

The Organizational Setting of Work on Campus

Colleges and universities are among the most complex of organizations. They are in some ways collegial in nature, in other ways political, and in still other ways bureaucratic (Baldrige et al., 1978). This mixture is clearer in large institutions but it exists in small ones too: the academic dean is the major link between the stratified collegial structure of his college—which is really synonymous with his faculty and their departments; only the dean's staff provides a hint of bureaucracy—and the primarily bureaucratic nature of the central administration. However, while the dean is the primary formal link with the senior central academic officer, normally a provost, the dean's staff responsible for academic support services, student services, and financial matters works closely with central officials in the same areas. In other words, the mid-level administrators in both colleges and central staffs are linked in common duties. Allegiances may differ, one to the college and one to the university or central administration, but the substance of the work is largely the same.

This role as links or "linking pins," borrowing from Henderson and Henderson (1974, p. 217), Likert (1961, pp. 113-115), and Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 321), is a variation of an industrial role model. There, middle managers act as links between two levels of organizational structure and "serve as funnels through which the intentions of top management flow down and information flows up" (Kay 1973, p. 5).

Collegiate middle-managers serve as linking pins between vertical levels but, given the "mixed organizational structure" of colleges and universities,* they also serve as linking pins between horizontal structures, i.e., between colleges and central offices. As in industry, collegiate middle-managers implement but rarely develop policy; they do not contribute directly to the institution's mission. Instead they are adjuncts who exist because top management cannot cope with the volume and complexity of the workload.

Both the collegiate and the bureaucratic elements of the organizations are influenced by a politically mandated governance system

*The term "mixed organization" is used because of its similarity in both form and content to the term "mixed economy," which refers to an economic system including elements of both public and private enterprise. A mixed organizational structure includes bureaucratic, collegial, and political elements.

comprised of faculty, students, and staff. For interesting and thoughtful analyses of this unique, mixed organizational structure, see Baldrige et al. (1978, p. 9), Caplow and McGee (1958), Ikenberry (1972), Cohen and March (1974), Ryan (1977), McHenry (1977), Perkins (1973), and Blankenship (1977). The Perkins' volume compares the university as an organization to other forms of organization, such as companies, banks, and government bureaus. Blankenship is editor of a volume that offers studies of several types of "mixed" organizations, including hospitals, law firms, social service agencies, and police departments. Each of these organizations is a mixture of professionals as equals working with nonprofessionals in a partial or pseudo-bureaucratic setting.

The basic assumptions of collegial, bureaucratic, and political systems are well-known. Some author's metaphors about "market influences" (Caplow and McGee 1958) and "organized anarchy" (Cohen and March 1974) have captured the imaginations of succeeding generations of analysts. Millett's more modest "organized autonomy" (Millett 1977), is a suitable metaphor for this study's focus.

The essential differences between collegial, bureaucratic and political systems include objectives, sources and lines of authority, and differentiation among structural components (Blau 1974, p. 297n; Van de Graaf 1978). Since our concern is with the organizational setting for the work of mid-level collegiate administrators, and since much attention has been given elsewhere to the organization of "academic" work (Blau 1973; Perkins 1973; Baldrige et al. 1978; Parsons and Platt 1973), I want to turn now to two other issues of major importance: (1) the effect of collegiate organization on mid-level administrators' responsibilities and activities, and (2) the effect of collegiate organization on the careers of middle-managers.

Throughout this monograph, the roles and tasks of middle-managers will be discussed. The effect of organizational size on the differentiation of functions has already been noted (Meyer 1972; Brown 1969; Altbach 1977). In this section particular attention will be given to additional selected effects of the mixed organizational structure.

The structure is complex. It is not merely a merging of the bureaucratic and the collegial with a dash of the political, but a state of uneasy balance made up of entirely different and, to some degree, noncomplementary forms. The balance includes not only formal and informal authorities and professional and nonprofessional staffs, but both unitary and federal structures, single and multi-

ple value systems, consensual and bureaucratic coordination, and hierarchical and "flat-structure" communications. It is a rough balance between the conditions required for academic freedom and individual autonomy, and the necessity for organizational efficiency, accountability, and control (Ikenberry 1972). Decentralized versus centralized authority are constant value themes. Most institutions are "fiercely decentralized," resulting in the "organized autonomy" of which Millett (1977) speaks.

The values of collegiate middle-managers are not purely bureaucratic, as one might guess from their administrative organizational structure, but are informed by the collegial sentiments and beliefs of the faculty (Bess 1978). This effect varies with the kind and frequency of interaction between managers and faculty; the kind and frequency of interaction varies—as do incentives, conditions, and aspirations—according to position as line or staff.

Another effect of the mixed organizational structure is that socialization is complicated because role models are often ambiguous. There are several reasons for this. In many cases, a middle-manager's superior has not worked in the area he supervises. This is especially true in financial aid and admissions, but also in the other fields (Scott 1978c). Also, the senior officer of the institution is even less likely to have any working knowledge of middle-management fields, their problems, and their complexities. He is, after all, an "amateur" administrator who got where he is by not aiming for it (Cleveland 1977, p. 33; Knapp 1969). Furthermore, the other major clients of the middle-managers—students and faculty—want service and are unlikely to be informed about the field. As a result, of the mixed organizational structure, middle-managers are both circumscribed in what they do and bombarded by a mixture of role cues (see chapter entitled "Uncertain Loyalists") (Scott, 1978d).

