The Beginning of Student Unions in American Higher Education with Special Emphasis on the Student Union Building at Texas Tech University

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Many years ago, the college campus was seen as a place to gain an education, not for relaxation or play. However, today many campuses have student centers, where relaxation and play have become a large part of student life. College administrators were afraid of student unions impeding the education of their student population; the Association of College Unions stated that student unions would provide cultural, social, and recreational programming that correlates free time with educational study (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Student unions would give students a place to relax and continue to learn in the college environment. The fear of impeding education dwindled with the construction of several student unions across the country. Student unions on individual campuses were starting to create a place of school cohesion and pride. At Texas Tech University, students, faculty and staff, and the board of directors joined to create their very own community center on campus, using support from outside institutions, and continually changing the Student Union Building to fervently assist in student success.

Texas Tech University was created in 1923 in Lubbock, Texas through legislative action. The school opened its doors in 1925 as Texas Technological College with only six buildings. Texas Technological College opened as a co-education institution, enrolling 642 men and 268 women (Texas Tech University Institutional Research, 1925). The college started out small and has grown throughout its existence. One expansion that has become the center of campus and student life is the Student Union Building.

The Student Union Building was designed as a location for students and faculty to enjoy their time between classes. They could take part in recreational and leisure activities without
traveling off campus (Vanzant, 1993). This idea was recommended by Dean James G. Allen in 1928. It was not seriously considered until the 1950s when Texas Tech University was prioritizing building expansion. Buildings for home economics, engineering, music, science, and agricultural engineering were proposed by President D.M. Wiggins at a Board of Directors building committee meeting in 1950. In that same year, a preliminary search began for planners to design a new Student Union Building (Vanzant, 1993). This dynamic structure within the Texas Tech University campus serves our students, faculty, and the community of Lubbock, Texas. However, the building was not always such an important structure on campus.

In the 1930s, union effort leaders were greatly influenced by the development of general civic recreation and cultural centers. On college campuses, these leaders wanted to create a truer community of teachers and students (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). The leaders saw student unions as community centers with a positive educational and recreational mission (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975).

**The Role of a Union in Higher Education**

Is a student union necessary? Does it belong on a college campus where knowledge, not relaxation, is the primary objective? Would spending too much time in a student union have a negative impact on a student's ability to focus on academics? Surely these are questions that administrators and educators had to consider when approached by students who wanted a place where they could briefly escape the rigors of school and enjoy one another in a stress-free environment.

Fortunately for students, many administrators and academicians throughout the nation were receptive to the idea of having a central location on campus where students could meet on common ground. They recognized that recreation is essential to learning. As a result, most of
the nation's student unions were student driven, for they knew what their target audience wanted, being students themselves.

In William Brattain's (1981) book, *The Administration of College Union and Campus Activities*, he quotes, Porter Butts, the first director of the Wisconsin Union, as he explained the importance of having student unions on college campuses.

It was into this climate of ideas about what constitutes an association that the union came, in America. I think you can see why the union became what it did, and in large measure, still is -- a place for students to go together and to talk among themselves, a place for comradeship (Brattain, 1981, p. 5)

Those associated with student unions envisioned them as facilities that had the potential to bring the arts and leisure together so students could enjoy the best of both worlds in a safe environment. Brattain (1981) explained in his book that the Association of College Unions adopted a role statement in April, 1956. Their report reads in part:

1. The union is the community center of the college, for all the members of the college family -- students, faculty, administration, alumni and guests. It is not just a building; it is also an organization and a program.

2. As the 'living room' or the 'hearthstone' of the college, the union provides for the services, conveniences, and amenities the members of the college family need in their daily life on the campus and for getting to know and understand one another through informal association outside the classroom.

3. The union is part of the educational program of the college. As the center of college community life, it serves as a laboratory of citizenship, training students in social responsibility and for leadership in a democratic society.
4. The union serves as a unifying force in the life of the college, cultivating enduring regard and loyalty to the college (Brattain, 1981, p. 18)

Even today the college student union is referred to by many as the living room of the campus.

