

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Brandon C. Zicha
Title of clinic:	Student Campus Organization, Student Politics, and Civic Education
Number of students:	6
Major (if applicable and approved by the Major Convener):	none
(Pre)requisites (if applicable):	One applicant should be comfortable doing legal research. None, but it is preferred that students have done coursework in Institutions of Governance and Development, and coursework in either GED, WP, IJ relevant to elements of institutional, organizational, and legal design and function. Also preferred students who have done work in the Community project related to Education, or students with any experience in Education Research.

Research context

Universities and colleges around the world see students organizing their collective life in different ways ranging from competing student associations, student Senates and government, student unions, professional university services without student involvement, to self-organized needs-based impromptu organization. Over the years there has been scholarship, and policy statements by institutions of higher education asserting that these organizations have educational value essential to a quality university education.

Scholarship in constitutional political economy would suggest that different organizational formats will not only generate educational effects differently, but also would divergently stimulate student involvement, provide platforms for various types of issues, provide different types of informational benefits, manage budgets and workloads differently. However, a comparative approach to the costs and benefits of different types of organization for education and service to the student community - as with many other domain of micro-level politics is not heavily studied.

At the LUC, we also see a student association that does not seem to be fulfilling its functions to the satisfaction of much of the student community or its own board members year upon year. Interest in running for positions has steadily declined, complaints have increased, and students generally seem to signal a feeling of powerlessness and lack of agency with regards to their own collective lives, as well as their interfaces with the college and university. Furthermore, it is unclear if the current legal structure of the student association is functionally compatible with its monopoly status. Student agency is further divided among no fewer than 4 bodies: The association (Fortuna) the Programme Council, the College Council, and the Student representative to the Programme Board. the degree of accountability and salience of these roles is difficult to discern. Educationally, participation is narrow in the current association and presumably its affects are similarly narrowly constrained.

This research clinic would aim to do the following things:

1. Review the literature on the educational effects of student organization in comparative perspective.
2. Review the types of student organizational models that exist, and collect a database of such organizations.
3. Analyze these models from the perspective of constitutional political economy and formal analysis, including that within LUC, to draw hypotheses of the types of outcomes and problems scholarship would lead us to expect.
4. Begin to evaluate the plausibility of these conclusions in a report.
5. Evaluate the legal constraints of different modes of student organization in the LUC (Dutch) context.
6. Propose reforms or an alternative approach to organize the LUC student community with specific focus on the problems identified in parts 3 and 4, with justifications for why alternative forms would be worse given stated objectives (to be determined).

Students' tasks and activities

2 students will compile the literature review discussed in point 1, while another 2 will collect a database and begin analysis in 2 and 3. The fifth student will evaluate the legal context, locally (5). After, the whole group would participate in assembling the reports (4) leading to (hopefully) a final report.

Each student will thus produce a literature, review, or report as output.

