

Dreaming of a Better World: Student Rebellion in 1960s Regina

Roberta Lexier

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of widespread social upheaval; universities around the world witnessed an explosion with activism and demands for a better world. The University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus was founded during these turbulent years and thus developed a strong culture of student radicalism. This paper examines the two major events that shook the university during this period. The first, the so-called Carillon Crisis, was an attempt by the University Board of Governors to censor the Regina Campus student newspaper, The Carillon. The second, the occupation of the offices of the Dean of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research was an attempt by students to formalize student representation within the university community. Demanding that the university and surrounding society live up to the ideals of democracy they proclaimed, these protests left a lasting impression not only on the development of the university, but on the students themselves.

“We saw ourselves as the wave of the future.... At the time I had enormous confidence.... I thought we were going to change the world.”¹ This statement by Sixties student activist John Conway explains the power of the era; it was a time when young people truly believed they could create a new and better world. The 1960s are remembered as a time of upheaval and youthful rebellion. On university campuses, including the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, a culture of student activism grew and developed. Between 1961 and 1974 the Regina Campus provided a postsecondary education for the large numbers of young people belonging to the baby boom generation, who were attending university in record numbers. The Regina Campus was a new institution that focused on liberal arts education and interdisciplinary work and it experienced its formative years during a time of worldwide social upheaval. Two major student rebellions occurred during this period at the Regina Campus, both of which involved a large proportion of the student body in calls for change. The first, the so-called *Carillon* Crisis in 1968-69, was an attempt by the University Board of Governors to censor the Regina Campus student newspaper, *The Carillon*. The second, the 1972 occupation of the offices of the Dean of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, was an attempt by

¹ John Conway, interview by the author, 15 December 2001. John Conway was part of the Sixties student movements at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus and at Simon Fraser University.

students to gain formal student representation within the university community. The baby boom generation had been taught that their society was founded upon the democratic values, and both of these events at the Regina Campus were attempts to create a world truly based on these ideals.

Throughout the post-World War II era, economic expansion and the rise of a consumer society increased the demand for university education; coupled with the large size of the baby boom generation, this forced an enormous expansion of universities throughout North America.² For example, between 1955 and 1975, university enrolments in Canada increased from 33,000 to 220,000.³ In response to these demands, provincial governments across Canada poured money into the university system; new universities were opened and older institutions were expanded and upgraded.⁴ The development and expansion of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus was part of this trend.

Regina College, established by the Methodist Church in 1911, became a full degree-granting institution as part of the University of Saskatchewan in 1959.⁵ By the end of the 1950s, many at the University of Saskatchewan realized that rising enrolments were straining their facilities and budget.⁶ A report published by the university's planning committee in June 1959 recommended that the Saskatoon Campus be limited to an enrolment of 7,500 students, a number which estimates indicated would be reached by 1964-65 or 1965-66, and that Regina should have a three-year program in place by that time.⁷ Following the recommendations of this report, the University Senate approved a resolution creating a campus of the University of Saskatchewan in Regina in July 1959. Two years later, the Regina Campus began offering classes to young people in the province.

With the expansion of Regina College into a full degree-granting institution, there were problems providing adequate facilities for the growing number of students. The small campus in downtown Regina did not have the

² Patricia Jansen, "'In Pursuit of Human Values (or Laugh When You Say That)': The Student Critique of the Arts Curriculum in the 1960s," in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education*, eds. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 248-249.

³ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Higher Education, 1968-69* (Ottawa, 1969), table 14.

⁴ Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 181.

⁵ J. W. T. Spinks, *A Decade of Change: The University of Saskatchewan, 1959-1970* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1972), 9.

⁶ W. A. Riddell, *The First Decade: A History of The University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, 1960-1970* (Regina: University of Regina, 1974), 25.

⁷ Michael Hayden, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 236.

space to accommodate the new university and, based on the recommendations of the Toronto firm Shore and Moffat, the decision was made to use the Experimental Farm property in the southeast corner of the city, a site that could be expanded to as much as four hundred acres.⁸ Far from the developed areas of the city, the campus was very isolated in its early years. Premier Woodrow Lloyd turned the first sod for the project on 10 April 1963, and Premier Ross Thatcher opened the first buildings in October 1965.⁹ The first facilities were the Classroom Building and Laboratory Building, with the Physical Education Centre opened in February 1967, the Library opened in October 1967, and the Students' Service Centre and the Education Building opened in 1969.¹⁰ Over this period, 810,000 square feet of space were added to the Regina Campus.¹¹ Enrolments also continued to rise. In 1958-59, there was a total of 327 students enrolled at the Regina College. When the new campus opened in 1965, enrolment had risen to 2,891 and reached a peak of 4,345 students in the fall of 1969.¹² There was also tremendous growth in the number of faculty at the Regina Campus--from nineteen in 1961-62 to 303 in 1969-70.¹³

At the same time that major changes were happening at the Regina Campus, students began to change both the way they organized themselves and the issues they pursued. In large part, the movements that emerged were based on the ideals of democracy and justice. In the struggle between democracy and communism that played out during the Cold War, young people in North America were inculcated with a heightened sense of the value of democracy. However, they came to see that their society did not live up to the values proclaimed by its leaders. "It was America's youth," argues Sara Evans, "who first heralded the discrepancy between myth and reality."¹⁴ Similarly, Stewart Burns explains:

Ever since the crusade to abolish slavery, a recurring impetus behind social movements in the United States has been the clash between the values of the "American creed" that furnishes a national identity for Americans - liberty, individualism, democracy, constitutionalism, and equality - and social realities, such as oppression of black people and women, that

⁸ Riddell, *The First Decade*, 85-86.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 92-97.