The Student Union in the United States

The first student union in the United States was established at Harvard in 1832, which was more of a student group and not a true facility. According to Brattain (1981), the first student union building, Houston Hall, was built on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania in 1896. They took considerable strides to make it a facility that included numerous amenities for their student population to enjoy. Among the furnishings was a bowling alley, swimming pool, gymnasium and photo darkroom. The building also included many places that are also in today's student unions, including a food court, meeting rooms, pool tables, a theater, and office space for students. Houston Hall was significant because it was the first time that a university, not a student group, was responsible for the creation of a student union facility that was designated for the entire student body and not just a student society or debate club. In Brattain's book (1981), he refers to C. A. Berry and how he emphasized the importance of this event and the impact it made on higher education.

It is noteworthy; too, that Houston Hall was built and operated by a student society, but rather by the university. The University of Pennsylvania catalog of that year, 1896, stated that Houston Hall provided ‘for all the students of the various departments a place where they can meet on common ground and furnish them with every available facility for passing their leisure hours in harmless recreation and amusement’ (Brattain, 1981, p. 3-4)

With the establishment of Houston Hall, student unions became recognized as having a pivotal role in higher education. At the turn of the century, administrators realized that students
needed a place to relax and get away from the stresses of academics and constant studying. They believed that a student union could give students freedom from the confines of a classroom as well as provide them with a safe environment that they could call home. As a result, more universities began to build student unions on their campuses (Brattain, 1981).

**The Student Union Through The Years**

During the early 1900s, universities were growing at a rapid pace and they wanted to honor those who had served during World War I. The result was the creation of several beautiful memorial student unions on campuses throughout the nation. Also during this time, many universities built memorial stadiums, especially in the Midwest. In the 1940s, student unions were used to help during the war. The military used student unions for training and thousands of armed forces stayed in student unions during this period. There were fewer male students on campus during this time than in years past because they were serving in World War II.

After the war, college enrollment swelled throughout the nation due, in part, to the G.I. Bill, which resulted in large numbers of older students on campus. Colleges offered courses that would be more appropriate for the new demographics. Many student unions underwent renovations in order to compensate for the rapidly-growing student population.

During the 1950s, the number of student unions soared throughout the nation. According to Brattain (1981), there were only a couple of student unions in the nation in 1900. However, around 1950 there were more than 150 student union buildings built and another 150 more were in the process of being constructed. During this time of increased enrollment, student unions concentrated on educating staff members to focus on the union's significant role in higher education.
In the 1960s, the Vietnam War affected higher education and many student unions. According to Blum (as cited by McMillan & Davis, 1989), many campuses were silent during the 1950s. During this time students also felt alienated, not only from the institutions of higher education, but also from the society they lived in. Student unions were not immune from interruptions that affected higher education and society (McMillan & Davis, 1989). Activists often occupied student unions to voice their discontent with the war. However, the number of unions in the United States changed interest in internationalism. During this volatile time, students were becoming increasingly more vocal and administrators had no choice but to address the needs of their students. As a result, students were placed on various university boards and councils, which gave them a greater voice in higher education.

In the 1970s, there were fewer students attending colleges in the United States than in earlier years. Administrators were faced with the dilemma of trying to repair old student union facilities that had been used by thousands of students throughout the years. Educators had to find ways to repair these facilities with less revenue because student unions were funded with student fees. With fewer students and less money, it became increasingly more difficult to make the badly needed repairs and upgrades to student union facilities. Administrators had to make the difficult choice of cutting student services and facing the wrath of older students who had become accustomed to a certain standard from student unions or continuing to serve the students with fewer resources, which made budgeting extremely difficult (Brattain, 1981).

**Planning a Student Union**

A student union is unique on campus in the fact that its operations begin early in the morning and continue until late in the night, and thousands of people use it on a daily basis. Most student union buildings have meeting rooms that are available for on-campus and off-
campus communities. They also have space for student organizations to meet, cafeterias or restaurants, an information desk, a game room, theater, ballroom and vending machines.

Students always have played a vital role in the creation of student unions. Often universities asked students to remain after they graduated in order to help raise funds for student unions, as well as provide their input on the facilities. As a result, when planning committees were formed, a student was asked to serve on a general student union governing board, as well as a former student, faculty member and several administrators (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Later, a consultant was hired to help with the process. The consultant preferably had considerable experience in operations and was familiar with the university that was planning the facility. In order to allow the student body a say in the process, a survey was distributed for their input. The selection of an architectural firm was essential because they would make the vision a reality. These are just a few of the steps in the process of building a college student union, which is a very complicated and detailed process.

