence between the consultants and the colleges, and inhouse memorandums. Additionally, two proposals concerning the DCP which were directed to a faculty committee at Merton were examined. At Woolman, a summary of a telephone conversation and a report on the DCP shortly after it was implemented also contributed data, as did correspondence between Woolman and the state and regional accrediting agencies. Current college catalogues were obtained and used as sources of background information about the mission, policies, programs and demographics relevant to each college. DCP promotional materials provided by each school contributed to the investigator's understanding of its present status.

Files containing documentary information on the initiation and implementation of the DCP at the colleges also were made available to the investigator when she visited the consultants' headquarters. These potentially included new sources of information such as inhouse
memorandums and reports or proposals about the decision process in the colleges. Since the consultants' files contained copies of many of the same documents maintained by the colleges, inspection of them also functioned to verify information obtained from the colleges.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by the investigator on site at the colleges to obtain additional information about the sequence of events leading to the decision to initiate the DCP, the issues involved and the arguments used to debate them. The investigator also sought information about the politics of the decision process.

In preparation for the site visits and interviews, the investigator read the respective college catalogues, DCP promotional materials, feasibility studies, correspondence between the consultants and colleges, minutes of administrative and faculty committee meetings, and minutes of full faculty meetings supplied by the informants. Based on information from these sources and suggestions from the informants, administrators and faculty who had been involved with the decision to initiate the DCP or were generally knowledgeable about the program were chosen to be interviewed. At that time, a list of topics to be covered in the interviews also was developed by the investigator (see Appendix B for the interview introduction and topics). All interviews were scheduled in advance with the exception of a few at Merton which were prompted when new information became available after the investigator arrived on campus.
On each campus, the investigator interviewed the academic deans in charge of the DCP as well as the DCP directors. Eight senior faculty members were interviewed at Merton College and four at Woolman. The deans and faculty all were involved in the decision to initiate the DCP. The presidents and chief financial officers also were interviewed. Because of the longer period of time spent at Merton College, the investigator was able to meet with the Prior Learning Assessment Committee and interview the vice president of enrollment and assistant to the president, the associate dean of student development, and the director of advancement. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to two hours in length, with the average being approximately 40 minutes long.

In format, the interviews were flexible. The investigator opened each by introducing herself, briefly describing her research interest and stating the reason for the interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p 270). Next the respondent was asked to, "Tell me how the DCP came to be implemented at [College]." The use of an open-ended question was intended to encourage the respondents to begin talking about the DCP from whatever perspective they chose. The investigator then used the response as a basis from which to begin focusing the interview by guiding the respondent through the list of topics which had been prepared in advance. The same topics were covered in all interviews but the timing and manner of their introduction varied according to the unique circumstances of the particular interview. Use of this relatively unstructured interview format enabled the investigator to obtain idiosyncratic as well as redundant information and to probe widely and deeply into the individual respondent's perceptions of the
DCP both historically and in the present (Denzin, 1989, pp. 105-106; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 268-270).

The two consultants to the colleges were interviewed at their headquarters in order to obtain their perspective on the decision process in each of the colleges. They were asked to address the same topics as all other respondents with respect to their knowledge of individuals and events in each of the colleges and to make some comparative generalizations based on their experiences. In addition the investigator attempted to learn what role the consultants played and the arguments they used to persuade the colleges to enter into the contract. The investigator spent one day and evening at the headquarters and interviewed each consultant for two hours.

Interviews with the DCP directors, the Merton dean of adult and continuing education and the consultants were tape recorded. In all other instances, the investigator took notes throughout the interviews. The notes were reviewed and edited for clarity as close as possible to the time of the interview. The investigator also made written annotations daily regarding the interviews and impressions formed during the site visits (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 327).

Data Analysis Procedures

The Merton College data were processed and analyzed first, and then the same procedures were applied to the Woolman data. The sources of data were similar in both colleges. Included were interview notes and transcripts, the report of the feasibility study, minutes from meetings,
memorandums and correspondence. Unless otherwise noted, these sources supplied all the raw data used in the various analyses. Unitizing and categorization procedures derived from the constant comparative method as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 344-350) were used to identify and classify issues relevant to the DCP decision. Identification and classification of arguments was guided by criteria specified in the Crable model of argumentation as a form of communication. The influence of socio-political factors on the argumentation was examined using four criteria adapted from the work of Farrell and Peterson (1982, pp. 408-410) on organizational politics.

Identification and Classification of DCP Issues

Unitizing Procedures

Unitizing pertains to the process of identifying from the raw data the "units" of information which are essential to the conduct of the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 344-347). Units of information are those which can be understood without reference to a particular context and which have "heuristic" value (Lincoln & Guba, p. 345). By heuristic is meant that the information must be pertinent to the research problem and facilitate the analyses being undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, p. 345). Using these definitional criteria as a guide, the researcher must devise the strategy by which to proceed in identifying the units of information in the data which seem relevant to the inquiry. Since it is not possible to know for certain which units of information will be
important, Lincoln and Guba advise that researchers should err on the side of over-inclusion.

Each unit of information typically is recorded on a separate index card which may be coded according to the source of the information or any other pertinent characteristics which the investigator deems important. Thousands of units of information may be accumulated. The purpose of unitizing is to develop the data base from which categories of information having similar content may be developed.

Unitizing of data in this study focused on identifying the issues pertaining to the DCP in the two colleges. The process was begun by scanning the interview transcripts and documents in an effort to identify decision points pertaining to the DCP on the assumption that the most important issues would cluster around them (Mintzberg, 1978). For example, the request to have the consultants conduct a DCP feasibility study represented one of several decision points in the process of deciding whether or not to initiate the DCP. Each decision and the issues which clustered around it were listed along with the data source(s) in which they appeared, the date in the decision chronology in which they occurred, and the individuals or groups who raised, discussed and decided them.

**Categorization Procedures**

Categorization refers to the classification of data on the basis of content and the construction of rules that describe the properties of each category (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347-350). The rules justify the
inclusion of particular units of information in a certain category thus rendering the category internally consistent and providing a basis for replicability of the categorization process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 347-350). In classifying issues for purposes of this study, categories of issues were developed according to the regularity with which particular themes emerged from the unitized data. For example, all issues pertaining to market considerations, financial obligations, and staff considerations associated with the DCP were classified as separate resource issues.

Reconstruction of the Argumentation

Arguments favoring and opposing selected DCP issues were reconstructed and diagrammed for purposes of identifying the position on the issues taken by particular individuals or groups and assessing the strength of their stance. In order to reconstruct the arguments, claims regarding the issues were identified first, then the evidence supporting them and finally the reasons, their backing and qualifiers (see Chapter One, pp. 27-29). The arguments then were classified according to the type of warrant or reasoning which supported them (see Chapter One, pp. 28, 30-33).

The argumentation was reconstructed by forming tentative ideas about the relationships among the various arguments which pertained to the DCP issues. For example, one idea was that the consultants' position favoring the DCP, or that of their opponents, might be
comprised of several arguments which formed a chain of reasoning in support of their position. In order to confirm or disconfirm the idea it was necessary to find and display plausible connections among the arguments advanced by the consultants or their opponents.

Another idea was that there were connections between the arguments advanced by the consultants and those of their opponents. To learn whether or not the idea was sound, the investigator examined the data to see if certain arguments functioned as responses to a position taken by the consultants or vice versa.

The investigator also sought to identify and explain the function of responses to arguments other than counter arguments. For example, receivers of an argument might have chosen to respond by ignoring, accepting, questioning, or modifying it (Crable, 1976, p. 105-109). By noting and classifying all responses it was hoped that one or more trends might emerge which characterized the argumentative transactions regarding the DCP.

The ongoing formulation and revision of ideas about the relationships among arguments based on the available data illustrates how the argumentation in the DCP decision making was reconstructed through the process of analytic induction (Denzin, 1989, pp. 165-170). Analytic induction refers to a procedural mode whereby the investigator works back and forth between the data and working ideas until a plausible explanation of the data or grounded theory relevant to the research question is achieved.
Identification and Classification of the Socio-Political Factors Contributing to the Argumentation

The socio-political factors which were assumed to be potential contributors to the argumentation's development or failure to develop, as well as the persuasiveness of particular arguments, were identified and grouped according to four predetermined categories adapted from the work of Farrell & Peterson (1982, pp. 408-410) on organizational politics. These investigators proposed that four factors influence the type of political behavior in which an individual is likely to engage: (a) investments, (b) alternatives, (c) trust, (d) efficacy. Investments refer to the organizational member's commitment to the organization in expectation of future benefit. Alternatives are readily available opportunities to obtain rewards outside the organization. Trust is the perceived necessity for influence, and efficacy is the perceived ability to exert influence.

The classification of data collected from the colleges according to the socio-political factors enabled the investigator to describe the context in which argumentation developed from the perspective of the participants in each college using consistent criteria. Identification of the socio-political factors also facilitated the development of ideas about how they influenced the DCP argumentation. For example, a statement such as "He is honest and fair" used by an interviewee to refer to an individual who was prominent in the DCP decision process was classified in the "trust" category. When similar statements about the
same individual were made by several interviewees, they were regarded as reflecting a pattern of trust which might influence the argumentation.

The Case Reports

The results of the analyses were presented as a case report of the DCP decision making process in each college. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 361) case reports may serve a variety of purposes and be written at different analytic levels. The three analytic levels — factual, interpretive and evaluative — reflect increasing degrees of abstraction each of which presupposes the former. All levels may be included in one report but each level should be clearly identified.

The purpose of the case reports in this study was to describe on a factual level the chronology of events leading to the DCP decision, the argumentation which occurred, and the contribution of the socio-political factors to its development. Based on the case reports, descriptive comparisons were made between the colleges of the chronologies of events, argumentation, and socio-political factors. The comparative analyses served as the basis for the interpretation and evaluation of the influence of argumentation on the decisions to initiate the DCP at the two colleges.
CHAPTER THREE: THE ARGUMENTATION OVER THE DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM AT MERTON AND WOOLMAN COLLEGES

The results of the analyses of the DCP argumentation at Merton and Woolman Colleges presented in Chapter Three show how logical argument and socio-political factors interacted to produce the decision to initiate the DCP through a consulting agreement. Descriptions of the decision forums, chronology of events, influential individuals and issues in each college provide information essential to understanding the argumentation. The reconstruction of the argumentation begins with an analysis of the consultants' arguments proposing the initiation of the DCP and is followed by separate analyses of the responses from the colleges. Complete arguments were diagrammed according to their basic elements. In each case, the analysis shows the evolution of the argumentation among the consultants, managers and faculty in various forums and discusses how the socio-political factors contributed to its development. A descriptive comparison of the similarities and differences in the chronology of events, the decision forums, argumentative transactions, and influence of socio-political factors concludes Chapter Three.

The Decision Forums and Chronology of Events in Merton College

The DCP was introduced at Merton College when the president heard about the program from colleagues and arranged for members of his cabinet and senior faculty to meet with a team of consultants to learn
about it. At the meeting the consultants proposed that the college schedule a study to assess the feasibility of initiating the DCP at Merton. The cost of the study would be assumed by the consultants and the college would be under no obligation to initiate the program.

The proposed feasibility study was subsequently discussed at two meetings of the president's cabinet. Members of the cabinet included managers at the level of vice president in the areas of finance, enrollment, advancement, student services and academic affairs. These individuals were responsible for advising the president and making policy decisions for the college. Before deciding to proceed with the feasibility study, the cabinet asked the president to obtain more information about the DCP and the consultants by contacting colleagues in two "DCP contract colleges." The contract colleges were small private colleges which had implemented the DCP with the support of the consultants. Upon receiving favorable reports from the contract colleges, the cabinet members agreed to request that the consultants conduct a feasibility study at Merton. The vice president of student affairs was asked to make the appropriate arrangements (see Appendix C, numbers 1-4 for an annotated list of the documents which contributed information about the Cabinet level discussion of the feasibility study proposal).

The feasibility study was conducted and a report of the outcome was submitted to the cabinet within two months after it was requested (see Appendix C, numbers 5 & 6 for a description of the findings and content of the feasibility study report). Prior to receipt of the final report, the cabinet solicited reactions to the feasibility study process and the
consultants from the faculty and staff. The vice president of student affairs summarized the written and verbal responses in a report which was discussed at a subsequent cabinet meeting (see Appendix C, numbers 7-13 for an annotated list of the documents which contributed information about the response of Merton faculty and staff to the feasibility study process).

After the feasibility study report became available, cabinet members raised many questions pertaining to the market projections, the curriculum and the cost of the proposed consulting agreement. It was decided that a survey of all the DCP contract colleges would be made in an effort to answer questions which had been raised and to verify the credibility of the study and the DCP. The vice president of student affairs conducted an extensive telephone survey of six contract colleges and two colleges which obtained feasibility studies but did not implement the DCP. The results of the survey supported the reliability of the feasibility study and the success of the DCP in the contract colleges (see Appendix C, numbers 14 & 15 for a description of the documents which contributed information about cabinet actions in response to the feasibility study report).

