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Faculty Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Janet Lawrence and Molly Ott

Worsening financial conditions in higher education may have awakened a sleeping bear. In 2009, administrators from the University of California Berkeley, whose athletics team mascot is the “Golden Bear,” proposed mandatory employee furloughs, staff layoffs, and elimination of 100 faculty positions (Lederman, 2009; Wieberg, 2009), provoking widespread faculty protests. This announcement by the UC Regents about deep academic budget cuts was followed by one from the Berkeley president, with plans to give the athletic department a loan for a new football stadium. Coupled with annual subsidies from general institutional funds to athletics—totaling \$7.4 million in 2008—and forgiveness of an additional \$31 million in loans that the administration had given to athletics, these proposals outraged faculty, who responded with an academic senate resolution calling for the Berkeley athletics program to become financially self-sufficient (Lederman, 2009).

National reform efforts, led by the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) and the Drake Group, have tried to rally support for increased faculty oversight of college sports, calling for coordination among university trustees, presidents, athletics departments, and faculty governance groups (COIA, 2007). Yet despite these initiatives and incidents such as the one at Berkeley, most professors are reluctant to make intercollegiate athletics a faculty governance priority (Lawrence, Hendricks, & Ott, 2007).

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Why might this be the case? Lederman (2007) suggests that faculty lack knowledge about athletics; they are unaware of how critical the situation is and/or unsure of how to become involved. Lawrence, Hendricks, and Ott (2007) conclude that the reluctance stems from a sense of detachment and separation from sports on their campuses. Ridpath (2008) believes faculty are biased against intercollegiate athletics and do not think correcting problems related to college sports is their responsibility. Feezell (2011), Palaima (2006), and Toma (2003) suggest that faculty have tried to intervene but that presidential and governing board actions thwart their initiatives. Brand (2006) asserts that faculty are unwilling to be critical of colleagues engaged in questionable practices who fail to uphold academic standards.

Athletics is a domain where interest groups' values frequently conflict, the financial stakes are high, and decisions profoundly affect campus constituents (Duderstadt, 2003; Thelin, 1996). Contested higher education decisions of this sort foster political behavior by stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Eckel, 2000; Massey & Zemsky, 1994; Mortimer, 2007) and individuals who believe that others use inappropriate political tactics, often assume decision-making processes are unfair, disengage from deliberations, and are dissatisfied with the outcomes (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Ferris, Frink, Galang, Zhou, Kacmar, & Howard, 1996; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2000). Therefore, in the present study we consider the possibility that faculty perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris, Fedor, Chachere & Pondy, 1989; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992) foster reluctance to increase their responsibility for oversight of athletics. Specifically, we ask the following questions:

- How do characteristics of individual faculty and their campuses affect their perceptions of organizational politics around intercollegiate athletics? And
- How do faculty perceptions of organizational politics influence their sense of authority in athletics decision-making and the priority they assign to intercollegiate athletics as a faculty governance issue?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kezar and Eckel (2004) find that campus governance research has emphasized organizational structures and processes, particularly their efficiency and effectiveness. They note that this focus has persisted despite Baldrige's (1971) classic study of New York University that "debunked the myth that colleges and universities are primarily rational decision-making bodies. . . . [I]nformal deal making was so prevalent in his case study that it would be hard to know when formal processes were responsible for a decision within governance" (Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 382). Consequently, they advocate the

application of new conceptual frameworks that capture the human dynamics of decision-making, particularly social constructivist theories.

For our study, we adapted the Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989) Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP) framework to explain how faculty members' social cognitions may affect their orientation toward campus governance. We drew on three distinct literatures to guide this inquiry: studies of faculty beliefs about intercollegiate athletics and their oversight responsibilities, higher education scholarship on faculty governance, and research on perceptions of organizational politics.

FACULTY AND INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Recent proposals for reforming intercollegiate sports call on faculty to spearhead policy formulations both on their campuses and at a national level (Bernard, 2003; COIA, 2007; Lawrence, Ott, & Hendricks, 2009; NCAA, 2006; Splitt, 2004). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has not traditionally focused on intercollegiate athletics as a priority of its membership, but public scandals during the 1980s drove the organization to issue a series of reports and recommendations, including *The Role of Faculty in the Governance of College Athletics* (AAUP, 1989). These documents acknowledge that placing absolute responsibility for athletics in the hands of faculty is unrealistic. However, the AAUP is clear that faculty must be given some decision-making authority due to their position as guardians of the academic standards and values of their institutions. Still, throughout the history of higher education, the role of faculty in athletics oversight has been ambiguous (Thelin, 1996) and systematic inquiries into faculty beliefs about intercollegiate sports and their oversight responsibilities have produced mixed results.

A study of faculty on one NCAA Division I campus concluded that they perceived no conflict between the athletics department and the rest of the university (Easter, 1997). Yet other studies of campuses in the same division indicated that faculty saw athletics as disconnected from the academic mission of their institutions and as a negative influence on their campuses' overall reputations (Briody, 1996; Engstrand, 1995). Comparisons of views across NCAA divisional affiliations suggested that faculty employed at Division I institutions were less satisfied with facets of their intercollegiate athletics programs than faculty from Divisions II, III, or the NAIA (Cockley & Roswal, 1994; Norman, 1995). Division I faculty were more likely to agree that, in general, their colleagues resented athletics and that athletics engaged in practices of questionable ethics (Engstrand, 1995).

Engstrand (1995) found that faculty characterized their roles in the oversight of college sports in both positive and negative terms. Those who held

positive views considered formal organizational structures and faculty representation on boards or committees to be effective. Those with negative views believed that faculty roles lacked authority and effectiveness, and they thought true decision-making power rested with administrators. Cockley and Roswal (1994) discovered that satisfaction with campus athletics programs and their oversight was higher among faculty who were involved in the governance of intercollegiate athletics, as a member of a campus oversight committee, or as the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). However, another study indicated that Division I FARs believed that the athletic director had more power in athletics decisions than the institution's president, board of trustees, faculty, or alumni (Solow, 1998). More recently, articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Lederman, 1991; Wolverton, 2010) questioned whether FARs fulfill their oversight responsibilities.

If and how other individual characteristics beyond governance involvement affect faculty views of athletics is unclear. Kuga (1996) found men held more reformist-oriented opinions about intercollegiate athletics than women. In contrast, Atwater (2010) did not observe gender differences in faculty perceptions of athletes' skills and motivation, and Seidler, Gerdy, and Cardinal (1998) found consistent views among male and female faculty when asked about athletics program goals. In several studies, less experienced faculty (e.g., untenured, recently hired) had more positive perceptions of athletics than those who had worked longer on a campus (Engstrand, 1995; Noble, 2004). Harrison (2004) and Noble (2004) determined that faculty in sports-related fields, such as kinesiology and physical education, were more positive than their colleagues in other fields about the role of athletics at their institution and the image of their campus's athletics program. Others, however, have not identified disciplinary differences in faculty attitudes (Feezell, 2005).