**The Funding for Student Unions**

Between the years 1957 – 1960, 157 student centers had received federal aid for their construction programs. Fifty million dollars had been additionally set aside by congress for further assistance. Ed Whiting and Porter Butts in Washington led this movement (McMillan & Davis, 1989). Most student unions are built without help from taxpayers. Generally, student unions come about through donations from alumni, students, staff, and faculty (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Once built, most student unions are financially self-sustaining and do not compete for funding through the college or university (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Funding for student unions is derived from building earnings; such as dining areas, bookstores, sales, the renting of open spaces, and fees paid by students during registration (College Unions:
Fifty Facts, 1975). In a 1973 survey, students expressed they were paying between two dollars a year and $120 per year in student union fees. At this time; however, labor costs and the cost of goods were increasing (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975).

**Student Unions as Community Centers**

Between the World Wars, the nation experienced a rise in the community recreation movement, when playgrounds began to spring up throughout the United States. This movement had a direct impact on student unions, which serve as community centers for the campus family, such as students, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. University administrators reached out to community leaders to join forces since the two groups had similar interests. Community leaders provided valuable information about what should be included in a student union. The building provided services for students and the rest of the college family in their daily campus life. For the individuals who used the building, there were various programs organized by different organizations. Through these organized programs, students learned how to be socially responsible and how to become a leader (Butts, 1971).

This makes the student union an essential part of the educational program. The student union consists of committees, boards, organizations, and staff. Different parts of the staff join forces to provide the college family various types of entertainment; such as recreational, social, and cultural programs. The activities in the student union encourage students’ self-directed activity, individual growth in social competency, and group effectiveness. Lastly, the student union serves as the merging of college student life and loyalty to the campus.
Student Union Activities and Operations

Student unions in the United States basically have two major functions, each paralleling and accompanying the other and both are under one director. One of the functions consists of directing the recreational programs for the campus and working with students, individuals, and groups in social and recreational fields. The second main function is the business and administrative function of operating the building and the services offered within the building (Berry & Looman, 1964).

Programming and activities boards make up a very important component of student unions. Often activities are planned in student unions, because that is where most of the students spend their days and nights. The average student union would provide 40 different services and social-cultural programs (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Programming boards are split into committees, each committee is responsible for planning events that are diverse and will appeal to a variety of groups.

Advisors who work directly with students on these boards are responsible for developing student leaders and the members of these committees volunteered their service. Activity boards collaborate with other groups and departments on campus (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975), are accessible for the entire campus, make accommodations for the disabled, will provide events that are intellectually stimulating and entertaining, and have events for students that are planned by students. The programs that are presented by activity boards may range from intellectual lecture series to outdoor outing programs to support student well-being (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). A number of studies have shown that students are more likely to attend a cultural program presented by the student union than a program put on by another source (College
Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Student unions provide a well versed display of events for the students of the campus.

Selecting a staff member for the student union was important as well. One main characteristic faculty looked for when hiring a staff member was their special ability to direct a particular activity. They had to keep in mind that the student union was a field of informal education, interests, attitudes, and potential capabilities. Within those capabilities is greater importance in which the technical skills in directing a particular activity are involved. They also were expected to have an interest in making the student’s experience within the union an opportunity for growth in self-development (Berry & Looman, 1964).

The second function of a student union is operations. Within this function, the student union is run from behind the scenes. Operations include the management of the building, overseeing maintenance, reservations of meeting rooms, setting up meeting rooms, the running of the information center, and assessing the needs of the services provided within the student union and the students who enter the student union. The operations function of the oversees facilities such as dining centers, coffee shops, the campus bookstore, theater, post office, bank, and different student services’ offices, including student government (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975).

The staff of a student union can be comprised of a large or small group of union professionals. Larger student unions have an intricate organizational structure where the managing director may oversee both the operations and the activities aspects of the building. A smaller student union may consist of a one-person professional staff. However, both set-ups express that union professionals not only act as managers, but also as educators (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975).
Professional Development

In order for advisors to perform quality work, there must be professional development. The training of advisors is essential in assuring the development of the student leaders they advise. Advisors teach their students the importance of responsibility by delegating tasks to them that will require accountability for their events and programs, while at the same time giving them freedom to develop as leaders.