¹¹ Spinks, *A Decade of Change*, 98.

¹² University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1965-66 to 1969-70.

¹³ Spinks, *A Decade of Change*, 76.

¹⁴ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 212.

trampled on these ideals...In the 1960s, the glaring contrast between textbook ideals of freedom and equal opportunity on the one hand and unabated racial and sexual subjugation on the other, along with conscription and an unjust war, impelled many blacks, women, and youth to close the gap between ideal and reality.¹⁵

This gap between myth and reality also became the primary focus of social movements in Canada, as students worked actively to promote specific democratic values.¹⁶

Student movements of the 1960s focused on a number of ideas inherent in the democratic system. One of the most important of these was the concept of popular rule: that is, the people should have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes of government.¹⁷ Another was the notion of equality and the right of all citizens to possess the same political prerogatives. Within such a system, people should enjoy freedom from economic and political oppression and have the ability to express themselves and influence their government. Finally, there was a belief in the right of self-determination, whereby all people can make decisions without external pressure or force.¹⁸

The student activism of the Sixties revolved in large part around these issues of democracy and the gaps between rhetoric and reality in Western society. Students across North America were inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, which challenged the inequality and injustice of racial segregation in the American South. After returning to university campuses following the 1964 Freedom Summer in the southern United States, students focused their attention on their own situation and the authoritarian nature of the university system. Believing they had replaced workers as the agents of social change, and rejecting dogmatic Marxism,¹⁹ the youth of the early 1960s believed that "students were not merely the leaders of the oppressed, they were the oppressed themselves."²⁰ This youth movement has been referred to as the New Left, a movement defined

¹⁵ Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), xiv.

¹⁶ S. L. Sutherland, *Patterns of Belief and Action: Measurement of Student Political Activism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 4.

¹⁷ William E. Hudson, *American Democracy in Peril: Seven Challenges to America's Future*, 2nd ed. (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers Inc, 1998), 25.

¹⁸ Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995), 46.

¹⁹ Owsram, *Born at the Right Time*, 228.

²⁰ Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959-1972* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 80.

by its eclecticism and its anti-ideological and anti-authoritarian beliefs.²¹ Having deep convictions about participatory democracy and direct action,²² students questioned the authoritarian nature of the university, the existence of *in loco parentis*,²³ and the lack of student representation on decision-making boards within the university system. As a result of these ideas and beliefs, universities throughout the United States and Canada were rocked by protest throughout the Sixties. Specific examples of this movement in Canada can be seen in the upheavals that occurred at both Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, where students shut down the operations of the university and engaged in direct confrontation with police, and Sir George Williams in Montreal, where the computer lab was occupied and destroyed by activists, who caused over \$2 million in damage.²⁴

Saskatchewan students, especially those in Regina, were influenced by these larger North American trends, but also by the distinct political traditions of the province. With an economy based almost entirely on wheat production, Saskatchewan experienced the boom and bust of agricultural cycles and the need to rely on hostile external businesses in the east; this spurred a search for new political and economic approaches that resulted in the development of co-operatives and credit unions and the election of the first socialist government in North America.²⁵ Thus, even prior to the Sixties, Saskatchewan was a politically active place. Many young people were raised with a sense of the importance of political action and the use of new ideas, sometimes radical ones, to solve problems.²⁶

Many of the students who attended university at the Regina Campus in the Sixties and were involved in the movements of the era developed their political beliefs within this atmosphere of radical provincial politics. In fact, their parents and grandparents had often been founders of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and were involved in the farm and union

²¹ Arthur Lothstein, ed., "All We Are Saying..." *The Philosophy of the New Left* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), 11-20.

²² See James Harding, "SUPA: an ethical movement in search of an analysis," in *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, ed. Dimitrios Roussopoulos (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1983), 339.

²³ *In loco parentis* refers to the role of the university administration in place of the parent; that is, the university administration was responsible for regulating not only the academic, but also the personal conduct of students. See Owsram, *Born at the Right Time*, 178.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 242-247 and 286-287.

²⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan. A Study in Political Sociology* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), 41.

²⁶ Lorne A. Brown, Joseph K. Roberts & John W. Warnock, *Saskatchewan Politics From Left to Right, '44 to '99* (Regina: Hinterland Publications, 1999), 1.

movements within the province. These students were largely "pink diaper babies," who were influenced by the unique Saskatchewan political culture.²⁷ Students were also often affected by the experiences of the struggle over Medicare, which divided the province during their younger years.