FACULTY GOVERNANCE

Shared governance is the system of structures and processes through which collective institutional decisions are made by faculty, administrators, and other campus constituents (Association of Governing Boards, 1996; Eckel, 2000). Birnbaum (1991), Drummond and Reitsch (1995), Hollinger (2001), and others (e.g., Baldwin & Leslie, 2001; Mophew, 1999; Williams, Gore, Broches, Lostoski, 1987) claim that professors' choice to work unitedly with administrators often depends on whether they have relevant expertise or think a decision is appropriately left to administrators. Clark (1985) deems it a matter of self-interest; faculty participate in decisions that, they believe, directly affect their daily work lives. However, other researchers find that involvement in shared governance may be influenced by years of employment ([Porter, 2007](#)), perceived rewards (Fairweather, 1996), tenure-track

status (Morrison, 2008), field of teaching and research, and professors' satisfaction with their impact on decision-making (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; McConnell, 1971; Minor & Tierney, 2005). Tierney and Minor (2004) contend that participation is conditional and based on faculty beliefs about the viability of a particular venue—whether, for example, their faculty senate is a legitimate governance mechanism. Minor (2004) suggests that viability depends on trust among decision-makers, as distrust can lead to self-censorship and foreclose discussions.

Scholars have also identified organizational factors that alter the opportunities for administrator-faculty collaborations. March and Simon (1994) and others (James, 1990; Lowry, 2007) characterize universities as complex organizations with distributed authority and decentralized governance. The participation process is fluid and faculty move in and out of it, depending on their interests. Rhoades (1998) and Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argue that decision-making has become centralized with fewer opportunities for faculty input and greater authority ceded to administrators. McNay (2002) asserts that campus size affects faculty-administrator collaboration, while other observers (Altbach, 1981; Kissler, 1997) suggest that shared governance procedures may vary depending on campus financial conditions. However, among all the possible factors that contribute to faculty participation, campus norms are perhaps the most widely studied. The general conclusion is that, when faculty believe collegial decision-making is valued and rewarded and when professional authority is recognized, they are more likely to engage in governance activities (Birnbaum, 2004; Drummond & Reitsch, 1995; Gumport, 2002; Peterson & White, 1992; Tierney & Minor, 2004). On these campuses, norms stipulate that faculty are to be consulted. Professors tend to be concerned about consistent opportunities for their input and the fairness of processes (i.e., procedural justice), decisions that follow from accepted procedures are likely to be perceived as legitimate, and institutional leaders are more often trusted (Birnbaum, 2004; Curry, 1992; Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Some higher educators believe that shared governance, with deliberative processes and reasoned decisions, is an ideal (e.g., Baldrige, 1982; Mason, 1974; Rhoades, 1998). They characterize universities as professional bureaucracies with ambiguous goals and non-routine technologies (Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977; Cohen & March, 1986; Lowry, 2007). They claim that political tactics play a role in decision-making, particularly when collective decisions are not clearly within the domain of either administrators or faculty and when vested interest groups strive to establish their authority (e.g., Baldrige, 1971; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Curry, 1992; Dill & Helm, 1988; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Darr & Johns, 2004; Ferris, Perrew, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000; Mortimer, 2007; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Hartley, 2003; Williams, Gore, Broches, & Lostoski, 1987).

Because control is a key aspect of struggles for authority, the preponderance of governance research uses political science and sociology theories to explain the mechanisms through which power is distributed and exercised (e.g., Birnbaum, 1989, 1991; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Eckel, 2000; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Gumport, 2002; Hardy, Langley, Mintzberg, & Rose, 1984; James, 1990; McLendon, 2003; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1980). Scholarship on local campus governance is typically concerned with influence-behaviors within formal organizational structures and processes and the decision-making effectiveness of established bodies such as boards, senates, and unions (Baldridge & Kemerer, 1976; Hartley, 2003; Kaplan, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Rhoades, 1988; Schuster, Smith, Corak, & Yamada, 1994). Case studies are often conducted and political theories are used to explain the strategies and tactics that vested interest groups employ to shape outcomes (Lowry, 2010; McLendon, 2003; Pusser, 2003). Few investigations have asked if faculty and administrators believe these efforts to control outcomes are sanctioned by campus norms or if perceptions of organizational politics affect their orientations toward collaborative decision-making (Williams et al., 1987; Tierney & Minor, 2004). If legitimate organizational behavior is critical to the implementation of decision outcomes ([Meyer & Rowan, 1977](#)), this omission is a significant one.

PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, and Anthony (1999) acknowledge:

The phenomenon of organizational politics presents researchers with quite a challenge: political behavior in organizations is highly covert, symbolic, and subject to differences in perception. The same behavior may be interpreted as either political or nonpolitical by different observers, depending on each observer's prior experience and frame of reference. (p. 385)

Whereas the use of political skills such as exchanging favors, lobbying, and coalition building is appropriate in some settings, in others, individuals view such tactics negatively, believing that they undermine the fairness of established decision-making processes (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999; Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995).

Confronted with this dilemma, a group of scholars uses cognitive evaluation theory to frame their research on organizational decision-making. These researchers believe that individuals draw on prior experiences to label others' behavior as political and then act on the basis of these social cognitions (Ferris, Fedor, et al., 1989; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Ferris, Fedor, et al.'s (1989) explanation of the processes through which perceptions of organizational politics evolve and affect work-related attitudes, intentions,

satisfaction, and behavior is used widely in organizational research. They propose that individual attributes such as agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness shape employees' work experiences. These experiences influence beliefs about the political nature of the work environment that, in turn, result in employee absenteeism, turnover, job dissatisfaction, weak organizational commitment, and job-related stress (Ferris, Frink, et al., 1996; Kacmar et al., 1999; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Witt, Kacmar, Carlson, & Zivnuska, 2002).

Perceptions of organizational politics (POP) are taken to be social influence behaviors that are often enacted behind the scenes. Although "not explicitly prohibited by the organization" (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001, p. 348), people may believe that these dealings are unfair, fall outside proper procedures, and are aimed at displacing legitimate power (Poon, 2003). Designed to maximize an individual's or group's self-interest at the expense of others and/or the collective well-being of the organization, these behaviors tend to cluster into three groups. Organizational members may believe stakeholders receive preferential treatment by those in positions of authority in exchange for favors designed to curry their support (i.e., favoritism). Close relationships between supervisors and a few subordinates may give rise to perceptions that an in-group exerts undue influence on organizational decisions (insider opinion leading). Finally, organizational members may believe that supervisor behavior discourages others from being critical of established ideas or the supervisor's agenda (i.e., foreclosure).