Professional Organizations. For professionals who work in student unions, there are conferences that build leadership, skills, and ideas. They then return to their individual campuses to teach students what they have learned. One of the most popular conferences is the Association of College Union International (ACUI). It is the first and the oldest institutional membership (Brattain, 1981), founded in 1914 by student and staff representatives (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). This organization provides opportunities for different colleges to join forces in studying and improving their programs and services, and assist in the development of new student unions (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). One member of each campus is a member of this institution and has annual membership dues. Its main purpose is to hold professional and student membership for undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in student unions as volunteer workers and as a potential career (Brattain, 1981). A national conference is held on a member campus every spring, with 15 regional conferences held in the fall, where professionals gather for staff development sessions and educational workshops designed to acquaint professionals to new or different programming ideas, engage in discussion with other professionals, and have an active role within the association (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Each year, proceedings of the annual conferences are published and remain one of
the best sources of information on student unions. These publications are readily available to staff members and graduate students in Higher Education (Brattain, 1981).

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, entertainment began expanding in the college campuses. Also, many student unions began to have the space and equipment to hold live entertainment events and large performances. Therefore, from this growth of entertainment, an organization developed in relation to the student union called The National Entertainment and Campus Activities and Association (NECAA). This association included representatives from the programming and the entertainment industry. NECAA also focused on the technical aspects of how to program, staff development, and some of the philosophical reasons behind co-curricular programming. This organization and conference was pushed by the students who realized that there needed to be a massive program to take place in order to educate all college staff and students in regards to booking and having entertainment on a campus. After that came into play, the students who attended this convention pressured the faculty members, who were present to develop a national organization, increase educational programs, and to offer more conferences. NECAA was changed to National Association of Campus activities (NACA) in 1982 (The History of the National Association for Campus Activities, 2010) and has become the biggest gathering in the Higher Education in the United States (Brattain, 1981).

**The Student Union Building at Texas Tech University**

In a 1928 Faculty Committee meeting Allen, then an English professor, was recorded as mentioning that a student union building would highly benefit the students. Dean Allen recounted in an interview years later that he did not remember making that suggestion, but he played a major role in the establishment of the first Student Union Building at Texas Tech University (Allen, 1983).
Early Contributions

It is unclear when the initial Student Union Building Fund was established, but several senior classes between 1930 and 1952 donated money in the form of cash or war bonds to the fund (Andrews, 1956). A 1946 Tech Tips quotes that there was $3,750 in War Bonds set aside for the “post-war construction of a Student Union Building” (Andrews, 1956, p. 11). The booklet also mentioned plans for the Student Union Building including meeting rooms, places to eat, the campus bookstore, ballrooms, an auditorium, and places to mingle and relax (Andrews, 1956). The Association of Women Students published Tech Tips each year for many years and both the 1946-47 edition and the 1947-48 editions both mentioned the building fund and encouraged all students to donate (Tech Tips, 1946; 1947).

Recreation Hall

During World War II, Texas Tech allowed several military barrack-type buildings to be set up on campus by the government for Texas Tech’s ROTC program. In 1947, the government offered Texas Tech the opportunity to take over the buildings and Allen, then Dean of Student Life, requested two buildings be purchased and used as a sort of student center. Dean Allen knew that it would take some work to combine the two buildings together so he contacted 25 of his closest Lubbock friends and asked for a $1,000 donation from each. In Cindy Martin’s interview with Dean Allen in 1983, the retired dean recalled using the discarded wood flooring from Doak Hall as the dance floor in the new building. Dean Allen also said that when a dust storm blew through town, there was a layer of dirt on everything inside the Recreation Hall. Similar things happened when it rained; the roof leaked! Ruth Horn Andrews (1956) reported that Dunlap’s Department Store in Lubbock was not only one of Dean Allen’s $1,000 donors, but it also agreed to sell the furnishings for the building at wholesale cost. With a little creative
spending and generous Lubbock residents, the Recreation Hall was opened in 1947 (Andrews, 1956).

The Recreation Hall was used daily by students. In the beginning there was a local retailer selling food on one end of the building but as Dean Allen recalled, it was too expensive for the students. The 1953 La Ventana called this area the Green Room and said it was the meeting place for all coffee drinkers. The University also sponsored weekend dances and picture shows for students. Students played bridge, ping-pong or other table games in between classes (Goodyear, 1953). A chorale was started for students who enjoyed singing and they held regular concerts in the Recreation Hall. Dean Allen recounted that at the time there was not a lot of safe hangouts for students near the campus, so the Recreation Hall provided a good place for playing games or relaxing after class. He also stated that this was the reason he continued to advocate for a permanent student center (Allen, 1983).