Proper socialization to a field or position should result in professional identity, commitment to one's work, and a career (Bucher and Stelling 1977). But this requires role models, even as negative forces, and collegiate middle-managers often do not have them. More than likely colleagues at other campuses and even government officials will be the source of role standards (Graves 1977).

Still another effect, which as far as I know has not been studied, is the influence of academic department organization and values on administrative office organization and values. The result is a lessening of the influence of hierarchical structure and an encouragement of informal relations between status levels. I am not suggesting that

this is universal, but that it is more common in collegiate institutions than in other forms of bureaucracy. However, the committee structure of academic departments and faculties has not been widely adopted in the form of task force organization (Bennis and Stater 1968). One reason for this may be the faculty's reluctance to tolerate administrators without apparent portfolios.

In partial summary, the effects of the mixed organizational structure on the work setting of collegiate mid-level administrators contributes to the confusion of roles, the diffusion of values, and the complexity of tasks.

Sources of Administrators, and Their Backgrounds and Training

Based on the findings of several studies (Ingraham and King 1968; Bess and Lodahl 1969; Thomas 1978; Scott 1976a; AACRAO 1977; CUPA (see Van Alstyne 1977a), and others) one can offer some generalizations about the sources, backgrounds, and training of collegiate middle-managers.

The CUPA survey (Van Alstyne 1977a, pp. 52-54) includes both basic demographic data and summary descriptions of the positions. Of the incumbents surveyed, 79 percent were white men, 5 percent minority group men, 14 percent white women, and 2 percent minority group women. White males predominate in virtually every administrative post except the affirmative action/equal opportunity officer. At white, coeducational institutions, they hold 83 percent of administrative posts (Van Alstyne 1977a, p. 2).

Ten years ago, most mid-level administrators who were directors of offices came to their collegiate positions after they were age 30, well after their college education and graduate training were completed (Bess and Lodahl 1969, p. 221). Ingraham (1968), Hauser and Lazarsfeld (1964), and Scott (1976a) point out that "directors," the officer-level surveyed, were mostly in their forties. About one-half of the office directors surveyed in the 1968 and 1969 studies, as well as in the 1976 and 1978 studies, came to the positions from other collegiate administrative posts or from faculty positions. The others came from secondary school teaching or administration and from outside education. Of course, some of these entered their jobs directly from graduate school. In my 1977 survey (Scott 1978e), the previous positions held included newspaper reporter and editor, army officer, AAUP staff, auditor in a commercial credit company, public accountant, laboratory administrator, and coordinator of

elementary school programs. A strikingly large number of middle-managers start and continue their mid-level administrative careers at the institutions they attended as students (Hauser and Lazarsfeld 1964; Bess and Lodahl 1969; Scott 1976a).

A capsule generalization about middle-managers' backgrounds and training is that their parents are more than likely to be or have been white-collar workers with average or higher educational attainment (Hauser and Lazarsfeld 1964; Scott 1976a). While the percentage obviously varies by position, middle-managers are comparatively well-educated; those with some type of advanced degree out-number those with only bachelor's degrees (Scott 1976a). However, most training for occupational responsibilities is gained on the job. There is neither formal training nor socialization for collegiate middle-managers as there is for school superintendents and principals. In answer to the question about what collegiate middle-managers are like, we can say tentatively that in background, training, and orientation they are probably more like teachers and salesmen than like physicians and librarians; more like businessmen than faculty (Hauser and Lazarsfeld 1964; Scott 1976a).

Career Paths, Mobility, and Organizational Commitment

It is not uncommon when interviewing collegiate middle-managers to find a director of an office who has served for twenty years or more in the same position, during which time his office's responsibilities have grown and expanded. In similar fashion, the whole administrative organization of the college became more complex and added administrative layers. A variation of the "Peter Principle" takes place: the person appointed head of a small service office stays as its head even while it grows in size and complexity; the required skills change, but the same person remains director. In one institution I studied, the director of an office was due to retire after 47 years at its head; the assistant had been second in charge for 19 years. There are several issues highlighted by such an example, not the least of which is loyalty or organizational commitment, with career paths and mobility being others.

The longevity of office directors can serve to retard even further the already limited internal mobility of junior officers in the relatively flat organizational structures of colleges (Scott 1975). Thomas (1978) and Bess and Lodahl (1969) refer to the slight turnover of middle managers, but they sampled only heads of offices. In my study, I asked department heads about turnover among subordinates and as-

sociation officials about turnover among members. Based on this sample it appears that assistants and associates change positions much more frequently than directors.

The literature on the organizational commitment of collegiate administrators is sparse. Thomas (1978) provides an excellent summary and analysis of what is known and contributes to the field with the findings from his research. He cites Lodahl and Kejner (1965) and Buchanan (1974, p. 340), who define job involvement as the degree to which a person's work performance affects self-esteem, identification with the organizational mission, a sense of involvement in one's organizational duties, and a commitment to remain with one's organization.