The results of the survey were presented in a written report to the cabinet which included a statement that the DCP market projections and program description would be submitted to the faculty Academic Policy Committee (APC) for consideration and approval (see Appendix C, number 16 for a description of the document contributing information about the results of the survey of contract colleges). Minutes of the cabinet meeting indicated that a DCP report and proposal for approval intended
for the APC were discussed, but there was no record of a decision to approve the proposal and open discussions with the faculty, or to formally approve the DCP and consulting agreement (see Appendix C, number 17 for a description of the document which contributed information about cabinet action after results of the survey were received). However, after that meeting, discussions regarding the DCP at Merton shifted to the faculty forum.

During the period when the cabinet was discussing the DCP, Merton's president also was formulating plans to create the Division of Adult and Continuing Education which he envisioned would function with considerable autonomy from regular academic governance procedures. According to the vice president of student affairs, he was asked privately by the president to become the adult division's first dean and given the assignment to "mount the DCP." The vice president accepted the challenge and opted to seek faculty approval for the DCP. Reportedly, the president agreed to open discussions with the faculty, although he did not view faculty support for the program as essential, since he intended that the DCP be administered through the new adult division.

Discussion of the DCP in the faculty APC began when the vice president proposed that the APC approve, "in principle," a collaborative agreement with the consultants to implement the DCP. The APC was an interdisciplinary faculty committee responsible for formulating academic policy pursuant to a vote by the full faculty. The DCP proposal was rejected unanimously by the APC with the recommendation that it be revised and that the vice president attend the next meeting to present
The revised proposal again was rejected by the APC pending additional information. It passed on the third review with modifications to ensure faculty control of the curriculum. The APC then recommended that the faculty approve of the DCP and the consulting agreement. The faculty accepted the recommendation by a wide margin (see Appendix C, numbers 18-24 for an annotated list of the documents which contributed data pertaining to the events which culminated in the faculty approval of the revised DCP proposal).

The vice president indicated that during the APC deliberations he had spent considerable time "one on one" with various faculty members explaining the philosophy of adult education and its impact on the design of the DCP curriculum and services. However, the data clearly indicated that the APC was viewed as the primary forum for the faculty discussion of the DCP, and APC approval was considered crucial to a favorable faculty vote. The DCP deliberations by Merton faculty spanned approximately three months. The contract with the consultants was signed by Merton's president approximately one month after the faculty vote.

The Decision Forums and Chronology of Events in Woolman College

The DCP was introduced at Woolman by the president who heard about the program from a colleague at a contract college and mentioned it to members of his cabinet. The cabinet was comprised of the vice presidents of academic affairs, business and finance, development, and student services. Cabinet meetings were informal and minutes generally
were not kept, so there was no written record of discussion about the feasibility study by the full cabinet. Apparently, the president and the vice presidents of development and academic affairs decided to request that the consultants conduct the feasibility study and announced their decision in a memorandum to faculty, staff and other cabinet members (see Appendix D, numbers 1 & 2 for a description of the documents which contributed information about the decision to request a feasibility study). There were no indications in the interview data of objections to the decision to conduct the study.

The interview data indicated that the DCP was discussed at length in cabinet meetings after the feasibility study report became available. However, the first documented reference to the DCP was a letter from the consultants dated seven months after the report had been received which responded to a concern raised by the president about the timing of the DCP implementation process. The consultants urged the college to proceed with the implementation of the DCP quickly in order to eclipse potential competition from other colleges which might be interested in offering a similar program (see Appendix D, number 3 for documentation of the consultants' letter).

Approximately one month after being encouraged to act quickly to implement the DCP, the president responded to the consultants in a letter which stated that while "inclined to favor" initiation of the DCP, the college was not ready to make a final decision. The letter also indicated that the DCP and consulting agreement would have to be approved by the faculty and the trustees before the program could be
initiated (see Appendix D, number 4 for documentation of the president's letter).

The next recorded reference to the DCP occurred nearly four months later in a letter from the consultants to the vice president of academic affairs describing the terms under which the DCP curriculum had been forwarded to the Woolman faculty for review. Three months later, the president received a letter describing the terms of the consulting agreement which would be put into effect, if the college decided to offer the DCP as proposed (see Appendix D, numbers 5 & 6 for documentation of the correspondence between the consultants and the president and vice president). On the same date, a memorandum from the vice president of academic affairs was sent to the Woolman faculty announcing that an information session on the DCP would be conducted by one of the consultants. Discussion of the DCP expanded to the faculty forum at that point.

The faculty discussions about the DCP at Woolman opened with an informational meeting led by the consultants. A proposal describing the DCP was distributed by the consultants and discussed. At a subsequent meeting of the Academic Program Committee (APC), the vice president of academic affairs asked the members of the committee to approve the DCP "in principle." As at Merton, the APC was an interdisciplinary committee responsible for formulating academic policy and making recommendations to the faculty as a whole. Approval was granted and the vice president convened a subcommittee of the APC to develop a DCP curriculum and present it to the APC for review and approval (see Appendix D, numbers 7-9 for a description of the documents which
contributed data about the faculty information meeting, APC approval of the DCP, and the convening of the APC subcommittee).

The consultants were invited to attend the first meeting of the subcommittee to respond to questions and offer assistance in tailoring the DCP curriculum to meet Woolman's core and religion requirements. Subsequently, the subcommittee submitted a curriculum proposal to the APC which modified it further before recommending it for approval by the full faculty. The faculty unanimously approved the DCP curriculum after making changes in the required courses. The faculty decision process at Woolman spanned approximately three months (see Appendix D, numbers 10-14 for a description of the documents which contributed information about the discussions leading to the faculty approval of the DCP).

Interview data indicated that the vice president of academic affairs met frequently with senior faculty members individually to solicit their support for the DCP. Among the incentives offered for their support were additional pay for time spent in DCP curriculum development and an adjusted workload when teaching in the program. The use of personal influence and tangible incentives were acknowledged as appropriate and effective actions in achieving support for the DCP by the faculty who were interviewed.

One final concern was addressed by the president and his cabinet before the proposal to initiate the DCP through a contract with the consultants was recommended to the trustees. The president requested that the proposed DCP contract be amended to include a provision to protect Woolman's DCP market." In response, the consultants agreed not to market the DCP to another college within a 100 mile radius of Woolman
for the duration of the consulting agreement. The amended contract was signed by both parties slightly more than a year after the feasibility study was conducted (see Appendix D, number 15 for documentation of the correspondence pertaining to the protected market territory).

Woolman's resolve to implement the DCP was tested severely within a year after the program was implemented. A consortium of colleges responded to newspaper advertisements on the DCP which appeared in their city by calling Woolman's president and questioning the academic quality of the program. In response, the vice president of academic affairs and the DCP director met with representatives of the consortium to discuss the concerns. The issues were not resolved and the consortium filed complaints about the academic quality of the DCP and the propriety of the consultants' involvement with the Regional Accrediting Association and a state regulatory agency. These actions "sent shock waves" through the Woolman campus and prompted the president to reconsider the decision to implement the DCP. However, the vice president of academic affairs remained committed to the program and successfully defended it both on and off campus. Eventually the disagreement was resolved in Woolman's favor and the episode became known throughout the campus as "The Challenge."

The successful response to The Challenge functioned symbolically on the Woolman campus to endorse the credibility of the DCP and the wisdom of the decision to initiate it (see Appendix E for a list of the documents which contributed data about The Challenge to the DCP by the consortium). In retrospect, the success of the DCP at Woolman far exceeded the original projections. At the time of this study, the
college had limited the number of DCP classes it intended to offer per year in order to "maintain the quality" of the program. Interestingly, the question of protected market territory reemerged and became an issue of major dispute with the consultants as Woolman approached the end of its contractual agreement.

The Issues

The DCP issues were found to be similar in both colleges. They were identified through unitizing procedures applied to the documentary and interview data and then grouped into two broad categories designated "Resource Issues" and "Program Issues" (see Appendices C & D for annotated lists of the documents which contributed data about the DCP issues).

Nested within the resource and program categories were subgroups of issues. Resource sub-issues were concerned with whether or not the DCP was a good investment in terms of its marketability, impact on faculty workload and cost of the proposed consulting contract. Program sub-issues were concerned with the academic quality of the DCP core curriculum and course contact hours. Faculty at Merton also were concerned that they would be unable to control the quality of the curriculum if a consulting agreement were signed. Ultimately, all issues pertained to the question of whether or not to initiate the DCP through a contract with the consultants. Table 1 presents the main DCP issue confronting the two colleges and summarizes the related resource and program issues.
Table 1

Summary of the issues pertaining to the proposed Degree Completion Program (DCP) at Merton and Woolman Colleges.

Main Issue: Should the DCP be initiated as proposed by the consultants?

Resource Issues

- Is the DCP a good investment?
- Is there a market for the program?
- How will the DCP impact faculty workload?
- Is the proposed consulting agreement favorable to the college?

Program Issues

- What is the academic quality of the DCP?
- Are reduced student/teacher contact hours per DCP credit justifiable?
- What will be the DCP core curriculum?
- Will the faculty control the curriculum?

The DCP curriculum design issues symbolized a deep and generalized concern among managers and faculty for the academic "reputation" of their respective colleges. There were frequent references in the data to the low academic standards of the DCP compared to the colleges' traditional baccalaureate degree programs which reflected concern that the program might offer a "cheap degree." Interestingly, offering
credit for experiential learning presented a "philosophical" issue to a few respondents in both colleges, but was not a central issue in the discussions among decision makers in either school. Some respondents suggested that it was not a major issue because there was precedent for crediting experiential learning in other degree programs offered at the colleges.

The Consultants' Arguments

The Primary Argument

Interviews with the consultants and inspection of the DCP feasibility study reports indicated that the consultants position on the DCP issues was the same in both colleges (see Appendix C, number 6 and Appendix D, number 16 for the respective descriptions of the Merton and Woolman DCP feasibility study reports). The consultants began developing arguments favoring the DCP in their first contact with the presidents of the colleges. The primary argument was based on resource and program sub-arguments developed in the feasibility studies (evidence) and functioned to establish the position that the colleges should initiate the DCP through a consulting contract (claim). The credibility of the primary argument was contingent on accepting the authority of the consultants as experts on adult learning and innovative approaches to post-secondary education (warrant). Backing the consultants' expertise were their academic credentials, professional
experience, and testimony of satisfied clients. The primary argument is shown in Figure 2.

The resource and program sub-arguments which were developed in the feasibility study reports addressed the issues of market potential and academic quality respectively. Challenges to the resource and program sub-arguments prompted considerable argumentation which had to be resolved in order for the feasibility study report to be accepted as evidence in the primary argument.

The Resource Sub-Argument

The resource sub-argument claimed that the colleges should initiate a DCP as a strategy for increasing student enrollment. Various demographic statistics and survey data were offered as evidence in support of the claim. First, statistics were cited to show that there was a national trend in demand among adults over the age of 25 for postsecondary education and that significant numbers of adults in the vicinity of the colleges met the criteria for admission to the DCP. Figure 2. The Primary Argument from authority favoring the initiation of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) in Merton and Woolman Colleges through a contract with the consultants.

Second, data from a telephone survey conducted by the consultants indicated that no other institution in the market area was offering a DCP, and that business and civic leaders in the communities supported the DCP concept. The resource sub-argument is shown in Figure 3.
EVIDENCE
Resource Sub-Argument
The feasibility study report
Program Sub-Argument

WARRANT
The consultants are experts in designing and marketing DCPs so -

CLAIM
Merton and Woolman Colleges should initiate the DCP by signing a contract with the consultants to assist in its implementation

BACKING
- The consultants have advanced degrees in adult education
- The consultants have conducted many feasibility studies
- The consultants have assisted several colleges in developing and implementing successful DCPs

Figure 2. The Primary Argument from authority favoring the initiation of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) in Merton and Woolman Colleges through a contract with the consultants.
**EVIDENCE**

1. National statistics show a trend in demand for postsecondary education by adults
2. Local statistics show significant numbers of adults qualify for enrollment in the DCP
3. Survey data show no competition
4. Survey data show business and community support

**WARRANT**
The data are overwhelmingly convincing so -

**CLAIM**
Initiate the DCP as a strategy for increasing student enrollment

Figure 3. The Resource Sub-Argument which reasoned from the authority of statistical and survey data that Merton and Woolman Colleges should initiate a Degree Completion Program (DCP) as a strategy for increasing enrollment.
The authority of the statistical data used as evidence in the resource sub-argument provided a powerful reason to accept the claim that the DCP offered an important strategy to boost enrollments. The resource sub-argument functioned in tandem with the program sub-argument to establish the credibility of the feasibility study report and strengthen the primary argument that the DCP should be initiated through a consulting agreement.

**The Program Sub-Argument**

The program sub-argument implied that the DCP was academically excellent by claiming that the program would establish Merton and Woolman as "leaders in innovative education for adult learners" in their respective states. The argument was based on the following assumptions stated in the feasibility study report:

The form and content of the [DCP] are based on the assumption that the adult student brings a wealth of curriculum-related experience to the classroom. Moreover, it is assumed that the curricular material provided through the program will be understood [by adult students] on the basis of and assimilated with such past experience. New learnings will then be applied immediately to the existing life situations of the student.