Planning the Tech Student Union

Before the Recreation Hall opened, students used the bookstore as a hangout and a place to grab lunch or snacks at the bookstore’s lunch counter. Soon after the Recreation Hall opened, the bookstore was quiet. Manager Conner Cole decided to put the $150,000 from the bookstore’s “general fund” towards the Student Union Building Fund. When presented with the idea, President D.M. Wiggins and Dean Allen enthusiastically approved. The College Infirmary also decided to make the sizable donation of $100,000 to the cause from a surplus in their accounts and the Ex-Students Association agreed to raise $25,000 (Andrews, 1956).

On October 15, 1949, the Board of Directors instructed the Building Committee to “proceed with plans for the construction of a Student Union Building at a cost not to exceed $500,000” (Board of Directors, 1949). In December of that same year, the Board of Directors
approved a bid from Blyth and Company in Chicago for the purchase of $250,000 in bonds. The profits from the sale of the bonds would be added to the Student Union Building Fund (Board of Directors, 1949). The Board approved the plans for the proposed Student Union Building on January 28, 1950 and hired Atcheson and Atkinson of Lubbock, both Texas Tech graduates, as the architects for the proposed building (Board of Directors, 1950 & Andrews, 1956, p. 259). Bond sales, revenue from campus concession sales and the donations from the bookstore, infirmary, and ex-student association were added together to form the $500,000 needed to construct the Student Union Building. Texas Tech University was proud that current and former students and campus departments raised all but $50,000 of the money for the building construction (Andrews, 1956).

**Student Union Fee.** In case the pledged revenues were ever insufficient, the Board of Directors also approved a student fee of four dollars to be imposed upon each Texas Tech University student for the use and availability of the building (Board of Directors, 1950). In May of 1953, the Board was allowed by the government to impose the Student Union Fee of five dollars as a regular fee “for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the building” (Andrews, 1956, p. 260). The fee was charged each semester (Teeing Off, 1955). Dean Allen explained that the students were in favor of the fee because they were happy about the Student Union Building and wanted to help make it better. Several *Teeing Off at Texas Tech* editions explained the fee, its uses, and purposes, to new students and their parents (1955; 1962).

**The New Student Union Building**

Texas Tech called upon Butts, a “pioneer in the field of student union design and construction” (Vanzant, 1993, p. 1), to help plan the building structure and features. A swimming pool and bowling alley were two ideas recommended by Butts, but with a hefty price
tag, both were cut from the plans (Vanzant, 1993). On October 31, 1952, the cornerstone was laid for the Student Union Building and the two-story plus basement building was opened to students on March 10, 1953. The building design kept with the Spanish Renaissance exterior of the other campus buildings and offered a ballroom, meeting rooms, campus organization headquarters, a game room, lounges, and food service. Approximately 1,500 people attended the open house on April 12 (Andrews, 1956).

Students used the building constantly and soon a Student Union Council comprised of five executive staff members, eight committees, and 250 student volunteers was created to coordinate all of the activities and programs in the Student Union Building. Some of the events offered were concerts, movie showings, dances, bridge and other game tournaments, lectures, art exhibits, and a Tuesday night Quarterback Club reviewed the videos of athletic games of the previous weekend (Andrews, 1956; Teeing Off, 1955; & Harrison, 1954). The Student Union Council provided an opportunity for students to “develop leadership qualities, social maturity, cultural background and personal character” (Sanders & Woody, 1962, p. 35). The December 1955 edition of Teeing Off at Texas Tech listed the Student Union Building as providing services such as check cashing, poster making, food catering, campus information, ticket sales, and a lost and found department. The Student Union Building offered “the student body as a whole a complete schedule of events with valuable out-of-classroom information and education” (Sanders and Woody, 1962, p. 35). The Student Union Building held a Regional Unions Conference in 1955 with schools from five states in attendance (Hudson, 1950). The Texas Tech Student Union Building has long been a member of Association of College Unions International (ACUI) and National Association for Campus Activities (NACA). Through the Council and the
subsequent programming boards that followed, the Student Union Building at Texas Tech became the community center, or living room, of the campus.