Along with these external issues, the specific development of the Regina Campus had a tremendous impact on the emergence of an activist culture. Designed as a liberal arts university which promoted critical thinking rather than specific job training, students were expected to rigorously examine the world and develop ideas for change.²⁸ Faculty members, largely trained in the United States, experimented with different approaches to education, including the development of interdisciplinary programs;²⁹ they were involved in the process of creating a new university during a time of increasing social unrest and activism worldwide. The growth of the Regina Campus during this era of political turmoil encouraged the development of a culture of activism among both students and faculty members.

Influenced by these various factors, students at the Regina Campus developed more sophisticated analyses of the university system and challenged those things that did not conform to their concepts of democracy and justice. As William Riddell, the first principal of the Regina Campus, states:

No longer were the Students' Councils content to deal only with social and athletic activities and debating societies. They sought...the right to participate in decisions about the university programs and activities, and they freely expressed their concern about the role they thought the university should play in society. Saskatchewan students were as much involved in this movement as those elsewhere.³⁰

On the Regina Campus, these changes were in part related to the Canadian Union of Students (CUS), a national student organization focused on providing political leadership to students across the country.³¹ Students from the Regina Campus were very active in the organization, and came to be seen as some of the most radical activists in Canada. The links with the student movement across Canada developed through CUS and enabled an exchange of ideas and tactics, integrating

²⁷ Conway, interview.

²⁸ University of Regina Archives, Regina Beach Retreat, 90-27, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus "Educational Policy for the Liberal Arts," File 1.

²⁹ Riddell, *The First Decade*, 36.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 80-81.

³¹ Owrain, *Born at the Right Time*, 225-226.

the students at Regina with those around the country.³² With the creation of the Regina Campus, a student movement emerged that grew and expanded over the coming decade.

Early phases in the emergence of a student movement in Regina focused on the idea of student representation and the role of student government in the university. Students realized that there were many issues both in the university and in the larger society which affected them, and came to believe that student government should have a role to play in these political issues. There were early debates about the need to formalize student representation to ensure students would have a say in the development of their university; this resulted in the rise of the student union movement in Regina. A new constitution was introduced during the 1964-65 academic year which changed the Students' Council into a Students' Union.³³ The goal was to provide students with an opportunity to become equal members of the university community previously dominated entirely by the Administration. As part of the push for democracy, students felt that they should have a role to play in the decisions that affected their university and their own lives.

Another important tool in the rise of student activism at the Regina Campus was the student newspaper, *The Carillon*. In 1962, *The Carillon* came into existence and became part of the political changes that were happening within the student movement. The newspaper was an important focus for political activity because, as Barry Lipton, a drama student at the time, argues, "[a]s students we realized that if we were going to be political we had to get the message out and it was the most popular medium that we had at the time and we made use of it."³⁴ *The Carillon* reported on political issues that affected students, from tuition fees and university governance to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement. The student activists involved with *The Carillon* also became involved in the Canadian University Press network and the Liberation News Service in the United States, submitting articles to and receiving articles from these sources.³⁵ Similar to the links made through CUS, these networks linked the students in Regina with student activists from around North America and provided them with information about the activities of student groups at universities across the continent.

The Carillon was an important medium for informing and encouraging debate among the entire student population. Rob Milen, a history student on campus between 1967 and 1970, explains:

³² University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, *Student Handbook, 1970-71*, 21.

³³ Ron Thompson, interview by the author, 21 March 2002. See also University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Students' Union, *Survival '71*, 22.

³⁴ Barry Lipton, interview by the author, 20 February 2002.

³⁵ Pat Gallagher, interview by the author, 28 March 2002.

There is no question that when the Carillon [sic] came out everybody rushed to get a copy...It was exciting because there was debate and there was discussions [sic] on things. And it questioned the role of the university and the role of the university in society and the role of the university in educating students. All of these kinds of questions that many of us may have had about the world; what's our place in the world, why are we in Vietnam, what's happening to the blacks in the States. It talked about the kinds of things largely that we were interested in and in the world and offered an analysis and offered a debate.³⁶

In the years when the student movement was developing in Regina, *The Carillon* played a very important role in discussing political issues of relevance to students and informing them on such matters. While there was a great deal of controversy regarding the left-leaning politics of the newspaper,³⁷ it was still an important medium to engage average students in political issues and actions.

The first major event which helped to inspire student activism on the Regina Campus was the *Carillon* Crisis. Since the creation of the Students' Union, the Board of Governors had collected student activities fees from the students and then transferred this money to the Students' Union, which could spend the money as it saw fit. On 31 December 1968, with little advance warning, the Board of Governors announced their decision not to collect student activities fees for the winter semester. In the statement released, the Board of Governors explained that the decision was made because of concern about certain student activities, particularly the practices of the student newspaper, *The Carillon*. They stated that the decision to stop collecting fees was "an attempt to completely disassociate the university from the student weekly publication, *The Carillon*,"³⁸ because the paper

pursued an editorial policy clearly aimed at undermining confidence in the senate, board of governors and the

³⁶ Rob Milen, interview by the author, 30 March 2002.

³⁷ Throughout the Sixties, there was often a great deal of controversy regarding the editorial policy of *The Carillon*. While many student activists used the newspaper to discuss political issues, other students believed that the newspaper did not represent their views or interests. One example is in 1965-66 when the editor of *The Carillon*, John Conway, was fired for his continued coverage of the Vietnam War. Not all students agreed that the student newspaper should deal with politically controversial issues.