The assumptions provided a rationale which was used to justify the unique features of the curriculum including the applied curriculum, accelerated courses, a competency approach to grading and the assessment
The consultants certify that the DCP appeals to adult students and meets their needs so -

- Testimony of faculty at DCP contract colleges
- Testimony of DCP graduates

The initiation of the DCP will establish the colleges as leaders in innovative adult education.

Figure 4. The Program Sub-Argument from authority that the initiation of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) would establish Merton and Woolman Colleges as leaders in innovative adult education.
and crediting of prior experiential learning. The knowledge and experience of the consultants supported the assumptions and certified that the DCP met the specific learning needs of adult college students. The consultants' expertise was backed by reports from DCP graduates and faculty in the contract colleges which testified to the rigor and appeal of the DCP curriculum and its instructional format. The program sub-argument is shown in Figure 4.

All the argumentation pertaining to the DCP responded to the position that Merton and Woolman should initiate the program through a contract with the consultants. It was manifested in challenges to the resource and program sub-arguments as well as in direct challenges to the primary argument claim that the DCP should be initiated through a consulting contract. The analyses which follow examine the argumentation generated by the consultants' position.

The Argumentation in Merton College

The analysis of the argumentation and socio-political factors in Merton College was based on data obtained from the documents listed in Appendix C and from interviews with the following individuals: a) the president of the college, b) the vice president of student development, c) the DCP director, d) eight senior faculty members involved in the decision to initiate the DCP, f) the vice presidents of finance and admissions, g) the director of advancement, and i) members of the Prior Learning Assessment Committee.
Response to the Primary Argument

Members of the president's cabinet at Merton responded to the primary argument that the DCP be initiated through a consulting agreement by endorsing the concept of nontraditional adult education and raising questions about the academic quality of the DCP, the wisdom of investing in it, and the reputability of the consultants as well as the DCP contract colleges. Some challenged the objectivity of the feasibility study by claiming that it represented a "sales job." The provocative language called attention to the fact that the consultants stood to gain financially if Merton initiated the DCP through a contract with them. The "sales job" claim was presumed to be self-evident in the context in which it was made and functioned as an argument which implied that the outcome of the feasibility study was biased.

Cabinet members responded to the implication of bias by acknowledging it and attempting to establish the credibility of the study by conducting the survey of contract colleges. Since the outcome of the survey was entirely favorable, it contributed significantly to the acceptance of the feasibility study report as an objective basis for making an informed decision.

The primary argument also was countered by two faculty members. The associate dean of sciences and a member of the APC independently submitted written memoranda to the cabinet arguing that Merton should invest its resources in the faculty to create and initiate a DCP rather than the consultants. The counter position was supported through two related arguments.
Counter Argument 1

The first counter argument claimed that the Merton faculty could develop a DCP without entering into a consulting agreement. The evidence cited a faculty review of summaries of DCP coursework which indicated that the curriculum proposed by the consultants did not meet Merton's academic standards in either course content or assessment of student learning. The faculty reasoned that since the consultants appeared to have "Master's Degrees in Education (or some variation) with no college level experience beyond [the DCP]" their own superior credentials and expertise would ensure the development of a better program. The argument is an example of reasoning from correlation, that is, reasoning that there is a relationship between academic credentials and experience and program quality.

A second reason offered in support of the claim that Merton faculty could develop a DCP without consultation was based on a report from a dean at a DCP contract college indicating that there was "no reason why the DCP could not be developed internally." The report implied that Merton faculty possessed the skills necessary to design a DCP without formal consultation. The persuasiveness of the argument depended on the acceptance of the dean's report as authoritative. Counter argument 1 is shown in Figure 5.
EVIDENCE 1
Merton faculty review of the DCP curriculum shows that it does not meet the academic standards of the college

WARRANT 1
There is a relationship between program quality and the academic credentials and experience of its developers

CLAIM
Merton faculty can develop and implement the DCP without a consulting agreement

EVIDENCE 2
Information obtained from the academic dean of a DCP contract college indicates that a consulting contract is unnecessary

WARRANT 2
The dean is in a position to know

Figure 5. The argument from correlation shown in Warrant 1 and the argument from authority shown in Warrant 2 that the Merton faculty could design a Degree Completion Program (DCP) without entering into a consulting agreement.
Counter Argument 2

The second counter argument supporting investment in the faculty reasoned from circumstance that there was a causal relationship between the proposed DCP consulting agreement and the prerogative of the consultants to control the curriculum. The faculty claimed that, if a consulting agreement were signed, they would lose control of the DCP curriculum and be unable to ensure its quality. Counter argument 2 is shown in Figure 6.

Counter arguments 1 and 2 formed a "chain of reasoning" in support of the claim that the college should initiate a DCP by investing in the faculty rather than in the consultants (Toulmin et al., 1984, pp. 73-77). Response to the counter position came from the consultants and the vice president of student affairs.

Response to the Counter Arguments

The argument that Merton should invest in its faculty to develop the DCP rather than the consultants received qualified acceptance among cabinet members. The vice president summarized the response by pointing out that Merton faculty, while expert in educational matters, generally did not have experience with the non-traditional instructional format used in teaching adults. The argument was that since the consultants did have the necessary expertise in teaching adults, "why reinvent the wheel?" The argument was supported by residual reasoning which implied that because the faculty did not meet an important criteria for the
Figure 6. The argument from circumstance that if a consulting agreement is signed, the faculty will not be able to control the quality of the Degree Completion Program (DCP).
successful development of the DCP, the reasonable choice was to consult with the experts.

At every opportunity, the consultants responded to the concern about control of the DCP curriculum by reassuring members of the cabinet that the consulting role was strictly advisory. To support their position, they provided examples of course content and format alternatives used by the various contract colleges. Their response implied that if Merton became a contract college, it would control the DCP curriculum as did all the other contract colleges. In the terminology of argumentation, the consultants presented an argument supported by reasoning from classification. This type of reasoning is similar to a categorical syllogism which states that if all circles are round and A is a circle, then A is round. By analogy, if faculty in all DCP contract colleges control their curricula and Merton is a contract college, the Merton faculty will control the DCP curriculum.

The faculty members who argued in favor of investment in the Merton faculty to develop the DCP did not press their claim after the vice president and the consultants responded. However, neither was the primary argument accepted at that point in the deliberations because there were additional questions and requests for clarification of the feasibility study report. Some cabinet members questioned whether the initiation of the DCP would increase enrollment as the resource sub-argument claimed. The issue of faculty control of the curriculum also resurfaced as did other program concerns when discussions reached the APC. These issues had to be resolved before there would be acceptance of the claim favoring the initiation of the DCP through a consulting
agreement. The discussion which follows describes the challenges to the resource and program sub-arguments and the responses which were made to them.

Response to the Resource Sub-Argument

Data indicated that managers and faculty at Merton College challenged the resource sub-argument presented in the feasibility study report by questioning the accuracy of the market projections. The question raised among members of the cabinet was whether or not the adult population in the vicinity of the college was large enough to support the DCP. A report from a dean at a contract college indicated that a population base of one million was needed for a successful DCP, however, the report was not substantiated by demographic data. A second challenge to the resource sub-argument noted that the market projections reported in the feasibility study included neighboring states and questioned whether or not interstate commerce regulations might restrict the potential for offering the DCP outside Merton's home state.

The consultants responded to the DCP marketability questions by acknowledging the concerns and remaining firm on their projections. No revised projections based on statistics which excluded neighboring states appeared to have been made. When the survey of contract colleges supported the consultants' record in developing accurate market projections the discussion of market issues among decision makers at Merton subsided.
It was interesting to note in retrospect that enrollment in DCP classes consistently fell below projections during the first three years after Merton initiated the program. Among the reasons for low enrollment offered by the president and some managers, were the failure of the college to take the necessary steps required to offer the DCP in neighboring states and the failure to anticipate the reluctance of large numbers of potential students to obtain bank loans to pay the tuition for the DCP. The consultants cited the additional reason that Merton failed to fund the initial advertising and staffing costs of the DCP at recommended levels. None of the reasons suggested that the low enrollment might have been the result of inaccurate market projections.

Response to the Program Sub-Argument

Challenges to the DCP curriculum and instructional format occurred mainly in the APC forum. The vice president presented a written proposal describing the DCP and the consulting agreement to committee members and requested that it be approved in principle. In response to the proposal, the faculty requested "clarification" of the coursework required for the DCP major in organizational management in terms of its content, sequence of presentation and completion time.

The vice president responded by dismissing the faculty request for clarification and stating that the college had not asked for a detailed description of the DCP curriculum because of "ethical reasons" and as a "protective measure," in case Merton decided to develop its own DCP rather than collaborate with the consultants. Then he argued from
generalization that since there was no "hard and fast rule" regarding
the composition or format of the major coursework, the Merton faculty
would control the design of the curriculum. Evidence from which the
vice president generalized were the results of the telephone survey of
six DCP contract colleges describing their curricula and the degree to
which they had followed the recommendations made by the consultants.
The vice president qualified his argument by stating that he anticipated
that the DCP curriculum at Merton would closely approximate the field­
based model proposed by the consultants. The argument is presented in
Figure 7.

The faculty responded to the vice president's argument on
curriculum content by specifying the types of learning activities to be
included in each DCP course and then voting to require prior approval by
the faculty of each course to be offered in the program. These actions
brought to a close the argumentation pertaining to the control of the
DCP curriculum. The second faculty challenge to the curriculum
questioned the number of student contact hours required per course
credit. The DCP curriculum had been presented to the faculty as a
series of learning modules intended to function as an integrated whole
to develop student proficiency in general skill areas such as
communication, management, organizational structure and behavior,
research and problem solving. However, each module in the curriculum
was titled as an individual course and was assigned a specific number of
credits. The faculty questioned the number of contact hours required
per credit in the proposed modules because the accepted standard for
awarding credit was not met. The issue was whether or not fewer contact
EVIDENCE
Survey of DCP contract colleges regarding the flexibility in design of the DCP curriculum

WARRANT
All the DCP contract colleges controlled the design of the DCP curriculum so -

QUALIFIER
Although the design will approximate the consultants' proposal

CLAIM
Faculty will control the design of Merton's DCP curriculum

Figure 7. The vice president's argument from generalization that faculty would control the design of the curriculum of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) at Merton College.
hours per credit implied that DCP modules were less rigorous academically than traditional courses.

The vice president responded to the concern about contact hours by offering two related arguments. First he contended that the DCP met the contact hour requirements per credit when fieldwork and independent research assignments were included in the calculations. He reasoned from analogy by drawing comparisons between the instructional formats of the DCP and traditional courses and the time spent by students to earn credit through each approach. Underlying the argument were the assumptions pertinent to the type of curriculum appropriate for adult college students. The argument is shown in Figure 8.

The second argument reasoned from generalization that Merton's accrediting association would approve the inclusion of DCP fieldwork and independent research assignments in the calculation of contact hours per credit because it had been approved in all the contract colleges, including one in Merton's accreditation region. The evidence on which the argument was based consisted of reports from the consultants verified in a survey of the contract colleges. The argument is shown in Figure 9.

The members of the APC did not challenge the vice president's arguments on contact hours and approved the recommended number of credits assigned to DCP modules in the curriculum proposal. However, while the vice president's arguments appeared to be effective, there were indications that the faculty may not have been entirely convinced by them. Quipped one member of the APC during an interview with the investigator, "Since it [the DCP] wasn't clearly illegitimate - why not
1. Number of student contact hours required per credit in traditional lecture-based instructional format

2. Number of student contact hours required per credit based on DCP instructional format including fieldwork and research

Students in traditional and DCP classes spend comparable amounts of time to earn degree credit

The DCP curriculum meets the standards for contact hours per credit

Figure 8. The argument from analogy that the Degree Completion Program (DCP) curriculum met the requirements for student contact hours per credit when time spent in field-work and independent research assignments were counted.
The Regional Accrediting Associations of the DCP contract colleges have allowed fieldwork and independent research assignments to count in calculations of contact hours per credit.

Since there is significant precedent for approval.

Merton's Accrediting Association will approve the inclusion of fieldwork and research assignments in the calculation of contact hours per credit.

Figure 9. The argument from generalization that Merton's Regional Accrediting Association would approve the inclusion of fieldwork and independent research assignments in the calculation of student contact hours per credit required in Degree Completion Program (DCP) courses.
give it a try?" There was no indication that the issue of DCP contact hours resurfaced at a later time or that it was an issue in the college's most recent accreditation review.

The issue of the effect on faculty workload if the DCP were initiated was raised in various forums throughout the DCP discussions. The response consistently was made that participation in the DCP was voluntary, and that faculty would be compensated for teaching in the program or assisting with the development of curriculum.

**Summary of the Argumentation in Merton College**

The argumentation in the DCP decision process at Merton College occurred in two forums, the president's cabinet and the APC. The faculty were the most persistent challengers to the primary argument that the college should initiate the DCP through a consulting agreement. The vice president of student services emerged as the outspoken defender of the primary argument in both the cabinet and APC forums. He served as liaison with the consultants throughout the decision process, and he used their arguments pertaining to the DCP program and resource issues in seeking approval for the DCP from the faculty.

