

## 7C—Critical Reflections on Professional Issues

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Most universities in Canada have a bicameral governance structure composed of a senate, which is the senior academic decision-making body of the university, and a board responsible for approving the university's mission, strategic direction, and finances. Within this structure, each faculty or school has a faculty council responsible for academic governance, including approval of new programs and courses, academic planning and standards, and admissions requirements at the faculty or school level. Faculty or school councils serve an important purpose in university governance and, along with the senate, provide a forum for collegial decision-making. A cornerstone of academic status, collegiality allows for the participation of academic staff in academic governance structures and ensures that a degree of professional autonomy of members is respected. As professionals, academic staff possess a specialized body of knowledge and skills and can expect to participate in decisions affecting their work. For academic librarians, participation in the collegial governance of their institution is a recognized aspect of librarians' academic status, and this is often realized through their membership in library councils. Despite the nearly 40-year history of library councils in Canadian academic libraries, widespread endorsement of library councils and collegial governance structures for academic libraries by the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the American Library Association, and the Association of College and Research Libraries, there is little recent literature on these topics and no empirical studies within the Canadian context. Furthermore, it is evident that library councils in Canadian academic libraries may not be operating as collegial decision-making bodies as they were originally intended. Within the framework of institutional theory, this paper will consist of a critical literature review regarding library councils and collegial governance structures for academic librarians. Drawing from the librarianship, sociology, and higher education literature, this paper will review the breadth, depth, gaps, and inconsistencies and general approaches to collegial governance in university libraries. The authors hope that this paper will serve to reignite the conversation on the importance of collegial governance and library councils as decision-making bodies for Canadian academic librarians.