Certain organizational characteristics, particularly the centralization and formalization of decision-making, foster political behavior, and POP. Centralization refers to the location of decision-making within an organization—close to where a situation arises (low and distributed) or further up the line of command (high and centralized). Formalization captures the degree to which decision-making follows set rules, procedures, and policies. Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1989; see also Ferris, Frink, et al., 1996) argue that in highly centralized organizations, individuals have less opportunity for input, experience less control over decisions and therefore, more often perceive organizational politics. They posit as well that political activities and POP are more frequent in organizations with few rules guiding decision-making. Kacmar et al. (1999) showed that POP are more likely with high-stakes decisions, and Vigoda (2000) found that perceived influence within a particular decision domain mediates the effects of POP on individuals' subsequent job-related attitudes and behavior.

Building on the campus governance, athletics, and POP literatures, we modified the Ferris, Frink, et al. (1989) model by incorporating characteristics of universities and faculty that may influence their perceptions of campus-level decision-making. We assumed that faculty attributes (e.g., their experience in faculty governance of intercollegiate athletics) and university

characteristics (e.g., normative climate) shape faculty perceptions of the organizational politics surrounding intercollegiate athletics (POP-IA). We also assumed that these beliefs subsequently affect individuals' prioritizations of intercollegiate athletics as a faculty governance issue at their institution. If faculty perceive that interest groups are influencing decisions by engaging in activities that circumvent or undermine established decision-making processes, they may be less satisfied with their collective authority and less inclined to believe that athletics issues are a central concern of established governance. On the other hand, if they believe that political maneuvering by groups occurs but are satisfied with their own power, faculty may prioritize athletics high among campus issues calling for their attention. (See Figure 1.)

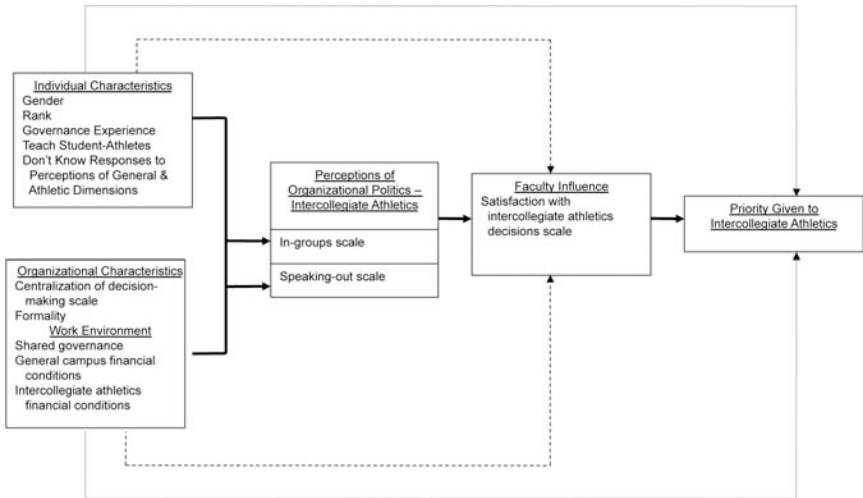


Figure 1. Perceptions of Organizational Politics Conceptual Framework.

METHODS

Given the lack of clarity regarding campus authority, the high-stakes nature of decisions, and the variety of stakeholders with different priorities who strive to influence outcomes (AAUP, 1989), it is reasonable to assume that organizational politics may play a role in administrative choices regarding intercollegiate athletics. Therefore, we drew the data for this study from the Faculty Perceptions of Intercollegiate Athletics Survey conducted in April and May 2007 for the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. The survey, developed by the authors with input from an advisory group of fac-

ulty involved in national reforms of intercollegiate athletics, focuses on the governance, financial, and academic aspects of college sports. Governance items inquire about campus norms supporting shared decision-making in academic and athletic matters, athletics-specific oversight roles, campus leadership—including the president and athletics administrators—and off-campus groups such as the media that might shape decisions. Finance items cover their institution's economic conditions, institutional and athletics budgetary decisions, and commercialization activities. Academics items relate to admissions, advising, and academic performance for the general student body and student-athletes specifically. (For the full survey, see http://www.knightcommission.org/images/pdfs/faculty_perceptions_final.pdf.)

SAMPLE

The survey was distributed online to faculty at 23 universities belonging to the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division 1-A). We randomly selected two institutions from each of the 11 Football Bowl Subdivision conferences and one from the independent schools. Using publicly available online and paper campus directories, we drew a purposive sample of 13,604 faculty from the 23 universities to maximize the representation of faculty with campus governance involvement and with experience teaching student-athletes. Tenure-track faculty were chosen to include (a) all those currently involved in campus governance at the institutional level (e.g., senates and advisory groups) or in roles associated with the oversight of intercollegiate athletics (e.g., FARs and athletics advisory boards) and (b) those with tenure-track appointments in fields/disciplines that typically have larger undergraduate course enrollments.¹ A total of 3,005 individuals completed the survey, for a response rate of 23 percent. Adjusted for those who did not fully complete the survey, faculty on sabbatical, emeritus faculty, and non-tenure-track faculty, and administrators inadvertently included,² the final sample size is 2,071. The final sample for analysis is 1,995 after removing individuals with missing data on key variables.

MEASURES

Divided into five sections, the online survey includes both open-ended and Likert-type questions. One section gathers demographic data. The other

¹These fields are biology, business, chemistry, education, engineering, English, history, kinesiology, mathematics, music, physical education, political science, psychology, romance languages, and sociology.

²Some campus senates include non-tenure-track faculty, librarians, and administrators on their governing bodies. We made extensive attempts to exclude these individuals during the initial sample identification process.

four probe faculty perceptions, beliefs, satisfactions, and concerns about selected institutional decision-making policies and practices as well as behaviors and attitudes of constituencies on respondents' own campuses. The perceptual and belief items ask respondents to "please indicate the extent to which you think the statement applies to your campus," with possible responses including "Not at All," "Slightly," "Moderately," "Very Much," "Don't Know," and "Not Relevant."

We used a principal component factor analysis with orthogonal rotation (varimax) to create multi-item proxies for organizational climate, perceptions of organizational politics related to intercollegiate athletics, and satisfaction with faculty decision influence. The four measures of organizational climate are Shared Governance, Centralization of Decision-Making, General Financial Conditions, and Financial Conditions for Athletics. The two measures representing different dimensions of POP-IA are: POP-IA: Speaking Out and POP-IA: In-Group. A final factor-derived variable signifies Satisfaction with Decision Influence. (See Appendix for factor loadings.)

A single item represents the Formality of Decision-Making, or the specificity of faculty governance roles related to athletics. A faculty rating of intercollegiate athletics as a governance matter (IA-Priority) was created from a question that listed 13 issues and asked faculty to indicate the priority that faculty governance groups on their campuses must give to each one over the next five years.

Based on previous inquiries into faculty involvement in campus and athletics governance and prior research on POP, individual-level items used in the analyses were: gender, rank, and discipline, as well as levels of experience in teaching student-athletes and serving in intercollegiate athletics governance roles. We also created measures of a respondent's overall lack of knowledge about intercollegiate athletics on his or her campus. Each survey item included "don't know" as a response option. A respondent's "don't know" responses to the items about academics, governance, and finance were aggregated and used as proxies representing general knowledge about each aspect of intercollegiate athletics. (See Table 1 for variable definitions.)