**Name Changes.** While the official name was Student Union Building, students and campus publications called the building “Tech Union” up until the name changed to University Center in the 1970s, when it became “the UC” by all the union constituents. Dean Allen commented on the 1970s name change by commenting that at that time “union” had other meanings that did not represent what the building was used for and therefore the building was renamed University Center (Allen, 1983). No matter what the name on the outside of the building was, the popular phrase around campus was “I’ll meet you at the Union!” (Teeing Off, 1955).

**End of the Recreation Hall.** After the opening of the Student Union Building in 1953, the Recreation Hall became home to the Campus Club, an organization of faculty and staff (Andrews, 1956). With the expansion of the Student Union Building to include a Faculty Club, the Board of Directors approved the removal of the Recreation Hall in August of 1962 (Index, 1962).

**Additions, Remodeling, and Reflections**

Dean Allen remembered that administrators and students alike soon realized the new building was too small. In 1955, up to 4,500 people passed through the Student Union Building on any given day (Teeing Off, 1955). Plans quickly went into action for an addition and the university again consulted Butts for ideas. Dean Allen also reported that his office staff held student focus groups to get suggestions of what the students would like to see added onto the Student Union Building. The one million dollar annex was opened to students in the spring of 1962, including more office space, meeting rooms, and an expanded cafeteria with modern
kitchen facilities (Sanders and Woody, 1962). The August 1962 edition of *Teeing Off at Texas Tech* quoted that 6,000 people entered the building on a peak day.

The Student Union Building was expanded again in 1977 and renamed University Center (UC). The UC had been enlarged so much that it joined the back of the music building. The addition included a courtyard area for lounges or informal receptions and Center Theatre, which, according to Dean Allen, served as a perfect alternative to the Municipal Auditorium. The Municipal Auditorium was continuously booked and there was no other high-capacity theater like it in Lubbock. The Center Theatre was renamed Allen Theatre in 1985 in honor of Dean Allen (“Allen Theatre”). The theatre was and still is used year-round by various campus departments and student organizations. Due to the continued growth of the campus population, the University Center was enlarged again in 2006 with a third floor and expanded basement area and was renamed Student Union Building.

Dean Allen expressed that the Student Union Building had always and should always have the same personality of Texas Tech and West Texas: open, friendly, out-going and hospitable. He strongly believed that students needed to have a well-rounded development. The programs and services of the Student Union Building were part of that development because the union was an “auxiliary educational source” (Allen, 1983). When asked how he felt about the building and its’ programs’ progress since 1928, Allen said that when he looked out at the Student Union Building he always felt “a sense of fulfillment” and then jokingly, everything may not have happened if someone had not reminded him of his suggestion made in 1928 (Allen, 1983).
Conclusion

The Student Union Building at Texas Tech University now sits strong in the center of campus. From its opening in 1953 to its current state in 2011, the Student Union Building has grown both physically and in the services it provides. With every enrollment boom, the student union must be prepared for unanticipated needs that can lead to further expansions (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975). Furthermore, with every expansion, construction costs will continue to increase. In the Student Union Building’s fourth addition, sustainable resources were used. In searching for stone that matched the original portion of the building, a stone called “turkey track” was found on buildings in the community of Lueders, Texas. Presenting this stone to the building committee was met with unanimous approval. This stone successfully attributed the new part of the building to its older additions (Holzman, 2008). There has been increased emphasis placed on facilities; such as, art, films, and theaters within student unions to be more culturally diverse (College Unions: Fifty Facts, 1975).

Before the last renovation of the Student Union Building, which cost $45 million, the fee was raised to pay for the renovation. The renovation was entirely funded by student fees (Revisiting Construction, 2009). The student union fee at Texas Tech University has increased over the years and is currently $49 a semester. This fee is generated through a student union fee advisory board that meets every year to discuss the fee and what it is allotted for (Summary of Tuition, Fees, and Other Charges, 2011). With an ever-growing student population, of more than 30,000 students, Texas Tech University and the Student Union Building serving thousands of students daily, there is the possibility for further expansion of the Student Union Building. Regardless, the efforts of Dean Allen and countless others have not gone unnoticed. The Student Union Building on Texas Tech University’s campus continues to function as a center for
relaxation, play, and educational programming. Not only used by students, faculty, and staff, but also by groups throughout the Lubbock, Texas area. As the student population grows, the efforts of the student union staff will grow to continue their support in student success, educational and cultural programming, and student services within the building.


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