The analysis of the argumentation showed that it occurred in a variety of transactions in which the primary argument developed by the consultants was challenged and defended. It was clear from the analysis that reasoned arguments were presented on both sides of the DCP issues.
The acceptance of the primary argument marked the close of one phase of the DCP argumentation and the beginning of a new one. After the contract with the consultants was signed, circumstances associated with the implementation process prompted some market and curriculum issues to resurface in new forms. For example, the issue of marketability reemerged when DCP enrollments failed to meet projections and new argumentation was required to address the issue under current circumstances. This example points to the importance of context on the development of both issues and the argumentation concerning them. The discussion which follows examines several socio-political factors which influenced the development of the argumentation.

The Influence of Socio-Political Factors on the Argumentation

The analysis of the socio-political context in which the argumentation about the DCP occurred in Merton College was conducted by searching the data for references to events and behavior which could be classified according to the socio-political factors identified by Farrell and Peterson (1982, pp. 408-410). The factors discussed include investment, alternatives, trust, and efficacy.

Investment

Merton College was founded in the 1950's by a religious order dedicated to liberal education which aimed to "liberate the student's full potential for emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, social and
spiritual experience." Service to the local community, state and region also was a high institutional priority. In the 1980's, Merton began experiencing a steady decline in student enrollment, and the corresponding decrease in revenue was becoming a serious threat to institutional survival at the time the DCP was first introduced by the president.

Many Merton faculty and staff had been associated with the college for many years. One long-time member of the Merton community described its aura as follows:

You know, one of the pleasures you get being in a smaller, quieter college, is you don't get great libraries, you don't get great research facilities, you don't always get great students - you get a quiet way of life, time to think, smaller classes. So I think people who come here and stay - some of them can't get out; there's definitely some of that - but for some of them you have this small town, and they don't teach summers, and they don't teach evenings, and they don't want to. They have a life. They don't make a lot of money. They have a life, and a lot of people have really made those real clear choices.

Two key individuals in the DCP decision process, the president and vice president of student affairs were highly committed to Merton. The president, a scholar and an activist, was a member of the college's founding denomination. At the time of the interview, he had been with the college for six years. He made the point that he had chosen to assume the presidency because of the challenge presented by a "lean and hungry" institution ripe to accomplish its mission of serving
economically disadvantaged students. He was proud that an accreditation review team had found that more than 90% of the faculty and staff knew and agreed with Merton's educational mission. His perception of his task as leader was to develop the resources, including students and facilities, which would "enable faculty to do their jobs better." In addition to its economic potential, he indicated that one reason for his interest in the DCP was its potential to meet the educational needs of an underserved adult population in the Merton community.

The vice president of student affairs also was a member of Merton's founding denomination and had been with the college for many years. At the time of the DCP deliberations, he had been selected by the president to become the first dean of the new Division of Adult and Continuing Education. He reported to the investigator that he "thoroughly enjoyed the business of adult education" and the challenge of developing a new educational focus at the college. He considered that it was his responsibility to achieve a favorable decision on the initiation of the DCP through the consulting agreement.

Alternatives

Alternatives for employment or career advancement for faculty and staff in the community surrounding Merton College generally were not perceived as being readily available. Economic factors also made moving out of the area difficult as one faculty member stated, "It's not very feasible for us to move. If we sell our house for $50,000 here, how can we get a $200,000 house elsewhere?"
The president, on the contrary, felt that he did have alternatives to continuing his tenure at Merton and indicated that this knowledge freed him to act decisively. He stated, "They could get rid of me and it would be all right, because there are lots of other things I'd like to do." The security of his position within the hierarchy of college's founding religious denomination supported his career options.

The vice president of student affairs also believed that his career options were open. At the time of the interview, he had plans to leave Merton to become the chief executive of an important cultural and philanthropic organization in the community. He was excited about his plans and spoke frankly of his ambition to become a college president until the new opportunity had been presented. The impression conveyed by the vice president was that the leadership and academic experience he acquired at Merton, coupled with an avocation in the arts, had prepared him well for the demands of the executive position he was about to assume.

Trust

Faculty trust in Merton's president and, by extension, some members of his cabinet, was not high at the time of the debate over the DCP. The president was described as an authoritarian who was censured twice by faculty when he overrode their decisions on academic matters. These incidents were symptoms of widespread distrust which one faculty member described with the following statement, "Just because we only censored him twice doesn't mean we were only unhappy with him twice." However,
the president also was described as "innovative, creative," and an
"idea" man who "talks big and is impatient with administrators who don't
make things happen." It generally was acknowledged that he had
initiated significant change at Merton which some believed to be
positive while others feared that "the bottom might drop out."

The president was not unaware of the controversy he had generated
throughout his tenure at Merton. He stated that, "There's a turf war
that goes on between the faculty and me." He described himself as
"results oriented," and a "non-democratic" leader who aims to provoke
action and "win the ball game." "I'm the lightning rod," he quipped, "I
know it and it's ok." The president indicated that, at most, he would
consult with faculty or staff on issues, but if deliberations became
prolonged or otherwise delayed action, he would not hesitate to make
decisions himself. To the faculty he applied the terms "honest" and
"issue oriented" and supported this view by exclaiming, "The faculty
voted to detenure two people and liked both of them! Now that's an
honest faculty!" Owing to faculty integrity, the president declared
that Merton was the "least political college" he had ever encountered.

There appeared to be a continuing perception among those
interviewed that some members of the president's cabinet were "yes men."
Indeed, the vice president of student affairs confided to the
investigator that some faculty may have believed at one time that the
president had "tied my job" to the successful outcome of the DCP
decision. Another perception early in the DCP debate was that the vice
president's support for the DCP stemmed from his personal ambition and
proclivity for "empire building." These concerns appeared to be
discredited as the debate over the DCP widened and the vice president's role in the decision process became increasingly public. For example, the following comments were representative of those offered by many interviewees: "The DCP was [the vice president's] program. He thought of it, argued it, got it through the faculty. He did his homework. He is well organized. He answered questions well. He raised our consciousness about adult students." The vice president attributed his credibility with the faculty, in part, to an understanding of academic issues which he had gained through teaching and years of experience in working with the Merton faculty.

**Efficacy**

There appeared to be consensus among the faculty that their decisions on academic matters largely were made through a collegial process of reasoned debate conducted in appropriate meetings. However, they viewed the president as an authoritarian who was apt to make decisions without sufficient planning or justification, and there was frustration that there seemed to be no effective means of appealing presidential actions. One faculty member cynically described his perception of decision making during the president's tenure as follows, "I get the feeling that it's like in Libya. God speaks to Khadsfi and says what will happen next. Plans don't mean anything." Nevertheless, the faculty were neither apathetic nor naive about the politics of decision making as the censorship incidents and the relatively intensive debate over the DCP indicated. Their willingness to act on campus
issues important to them suggested that they continued to believe that they retained some influence on important decisions. As one faculty member put it, "The president is creative and has a lot of ideas. We reign him in."

It was clear that the president was confident in his vision for Merton College and how to accomplish it. He was willing to make unpopular and unilateral decisions, but despite claims to the contrary, he did not appear to make them arbitrarily. In some cases, the reasoning behind his actions may not have been clear to those affected, or the reasons, when clear, simply may not have been acceptable to critics. Faced with potential or real disagreement, the president seemed to have little patience with prolonged negotiations which may have been necessary to reach consensus. However, he did agree that the vice president of student affairs could pursue DCP approval through regular faculty channels provided it did not take too long. Although the president clearly expected the faculty to decide in favor of the DCP, by seeking their endorsement the possibility was opened that the program might be rejected.

The vice president of student affairs confidently told the investigator that he "orchestrated" faculty approval of the DCP. He viewed the decision process politically and his strategies to achieve approval of the program included informal meetings with key faculty as well as the presentation of a formal, written proposal to the appropriate committees. He also indicated that the fact that he reported directly to the president was an important factor in his ability to facilitate action.
The faculty viewed the vice president of student affairs as innovative, capable and "political," a man "who plans very carefully how to get things done." As one faculty member stated, "[The vice president] has a real ability to lay things out. There are politics . . . knowing this he is able to use it [the politics] to get things done." The comment also was made that the vice president's strong personality may have been a factor which swayed some people to favor the DCP. However, there was no indication that the faculty felt deceived about the DCP after it was approved or that their opinions were not heard during the decision process.

Summary of the Influence of the Socio-Political Factors on the DCP

Argumentation

The promise of significantly increased enrollments undoubtedly was an important factor in the DCP deliberations. As an institution dependent on tuition as a major source of revenue, Merton needed to develop new student markets. Clearly the DCP had an impressive record of financial success in the contract colleges and the president and vice president of student affairs actively began to support its initiation and the consulting agreement early in the cabinet discussions. They did not, however, curtail debate over the program, and the vice president was firm in insisting that the DCP proposal be subjected to the formal, faculty approval process for new degree programs.

Distrust of the administration was prevalent at the time of the DCP decision. The faculty were severely critical of the president because
they viewed his actions to be unpredictable, unilateral and final. The concern that the president and vice president were trying to "pull a fast one" may have provided an important impetus for careful examination of the DCP and debate over the consulting agreement.

There were many references from both managers and faculty to the "politics" of the DCP decision process. For example, the vice president candidly told the investigator that he lobbied faculty "one on one" to gain support for the program prior to the APC meetings, and that he carefully planned how to argue his position in the APC forum. Faculty responses indicated that they were keenly aware of the vice president's strategizing and they seemed to admire his ability to achieve his objectives. All indications were that the faculty were satisfied with the process by which the DCP and the consulting agreement were approved at Merton College.

The Argumentation in Woolman College

The analysis of the argumentation and socio-political factors in Woolman College was based on data obtained from the documents listed in Appendices D and E and from interviews with the following individuals: a) the president of the college, b) the vice president of academic affairs, c) the director of the DCP, d) four senior faculty members who had been involved in the decision to initiate the DCP, and the vice president of finance.
Response to the Primary Argument

Members of the president's cabinet questioned whether or not the college could afford the investment required to implement the DCP and pay the consultants' fees. The vice president of academic affairs indicated to the investigator that he was firm in supporting funding at the levels recommended in the feasibility study report. He stated, "I knew it [the DCP] was a big job, and I didn't want anything to do with it if it didn't have the resources and staff to make it work." A key voice in the discussion of funding was that of the vice president of finance. Once the credibility of the feasibility study had been confirmed, he supported the investment in the DCP because the market statistics convinced him that the program could become profitable within three years. There was no evidence of opposition to these views by other cabinet members nor was there evidence that the financial aspects of initiating the DCP were discussed outside the cabinet forum. As a result, the DCP eventually was funded at the levels recommended by the consultants.

Response to the Resource Sub-Argument

The cabinet also raised questions regarding program quality and marketability. Cabinet members readily accepted that the consultants were experts on adult learning, educational programming and assessing the DCP market potential, however, they challenged the resource sub-argument by questioning whether or not the DCP was the best program to
attract adult students. Cabinet members were concerned that the DCP was too innovative to appeal to the potential students in the Woolman vicinity. In response to this concern, the president contacted colleagues in two contract colleges who verified that the DCP had excellent market appeal, was respected academically and was successful on their campuses. That information apparently tipped the cabinet toward acceptance of the resource sub-argument and the primary claim that the college should initiate the DCP through a consulting contract.

Response to the Program Sub-Argument

The DCP discussion moved to the faculty forum after the cabinet had resolved the question of funding. Faculty discussion focused on the programmatic aspects of the DCP. Questions were raised concerning the "educational philosophy" underpinning the DCP including the teaching style, competency based grading, core curriculum requirements, prior learning assessment, and contact hours required per course credit. In response to the questions, the vice president of academic affairs reiterated the consultants' argument and stressed that adults have special learning requirements which must be met through innovative curricula and teaching methods. Although the faculty generally accepted the argument that "adults are different" as justification for the non-traditional DCP curriculum, a counter argument was developed over the issue of core course requirements.

The faculty argued that a reduction in core meant that the DCP degree would be different from the other baccalaureate degrees offered
at Woolman and might be viewed as less rigorous academically. Reasoning proceeded from classification as faculty compared the degrees based on their properties and the generally accepted criteria for graduation from Woolman. The faculty counter argument succeeded in obtaining several modifications to the proposed core curriculum which subsequently were passed by the full faculty. The counter argument is presented in Figure 10.

The concern about the DCP core curriculum requirement was not resolved permanently when the faculty approved the program. The DCP core curriculum issues resurfaced during the implementation phase as discussions began with individual faculty and the registrar on transfer credits, course equivalencies, and admission and graduation requirements. Compromises appeared to have been reached on the immediate concerns about the DCP, but later the core requirements became a generalized issue which prompted considerable debate between the humanities and science faculties. While the DCP was no longer the main focus of concern, the larger debate was expected to have a "trickle-down" effect on the program.