³⁸ "University fee decision aims at student paper." *Leader Post*, 31 December 1968, 1.

administration of the university. The language and illustrations in *The Carillon* [sic] have given offence to an increasing segment of a public that expects better of an institution of higher learning. Considerable damage has been done to the relationship of mutual respect which must exist between a public university and the community which supports it.³⁹

Part of the reason for this move by the university were the findings of a public relations firm that was hired after the fundraising campaign of 1967 failed to achieve its goals. The firm reported that many people in the community were upset by the actions of the students, especially those at the Regina Campus, and would not contribute money.⁴⁰ The Board believed that disassociating itself from *The Carillon* would restore public confidence in the university and assist in further fundraising campaigns.

The students were shocked by this action,⁴¹ and released a letter explaining the issues from their perspective. The first matter raised was that of freedom of the press. The Students' Union claimed that the Board of Governors was trying to censor *The Carillon* by refusing to collect fees. They declared that the Board had "openly stated they will not collect fees until editorial control is established over the *Carillon* [sic], to their satisfaction, and until the *Carillon* [sic] adopts an editorial policy acceptable to them."⁴²

Although not all students at the Regina Campus supported the editorial policy of *The Carillon*, the Students' Union was able to shift the attention from an attack on the newspaper to an attack on the right of students to organize democratically and make decisions for themselves. In the same letter, the Students' Union went on to argue that the "very right to participate in and control a free and independent Students' Union...is being challenged.... It should be obvious that any free and independent association of people, banded together for their common interest and well-being, should be free from outside interference."⁴³ The issue, according to the Students' Union, was not whether or not one agreed with the editorial policy of *The Carillon*, but whether or not one agreed that students had the right to join together and make decisions for themselves. As the letter explained, "[n]o matter what [the] editorial policies may be, it is up to us to establish them."⁴⁴ Dave Sheard, President of the Students' Union, argued,

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hayden. *Seeking a Balance*, 256-257.

⁴¹ University of Saskatchewan Students' Union. *Student Handbook*, 1970-71, 25.

⁴² University of Regina Archives. USRC Office of the Principal. 78-3. Letter to the students from the Students' Representative Council. 2 January 1969. File 2000. 1-3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

"[d]espite the faults of the Students' Union and The Carillon [sic], we are responsible to the students alone."⁴⁵ The Students' Union was quite successful at shifting the focus from *The Carillon* to the union as a whole. The issues, according to the students, were freedom of the press and the right to "organize and control an independent Students' Union."⁴⁶

Another issue that concerned students was the role that Ross Thatcher, Liberal Premier of Saskatchewan from 1964 to 1971, played in the decision to censor the newspaper, which had been openly critical of him and his government. The Students' Union argued that "[i]t is no secret that Ross Thatcher had little love for students, and it is very possible that the government had been pressing the administration on this matter."⁴⁷ Although Riddell claimed that the reason the Board stopped collecting fees was a supposedly pornographic illustration in the last issue of the year that showed Ho Chi Minh being birthed,⁴⁸ many students believed that it was for entirely political reasons that the decision was made.⁴⁹ *The Carillon* had been openly critical of the Thatcher government, especially during the budget crisis of 1967-68, when the government attempted to take control of the university finances by approving spending on a line-by-line basis similar to the process used for government departments.⁵⁰ Students believed that Thatcher put a great deal of pressure on the administration to stop this criticism.⁵¹ An article distributed by the Canadian University Press stated that "[t]he real question at Regina is a political one."⁵² The author said sarcastically, "the Carillon [sic] has displayed an unhealthy and positively unstudent-like interest in exposing the provincial government's unfairness to faculty and students alike,

⁴⁵ "SRC claims fee policy is 'confrontation'." *Leader Post*, 2 January 1969, 1.

⁴⁶ University of Regina Archives, USRC Office of the Principal, 78-3, Letter to the students from the Students' Representative Council, 2 January 1969, File 2000, 1-3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Riddell Says Latest Carillon Rang Bell." *Leader Post*, 3 January 1969, 1.

⁴⁹ Barry Lipton, interview by the author, 20 February 2002.

⁵⁰ In October 1967, Ross Thatcher announced his intentions to change the manner in which the University budget would be determined and administered. Prior to this time, the University was given a grant which it could allot in any way it saw fit. Thatcher wanted the legislature to approve the University budget line-by-line in a manner similar to government departments. Students and faculty members were strongly opposed to this initiative as they believed it would result in a loss of academic freedom at the University, since the government would have the power to promote certain programs and restrict others based on political motivations. Ultimately, Thatcher was not able to dramatically change the budgetary process, primarily because of political pressure from the students and faculty members at the Regina Campus.

⁵¹ Lipton, interview.

⁵² George Russell, "Regina Crisis Follows Two Year Conflict." *The Carillon*, Special Edition, 13 January 1969, 3.

and the government will not allow it to continue."⁵³ Lloyd Barber, Vice President of the University of Saskatchewan from 1968 to 1974, claims that Thatcher had no direct influence, but did have indirect influence over the Board's decision. It was clear that Thatcher did not approve of what was happening, and the administration was aware of this displeasure.⁵⁴ Students believed that the government and the university were trying to silence their critics by shutting down *The Carillon*,⁵⁵ and they rallied to its defense in the name of a free and democratic student movement.