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Consistent with the model presented in Figure 1, we first ascertained the effects of individual and organizational variables on POP-IA and then estimated the effects of these variables and POP-IA on satisfaction with collective faculty impact on athletics decisions. Finally, we examined the relative and combined impact of all antecedent variables on the priority that respondents believe their campus governance groups must give to intercollegiate athletics. Altogether, we ran four separate block entry Ordinary Least Squares regressions.

TABLE 1
VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND CODING

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>
Gender	Scale: 0 = Male, 1 = Female
Rank	Current academic rank Scale: Recoded into two dummy variables; 0 = assistant professor; and 1 = associate professor; and 0 = assistant professor; 1 = full professor
Discipline	Primary area of teaching Scale: 0 = biology, chemistry, engineering, English, history, kinesiology, mathematics, music, performing arts, political science, psychology, romance languages, or sociology, 1 = business or education
Athletics governance experience	Have you ever served in an institutional governance role with responsibilities for intercollegiate athletics? Scale: 0 = no, 1 = Yes: Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) or Yes: Campus Advisory Board, or Yes: My institution's NCAA Certification Team, or Yes: Other
Teach student athletes	How would you characterize your contact with student-athletes on your campus? Scale: 0 = Little to no contact in or out of class or 1 attend athletic competitions, 1 = Student athletes currently take my classes or Student-athletes have taken my classes in the past.
Athletics-academic: Don't know responses	The number of times that a respondent marked "Don't Know" to the 17 items pertaining to perceived academic issues around intercollegiate athletics. Scale: 0 to 17
Athletics-governance: Don't know responses	The number of times that a respondent marked "Don't Know" to the 16 items pertaining to perceived governance issues around intercollegiate athletics. Scale: 0 to 16

Table 1, Cont.

Variable	Description
Athletics-finance: Don't know responses	The number of times that a respondent marked "Don't Know" to the 7 items pertaining to perceived financial issues around intercollegiate athletics. Scale: 0 to 7
Shared governance	Perceptions of the degree to which campus constituencies value shared governance, agree about issues pertaining to athletics governance, and reward participation in shared governance. Scale: 3-item factor, standardized (low indicates perceived lack of shared governance, high indicates strong perceived shared governance) Reliability: $\alpha = 0.657$
Centralization of decision-making	Perceptions of administrators' willingness to share information with faculty oversight committees, faculty governance involvement in intercollegiate athletics decision-making generally and athletics-related budgetary and academic matters specifically. Scale: 3-item factor, standardized (low indicates lack of faculty involvement, high indicates strong faculty involvement) Reliability: $\alpha = 0.696$
General financial conditions	Perceptions of the campus's overall fiscal health and the fiscal health of each faculty member's academic department. Scale: 2-item factor, standardized (low indicates satisfactory financial conditions, high indicates unsatisfactory financial conditions) Reliability: $\alpha = 0.610$
Financial conditions for athletics	Perceptions of spending policies and practices specific to intercollegiate athletics, including coaches' salaries, facility construction, clothing contracts, and subsidization. Scale: 4-item factor, standardized (low indicates satisfactory financial conditions, high indicates unsatisfactory financial conditions) Reliability: $\alpha = 0.649$

Formality of decision-making	<p>Perceived specificity of faculty governance roles related to athletics. The item asked faculty to identify the degree to which "faculty roles associated with oversight of intercollegiate athletics are ill-defined on my campus."</p> <p>Scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much.</p>
POP-IA: Speaking Out	<p>Perception that administrators create faculty governance committees that are likely to have views consistent with their own and to use their authority to dismiss discussion of issues not on their agendas</p> <p>Scale: 2-item factor, standardized (low indicates lower perceived foreclosure of speaking out, high indicates perceived foreclosure of speaking out)</p> <p>Reliability: $\alpha = 0.830$</p>
POP-IA: In-Group	<p>Perception that "cliques" comprised of athletics department insiders and groups that are not part of traditional shared governance structures (e.g., boosters, the media, politicians) but are powerful and use their influence to further their vested interests, often at the expense of the campus's academic mission. Scale: 4-item factor, standardized (low indicates lower perceptions of in-groups, high indicates higher perceptions of in-groups)</p> <p>Reliability: $\alpha = 0.892$</p>
Satisfaction with decision influence	<p>Satisfaction with the types of roles faculty play in governance, the willingness of faculty in governance to assume viewpoints at odds with those of administrators, and the extent to which faculty input informs decisions made about intercollegiate athletics. Scale: 3-item factor, standardized (low indicates dissatisfaction, high indicates satisfaction)</p> <p>Reliability: $\alpha = 0.867$</p>
IA Priority	<p>Survey question listed 13 issues and asked faculty to indicate the priority faculty governance groups on their campuses must give to each one over the next five years.</p> <p>Scale: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high ("no opinion" and "not relevant" responses removed)</p>

Because our data are nested by institution and violate the independence assumption of OLS regression, we statistically adjusted for this clustering in our models using the Stata estimation technique for robust standard errors (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The Variance Inflation Factors for the independent variables in each model were well below 10, indicating no problems of multicollinearity (Field, 2009).

RESULTS

The summary of results follows the conceptual framework. We begin with findings related to POP. We then examine the effects of these perceptions and other variables on faculty satisfaction with their decision-making influence and their prioritization of intercollegiate sports oversight.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics: In-Group

In our model, the POP-IA: In-Group measure captures faculty perceptions that university administrators' decisions are shaped by non-faculty groups that seek to further their vested interests in intercollegiate athletics. The study sample did not have a great deal of direct experience with the governance of intercollegiate athletics, but they self-reported being informed about sports on their own campuses. (See Table 2.) Both faculty with athletics governance experience and those with less knowledge about faculty oversight roles were less inclined to observe in-group politics. The same was true for respondents who believed that their campus climate valued shared governance and centralization of decision-making. That is, in-group politics were less evident when faculty believed that campus constituents agreed on intercollegiate athletics issues and valued shared governance, that administrators gave oversight committees access to information, and that faculty governance groups were consulted on decisions about college sports.

Faculty were more disposed to perceive in-group politics if they were dissatisfied with financial conditions for athletics and general financial conditions, i.e., they were displeased with university expenditures on intercollegiate athletics and with the general financial health of their campuses and departments. Those who thought faculty oversight roles were ill defined (formality of decision-making) also believed administrators' athletics decisions were greatly influenced by non-academic groups. A lack of knowledge about athletics finances ("Athletics Finance: Don't Know") also fostered perceptions of interest-group politics. (See Table 3.)