The issue of a potential increase in faculty workload as a result of the implementation of the DCP was handled by assuring faculty that they would be paid for time spent in curriculum development and teaching in the program. Several senior faculty members who agreed to teach the first DCP class, if the program were implemented, also were promised a reduction in their regular teaching load. At the time of the study, the possibility of counting DCP courses in the regular teaching load was becoming a faculty issue.
Figure 10. The argument from classification that the degree offered by the Degree Completion Program (DCP) potentially was academically inferior to other baccalaureate degrees offered by Woolman College.
Summary of Argumentation at Woolman College

The argumentation on the DCP at Woolman College occurred in the president's cabinet and the APC forums. From the outset, the cabinet members seemed inclined to accept the outcome of the feasibility study on the authority of the consultants' knowledge and experience in the field of adult higher education. They accepted the experiences of colleagues in the contract colleges as verification of the credibility of the consultants, the feasibility study, and the quality of the DCP. An important influence on the faculty's decision to approve the DCP appeared to be the endorsement of the program by the vice president of academic affairs. He served as the liaison with the consultants and supported their arguments in discussions with the faculty.

The responses of both managers and faculty to the consultants' arguments tended not to be confrontational, but were issued in the form of questions which called for additional information or explanation of some aspect of the DCP which would enable the questioner to make a more informed decision on the issue under discussion. The exception to the challenge-by-question pattern, was the faculty counter argument challenging the quality of the DCP degree on the basis of its core curriculum requirements. In response to the counter claim, the vice president and the consultants reiterated the program sub-argument claiming the need for alternative curricular requirements for adult students. While the faculty accepted the response in general, they did vote to make changes in the proposed core requirements which had to be accommodated in the implementation of the program.
The decision to initiate the DCP through a contract with the consultants was challenged by powerful groups outside the college within a year after the program was implemented. As a result of the challenge, a new round of argumentation regarding the quality and propriety of the consulting agreement began both on and off campus. The vice president of academic affairs was influential in responding to critics and reinforcing Woolman's decision to initiate the DCP. At the time of this study, the issues of the core curriculum and protection of Woolman's DCP market also had reemerged under new circumstances and were the focus of renewed argumentation.

The Influence of the Socio-Political Factors on the Argumentation

The fortunes of the 100 year old Woolman College began to decline with the advent of the community college system in the early 1960's. Enrollment in its thriving evening school was reduced drastically when Woolman could not compete with the low tuitions offered by the state supported community colleges. In an effort to reestablish a niche in the local higher education community, Woolman drew on its Christian heritage and adopted the "Foundational Concepts of Christian Education" which have continued to inform its mission to the present time. Several years after its Christian focus was renewed, demographic shifts in the numbers of college age students and economic depression prompted by the closing of scores of factories in the area combined to presage a bleak future for the college.
Most faculty and staff had developed deep ties to Woolman and the surrounding community. In part, loyalty to the college was enhanced by commitment to its stated mission of fostering Christian higher education. That mission entailed subscribing to the belief that all of life must be penetrated by Christian perspectives, and that the potential of each person must be developed within the context of Christian principles in order that each life would honor God. Every faculty and staff member at Woolman made a profession of Christian faith upon joining the college. According to one faculty member, the emphasis on Christian principles has meant that often there has been an "amazing depth of compassion" among members of the college community. Politics or "pettiness" was characterized as having to do with how the "common vision is accomplished." Once it was decided that the DCP would be implemented, a conscientious effort was made to frame it as an opportunity to extend Woolman's mission in new and challenging ways.

Woolman's president was required to be a member of the evangelical denomination which chartered the college. The numbers of qualified candidates for president were limited by the size of the denomination and the willingness of those nominated to serve. Woolman's president described his commitment to the college as a sense of religious duty or "calling" to serve his church. He cited a desire to maintain Woolman's educational ideals and put the college on a solid financial foundation as his immediate goals. He declared that one day he hoped to see
Woolman recognized as among the "Ivy League of Christian Colleges in the Nation."

The vice president of academic affairs, joined Woolman about five years prior to the DCP decision. In his estimation, he came into a "no lose" situation because there had been little advocacy for the faculty prior to his tenure. He spent the first year "getting to know people and building trust and rapport." An activist, he perceived his job as "laying a vision that we don't have to be second rate ... let's get busy doing something." Satisfaction had come for the vice president in many positive changes and a corollary growth in faculty pride both in their work and in the college. He acknowledged that there had been frustration in his job but stressed that he enjoyed the challenges brought by his position. One goal he cited was to develop a long range plan for the growth and development of the faculty and the college.

Alternatives

Most faculty and staff had been with the college or had lived in its vicinity for many years. Although the faculty tended to stay at the college, many had competed successfully for state and national awards and project grants in both the humanities and sciences. These endeavors were recognized and encouraged in various ways on the Woolman campus. Employment alternatives in the immediate geographical region for non-professional staff were depicted as scarce.
The faculty indicated to the investigator that there was "no strong sense of faculty versus administration" at Woolman. The president was respected by virtue of his position, but was viewed as a "loner" who tended neither to lead nor to interfere with the activities of his management team. It was said that sometimes he made unpopular decisions, and that he remained firm once having decided an issue.

The vice president of academic affairs was held in high esteem by the faculty and others associated with the DCP who worked closely with him. He was described as "honest, straight-forward, credible." The faculty perceived that he "took a stand on hard issues" which were of great concern to them. The vice president described his relationship with faculty as "pretty amenable" and indicated that he worked hard to establish and maintain respect and trust through open communication. The director of the DCP described the vice president as the "ideal boss" because he "trusts subordinates to do their job... is attentive to issues and deals with them promptly."

The importance of trust among members of the college community as a basis for working relationships also surfaced in reference to the challenge by the consortium of city colleges. The DCP director attributed the favorable review of the accrediting team, in part, to the "high trust level" in the college which had been built over its 100 year history. He stated, "They knew Woolman would have done its homework" before initiating a program like the DCP.
Efficacy

Generally, faculty, DCP staff, and students all tended to use formal channels, such as representation on committees like the APC, DCP Advisory Council and the president's cabinet to air their views and achieve their objectives. On occasion, the president had been known to make unilateral decisions for which there was no appeal, and there was concurrence that he needed to be convinced for anything important to be done. Various individuals, including the vice presidents of academic affairs and of finance, were described as influential with the president. Faculty found the academic vice president to be attentive to their opinions and willing to act on their behalf.

The vice president characterized himself as a change agent who was willing "to get bloody" over the right issues. He noted that at times he had "moved faster than the faculty" and made them uncomfortable as a result. A "servant - leader" model of leadership was described as his ideal and he indicated that he had to "get used to the kind of authority I have" by virtue of position. He perceived that "cheerleading," or helping people set goals and develop confidence in their ability to achieve them constituted a large part of his job.

Summary of the Influence of the Political Factors on the Argumentation at Woolman College

The promise of significantly increased enrollments was an important factor in the decision to initiate the DCF at Woolman College. A strong
commitment to Christian values permeated every aspect of life at Woolman and fostered strong loyalties to the college and its mission. The same values which supported loyalty to Woolman's ideals, may also have promulgated conscientious efforts to foster trust among constituents as an important basis on which to build working relationships. The emphasis on trust coupled with the tendency to rely on formal channels and sanctioned authorities to make decisions may have been one reason that argumentation over the DCP lacked the element of confrontation typically associated with debate over controversial issues.

The attitude toward decision making which seemed to prevail among interviewees was that there was a "proper" way to get things done. Nevertheless, there were frequent references to efforts to influence various decision makers which appeared to be accepted as a normal aspect of the decision process. For example, the support of the vice president of academic affairs for the DCP was acknowledged as having an important influence on the faculty decision to approve the DCP, however, his position was not above question as the vote to modify the core requirements indicated. Recognition that the president needed to be "convinced" on certain issues and that certain vice presidents were particularly effective in persuading him was another example of the awareness that human or socio-political factors influenced how factual data were presented and perceived in the decision making process.
Comparison of the Argumentation in Merton and Woolman Colleges

Comparison of Decision Processes and Forums

Decision making at both Merton and Woolman Colleges was characterized by an extended, orderly process which flowed along formally structured channels. The colleges sought a substantive basis on which to consider the DCP when they requested a feasibility study. The outcome of the study represented both a summary of the findings relevant to the feasibility of developing the DCP on the respective campuses and a proposal to develop the program with expert consultation provided at a fee. The signing of the consulting contracts was the culmination of a series of decisions to ratify the DCP made in the presidents' cabinets, the APCs, and other faculty meetings.

The decision process in both colleges flowed downward from the president and his advisors to the faculty and then up to the trustees. The hierarchical influence of authority was particularly evident at Woolman where, for example, a decision to request the feasibility study was made by the president and two vice presidents and simply announced to faculty and other administrators. In contrast, the president's cabinet at Merton twice held meetings and sought information from the contract colleges before deciding to request the feasibility study and then solicited reactions to the study process from faculty and staff prior to receiving the official report of its outcome.

The consultants, presidents, vice president of student services at Merton and vice president of academic affairs at Woolman all played
crucial roles in promoting the DCP on the two campuses. The faculty presented the primary opposition to the DCP in both colleges. Woolman's academic vice president was in a better position to influence the faculty decision on the DCP than Merton's vice president of student services because he was the formal leader of the faculty and a member of the APC. In contrast, the vice president at Merton had to be invited to present his views in Merton's APC forum. Informal lobbying of individual faculty members on behalf of the DCP was conducted by both vice presidents. Their use of personal influence and tangible incentives to support the DCP were acknowledged by all faculty respondents in the study who seemed to regard these actions as routine.

In the final outcome, faculty reported that they considered the signing of the DCP consulting agreement to be the result of informed discussion and voting procedures in the appropriate forums by the appropriate individuals. Closure on the decision process occurred when the presidents signed the respective consulting agreements and legally committed Merton and Woolman to the implementation of the DCP.

Comparison of the Argumentation

The argumentation in the colleges addressed the issue of whether or not to initiate the DCP through a contract with the consultants. Related issues concerned the marketability and the academic quality of the DCP. The consultants began developing the primary argument when they were invited to deliver a presentation regarding the DCP and consulting services to senior managers and faculty at the colleges.
Their position was strengthened by the outcomes of the respective feasibility studies which were then used as the basis for the resource and program sub-arguments. The argumentation on the DCP began when the members of the presidents' cabinets and faculties responded to the primary argument and the resource and program sub-arguments.

Argumentation occurred in both Merton and Woolman Colleges, but there was an element of disagreement over the DCP issues in the argumentation process at Merton which was not evident at Woolman. At Merton, the related issues of investment of the college's resources and control of the DCP prompted counter arguments early in the cabinet discussions of the program. The control issue resurfaced in the APC in the form of questions. In both forums, Merton challengers focused on undermining the credibility of the consultants as their strategy to weaken the primary argument.

The argumentation at Woolman was not characterized by disagreement except as it occurred with respect to the core curriculum in the APC forum. The cabinet members acknowledged the consultants' expertise at the outset of their interaction with them. Rather, their questions concerned the appeal of the DCP to a conservative adult population.

Interestingly, despite the differences in the amount and type of argumentation over the DCP which ensued in the colleges, decision makers in both cabinets accepted reports from the contract colleges as verification of the appeal of the DCP and the professional expertise of the consultants. Although the Merton faculty may not have been completely convinced by the reports, the analyses suggested that the argumentation in the APC's at both colleges shifted from whether or not
to initiate the DCP to questions concerning what the curriculum and instructional format should be and who should control it. The outcome of the argumentation in the faculty forums was that the faculties asserted their prerogative to control the quality of academic programs on their campuses and obtained modifications to the proposed curricula.

The advocates for the DCP and the consulting agreement in both colleges were vice presidents who were members of the presidents' cabinets. The vice presidents' strategies in presenting the primary argument differed. Since control of the curriculum was a prominent issue among Merton faculty, the vice president relegated the consultants to the background and always addressed the faculty personally even though he used the consultants as a resource in developing his arguments. While he did endorse the consultants as authorities on nontraditional programming for adults, his arguments continually stressed their role as advisors to faculty who would control the DCP curriculum.

The vice president's strategy at Woolman was exactly opposite from the tact taken at Merton. At Woolman, the consultants were involved directly in faculty committee discussions, and the vice president stressed their knowledge and expertise in order to strengthen his own position that the faculty should approve the DCP curriculum as proposed. Although strategies differed, the outcome of the argumentation in the faculty forums in both colleges was the same in that the faculties approved the basic design of the curriculum with modifications.

The analyses of specific arguments developed by individuals and groups in the colleges showed that a variety of forms of reasoning were
used in support of claims. However, the authority of "hard" data such as statistics, survey results, credentials and experience verified by documentation or reports from trusted colleagues was persuasive to all parties in both colleges. Those who challenged the primary argument or the resource and program sub-arguments did not produce comparable, hard evidence as a basis for raising questions or issuing opposing claims. The failure of challengers to offer strong, competing evidence that the DCP should not be initiated through a consulting agreement may have been an important factor which enabled the primary argument to prevail.

Comparison of the Influence of Socio-Political Factors

Managers, faculty, and staff at Merton and Woolman were highly committed to their institutions. The ideals of liberal education and service to the community inspired many members of the Merton community including its president. At Woolman, the commitment to liberal education was strengthened by deeply held Christian religious beliefs which permeated every aspect of college life. Limited opportunities for employment or career alternatives were acknowledged at both colleges, but did not appear to cause widespread concern. The distinct impression was that managers and faculty chose to be part of the Merton and Woolman communities and were committed to the achievement of the social and economic viability of their institutions.