The actions taken by the students played an important role in the eventual resolution of the crisis. First of all, the Students' Union decided to keep publishing *The Carillon* and to stop all other union activities.⁵⁶ When students returned after the winter break, a general meeting was held on 8 January 1969. Approximately 1,500 students attended this first meeting at which the decision was made to hold a referendum "demanding the university's Board of Governors to collect the...student union fee but keep out of student union affairs."⁵⁷ At this meeting there was a great deal of criticism of *The Carillon* and its staff, but "it was obvious that the student body did not want to see the Union destroyed because of the Carillon [sic]."⁵⁸ On 9 January, more than 1,600 students voted in the referendum regarding the fees, with two-thirds of them supporting the collection of student activities fees for use by the Students' Union.⁵⁹ On 3 February, a boycott of classes was held in conjunction with a teach-in discussing the issues involved in the dispute. Approximately one thousand students attended the teach-in, many of whom boycotted classes.⁶⁰ As Norm Bolen, the editor of *The Carillon* at the time, states, "there was enough critical mass on the pro-student side, anti-university side to basically make the university non-functional."⁶¹ Classes did, however, continue throughout the crisis, while students continued to hold meetings and kept the issue alive in the minds of students throughout the winter of 1969.

Perhaps the most important action taken by students was to publish a four-page special edition of *The Carillon* that was distributed to communities throughout Saskatchewan in order to increase awareness of what the dispute

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Lloyd Barber, interview by the author, 21 March 2002.

⁵⁵ University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, *Student Handbook, 1970-71*, 27.

⁵⁶ Lipton, interview.

⁵⁷ "1,500 students back SRC in fees dispute," *Leader Post*, 9 January 1969, 1.

⁵⁸ National Archives of Canada, R. C. M. P. Files, Record Group 146, Box 97, 16 January 1969, 3.

⁵⁹ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors Minutes and Agendas – September 1968 – April 1969, 16 January 1969.

⁶⁰ "Teach-in a Success," *The Carillon*, 7 February 1969, 1.

⁶¹ Norm Bolen, interview by the author, 22 February 2002.

involved. The campus was relatively isolated from the community, and students wanted to make connections outside the university. During spring break, students going home to their towns and cities throughout Saskatchewan were given copies of the special edition to give to people in their community. This issue of *The Carillon* included an argument that the university really belongs to the citizens of Saskatchewan. It explained that the changes students wanted to make to the university for the purpose of increasing accessibility and democratization would make the university more relevant to the community. The students argued that they were "not asking for changes in the University in order to cause you trouble. We are asking for these changes to better our education and to make the University serve the people of the province."⁶²

The perception among the students was that this issue of the newspaper changed how the public viewed the crisis and forced the Board of Governors to back down.⁶³ The board had argued that the reason they refused to collect student activities fees was that *The Carillon* offended the public. The students worked to change public opinion and thus undermined the legitimacy of the board's action. "The week after spring break," explains Barry Lipton, "the whole attitude shifted in the public. When people got our side of the story they realized it wasn't pornographic and it was a political issue and the pressure then came onto the Board of Governors to negotiate a settlement for this."⁶⁴ While it is difficult to gauge public opinion or to determine the reasons why this opinion would change, students believed that this issue of the paper created the pressure necessary to force the Board of Governors to settle the dispute.

Although the Board of Governors established a committee to negotiate the settlement of the dispute on 16 January, it was not until 6 March that the agreement between the administration and the students was signed. The agreement guaranteed that the Board of Governors would collect student activities fees and could not suspend this collection without giving the Students' Union notice of one year. It also established a liaison committee comprised of both Students' Union and Board of Governors members who would deal with any issues that arose between the two groups. Finally, the agreement had *The Carillon* adhere to the Canadian University Press Code of Ethics.⁶⁵ Despite the difficulty in coming to this agreement, students felt that it was the Board of Governors who eventually backed down. As class of 1971 history student Kenda Richards stated, "[i]n the end, really, nothing changed. They had to back down because there was

⁶² "This is Your University," *The Carillon*, Special Provincial Edition, February 1969, 1.

⁶³ Bolen, interview; Bob Lyons, interview by the author, 21 March 2002 and Don Mitchell, interview by the author, 4 March 2002.

⁶⁴ Lipton, interview.