Perceptions of Organizational Politics: Speaking Out

The second POP-IA variable represents perceptions of faculty power in athletics decisions. POP-IA: Speaking Out signifies the extent to which faculty believe that colleagues selected to serve on formal governance committees

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FACULTY RESPONDENTS

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Female	2032	0.297	0.457	0	1
Discipline (professional)	2071	0.331	0.471	0	1
Rank (assistant professor)	2071	0.209	0.413	0	1
Rank (associate professor)	2071	0.295	0.456	0	1
Rank (full professor)	2071	0.471	0.499	0	1
Rank (other)	2071	0.025	0.155	0	1
Athletics governance experience	2040	0.136	0.343	0	1
Teach student athletes	2071	0.462	0.499	0	1
Athletics-Academic: Don't know responses	2071	4.205	3.507	0	17
Athletics-Governance: Don't know responses	2071	4.438	4.424	0	16
Athletics-Finance: Don't know responses	2071	1.420	1.648	0	7
Climate: Centralization of decision-making	2071	0	1	-1.436	1.548
Climate: Shared governance	2071	0	1	-3.829	1.254
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics	2071	0	1	-3.332	1.154
Climate: General campus financial conditions	2071	0	1	-2.561	0.851
Formality: Faculty roles are ill defined	2071	2.773	1.048	1	4
POP-IA: In-group	2071	0	1	-1.436	1.548
POP-IA: Speaking-out	2071	0	1	-1.436	1.548
Satisfaction with decision influence	2071	0	1	-1.578	1.229
Priority of intercollegiate athletics	2027	2.067	2.459	0	5

are those most likely to acquiesce to athletics administrators and that central administrators use their positions to foreclose discussions.

Faculty rank and level of experience teaching student-athletes were associated with a belief that their collective voice was weak. Senior faculty and those indicating more classroom contact with student-athletes were more likely to feel that colleagues in oversight roles acceded to athletics administrators who deflected discussion of certain topics. Respondents who self-reported less knowledge about athletics governance and finance also thought administrators discouraged expression of views at odds with their own. However, we observed the opposite relationship with knowledge about academic aspects of athletics (e.g., admissions standards, academic performance of student-athletes); faculty who knew less about academics were less likely to perceive POP-IA: Speaking Out. Among the climate variables, shared governance had

TABLE 3
REGRESSION RESULTS OF PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
POLITICS: IN GROUPS

	<i>Block 1</i>			<i>Block 2</i>		
	<i>b</i>	<i>Robust</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>Robust</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>						
Female	0.23	(0.14)		0.19	(0.11)	
Discipline ^b	-0.22	(0.10)	**	-0.15	(0.09)	
Associate professor ^c	-0.23	(0.16)		-0.12	(0.15)	
Full professor ^c	-0.42	(0.19)	**	-0.28	(0.17)	
Athletics governance experience	-0.18	(0.08)	**	-0.16	(0.08)	*
Teach student athletes	-0.21	(0.12)	*	-0.15	(0.11)	
Athletics-Academic: Don't know	0.07	(0.03)	**	0.06	(0.02)	**
Athletics-Governance: Don't know	-0.69	(0.03)	***	-0.95	(0.03)	***
Athletics-Finance: Don't know	-0.17	(0.06)	**	0.29	(0.08)	***
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Characteristics</i>						
Climate: Centralization of decision-making ^a				-0.17	(0.02)	***
Climate: Shared governance ^a				-0.08	(0.02)	***
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics ^a				0.22	(0.03)	***
Climate: General campus financial conditions ^a				0.05	(0.02)	***
Formality: Faculty roles ill-defined ^d				0.06	(0.02)	***
(Constant)	0.601	(.30)	*	0.60	(0.26)	**
Number of observations	2032			2008		
R ²	0.62			0.67		

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

^a Variable was standardized.

^b Discipline is a dummy variable representing professional disciplines compared to all others.

^c Reference group is assistant professor.

^d Scale is four-point Likert ranging from 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much.

~ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

the strongest relative effect and improved views of campus representatives and administrators involved in athletics oversight. (See Table 4.)

Satisfaction with Decision Influence

Faculty members' POP decreased satisfaction with their governance roles, their representatives' willingness to advocate positions different from those of administrators, and the impact of faculty input on intercollegiate athletics decisions (Satisfaction with Decision Influence). A one standard deviation increase in POP: In-Group was associated with a 0.29 standard deviation decrease in satisfaction, while a one standard deviation increase in

TABLE 4
REGRESSION RESULTS OF PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
POLITICS: SPEAKING OUT

	<i>Block 1</i>			<i>Block 2</i>		
	<i>b</i>	<i>Robust</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>Robust</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>						
Female	0.26	(0.11)	**	0.20	(0.12)	
Discipline ^b	-0.42	(0.17)	**	-0.33	(0.18)	
Associate professor ^c	-0.09	(0.22)		-0.01	(0.22)	
Full professor ^c	0.29	(0.13)	**	0.46	(0.16)	**
Other ^c	-0.07	(0.09)		-0.09	(0.07)	
Athletics governance experience	0.162	(0.11)		0.19	(0.11)	
Teach student athletes	0.08	(0.02)	***	0.07	(0.02)	***
Athletics-Academic: Don't know	-0.76	(0.02)	***	-0.94	(0.04)	***
Athletics-Governance: Don't know	-0.05	(0.06)		0.15	(0.07)	**
Athletics-Finance: Don't know	0.26	(0.11)	**	0.20	(0.12)	*
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Characteristics</i>						
Climate: Centralization of decision-making ^a				-0.07	(0.02)	***
Climate: Shared governance ^a				-0.17	(0.03)	***
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics ^a				0.09	(0.04)	*
Climate: General campus financial conditions ^a				0.02	(0.02)	
Formality: Faculty roles ill-defined ^d				0.04	(0.02)	*
(Constant)	-1.46		***	-1.47	(0.25)	***
Observations	2032			2008		
R ²	0.60			0.61		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

^a Variable was standardized.

^b Discipline is a dummy variable representing professional disciplines compared to all others.

^c Reference group is assistant professor

^d Scale is four-point Likert ranging from 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much.

POP: Speaking Out was associated with a 0.21 standard deviation decrease in satisfaction. Faculty satisfaction with decision influence was significantly affected as well by respondents' knowledge about athletics governance and finance. (See Table 5.) Those who felt less informed were less satisfied.