The data also supported the finding that members of the colleges believed that they were able to influence events which affected them by addressing their concerns to the appropriate authority or by
participating in decision making forums at the appropriate level in the formal decision hierarchy. The preference for using formal communication and decision processes was vividly demonstrated at Merton by the faculty sanctions of the president, the highest legitimate form of protest available. At Woolman, it was clear from the interview data that faculty actively relied on the vice president to represent their interests to the president and in cabinet meetings.

Participants in the DCP decision at both colleges readily acknowledged the use of personal influence and tangible incentives by the vice presidents to gain support for their positions. The indications were that these actions were acceptable and were perceived as a normal approach to resolving issues within the bounds of formal decision processes.

Trust factors may have contributed to differences in the development of the argumentation in the two colleges. Faculty at Merton did not trust the president to act in their interest, and there was suspicion that the vice president was acting mainly on the president's behalf in supporting the DCP. Distrust of the motives of the president and vice president may have sparked challenges and fueled the disagreement on the proposal to initiate the DCP and the consulting agreement.

There was some ambivalence among faculty at Woolman College regarding their president. However, the vice president of academic affairs was held in high esteem and was trusted to act in the faculty interest. Moreover, he was perceived as being influential with the president and cabinet members. When he supported the DCP and offered
assurances that faculty would be compensated for their participation in the program, there appeared to be little incentive to challenge his position and engage in prolonged argumentation.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUALIZING MANAGEMENT AS COMMUNICATION

This study responded to the question of how managers use language strategically to influence organizational decision making by adopting a rhetorical approach to the analysis of the decision processes which culminated in the initiation of DCPs at Merton and Woolman Colleges. The focus of the research was the reconstruction of the argumentation pertaining to the DCP in the respective colleges through the identification and analysis of the arguments favoring and opposing the initiation of the DCP through a consulting agreement and the responses to them. Chapter Four draws conclusions regarding how argumentation influenced the DCP decision making and discusses the implications of the study for research and practice in educational administration in collegiate institutions.

How Argumentation Influenced the Decision to Initiate the Degree Completion Program in Merton and Woolman Colleges

The DCP decision processes in Merton and Woolman Colleges were communication processes precipitated when the presidents sought advice from professional consultants on the merits of initiating DCPs to boost student enrollments and reverse the colleges' steady decline into insolvency. The consultants presented a new concept of higher education in which the traditional collegiate educational mission was expanded to include programs and services to meet the unique learning needs of adult students. Their ideas effectively established a new organizational
frame of reference within which their proposal that the colleges initiate the DCP made sense. The suggestion that a DCP feasibility study be conducted followed naturally from the perspective of an expanded educational mission and was made more desirable by the fact that there would be no cost or obligation to the colleges.

The consultants used the feasibility study process to gather information which was used to develop arguments favoring the initiation of a DCP on the Merton and Woolman campuses through a consulting agreement. A prolonged process of argumentation among cabinet and faculty members ensued in response to the resource and program sub-arguments developed in the feasibility study reports. However, there was a notable lack of response to the assumptions which formed the basis of the expanded educational mission and created the new organizational world view within which the initiation of the DCP seemed reasonable and desirable. In failing to challenge the assumptions underlying the DCP concept, decision makers gave the consultants an important strategic advantage by allowing them to define the terms or parameters of the argumentation. The following example illustrates how the power of definition is linked to the power to prevail in an argument:

... one complaint put forward by black Americans and other minority groups is that those in power exploit their power to control the accepted definitions of current political terminology to the detriment of the minorities. During the era of slavery, for instance, white people claimed to be superior to blacks and supported their argument by manipulating the accepted definition of superiority - implying that such things as speaking standard
American English, behaving in accepted white ways, and possessing light complexions, thin lips, and straight hair were essential to being "superior." At first blacks made the mistake of arguing back within the limits of that definition, only to find it impossible to compete. They were able to argue successfully only when they challenged the definition. (Toulmin, et al., 1984, pp. 210-211)

The consultants, by virtue of their role as experts, were able to make definitive statements regarding adult development, learning characteristics, and educational needs as well as the untapped potential of the adult student market which no one in the colleges was in position to challenge. Had decision makers sought other authoritative opinions, a competing concept of adult learners, the role of higher education in serving them, and the market potential for programs like the DCP might have emerged to frame the DCP proposal differently. Given an alternative perspective on adult higher education, the argumentation surrounding the DCP and its outcome could have been quite different. As it happened, the proposal to initiate the DCP offered a compelling solution to the enrollment and financial problems at the colleges because it made sense within the world view constructed by the consultants.

The endorsement of the DCP by the contract colleges convinced the presidents and academic vice presidents at Merton and Woolman that initiation of the DCP through a consulting contract represented a viable solution to their institutions' enrollment and financial problems. However, the decision to initiate the DCP was not necessarily a foregone conclusion since the consultants, the presidents and the vice presidents
were open to argument regarding the DCP proposal throughout the decision process. By remaining open to argument, the possibility always existed that someone might challenge the assumptions on which the resource and program arguments were based and offer a competing perspective on the mission to serve adult students.

The openness to argument was demonstrated when the consultants, presidents and vice presidents presented the DCP proposal formally, discussed, and defended it in the cabinet and APC forums. The argumentation which occurred in these forums influenced the DCP decision by prolonging the decision process and delaying final approval of the consulting agreement until the main interest groups had an opportunity to respond to the proposal. In effect, argumentation provided an opportunity for participation and the vehicle for dissent during the DCP decision process. It was only after issues concerning control of the DCP curriculum as well as its content and format were resolved to the satisfaction of the Merton and Woolman faculties, that they voted to approve the initiation of the DCP through the consulting contract.

It is conceivable that the faculty at either college could have voted against the DCP and the consulting agreement had their concerns about the program not been resolved to their satisfaction in the process of discussion. Failure to have achieved faculty approval would have created a serious problem for the consultants, presidents and vice presidents because it would have been difficult to initiate the DCP over faculty objections. The traditional authority given to faculties in academic matters in most collegiate institutions was institutionalized at Merton and Woolman through established channels of decision making
and further legitimized by state and regional accrediting policies. For management to attempt to initiate a new baccalaureate degree program without the formal approval of faculty might have violated accreditation standards.

The potential for faculty rejection of the DCP suggests that management's power to control or manipulate organizational decision making through language used to create a particular world view or decision framework is limited when there exists the opportunity to engage in argumentation. The public statement of an argument invites a response, and in the course of responding to an argument, defending one's position, and so on, participants create a course of action or decision which is the cumulative product of their interactions even when the original argument is accepted. The assumptions about adult learners which formed the organizational world view exerted a powerful influence by determining what proposals made sense to decision makers, but short of coercion, there was no guarantee that the consultants' and managers' arguments would prevail.

The DCP decision processes at Merton and Woolman were both democratic and rational when viewed from the argumentation perspective. Many individuals contributed to the deliberations through their participation in the cabinet, APC forums and faculty meetings as well as through personal communications with the consultants and the vice presidents. The analysis of documentary and interview data showed that the communications among decision makers were substantive, that is, they grappled with a proposed course of action (Primary Argument) on the basis of concrete evidence (Resource and Program Sub-Arguments) and
sound reasoning. The soundness of the arguments developed in the feasibility study report and the openness to argumentation which prevailed throughout the decision process in the colleges combined to produce a reasoned decision on whether or not to initiate the DCP through a consulting agreement.

The socio-political milieu into which the DCP proposal was introduced influenced the decision processes in the colleges but did not detract from their fundamental rationality. The consultants converted basic arguments pertaining to adult higher education and the quality of the DCP into a compelling call for action by skillfully weaving local data into their standard DCP proposal and presenting it in an "original" feasibility report. While receptivity to the arguments was heightened by the perceived lack of alternatives to the DCP proposal coupled with the desire for survival by members of the Merton and Woolman communities, decision makers, nevertheless, responded to the substance of the report. These findings suggest that the socio-political context contributed to the persuasiveness of the arguments favoring initiation of the DCP by imbuing them with a broader meaning than facts alone could convey.

The strategies and tactics used by the vice presidents to persuade faculty to approve the DCP reflected their perceptions of socio-political factors such as personal efficacy and the levels of trust among associates. The vice president at Merton, for example, knew that there was deep distrust of the president's motives regarding the DCP, and that the distrust extended to him as the president's spokesman. However, he respected the faculty's authority on academic matters and
correctly perceived the tension between the president and the faculty to be a struggle for power and control of Merton's future. His strategy in the DCP discussions was to dispel suspicion of the president's motives and deemphasize the role of the consultants by emphasizing the faculty control of the DCP curriculum. To accomplish these objectives, his tactics included drawing attention away from the consultants and the president by assuming a prominent leadership role in promoting the DCP among the faculty. Further, he offered repeated assurances in both public and private discussions that faculty would have academic control of the DCP, and he consistently focused attention on the substantive data contained in the feasibility report and survey results which supported the program as a wise option for the college.

The influence of trust and efficacy factors also was apparent in the strategy and tactics used by the vice president at Woolman to persuade faculty to approve the DCP. Although disagreement was not as overt as at Merton, Woolman's vice president assumed the leadership role in discussions with faculty, but unlike the situation at Merton, he was highly respected and trusted to act on behalf of the faculty who believed that the vice president was an influential member of the president's cabinet. Because of the high levels of trust invested in him, the vice president was able to rely on personal influence directly to persuade faculty to approve the DCP. His strategy was to lend credibility to the DCP proposal and the consultants by personally endorsing them. He accomplished his objective by meeting first with senior faculty to explain the DCP and his reasons for supporting it, and then to offer incentives for their participation. Subsequently he
relied on these faculty to support him in the APC and other public forums. By also extending his credibility to the consultants, the vice president was able to involve them directly in discussions with faculty, a wise tactic, since the consultants were the most conversant on nontraditional curricular issues.

The vice presidents' shrewd use of their knowledge of the socio-political milieu to influence the DCP decision did not undermine the basic rationality of the process because there was no evidence of fraud or deceit in their communications with the faculty. The faculties were completely aware that socio-political factors entered into the decision process, and their participation in the argumentation was influenced by their own perceptions of trust among associates, available alternatives, feelings of efficacy and personal investment in the organizational community. In effect, the contribution of the socio-political factors to the argumentation was symbolic, in that the decision makers used their awareness of them to create the nuances which enhanced the persuasive force of their favored position.

The analysis of DCP deliberations at Merton and Woolman Colleges displayed the dynamic interplay of symbolic action, substantive data, and sound reasoning. Management's effectiveness in establishing an organizational frame of reference in which the initiation of the DCP made sense and in persuading others to accept its position was linked to the development and presentation of reasoned arguments in several forums. Faculty who were unconvinced that the DCP should be initiated through a consulting agreement contributed to the decision process by responding to management's arguments thereby focusing the deliberations,
facilitating communication, and increasing the potential for reaching a mutually satisfactory decision. The influence of socio-political factors on the decision making was evident in the strategies used by the consultants and vice presidents in presenting and defending their arguments and by faculty members in interpreting and responding to management's arguments. All the arguers used their knowledge of their socio-political circumstances to enhance the persuasiveness of their own position. Opportunities to exert influence were available to all participants as long as they remained open to argument. In summary, the conclusion supported by this study is that argumentation is a prevalent and powerful form of communication used to influence organizational decisions.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

The analysis of argumentation in organizational decision making conducted in this investigation contributes empirically based information or grounded theory about management as symbolic action to a predominantly speculative theoretical field. In particular, the results of the study address two concepts which have appeared consistently in the literature on "symbolic management" (Bolman et. al., pp. 148-189; Pfeffer, 1981, pp. 1-52) or "interpretive management strategy" (Chaffee, 1985, 89-98).

A fundamental assumption of the symbolic management perspective is that organizations have no objective reality but are created through ongoing social interaction and communication among members. Another
prominent idea is that symbolic management activities involving the use of rhetoric, myth, ritual, and ceremony influence how decisions are perceived, interpreted, and legitimated by organizational members, while instrumental management activities like planning and forecasting influence the substance of decisions such as how organizational resources will be allocated. In this view, there is little relationship between perceived (symbolic) and real (substantive) decision outcomes and the symbolic and instrumental activities which respectively influence them.

The results of the present study indicate that argumentation is an important form of communication through which organizational reality is constructed. The creation of the organizational world view within which the proposal to initiate the DCP became a meaningful response to the enrollment and financial problems at Merton and Woolman Colleges illustrated the power of language to fashion reality. Another example was found in the evidence that the DCP decisions were the outcome of prolonged argumentation among decision makers in which logical arguments were imbued with symbolic significance. This latter finding suggests that the interrelationship between the symbolic (socio-political factors) and instrumental (logical argument) aspects of decision making was strong, not weak, and that they exerted combined influence through communication on the outcome of the DCP deliberations.

