There is a trend presently toward more and more student participation in policy decisions. Students sit on the Activities Development Board, the Athletic Board, and other committees. They have been invited to participate on the Committee on Environment, and the Incomman Judicious member has been invited to the Student Committee on Discipline. Other examples abound.

The Student Committee on Educational Policy was rebuffed however, when it asked that the CEP allow a student to sit in on CEP meetings. The reasons advanced for such a refusal were strong ones given the present state of affairs. Primarily, much of the CEP's business would not interest a SCEP member at all, such as discussion of sponsored research. But more importantly there is the fear that a student present would hinder the otherwise frank discussions which may include comments about a faculty member's personality or competence. Much of what is said is simply strictly off the record.

The present SCEP-CEP liaison consists of monthly luncheons and two dinner meetings a year. Aside from formal gatherings, there is a frequent interaction among members of both committees.

But very often SCEP does not participate at the initial stages of a new discussion. It is at this time that the student's view can be most useful. Later on student opinion could add much to the discussion. Continuous feedback is one of the principal reasons for seating undergraduates on faculty committees.

A memorandum was issued this year by the former UAP, past Editor of The Tech, and the past Student Committee on Environment Chairman. They listed a number of reasons for seating students on faculty committees, among them: Continuous feedback, the need for dialogue not negotiation, the amount of goodwill and trust that could develop, and the educational experience it provides for the students. Many of these reasons can be applied to a discussion on the advisability of seating a SCEP member, but there are more pragmatic considerations.

SCEP's association with the CEP has been excellent. A solid working relationship has been achieved whereby information channels are kept open, and members remain open-minded. But as long as some members of the CEP feels that a student among them will hinder free discussion and view it as an encroachment on their effectiveness, then any attempts to seat a student, if successful, could do damage to the relationship now enjoyed.

What is needed is not increased agitation, as has characterized other campuses, but a change in basic attitudes.

After June half the CEP will be new members. Next September would be an ideal time to experiment, on a trial basis, seating students. There would be a selection process for determining the relevant parts of the meeting. The student would gain insight into the decision process and possibly develop further interest in political ideas. The faculty might find that discussion is not as hindered as they thought.

There is a point where the student can no longer be of any value in policy formulation, and has no grounds to seek a role. But that point has not yet been reached in regard to the committee system and there is room for more student input.