Priority Given to Intercollegiate Athletics

Universities and colleges face a host of competing demands from constituencies, both on and off campus, and traditional governance structures are pressured to make timely and often high-stakes decisions involving a

TABLE 5
REGRESSION RESULTS OF SATISFACTION WITH DECISION
INFLUENCE AS OUTCOME

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>						
Female	0.30	(0.21)	0.31	(0.22)	0.32	(0.23)
Discipline ^b	-0.08	(0.20)	-0.10	(0.20)	-0.07	(0.18)
Associate professor ^c	0.10	(0.26)	0.06	(0.26)	0.03	(0.25)
Full professor ^c	0.48	(0.25)	0.41	(0.25)	0.23	(0.22)
Athletics governance experience	0.13	(0.17)	0.12	(0.18)	0.09	(0.17)
Teach student athletes	-0.08	(0.18)	-0.09	(0.18)	-0.17	(0.17)
Athletics-Academic; Don't know	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.08	(0.05)
Athletics-Governance; Don't know	-0.83	(0.04)	-0.66	(0.06)	-0.74	(0.07)
Athletics-Finance; Don't know	-0.19	(0.09)	-0.30	(0.11)	-0.25	(0.10)
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Characteristics</i>						
Climate: Centralization of decision-making ^a			0.09	(0.03)	0.05	(0.03)
Climate: Shared governance ^a			0.05	(0.04)	0.06	(0.05)
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics ^a			-0.06	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.04)
Climate: General campus financial conditions ^a			0.04	(0.04)	0.05	(0.04)
Formality: Faculty roles ill-defined ^d			-0.05	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.03)
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Politics: Intercollegiate Athletics</i>						
POP-IA: In-Group ^a					-0.29	(0.05)
POP-IA: Speaking Out ^a					-0.21	(0.04)
(Constant)	0.595	***				
Observations	2032		0.792	***		
R ²	0.51	***	0.51	***		
			2008			
					-0.97	*
					2008	
					0.54	

Table 5, cont.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

^a Variable was standardized.^b Discipline is a dummy variable representing professional disciplines compared to all others.^c Reference group is assistant professor.^d Scale is four-point Likert ranging from 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much.

wide range of topics (Dill & Helm, 1988; Eckel, 2000; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Hence, our survey asked about athletics and other issues that compete for faculty attention. With an overall mean rating of 2.07 (SD = 1.06) on a five-point scale, intercollegiate athletics was the second lowest priority of the 13 campus issues surveyed. Greek life averaged the lowest faculty governance rating (mean = 1.93, SD = 1.01). Among the highest priorities were resources for research (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.84) and graduate programs (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.83).

The combined effect of all variables on the priority given to intercollegiate athletics was smaller than the effects observed for the prior three outcomes ($R^2 = 0.11$). We anticipated that "satisfaction with decision influence" would have the greatest positive impact on priorities. While the direction was as expected, satisfaction did not add much to the explained variance in the ranking of intercollegiate athletics as a governance concern. Faculty who self-reported a lack of knowledge about how their campuses govern and finance their sports programs gave lower rankings to "satisfaction with decision influence," and so did faculty who believed that the financial well-being of their campus and department was problematic. Respondents' prioritizations were also affected by concerns about the behavior of faculty and administrators to whom athletics decisions are delegated and by in-group politics. (See Table 6.)

Limitations

Caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings of this study to faculty nationally. The survey response rate of 23 percent is relatively low, though typical for online surveys (Sheehan, 2001). Those who participated were mostly male, and almost half held the rank of full professor. As we discussed in our review of the literature, whether gender and discipline affect views is mixed (Trail & Chelladurai, 2000), though several studies have indicated that the longer a professor has been employed at his or her institution, the more negative the perceptions of intercollegiate sports (Engstrand, 1995; Noble, 2004). We do not have gender, discipline, rank, or other demographic information about nonrespondents and cannot determine the degree to which nonresponse bias may be present.

TABLE 6
REGRESSION RESULTS OF PRIORITY OF INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETICS AS A GOVERNANCE ISSUE

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3		Block 4	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>								
Female	-0.21	(0.12)	-0.20	(0.12)	-0.17	(0.12)	-0.19	(0.12)
Discipline ^b	0.20	(0.12)	0.15	(0.12)	0.11	(0.11)	0.11	(0.11)
Associate professor ^c	-0.19	(0.18)	-0.18	(0.18)	-0.19	(0.17)	-0.19	(0.17)
Full professor ^c	-0.08	(0.20)	-0.11	(0.19)	-0.09	(0.18)	-0.10	(0.18)
Athletics governance experience	0.18	(0.15)	0.18	(0.16)	0.16	(0.16)	0.15	(0.16)
Teach student athletes	0.22	(0.14)	0.22	(0.13)	0.23	(0.13)	0.24	(0.13)
Athletics-Academic: Don't know	-0.03	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)
Athletics-Governance: Don't know	-0.08	(0.02)	-0.05	(0.02)	**	(0.04)	***	(0.04)
Athletics-Finance: Don't know	-0.15	(0.05)	-0.25	(0.07)	***	(0.07)	***	(0.07)
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Characteristics</i>								
Climate: Centralization of decision-making ^a	0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.02	(0.01)
Climate: Shared governance ^a	0.08	(0.03)	0.06	(0.03)	**	(0.03)	*	(0.03)
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics ^a	-0.04	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)
Climate: General campus financial conditions ^a	-0.04	(0.02)	-0.03	(0.02)	*	(0.02)	*	(0.02)
Formality: Faculty roles ill-defined ^d	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)
<i>Perceptions of Organizational Politics</i>								
Intercollegiate Athletics								
POP-IA: In-Group ^a							**	(0.02)
POP-IA: Speaking Out ^a							***	(0.02)
Satisfaction with Decision Influence ^a							***	(0.02)
(Constant)	2.94	(0.33)	2.95	(0.34)	2.86	(0.34)	2.90	(0.34)
Observations	2003		1985		1985		1985	
R2	0.08		0.09		0.10		0.11	

Table 6, cont.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

^a Variable was standardized.

^b Discipline is a dummy variable representing professional disciplines compared to all others.

^c Reference group is assistant professor.

^d Scale is four-point Likert ranging from 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much.

Further, we distributed the questionnaire to faculty at a randomly selected sample of NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision universities; and while the sampling strategy yielded a diverse array of campuses, universities in this NCAA Division are typically larger in size and scale than the average American four-year college or university. (For more information on these institutions, see Lawrence, Hendricks, & Ott, 2007). In addition, we selected a sample deliberately over-represented from particular fields/disciplines and with institutional-level governance experience. Whether the results here extend to faculty from other fields and on different types of campuses belonging to other NCAA Divisions, such as smaller liberal arts colleges, is uncertain. Furthermore, the small number of females and the limited number of respondents in different racial/ethnic groups precludes a nuanced analysis of gender and race, though such characteristics may mediate faculty views of their campus environment and of the political dynamics at play.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Research on campus governance has attended primarily to its structures and processes, and higher education scholars have drawn on theories from political science and sociology to explain the distribution of decision-making power and influence (e.g., Birnbaum, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 2003). Previous explanations of faculty reluctance to engage with campus governance have emphasized factors such as time constraints (e.g., Austin & Gamson, 1983; Williams et al., 1987), lack of rewards (e.g., Fairweather, 1996) disinterest (e.g., Baldrige, 1971; Clark, 1985), and structural barriers to participation (e.g., Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). The goal of our study was to bridge these two literatures and add to the current body of research by examining faculty members' subjective understanding of influence-behaviors underlying decisions at their university. We focused on political strategies and tactics that are neither explicitly condoned nor prohibited (Benjamin, 1993; Heller, 2004; James, 1990; Kaplan, 2004) but which, in the opinion of some faculty, violate unstated norms and undermine sanctioned decision-making processes. Our aim was to understand if and how these perceptions of organizational politics (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Kacmar et al., 1999) affect faculty members' assessments of their authority for and their prioritization of governance issues.