The theoretical implication of the research findings is that communication is the fundamental management activity. While there may be some justification in distinguishing between symbolic and instrumental activities or symbolic and substantive decision outcomes as
analytic categories, as theoretical constructs they seem superfluous. Communication among human beings is always symbolic because it involves the creation of meaning. As Tompkins (1987) noted,

... I do believe that organizations make things, do good, poison the populace, and often crush individuals as well as reward them. I must even confess to thinking there might be a substance out here [in the world], but [if so] it takes symbolism to "see" it, talk about it, and transform it. (p. 86)

Any theory of management as symbolic action needs to give prominence to communication because it is the vehicle through which human organization is accomplished and through which managers influence the process. While it is beyond the scope of this research to outline a communication theory of management, the study of argumentation in the DCP decision making did show that adopting a rhetorical approach to understanding management as symbolic action was both theoretically and methodologically sound. When management was viewed through the rhetorical framework of the Crable model of argumentation it was clear that "talk is, does, and displays the work of managers" (Gronn, 1982, p. 32). Not only does the Crable model warrant further consideration by management theorists, but rhetoric as an established discipline concerned with achieving human cooperation and control through the use of language needs to be explored further as a meta-theoretic foundation for understanding organizational management.
Methodological Implications of the Study

Naturalistic methods guided data collection and processing and rhetorical methods were employed for data analysis and the interpretation of findings in the study of argumentation in the DCP decision making. The outcome of the study was a plausible, data based account of how the DCP decisions emerged through the argumentation which occurred among the consultants, managers, and faculty in Merton and Woolman Colleges.

One consequence of adopting a rhetorical approach and focusing on the analysis of argumentation in decision making was to narrow the scope of the research by defining what constituted data and how they were to be interpreted. By focusing on the analysis of argumentation, other forms of communication which may have influenced the decision making in important ways were not considered. However, the specification of the rules of evidence, that is the standards for identification, interpretation, and evaluation of one form of communication data, enabled cross site analyses of the argumentation to be made without diminishing the unique characteristics of the decision contexts in the two colleges. This finding is important if interpretive research is to move beyond the "one shot case study" and begin to build a body of knowledge through the replication and verification of empirical studies of managerial language.

A particular strength of the Crable model was that the communicative function of argumentation was not limited to the expression of disagreement, but included any response to a claim. Also,
by emphasizing the power of the receiver of an argument as well as the sender to influence the course and outcome of argumentation, analyses were focused on the interactions among decision makers as they occurred over an extended period of time.

A weakness of the Crable model was that it offered few guidelines for the systematic identification, analysis, and interpretation of the socio-political-cognitive-affective factors which were acknowledged as important influences on argumentation. The analysis of trust, efficacy, alternatives, and commitment were an attempt to identify and account for several socio-political factors believed to influence organizational decision making. The problem encountered was that the factors selected seemed to be representative of interdependent rather than discreet categories of influence.

There were two additional methodological challenges of particular note associated with the analysis and interpretation of the DCP argumentation. First, the identification of the elements of specific arguments as well as the links between arguments and responses in ongoing transactions was a voluminous task. The magnitude of the undertaking for a single investigator certainly increased the potential for both cognitive and technical error in the analytic and interpretive processes. Second, it was a challenge to find clear and concise means of displaying data and reporting the results of the research. If shown in full, the maze of argument diagrams which were developed in the course of the analyses could have obscured the findings rather than illuminated them.
The problems encountered in the analysis and interpretation of argumentation in the DCP decision making reflect the need for methodological refinement in future research. Nevertheless, the rhetorical approach to the investigation of managing through language was viable in that it offered systematic criteria for the identification, interpretation, and comparison of argumentation as an important and influential form of communication in organizational decision making.

Implications for Managing Collegiate Organizations

The study of the DCP decisions indicates that the ability to engage in effective argumentation is a valuable management asset. In argumentation the instrumental and symbolic aspects of decision making interact to shape organizational reality and influence the course of events. Managers who understand how to develop a logical argument, link arguments to form a strong position on issues of concern, and use their knowledge of socio-political circumstances strategically to enhance their views may have a key to achieving power in their organizations.

The ability to argue effectively may be especially important for managers of collegiate organizations where administrative responsibilities are shared with faculty, and the democratic and rational ideals of collegial decision making are highly valued. Managers skilled in argumentation are likely to have confidence in their ability to present and defend their opinions and to evaluate and challenge those of others. Such confidence is essential to the attitude
of openness to discussion which encourages participation in decision making.

The techniques of argumentation can be taught. Since argumentation appears to be an important form of communication in organizational decision making, management effectiveness might be enhanced by training in the techniques of argumentation. For example, curricula in educational administration could include coursework to develop students' proficiency in the construction and evaluation of arguments relevant to management situations.

It is important to note that argument can be used as an instrument of manipulation and repression rather than open communication. The study of the DCP decision making in Merton and Woolman Colleges indicates that the concern is unfounded to the extent that argumentation always involves a transaction in which mutual influence is exerted. However, arguers may not be equally skilled in argumentation, so the potential for manipulation or coercion clearly exists. The best defense against manipulation is to learn the basic techniques of argumentation so that one is able to recognize when evidence is insufficient to support a claim and/or reasoning is fallacious.

A second important defense against manipulation is to revive the concept of ethics in the management enterprise. Ethics is concerned with standards of conduct and moral judgement. Greenfield (1991) has spoken eloquently about the lack of attention to values and ethical standards in educational administration. He has argued that organizations are "moral orders" in which it is impossible to escape hierarchy and authority. Managers, as representatives of the
organizational moral order must respond to the question of what justifies a particular order and makes it worthy of respect and obedience, and they must act accordingly (Greenfield, p. 27). The discipline of rhetoric, long concerned with the ethics of persuasion, could provide standards for managing through language. Certainly, training in argumentation would be negligent if the student were not required to probe behind the techniques of persuasion into the ideals of truth, fairness, and honesty which rhetoric is intended to serve.

Concluding Statement

The study of the decision making which led to the implementation of the DCP on the Merton and Woolman campuses suggests that organizational circumstances create a propensity for action which is shaped through communication processes among members. In the cases studied, the consultants prompted both managers and faculty at Merton and Woolman Colleges to view their institution's mission in a radical new way. The vice presidents worked to actualize the vision by arguing persuasively in favor of the initiation of the DCP through a consulting agreement. After a series of public and private meetings in which the DCP was discussed by the vice presidents and faculty, it was approved with modifications pertaining to the control and design of the curriculum.

What distinguishes the study of the DCP decision processes and creates new insight into management as symbolic action is the interpretation and evaluation which was made of the events described in
the foregoing paragraph. The DCP decision making was interpreted as a process of argumentation in which symbolic and instrumental actions interacted continuously to influence the outcome of the deliberations between managers and faculty. As the discussions among the consultants, managers, and faculty progressed, a pattern of reciprocal influence emerged in which decision makers developed strategies for presenting and responding to arguments based on their understanding of the socio-political circumstances in their institution. The strategic maneuvering was interpreted as a form of symbolic action which contributed to the persuasive force of the substantive arguments.

The evaluation of the DCP decision making followed from the interpretive findings and indicated that the DCP decisions were the product of democratic and rational processes of deliberation among decision makers. The classification of specific arguments according to the type of reasoning used and openness to argument in the course of communication were the evaluative standards applied. From the evaluation, it was concluded that skill in argumentation is a valuable management asset.

Several implications followed from the conclusions reached in the study of managing through the strategic use of language. First, the findings implied that theory concerning management as symbolic action needs to reflect the fact that communication is the basis of symbolic management. Second, argumentation as a form of strategic communication in organizational decision making was found to warrant further investigation and methodological development. Finally, it was implied
that managerial effectiveness might be enhanced through training in the ethics and techniques of argumentation.

The conclusions of the study and the theoretical, methodological, and management implications are limited by the exploratory nature of the research and the fact that the study represents only one of many possible interpretations of how the DCP became a reality at Merton and Woolman Colleges. A distinguishing feature of interpretive research is that it does not seek apodictic truth. If the analysis of argumentation in the DCP decision making has offered a fresh look at organizational management and has opened new possibilities for research and practice in educational administration, then it has achieved its aim.
Appendix A

Permission to Reprint Figure 1

5944 Kalanianaole Highway
Honolulu, Hawaii  96821
(808) 396-8136

June 14, 1991

Dr. Richard E. Crable
Route 5 Box 268
Monticello, Indiana 47960

Dear Dr. Crable:

I am seeking permission to reproduce Figure 4, page 71 from your book, Argumentation As Communication: Reasoning With Receivers, published in 1976 by Charles E. Merrill.

I am a graduate student in the College of Education, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. The figure will be reproduced as an illustration of the elements of any argument in my doctoral dissertation tentatively titled: "Shaping Organizational Change Through Political Language: An Exploratory Analysis of Argumentation in Decision Making in Three Liberal Arts Colleges." Pending faculty approval, the dissertation will be published in its entirety by University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI).

MacMillan Publishing Company informs me that your book is out of print and that the copyright and unsold copies were returned to you. If you have any books available at this time, I would like to purchase one. Alternatively, may I reproduce a copy for my personal use? Your thoughts on the analysis of argument as communication have been most interesting and helpful to me.

Thank you for your attention to my requests. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jonna D. Zane
Dear Jane,

I am honored by your request. Though I've done 8-7 other books since then, it was my first (3 yrs. out of Ohio State), and is still I think the most important. A pity for so long the field equated "argumentation" with "debate" (not even a word indexed in A&I as Com as I recall). I sent the model repri.

Unfortunately, I have only 2 copies myself, so I cannot send you one. At this point, feel free to make one copy (I may do a revision).

P.S. look me up in Atlanta 8-24.

P.S. I'd love a copy of the dissertation in return.

Regards,

[Signature]
Appendix B

Interview: Introduction and Topics

Hello! Thank you for taking time to talk with me about the DCP. I'm Jonna Zane, a doctoral student at the University of Hawaii and I am interested in organizational change associated with the implementation of non-traditional degree programs for adults. Formerly, I directed a DCP similar to the one on your campus. I understand that you were involved in the early discussions regarding the program. Could you tell me how the DCP came to be implemented on your campus?

1. **Introduction of DCP Concept**
   - Who introduced the idea of the DCP - when, where, how, why?

2. **Issues**
   - What were the DCP issues? Who raised them? Who discussed them? In what forum(s) were they raised and discussed?

3. **Arguments**
   - What were the objections to the DCP? Who objected?
   - What seemed favorable about the DCP? Who was in favor?

4. **Consultants**
   - What was their role?

5. **Decision**
   - How was it made? When? Why? By whom?

6. **Current DCP Status**
   - Is the DCP accepted?
   - Has the DCP been good for the College?
   - What are the DCP issues now?
7. **Personal**

   Have your views changed since the DCP was first proposed?
   How? Why?

8. **Politics**

   How political is decision making on this campus?

9. **Who else should I interview?**
The documents included in the following annotated list were the sources of documentary data used in the analysis of the argumentation in the DCP decision making at Merton College.

1. Minutes of executive meeting, October 2, 1984
   The minutes summarized some early discussion of the need to develop the adult student market.

2. President's council minutes, September 2, 1986
   The minutes summarized discussion of the DCP information provided by the consultants, reviewed the pros and cons of conducting a DCP feasibility study, and indicated that a decision was made to obtain information on the DCP from a contract college.

3. Minutes of president's council, September 16, 1986
   The minutes summarized the discussion of information on the DCP received from the contract colleges.

4. President's council minutes, November 4, 1986
   The minutes indicated that the vice President of student affairs was asked to schedule the DCP feasibility study.

5. Letter to the vice president of student affairs from the consultants, December 12, 1986
   This was the cover letter for the feasibility study report.
   It stressed the favorable findings of the report.
6. A Feasibility Study Regarding the Initiation and Operation of a Baccalaureate Degree-Completion Program Via the Field-Experience Model, November 17-18, 1986

The report opened with an executive summary of the DCP "potential" at Merton College, a general description of the program model, and specific characteristics of the DCP degree in human resource management proposed for Merton. Market demographics for the Merton vicinity, a summary of the surveys of administrative department heads, key faculty members, and community leaders provided "internal" and "community" indexes of "receptivity" to the DCP model. Two questions of particular importance to the faculty were addressed specifically in the report: a) Would the DCP draw students away from the existing adult program? and b) Who controls the DCP? The report closed with a summary of the consultants' findings, services to be provided through a contract agreement, and statement of "significant benefits" which would accrue to Merton College if the decision to initiate the DCP were favorable. Appended to the report were financial projections for the first three years of DCP operation at Merton College and demographic data intended to support the consultants' market projections.

7. Memo to a faculty member from the vice president of student affairs which was returned to the vice president with handwritten note from the faculty member, November 25, 1986
The faculty member noted that the consultants gave good presentations, but expressed concern about the financial commitment necessary to support the DCP and suggested that Merton faculty might develop its own adult degree program.

8. **Memo to the vice president of student affairs from a faculty member, December 1, 1986**

   The memo supported the concept of nontraditional programs for adults but expressed reservations about the quality of the DCP and suggested the feasibility study was a "sales job." It was noted that if the DCP were adopted, the faculty APC would have to approve it. Suggestions for alternative courses of action included developing a nontraditional program "internally."