⁶⁵ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors Minutes and Agendas - September 1968 - April 1969, 6 March 1969, Exhibit F.

no way we were going to back down."⁶⁶ Most students felt that they had won a fairly significant battle with the university administration as the Board of Governors collected student activities fees in the next semester and peace was restored on campus.⁶⁷

The *Carillon* crisis had a significant effect on the Regina Campus. The attack by the Board of Governors on the Students' Union helped to bring students together in a fight to protect their right to organize democratically without external interference from either the university administration or the government. Although some students did not agree with the editorial policy of *The Carillon* and the political stances it took, there was "a united front with all the students...supporting the Students' Union."⁶⁸ The crisis also helped to politicize the student body and increase student activism on the Regina Campus. It helped to sensitize students not generally involved in student politics to the issues of student power; students who were not generally politically active became involved in the crisis, attending meetings, teach-ins, rallies, and boycotts.⁶⁹ Students' Union meetings attracted more than a quarter of the student population, a very high proportion compared to the low numbers who had attended meetings in prior years. Another impact that this crisis had on the Regina Campus was that it illustrated the ability of students to "organize and win a fairly significant fight."⁷⁰ The way in which the Students' Union handled the crisis reveals much about the focus of student activism during the Sixties at the Regina Campus, as it put attention not on the controversial editorial policy of *The Carillon*, but instead on the rights of students to collect fees as an organization and make decisions without external pressure from the administration. The fact that many students were very critical of *The Carillon*, but still rallied in support of the Students' Union, illustrates the importance of the ideas of democracy to students at the time.

The second major case of student activism at the Regina Campus during this period was the occupation of the offices of the Dean of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in November 1972. The primary cause of this occupation was the failure of the Faculty of Arts and Science to support the principle of student parity on decision-making boards. Parity meant that the number of student representatives should equal the number of faculty on any decision-making board. The issue of student participation was one that had arisen very early in student movements across North America, as students believed that they should have a say in the decisions that affected them and their

⁶⁶ Kenda Richards, interview by the author, 18 February 2002.

⁶⁷ Bob Ferguson, interview by the author, 26 March 2002.

⁶⁸ Lipton, interview.

⁶⁹ Bolen, interview.

⁷⁰ Lipton, interview.

education. It was based on the concept of democracy, that all groups should be represented in the decision-making process, rather than decisions being made for them without their input.⁷¹ One student involved in the occupation argues that "the baby boomers were a group that had a particularly strong sense of democracy and democratic participation," and this greatly affected the activism of the time.⁷² As Barry Lipton recalls, "[i]n those days, we thought students were one half of the equation of university," and accordingly should have a say in how the university operated.⁷³ Based on the concept of a democratic society, the students at the Regina Campus, like many students around the world, demanded the right to participate in the decision-making processes at the university.

While there were some faculty members who supported the students and attempted to make changes in their departments, many did not support the principle of parity, as they believed that students did not have the knowledge or experience to make decisions, and that they could not be held accountable for their decisions in the same manner as faculty.⁷⁴ Despite the reservations of some faculty members, however, both the provincial government and the administration of the Regina Campus had been relatively responsive to demands for student representation. In 1970, revisions to the University Act added two students from each campus to the University Senate, and revisions in 1971 added one student from each campus to the Board of Governors.⁷⁵ Earlier, in 1968, Principal Riddell had written a letter encouraging the faculties and departments to find ways of involving students in the decision-making process.⁷⁶ However, each faculty and department responded differently, with some allowing parity, others allowing student participation but not full parity, and still others allowing no representation at all.⁷⁷

⁷¹ University of Regina Archives, USRC Office of the Principal, 78-3, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Students' Union, "Brief on 'Open Decision-Making in the University'" File 2000, 12.

⁷² Ken Alecxu, interview by the author, 21 March 2002. See also S. L. Sutherland, *Patterns of Belief and Action: Measurement of Student Political Activism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981): 4-6 and Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), xi-xv.

⁷³ Lipton, interview.

⁷⁴ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Executive of Council Minutes and Agendas 1973-June 1974, "Recommendations Concerning Student Involvement in University Government, A Report of a Minority of The Tripartite Committee," 24 April 1973, 3.

⁷⁵ Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1970.

⁷⁶ University of Regina Archives, Regina Council Minutes and Agendas 1973-June 1974, Memorandum from Principal W. A. Riddell to all members of faculty, 12 September 1968.

⁷⁷ University of Regina Archives, USRC Faculty of Arts and Science, 85-54, File 103, 5-1.

The students initiated the occupation of 1972 in response to events occurring within the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Division of Social Sciences. Since 1969, the division had a by-law in place which stated that "each department may elect a number of student members no greater than the number of [faculty] members in that department."⁷⁸ This by-law still allowed each department within the division to determine the extent of student participation, and did not guarantee student involvement. In October 1972, a motion was put forward at the Division of Social Sciences meeting to amend the by-laws again to create parity in all departments.⁷⁹ At this meeting, sixteen faculty members left the meeting in protest over the issue of parity.⁸⁰ Despite the departure of these faculty members, the meeting continued and the motion was passed.⁸¹ However, on 10 November 1972, the Dean of Arts and Science, Sir Edgar Vaughan, ruled that the motion giving students parity in every department was out of order. He claimed that ultimate responsibility for decision-making rested with the faculty of each department, and that the consent of these faculty members was necessary in determining the participation of other groups and persons in decision-making.⁸²

On Thursday 16 November 1972, the Students' Union held a general meeting to discuss student participation in the Faculty of Arts as well as cutbacks to the university budget and increasing tuition fees. The students passed a motion to "demand the right to parity in all departments of the university including Social Sciences and...[to] censure the ruling of Sir Edgar Vaughan."⁸³ They decided to go to Vaughan's office to deliver the motion in person and demand he rescind his ruling.⁸⁴ The minutes note that this motion was never brought to a vote, but "by general concensus [sic] of the student body (i.e. Student Union) present the motion was implemented and the meeting adjourned to reconvene in Sir Edgar Vaughan's office at approximately 3 P. M. Thursday, November 16th."⁸⁵ This marked the start of the occupation.