Generally speaking, our results are consistent with previous research on POP conducted in non-educational settings (e.g., Ferris, Frink/Deink, et al., 1996; O'Connor & Morrison, 2001). Faculty beliefs about the oversight of intercollegiate athletics were influenced by personal attributes, perceptions of campus climate, and work-related experiences. Furthermore, how faculty interpreted the actions of athletics interest groups (POP-IA: In-Group) and the behaviors of university representatives to whom decisions were entrusted (POP-IA: Speaking Out) affected faculty members' satisfaction with their collective oversight influence. The findings also highlighted the ways in which faculty expertise may interact with other factors to shape attitudes toward collaborative decision-making with administrators. In particular, we found complex relationships among individual faculty members' domain knowledge, perceptions of organizational climate and politics, and their governance priorities. Overall, the model proved useful in identifying factors that contribute to faculty POP: IA In-Group ($R^2 = 0.67$), POP:IA Speaking Out ($R^2 = 0.61$), and their Satisfaction with Decision Influence ($R^2 = 0.54$). However, the prioritization of intercollegiate athletics as a governance matter was less robust ($R^2 = 0.11$).

Here we first consider the study findings in relation to POP theory and our guiding research questions: (a) How do individual attributes and contextual variables affect perceptions of organizational politics? and in turn, (b) How do these perceptions influence faculty members' sense of collective influence over and prioritization of intercollegiate athletics as a campus governance issue? After discussing how POP theory informs our understanding of the human dynamics of campus-level decision-making, we conclude with implications for further research.

INFLUENCES SHAPING POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS

POP theories hold that work experiences influence an individual's subsequent interpretations of situations that entail organizational decision-making. People with direct involvement are less likely to think stakeholders use inappropriate tactics to advance personal interests at the expense of the organization (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Rather, those who have been close to deliberations are more likely to believe that negotiations are fair and actors can be trusted (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001).

In a similar vein, higher education scholars suggest that, when faculty believe campus norms stipulate they are to be consulted but decision-making does not follow established procedures, they will distrust the outcomes (Birnbaum, 2004). Our respondents with oversight experience were less inclined to perceive that an insider athletic group, comprised of boosters and media representatives, dominates decision-making and displays a lack of concern for their campus's academic mission. Furthermore, respondents

who thought administrators involve faculty governance groups in decisions were less likely to believe that inappropriate political tactics determined outcomes. The same was true for faculty who reported that administrators valued and rewarded faculty engagement in shared governance.

Whereas involvement in athletics oversight shaped faculty beliefs about POP-IA: In-Group, it did not affect perceptions of politics along the second dimension—a general belief that faculty with oversight responsibilities lack voice (POP-IA: Speaking Out). Perhaps faculty close to decisions can recount both times when they felt debate was foreclosed and times when alternative positions were fully vetted. On the other hand, rank also influenced beliefs about POP-IA: Speaking Out. It appears that senior professors especially may believe their athletics oversight committees operate in ways that do not recognize or respect faculty members' authority (Birnbaum, 1991).

POP theories propose that, when decision-making procedures and roles become more clearly defined (formalization), political perceptions will decline. When administrators make decisions with little faculty input (high centralization), perceptions of organizational politics will increase (e.g., Ferris, Frink, et al., 1996; O'Connor & Morrison, 2001). In our study, respondents who believed that faculty oversight roles were ill defined thought that athletics insiders unduly influenced decisions, while those who believed administrators consulted faculty governance groups were less likely to hold this view.

Along with formalization and centralization, prior studies indicate that resource constraints increase the use of political tactics (Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995). Our investigation showed that faculty who were dissatisfied with the financial circumstances of their department and campus were more likely to perceive an athletics in-group working through various channels to promote their interests. As was the case at UC Berkeley, these findings suggest that, when competition for resources intensifies—and begins to impinge on their daily work lives—complacent faculty may become more vigilant about athletics budgeting and perhaps more active in local and national reform efforts.

COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE AND INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AS A GOVERNANCE PRIORITY

Researchers hypothesize that stakeholders' political behavior will intensify when decision authority is unclear (Ferris, Fedor, et al., 1989; Frink/Deink, et al., 1996; Hartley, 2003). In addition, POP will lead to job dissatisfaction (Kacmar et al., 1999; Randall et al., 1999). Given the ambiguity regarding faculty responsibilities for athletics, we considered whether POP affected faculty satisfaction with their formal governance opportunities as well as their ranking of athletics as a governance issue. We found that respondents

who reported POP were less satisfied with their collective influence and more likely to give intercollegiate athletics less priority. Perhaps, as others contend, faculty are reluctant to engage in deliberations that they think carry little weight in campus decision-making (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Hollinger, 2001; Tierney & Minor, 2004).

Baldwin and Leslie (2001) argue that faculty beliefs about the relevance of their expertise can affect their willingness to engage with administrators in collaborative decisions (see also Morphew, 1999). Our results support this claim and, at the same time, highlight the complex relationships among knowledge of campus athletics, POP, decision-making influence, and governance priorities. On average, respondents answered with “don’t know” to approximately one quarter of the items in each area: 27.6% of governance items (mean $n = 4.4$), 20.3% of finance items (mean $n = 1.4$) and 24.7% of academic items (mean $n = 4.2$). (See Table 2.) Faculty who had more knowledge relevant to the governance of intercollegiate sports on their own campuses gave athletics-related issues higher priority. They were also more satisfied with faculty influence in this domain and were less likely to think that in-group politics undermined established decision-making processes.

Respondents who lacked information regarding the finance of college sports on their campuses were more likely to perceive organizational politics, to be less satisfied with their collective influence, and more likely to assign lower priority to athletics as a governance issue. It may well be that faculty members’ POP and beliefs about their collective influence moderate the effects of knowledge on their willingness to engage in collaborative decisions (Vigoda, 2000).

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Having identified various ways in which faculty members’ POP may affect their satisfaction with their decision-making power and readiness to deliberate topics within formal shared governance venues, we turn now to the broader implications of the findings for future research. First, we consider athletics oversight and then campus decision-making generally.

