Given at C. S. F. Workshop for Faculty.

September 20-21, 1973

J. Claudia
INTRODUCTION

The religious congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate was established in Joliet in 1865. Four years later St. Francis Academy was opened. In 1874 the congregation obtained a charter from the State of Illinois to conduct "a seminary of learning for young ladies." In 1920 the charter was amended to read "College of Liberal Arts, Science, and Fine Arts." In 1925 the college, then known as Assisi Junior College, was open to the public.

In 1930 the senior college curriculum began to operate under the new title, the College of St. Francis. St Francis was at this time the only Catholic Senior College for young women in Illinois outside of Chicago. In June 1933 the College of St. Francis graduated its first students, thereby bringing to a reality the foremost educational dream of the founder of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate.

This brief paper proposes to consider the governance of the college from 1930 to 1969, by dividing the thirty-nine years into three periods: 1930 - 1938, 1938 - 1962, and 1962 - 1969.

The paper will treat the topic of governance from the point of view of trusteeship, administration, policy, making, and student involvement. If it should appear that efforts have been made to delineate the subtle distinctions between leadership and management -- know that the efforts have been intentional.

PERIOD 1930 - 1938

From 1930 to 1938 the Board of Trustees of the College of St. Francis comprised the General Superior of the congregation and her four counsel members, all elected
by the congregation. The General Superior served as Chairman of the Board. She was also the president of the college. The other officers of administration were the dean of the college, dean of students, registrar, business manager, and the librarian, all of whom had faculty status.

Although six members of the congregation had founded and established Assisi Junior College, most of the policy makers and curriculum designers of the first eight years of the senior college's existence were lay faculty members, the majority of them with earned doctorates in an academic discipline, who contracted with the college to continue in service until the Sisters who were away studying would obtain their Ph.D.'s and join the faculty.

During this period a study of Student Government was made by a faculty committee working with the students. A series of bylaws were drawn up and presented to the faculty. After a two year period of study and experimentation, Student Government became a reality.

At the close of 1937-38, the College of St. Francis seemed well established. It had full recognition from the Illinois State Department of Public Instruction and was accredited by the North Central Association. The college community took seriously its commitment to be a liberal arts college, Catholic in aim and Franciscan in spirit. Its vision was one of service to the Church and to the world.

At this time an esprit de corps characterized the college community and faculty solidarity was St. Francis' strongest force for growth.

PERIOD 1938 - 1962

At the beginning of the period 1938 - 1962, the Board of Trustees (still being the General Superior and her counsel) appointed a Sister as president of the
college. Two successive presidents, thus appointed, served the college during this twenty-four year period. The Administration still had the same ex officio membership.

The first years of this period saw the expansion of everyone's horizons. The administration managed what was necessary to maximize the energy available within the institution to accomplish institutional goals.

The faculty as a body exerted its leadership in academic matters. Curriculum studies, some of which were published, panel discussions and evaluation of classroom methods and performance insured a constant revision of the program of studies.

Student influence on the campus more than student involvement in governance marked this period in the history of the college. In 1943 the student body through its student government took membership in the National Federation of Catholic College Students. Student leaders, working through the commissions of the federation or participating in the Young Christian Movement, the Sodality or Third Order had a noticeable spiritual influence on the college life. Through the help and direction of faculty members appointed as moderators and advisers to student organizations and through the guidance of the personnel of the Buffer Committee elected from the faculty by student government, the student body became a vocal and responsible component of the college community.

In the academic year 1959-60 an eight page questionnaire was administered to the student body. The questionnaire, originally used by the United States National Student Association in conjunction with a survey conducted by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was adapted for use in Catholic colleges by the National Federation of Catholic College Students. Just in passing, I would like to quote questions 4, 13, 18, 27.
4. What is your opinion of a college academic program that centers its learning around independent study, the library, seminars, and a wide variety of laboratory experiences rather than the traditional program?

13. In general, do you feel that too high a percentage of the income of colleges is being expended for plant expansions rather than being used for higher salaries?

18. In your opinion, what arrangements will facilitate a desirable student participation in administrative planning and policy making?

27. What are the problems college students have today that are particularly unique to present times and which the colleges and universities do not appear to recognize?

During the last half of this period (1939-1962) more than in any other time in its history, the college community sought to realize through research and study what it means to be "Franciscan in spirit" and to answer the question: "What is the Franciscan message to the world?"

**PERIOD 1962 - 1969**

In 1962 the College of St. Francis became incorporated, the congregation thereby giving up the legal ownership of the college. This act of incorporation brought about a change in the composition of the Board of Trustees. The General Superior retained the chairmanship of the board and her first counselor retained membership on the board. The bylaws of the new corporation (since then revised) provided that the following persons be *ex officio* members of the board: the president, the superior of the college, the dean of the college, and the business manager. Lay board members would be chosen because of their expertise.

During this period the officers of administration did not include the librarian.

It is a fact that the legal implications of becoming incorporated were never adequately explained to or fully understood by many members of the college community. One needs to examine post 1969 board-level activities to comprehend the legal and canonical implications of a college incorporating separately from the Congregation that founded it.
However, the religious faculty of the college, during this period, were aware of the stewardship that was still rightfully theirs to guide the destiny of the College of St. Francis. Legal incorporation did not alter the first commitment of the college to be strongly supportive of the liberal arts, be Catholic in aim -- and in a broad sense, really ecumenical-- with a spirit that is truly Franciscan.

It was with these objectives in mind, and in pursuit of means for their fulfillment that the search committee in 1969, made up of board members, administration, faculty and students selected Dr. Francis Kerins to be the first lay president of the College of St. Francis.