⁷⁸ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Division of Social Sciences Minutes and Agendas, 27 February 1969, Box 1.

⁷⁹ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Division of Social Sciences Minutes and Agendas, Notice of Motion, October 1972, Box 1.

⁸⁰ "Faculty Walk Out," *The Carillon*, 3 November 1972, 1.

⁸¹ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Division of Social Sciences Minutes and Agendas, 20 and 27 October 1972, Box 1.

⁸² University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Faculty of Arts and Science Minutes and Agendas 1971-1974, 10 November 1972.

⁸³ Government of Saskatchewan, Department of Justice, Corporations Branch, File No. 63488, Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Students' Union, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, 16 November 1972, 5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

After the students had filled Dean Vaughan's inner and outer offices and most of the hallway outside, they presented their demands for complete student parity in all departments; an end to budgetary cutbacks and the firing of faculty, teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, and support staff; and no increase in tuition fees. The students also demanded "that the university push for changes in the university act as to be determined by university students, faculty and staff."⁸⁶ These changes included autonomy from the University of Saskatchewan, or more administrative control for the Regina Campus. The students gave the administration until noon on Friday to provide an answer to their demands.⁸⁷

Principal Archer arrived at Dean Vaughan's office approximately an hour and a half after the beginning of the occupation. Archer offered to suspend Dean Vaughan's ruling if students were "willing to 'earnestly discuss' the situation."⁸⁸ The students responded that the general student body would have to be consulted prior to the acceptance of any offer made by the Principal. The students held another meeting that evening, attended by approximately four hundred students, to discuss the occupation and what should happen next. At the meeting, a representative of the Board of Governors communicated an offer from Principal Archer which would suspend Vaughan's ruling until Monday, by which time a legal opinion could be obtained regarding the University Act and the changes to its by-laws. The students declined the offer, stating that their original Friday deadline provided sufficient time to secure a legal opinion.⁸⁹

When the Friday deadline had arrived, the student body held another meeting. This meeting, held in the large Education Auditorium, attracted an estimated one thousand students who came to hear Archer's response to the demands made.⁹⁰ Upon arriving at the meeting, Archer informed the students that a legal opinion would not be available until the following Monday, and consequently, he would not be able to give them an answer until that time.⁹¹ A motion was presented calling for the disruption of administrative services on the campus but not academic services. In other words, the occupation would continue, but classes would not be disrupted. The students gave nearly unanimous approval to this motion.⁹² Following the decision to obstruct the administration of the university, the first action of the students was to reoccupy the Dean's office

⁸⁶ Reg Silvester, "Students occupy office of dean," *Leader Post*, 17 November 1972, 3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Reg Silvester, "Students await answer," *Leader Post*, 18 November 1972, 3.

⁹¹ University of Regina Archives, Regina Council Minutes and Agendas 1970-May 1974, John Archer, "Statement to Regina Council by Principal Archer," 24 November 1972, 2.

⁹² Silvester, "Students await answer," 3.

and continue the occupation over the weekend.⁹³ An article in the *Leader Post*, the only major daily newspaper in Regina, stated that “[g]roups of thirty-five to fifty students will rotate holding the office during the weekend, and a further general meeting is scheduled for Monday morning.”⁹⁴

Following the weekend occupation, the students met for another general meeting in the Education Auditorium Monday afternoon. When there was no response from Principal Archer, the approximately 850 students attending the meeting voted to extend the occupation to include the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, A. B. Van Cleave, which was located just down the hall from Dean Vaughan’s office.⁹⁵ The students also voted to continue obstructing the administration of the university without disrupting classes and to publish a provincial issue of *The Carillon* to ensure that the public was informed with regard to the matters involved.⁹⁶ At the completion of the meeting, approximately 250 students went to take control of Van Cleave’s office.⁹⁷ Van Cleave refused to let the students enter his office and managed to delay the occupation for about an hour while the secretaries locked the file cabinets and left the offices. As Bob Lyons, an English major at the Regina Campus during the occupation, recalls, “Van Cleave was unwilling to leave and so we stood nose to nose with him at the door until we got the windows in his office pried open...and people poured in the windows and under his legs.”⁹⁸ Dean Van Cleave was forced to surrender his office and the occupation was expanded.

Once Van Cleave’s office was under the control of the students, Archer and his staff decided to implement “precautionary security measures” and held a press conference to “make a statement re [sic] the legal position of the University.”⁹⁹ The security measures included closing the business office, the offices of the registrar and bursar, and the campus bookstore.¹⁰⁰ At the press conference on the afternoon of Monday 20 November, Archer upheld Vaughan’s ruling that the motion requiring parity in all departments within the Division of Social Sciences was unconstitutional, and that the chairmen of the departments were responsible for making decisions “within both the academic and administrative spheres of [the] department.”¹⁰¹ Archer, after consulting with the university solicitor, rejected the students’ demands for parity in the departments.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Rick Belanger, “Second dean ousted,” *Leader Post*, 21 November 1972, 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Lyons, interview.