With respect to athletics, this study adds significantly to the field’s literature base, which has largely overlooked faculty as a topic of empirical research (Coakley, 2008; Cockley & Roswal, 1994; Frey, 1987). Our findings indicated that most faculty give athletics a low priority among other campus issues needing attention and that prioritization does not vary according to gender, rank, governance experience, or classroom contact with student-athletes. However, faculty who knew more about athletics finances and governance assigned it higher importance. These results, as well as recent mandates challenging governance bodies to assume more responsibility for campus reforms (COIA, 2007; NCAA, 2006; Splitt, 2004), underscore the

importance of further inquiry into the intricate relationships among knowledge about oversight, perceived decision-making influence, and beliefs about the effectiveness of faculty representation in athletics governance. This line of research will help us understand why faculty may or may not believe that traditional governance models are effective mechanisms through which they can affect campus decisions about athletics. Further study of faculty oversight responsibilities is particularly important, especially in regards to role clarity, expertise, agenda setting, and overall efficacy. The results of these investigations will enlighten debates about what modifications to existing structures might be acceptable to faculty and administrators.

We considered only the perspectives of faculty, and research needs to be broadened to include the views of others who participate in high-stakes decisions related to athletics. For example, over the last two decades, implementation of recommendations known as the “One Plus Three” model first proposed by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (1991) asserted the primacy of presidential control over campus athletics programs, as well as at the conference and national levels. Future research should examine variations in presidential beliefs and values about how athletics decisions are—and should be—made, particularly when and how faculty ought to be consulted.

In addition, the findings suggest several directions for additional study of how faculty perceive the nature of campus governance. Members of academic communities chat informally about organizational politics. Conversations frequently center on tactics used to achieve group or individual goals and, as in prior research on POP, there is often a negative undertone—a sense of disapproval (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Consistent with studies of employees in other organizations (Kacmar et al., 1999), the POP of faculty in our sample differed. However, faculty who perceived that organizational politics characterized their campuses thought the collective influence they exerted through formal governance mechanisms was weak. They were also less interested in having faculty governance groups take up athletics issues. Clearly, further investigation is needed regarding behaviors that faculty and administrators believe undermine established governance processes. Learning if and how the perceptions of these two groups vary will offer key insights into ways collaborative decision-making might be improved.

The questionnaire developed for the original study covered a range of topics besides governance; and consequently, the depth of inquiry into POP was constrained. However, researchers can draw on survey instruments used in other investigations (e.g., a POP instrument may be found in Ferris & Kacmar, 1992), and findings from this study to create more robust measures appropriate to the higher education context.

Moreover, researchers should continue to identify and systematically examine areas of shared governance where faculty governance roles are ill defined and no one group has authority to make decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Eckel, 2000). Although our findings are related specifically to athletics oversight, the need to clarify decision-making authority is experienced in many areas (e.g., Dill & Helm, 1988; Schuster et al., 1994). Abbott (2005) and other observers (Williams, 2008) describe changes in professions and campus management that result in overlapping responsibilities and foster jurisdictional competition between new professional groups and faculty.

Administrators, too, voice concerns about the need to differentiate their responsibilities (Cole, 1994). During a recent meeting of the National Association of College and University Business Officers, a panel of business and academic administrators discussed how to bridge differences in viewpoints that flow from professional backgrounds in corporations and academe. They also talked about how to determine who will take the lead on decisions (Kiley, 2012). The POP framework offers an alternative interpretation of why certain groups see faculty authority being eroded by inappropriate management activities (Rhoades, 1998; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) while others believe that faculty use their authority in ways that diminish the effectiveness of decision-making (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1996). It may also provide insights to administrators seeking to broach discussions about the ambiguities surrounding campus governance that stem from differences in their professional perspectives.

Finally, while the POP theories that guide this inquiry did not explicitly account for the relevance of one's professional expertise to the issue at hand, they did assume that perceptions are influenced by an individual's knowledge within a decision domain. Our results suggest that two types of expertise might shape faculty beliefs: understanding that results from direct involvement in decisions and knowledge gained from other sources. The latter type significantly affected POP as well as satisfaction with collective faculty influence and governance priorities. Clark (1985) would argue that faculty lack relevant knowledge because they fail to see a direct connection between campus-wide problems (such as athletics) and department-specific concerns. The issue is not salient and therefore, faculty do not take the time to become informed. He calls this situation a "trained incapacity to see these problems and to consider them serious" (p. 21). Our results suggest that POP and satisfaction with their collective voice in institutional decisions moderated the impact of knowledge on faculty prioritization of a governance topic. Future studies are needed to decide if reluctance stems from faculty indifference or if expertise may be a proxy for a general belief that their voice is not likely to matter.

APPENDIX
FACTOR-DERIVED VARIABLES, ITEMS, AND RELIABILITIES

<i>Factor Name</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor Scores</i>	<i>Cronbach's</i>
<i>Alpha</i>			
Climate: Shared governance	Shared governance between administrators and faculty is highly valued by administrators on this campus.	.458	.657
	My president and faculty agree on matters related to intercollegiate athletics. Service to this institution is rewarded in faculty personnel decisions (e.g., salary, promotion).	.442	
		.403	
Climate: Centralization of decision-making	Institution-level decisions about intercollegiate athletics are typically made by administrators who consult with faculty governance groups.	.437	.696
	During the budget process for my university's athletic department, faculty governance committees advise administrators.	.400	
	Central administrators and athletics administrators on my campus are forthcoming with information that faculty oversight committees need to ensure the quality of student-athletes' educational experiences.	.424	
Climate: Financial conditions for intercollegiate athletics	Salaries paid to head football and/or basketball coaches on my campus are excessive.	.380	.649
	Construction of state-of-the-art athletic facilities is given higher priority than capital projects needed by my academic department to keep pace with research in my discipline/field.	.393	
	Contracts with clothing and equipment companies (e.g., Nike, Adidas) have eroded the ideals of amateur athletics on my campus.	.380	
Climate: General financial conditions	Intercollegiate athletics is subsidized by my university's general fund.	.219	.610
	Fiscal conditions on my campus have improved continuously over the last five years.	.440	
	The budget of my academic department has declined over the last five years.	.440	

Appendix, cont.

Factor Name Alpha	Item	Factor Scores	Cronbach's
POP-IA: Speaking out	Central administrators and athletics administrators use their power to foreclose discussions of intercollegiate athletics that are not consistent with their agendas.	.541	.830
POP-IA: In Group	Faculty appointed to athletics governance committees are those most likely to acquiesce to athletics administrators on my campus. The athletic department can use its power with influential politicians, business leaders, and alumni to get what it wants on my campus. Athletics boosters who put winning sports records ahead of academic standards have influence with my president.	.541	.892
Satisfaction with decision influence	Decisions about intercollegiate athletics on my campus are driven by the priorities of an entertainment industry that is not invested in my university's academic mission. Compared with deans of schools/colleges, my athletic director has more influence with the president of my university. Types of roles faculty play in the governance of intercollegiate athletics on my campus Willingness of faculty who serve on governance groups to take positions at odds with those advocated by athletics administrators on my campus Extent to which faculty input informs administrative decisions related to intercollegiate athletics	.292	.867
		.283	
		.379	
		.359	
		.391	

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