9. **Memo to the vice president of student affairs from an administrator in the admissions office, December 2, 1986**

   The memo questioned the accuracy of the feasibility study and listed seven concerns about the DCP pertaining to the curriculum, cost, service delivery, and potential competition with the college's existing adult program. There were fourteen recommendations for alternatives for serving adults in the Merton vicinity without contracting with the consultants.

10. **Memo to the vice president of student affairs from an administrator in the financial office, December 2, 1986**

    The memo indicated that the consultants appeared knowledgeable, but that "hard data" on the financial impact on the colleges of the DCP was needed.
11. **Memo to the vice president of student affairs from a faculty member, December 3, 1986**

The author of the memo indicated support for the concept of serving adults through innovative programming but expressed concerns about the cost of the DCP and its impact on the faculty who "are presently stretched to their limits."

12. **Undated memo to the vice president of student affairs from a faculty member, "Perceptions of Consultants' Educational Plan" and alternative proposal for "Learning Modules for adults in Allied Health and Medical Technology (shop talk)"

The author favored the concept of nontraditional programming for adult students but questioned the quality of the DCP and the consultants' credentials. Concerns regarding DCP student contact hours, core course work, and the cost of the program were expressed. Favored was inhouse development of a nontraditional adult program in the field of allied health.

13. **Memo to members of the president's council from the vice president of student affairs, "On-Campus Feedback Concerning the Degree Completion Program," December 18, 1986**

This was a report from the vice president of student affairs summarizing 17 verbal and written responses he received from Merton faculty and staff who met with the consultants during the feasibility study. Prefacing the list of concerns was the statement that, "There was general unanimity on the concept of
offering a Degree Completion Program as suggested by the consultants, however there was not such clear unanimity on becoming involved directly with the consultants in order to bring this into reality."


The minutes summarized the discussion on the feasibility study report and indicated there was consensus on the DCP curriculum concept. The "lengthy discussion on the consultants' program vs an in-house originated program" was noted. The vice president of student affairs was asked to conduct a survey of contract colleges.

15. Minutes of president's council, January 20, 1987

The minutes recorded that the results of the survey of contract colleges indicated satisfaction with the DCP.

16. Memo to members of the president's council from the vice president of student affairs, "Results of Telephone Survey," January 22, 1987.

The results of a survey of five colleges which had implemented a DCP through contractual agreements with the consultants and two colleges which rejected DCP contract proposals were reported in the memo. The survey addressed the contract colleges' relationships with the consultants, faculty involvement in the program and pay, DCP curriculum content and delivery, cost of the program, and the assessment of the "campus and local reputation" of the DCP. The reasons for rejection of the DCP by
two contract colleges were reported to be "due to internal institutional situations unrelated to the [consultants'] program."

17. President's council minutes, January 26, 1987

The minutes indicated that the vice president of student affairs distributed a draft of a report and recommendations to the faculty APC for proceeding with the DCP. No action on the draft was reported.

18. Minutes of academic policy committee, February 13, 1987

A proposal by the vice president of student affairs to approve the DCP "in principle" was unanimously rejected.

19. Memo to members of the academic policy committee from the vice president of student affairs, "Response to Questions on the BA in Human Resource Management," February 19, 1987

The memo provided detailed responses of the vice president's position on issues concerning the sequence and timing of DCP courses, student contact hours, and the assessment of experiential learning.

20. Minutes of the academic policy committee, February 20, 1987

The committee raised further questions about the DCP curriculum, credentials of the consultants, reputation of the DCP contract colleges, and potential student market. It was decided to ask the Vice President to attend another meeting to discuss the proposal before presenting it to the faculty as a whole for approval.
21. Minutes of the academic policy committee, March 6, 1987

The minutes summarize the continuing discussion of the DCP with the vice president of student affairs and indicated that the DCP proposal should be revised to include "prerequisites needed, competencies expected, format of the program and a further explanation [sic] of the number of sessions per module."

Evidence of the accreditation status of the consultants' institution was requested. Approval was granted to the vice president of student affairs to host an open forum with the director of a DCP at a contract college.

22. Minutes of the academic policy committee, March 12, 1987

Questions about competency based grading arose in this meeting. The committee listed five recommendations to be included in the DCP proposal including procedures for faculty review of modules and program evaluation by Fall 1988. The proposal was then approved for submission to the full faculty.

23. Resolution 86-87: 3-20-1, Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management, March 20, 1987

This document was the recommendation to the faculty from the APC regarding the DCP which was approved by a majority of the Merton faculty.

24. Letter to the vice president of student affairs from the consultants, March 23, 1987

The letter expressed congratulations on the faculty approval of the DCP and indicated that two copies of the consulting contract were enclosed for signature by Merton's president.
Appendix D

Woolman College List of Documents

The documents included in the following annotated list were the primary sources of documentary data used in the analysis of the argumentation in the DCP decision making at Woolman College.

1. Memo to the president of the college and the vice president of academic affairs from the vice president of development, October 3, 1986

   The memo informed the president and vice president of the dates when the consultants were scheduled to conduct the feasibility study.

2. Memo to faculty and administration staff from the vice president of development, October 31, 1986

   The memo informed the faculty and staff of the decision to conduct a DCP feasibility study and announced the dates when the study was scheduled to commence. The concept of the DCP and the consultant's expertise were described briefly as was the success of the DCP in a contract college. Faculty were encouraged to meet with the consultants at the times announced in the memo.

3. Letter to the president from the consultants, March 31, 1987

   The consultants responded to a concern from the president regarding the "timing of the implementation of the DCP."
president was encouraged not to delay making a decision to implement the program.

4. Letter to the consultants from the president, April 24, 1987

The president reported that the cabinet had responded favorably to the feasibility study report and outlined the actions the college intended to take in reviewing the DCP further. He indicated that the final decision would be postponed until an accreditation review and major funds campaign had been completed. He suggested that the DCP might become "operative" the following year.

5. Letter to the vice president of academic affairs from the consultants, August 1, 1987

The letter contained the terms under which DCP curricular materials were being loaned to Woolman faculty for review.

6. Letter to the president from the consultants, November 9, 1987

The letter indicated that copies of the proposed consulting agreement were enclosed for review and expressed the consultants pleasure that the decision process was proceeding favorably.

7. Memo to faculty and administration from the vice president of academic affairs, November 9, 1987

The memo provided notice of a faculty meeting at which the consultants would make a presentation regarding the proposed DCP.

The proposal was distributed to faculty by the consultants at the faculty meeting on November 13, 1987. Included in the proposal was a brief introduction of the consultants and a description of the DCP. The services to be provided through a consulting contract were enumerated, although it was emphasized that "the entire program and degree is under control of [Woolman] College." Descriptions of the prior learning assessment component of the program and a sample curriculum used by a contract college also were included.

9. Minutes of the academic program committee, November 20, 1987

The minutes indicated that the APC approved "in principle a relationship with the [consultants]" for a DCP. Also approved was a motion to appoint a subcommittee to develop a DCP curriculum for APC approval.

10. Memo to three members of the academic program committee from the vice president of academic affairs, December 3, 1987

The vice president indicated that the three faculty members comprised the subcommittee of the APC and were charged with developing the DCP curriculum. The members were informed that a meeting was scheduled with the consultants who would "help direct our efforts."

11. Letter to the vice president of academic affairs from the consultants with a summary of the consultants'
meeting with the APC subcommittee on the DCP curriculum, January 12, 1988

The consultants indicated that they were pleased with the progress made by the subcommittee in planning the DCP curriculum. Notes describing the general education requirements and outlining the proposed curriculum for a degree in human resource management which had been agreed upon by participants were enclosed with the letter.

12. Memo to members of the academic policies committee from the vice president of academic affairs, January 13, 1988

The memo announced that a meeting of the subcommittee had been held. Attached to the memo were the subcommittee's general education requirements and proposed DCP curriculum for discussion at the next APC meeting. Changes made by the APC were handwritten on the proposals.

13. Memo to members of the faculty and administration from the vice president of academic affairs, January 19, 1988

A general faculty meeting to discuss the APC recommendation on the DCP curriculum was announced. Attached to the memo were the APC curricular recommendations for review at the faculty meeting. Changes in the proposed curriculum made at the faculty meeting were handwritten on the proposal.

14. Memo to faculty and administration from the vice president of academic affairs, date uncertain

The memo contained the minutes of the January 22, 1988 faculty meeting and stated that the DCP curriculum had been
approved by the faculty with several modifications which were then listed. It was reported that the general concerns which were discussed at the meeting related to, "the thinking behind reducing the entire core, staffing, development of new modules, financial resources, and program evaluation." Faculty and administrators were advised that the DCP would be presented to the trustees for approval.

15. Letter to the president from the consultants, February 24, 1988

The letter indicated that copies of the consulting agreements had been sent to the president of the consulting institution for signature. The consultants granted Woolman's request for "protected market territory" by agreeing not to contract for a DCP with other colleges located within a one hundred mile radius of the Woolman campus for the duration of the consulting agreement.

16. A Feasibility Study Regarding the Initiation and Operation of a Baccalaureate Degree-Completion Program Via the Field-Experience Model, November 17-18, 1986

The report opened with an executive summary of the DCP "potential" at Woolman College, a general description of the program model, and specific characteristics of the DCP degree in human resource management proposed for Woolman. In the summary it was noted that conversations with faculty members had indicated that the DCP curriculum would need to meet the college's general education requirements.

Market demographics for the Woolman vicinity, a summary of the surveys of administrative department heads, key faculty members, and community leaders provided "internal" and "community"
indexes of "receptivity" to the DCP model. The report closed with a summary of the consultants' findings, services to be provided through a contract agreement, and statement of "significant benefits" which would accrue to Woolman College if the decision to initiate the DCP were favorable. Appended to the report were financial projections for the first three years of DCP operation at the College and demographic data intended to support the consultants' market projections.
Appendix E

List of Documents Pertaining to the Challenge to the Degree Completion Program at Woolman College

The documents listed below contributed data to the investigator's understanding of the challenge by a local consortium of colleges to the DCP which had been implemented at Woolman College. While not a primary source of information about the decision processes which led to the initiation of the DCP, the documents provided records confirming reports of interviewees of the significance of the outside challenge to Woolman's decision to implement the DCP. The documents also provided indirect support for the interview data in which the vice president of academic affairs described the issues of concern to the college and his position on them during the decision making.

1. Letter to the executive director of the State Commission on Higher Education from the president of Woolman, June 14, 1988
2. Letter to the executive director of the Commission on Higher Education from the president, June 14, 1988
3. Letter to the president from the associate director of the Commission on Higher Education, June 20, 1988
4. Letter to the consultants from the vice president of academic affairs, June 27, 1988
5. Description of DCP contact hours prepared by the consultants, undated
6. Letter to the consultants from the director of the DCP, October 26, 1988
7. Letter to the interim president of the County Community College from the director of the DCP, October 26, 1988
8. Record of phone conversations between the president of Woolman and presidents of two local colleges, December 5 & 8, 1988
9. Letter from the consultants to the president, December 8, 1988
10. Letter to the executive director of the [City] Council on Education from the director of the DCP, December 9, 1988
11. Letter to the director of the DCP from the executive director of the [City] Council on Education, December 13, 1988
12. Letter to the executive director of the [City] Council on Education from the director of the DCP, December 22, 1988
13. Letters to the vice presidents of three local colleges from the director of the DCP, December 22, 1988
14. Adult Degree Completion Program, Director's Report to the Board of Trustees, January, 1989
15. Letter attached to the president from the consultants with a "Summary of Regional Accreditation Reviews" attached, January 16, 1989
17. Letter to the executive director of the higher education assistance agency from the executive director of the [City] Council on Higher Education, February 24, 1989

19. Letter to the consultants from the director of the DCP, March 8, 1989

20. Letter with information pertaining to the Review of Complaints to the president from the associate director of the Commission on Higher Education, March 10, 1989

21. Letter to the associate director of the Regional Accrediting Association from the vice president of academic affairs, March 10, 1989

22. Letter to the executive director of the Regional Accrediting Association from the president, March 14, 1989

23. Letter to Regional Accrediting Association from the vice president of academic affairs, March 16, 1989

24. Letter to the president from the executive director of the Commission on Higher Education, March 18, 1989

25. Letter to the Regional Accrediting Association from the vice president of academic affairs, March 27, 1989

26. Letter to the grant division coordinator from the vice president of academic affairs, March 27, 1989

27. Letter to the vice president of academic affairs from the associate director of the Commission on Higher Education, March 28, 1989

28. Memo to faculty and staff from the director of the DCP, April 4, 1989
29. Letter to local college presidents from the president of Woolman, April 2, 1989
30. Memo to faculty from the director of the DCP, April 10, 1989
31. Letter to the consultants from the director of the DCP, April 10, 1989
32. Memo to the president, DCP faculty, and staff from the vice president of academic affairs, April 13, 1989
33. Itinerary for the associate director of the Regional Accrediting Association, April 25, 1989
34. Letter to the associate director of the Regional Accrediting Association from the director of the DCP, April 26, 1989
35. Letter to the president from the president of a local college, April 26, 1989
36. Letter to the Regional Accrediting Association from the president, May 1, 1989
38. Letter to the vice president of academic affairs from the deputy for grants, June 13, 1989
39. Letter to the deputy for grants from the vice president of academic affairs, June 23, 1989
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