⁹⁹ John Archer, “Statement to Regina Council By Principal Archer,” 24 November 1972, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Belanger, 3.

¹⁰¹ University of Regina Archives, Regina Council Minutes and Agendas 1970-May 1974. John Archer, “Statement by Dr. J. H. Archer,” 20 November 1972, 1.

The students responded that no further decisions would be made without input from the general student body, but that the occupation of the offices would continue.

Although the situation at the Regina Campus appeared to have reached a stalemate by the end of Monday, by Tuesday afternoon a committee representing the students met with representatives of the university administration to discuss a resolution. Dr. Archer, Rev. Gorski, Dr. B. Tinker, and Mr. W. G. Bolstad met with seven students on the evening of 21 November. Following the meeting, Archer stated that the students had wanted to discuss the autonomy of the university, the right of student parity, and changes to the University Act to allow such representation.¹⁰² The student representatives and university administrators scheduled a second meeting for the morning of 22 November, two hours prior to a general meeting of the students. Dr. Archer presented a statement to the students outlining the points he was willing to endorse if the students ended the occupation. "I favour the concept of self-determination for the University in Regina and I favour greater participation on the part of faculty, students, and the general public in the governance of the institution," stated Archer.¹⁰³ "I believe that faculty and students have a vital role to play in the internal governance of the University," he continued. "I am prepared to urge a review of the nature and level of student participation with a view to ensuring that students have opportunity to make their full contribution."¹⁰⁴ Archer's third point was, "I welcome and urge a review of the University Act and I am prepared to discuss proposed changes with faculty and students, and to take steps to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Continuing Education and his deputy minister to pursue this end."¹⁰⁵ Last of all, he stated that he was "prepared to establish a committee composed of students, faculty members and members of the public to move towards the implementation of the above position."¹⁰⁶ On the basis of these points, the student negotiating committee agreed to recommend an end to the occupation at the general meeting later that afternoon. The students at the meeting approved the agreement, and the decision was made to leave the offices of the Dean of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research at four o'clock in the afternoon.¹⁰⁷ The occupation that had begun on Thursday 16 November ended six days later on Wednesday 22 November 1972.

¹⁰² John Archer. "Statement to Regina Council by Principal Archer," 24 November 1972, 2.

¹⁰³ University of Regina Archives. Regina Council Minutes and Agendas 1970-May 1974, John Archer. Untitled, 22 November 1972.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "Students leave campus offices." *Leader Post*, 23 November, 1972, 3.

Despite the resolution of the conflict, it took until January 1974 before any final decisions were made regarding the student demands. At this time, the concept of parity was again rejected when the Regina Council passed a motion limiting student participation in each department to twenty percent of the total number of faculty members, except in those departments where parity already existed.¹⁰⁸ By this time, however, student activism at the Regina Campus had dwindled for a variety of reasons¹⁰⁹ and there was little response to this decision. While the occupation had failed to secure parity, it was an important event in the history of student activism at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus. The occupation succeeded in raising awareness of issues that mattered to students, both within the university and in the larger community. Across the campus, debates surrounding the role of students in the university flourished and resulted in the recognition that students did have the right to be involved in the decision-making process.

The issue of democracy was the primary focus for much of the student activism at the Regina Campus in the Sixties, including both the *Carillon* Crisis and the occupation. The principle of self-determination and the right to make decisions without external pressure or force became the primary focus of the *Carillon* Crisis, as students argued that the freedom and independence of the Students' Union was at stake, not just the editorial policy of *The Carillon*. The primary reason for the occupation of the university in 1972 was to demand student representation and participation in university decision-making; these demands emerged from the belief that democracy provided all citizens with the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and influence the policies that affected their lives. The focus on democracy in both cases enabled the leaders of the student movement to gain the support of a large proportion of the student body and create a culture of student activism at the Regina Campus. While

¹⁰⁸ University of Regina Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus Executive of Council Minutes and Agenda 1973-June 1974, 30 January 1974.

¹⁰⁹ These reasons relate to the larger decline of the student movements throughout North America by the mid-1970s. Just as there were complex reasons for the initiation of political activism, there were numerous factors accounting for its decline. Many of the activist students had graduated from university and were focused on the responsibilities of employment and family. The new generation of students had little knowledge of institutional history or interest in politics. The liberal arts program began to decline on the Regina Campus as professional programs in Administration and Engineering expanded and shifted the focus away from critical thought to job training. Students also felt they had largely failed in their demands and became less optimistic about the possibilities for change. As well, the affluence and prosperity of the 1960s, which had made concerns about job possibilities irrelevant, was replaced by economic decline and inflation. Students became less concerned with politics and more focused on their future opportunities in the job market.

Regina did not experience as great a level of confrontation and disruption as was seen at such schools as Simon Fraser University or the University of California at Berkeley. It had a strong core of student activists who had been influenced by the radical political traditions of Saskatchewan and struggled to create a more democratic university and society. Though their dreams for a better world were not fully realized, their activism brought change both to the Regina Campus and to their own lives.