The message is clear: commitment requires, among other elements, that one's self-esteem be enhanced. Generally, the status and role of collegiate middle-managers is subservient to others, especially faculty (see also Scott, 1978a and 1978c). Consequently, more needs to be known about the loyalty and commitment of college administrators, since their relationship to senior administration and to the governance system, and their opportunities for socialization, are simply not the same as those of the business executives, engineers, and scientists whose organizational commitment has been studied.

Another element of commitment is opportunity. What opportunities for mobility are available to middle-managers? It is true that opportunities for mobility differ by field; not all collegiate middle-managers have similar opportunities for advancement. First, not all categories have clearly defined career paths. Second, not all positions require skills that are desired by industry and government, and persons in these positions have greater opportunities for mobility. So mobility exists in several forms and will be discussed in terms of internal and external mobility.

Internal mobility, or advancement within an institution, is limited in several ways, some of which are obvious, e.g., pyramid-shaped organizations have fewer spots at the top than at the bottom. Mobility may involve traditional advancement, say from assistant director to associate director to director, or from director to vice president. Mobility in this form involves increasing responsibilities over larger numbers of people and for larger budgets, and for supervising more layers of supervisors. This traditional form of serial or upward advancement is greatly limited in colleges and universities because there are fewer levels of supervision than in other organizations (Millett 1977). This short vertical or flat structure, with little distance between the

lowest managers and vice presidents, is accompanied by increasing specialization at the base of the organization. The result is "girth growth" or a short pyramid with a wide bottom.

The impact of Affirmative Action on career paths also makes it difficult for an institution to transfer a junior officer in one department to a mid-level position in another as part of a program in staff development, since the position would have to be widely advertised instead.

Because the traditional form of upward mobility is limited, two variations have developed that may be found in management organizations as well as in colleges. In the one case, the administrative, personnel, or career-counselling office grows in complexity and in the range of services offered and the number of clients serviced. As a result, the director may serve twenty years or more with the same title but with an ever-expanding number of staff members reporting to him. In this case, the middle-manager is "pushed" up a ladder of responsibility, for which there are compensating salary and status adjustments, even though he does not actually move up the organizational ladder.

In the other case, the middle-manager performs a function that is so vital to the health of the institution, says admissions, and becomes so expert at what he does, that he receives acclaim both on and off campus. In recognition of this exceptional service, the university may reward the officer with a change of title to one that reflects higher status. In the case of one nationally known Registrar and Admissions Officer, titles have ranged from Registrar and Director, to Registrar and Dean, to Vice Provost for Registration and Enrollment, to Executive Officer for Enrollment Studies. Other nationally known persons in admissions hold the titles of Assistant Vice President for Life Planning, and Vice President for Enrollment Planning. A cynic might say that such status inflation is silly, but how else other than in salary (an unlikely possibility) can a college or university reward an excellent middle-manager who has devoted many years of successful and sophisticated service to an important job.

Of course not everyone stays. With incumbents in office for so many years and so few opportunities available for lateral transfer to new jobs, junior-level administrators find they must leave to advance. This kind of advancement takes several forms. Some move from an assistant or associate position at one institution to an associate or director position at another. There are those who move and keep the same title but earn a higher salary and command more respect by working in a larger office. And then there are those who achieve up-

ward mobility by downgrade progression. These people trade the status of their current employer for the prestige of a higher position in a college of lower status.* From some middle-management positions, this is the most common type of mobility; however, it too is limited: a senior middle-manager may be already earning a salary that is higher than another institution pays its senior officers.

By definition, there are fewer opportunities for advancement at high status schools because there are fewer of them and not all junior-level administrators at high-status colleges will be able to progress through the ranks at those colleges. As a consequence, these administrators must look for higher level employment at schools of lower status where in fact they are often seen as desirable candidates because of their previous connections. The same phenomena have been reported in England (Brooks 1973).

Another view of mobility is called "turnover." Mobility is valued by middle-managers, but as managers they are concerned about turnover. Is there a proper rate for it? The high rate for financial aid officers—reported as more than 30 percent annually (Scott 1978c)—does not seem healthy, but neither does the slow rate represented by persons who are assistant directors with the same responsibilities for fifteen years or more. Turnover and mobility are topics deserving further research and discussion.

Administrators' Rights and Grievance Procedures

The effects of mixed organizational structure on middle-management careers have resulted in concern for administrators' rights and grievance procedures. There seems to be a trend for middle-level administrators to see themselves as separate in condition and status from the senior administrative levels. This is in part the result of the increased professionalism felt and sought by middle managers.

While the statements of rights and grievance procedures for administrators are meant to be applied to all levels of officials (McInnes 1971), it is clear that the separate groups do not mix well. After all, it is the president—usually chosen from the ranks of faculty—who decides whether or not career development activities will be supported. And it is not unusual to hear it said that such support is not important because: there is no mobility in college administration, and

*Status refers to one's position in relation to others of the same profession, class, or social standing. "Prestige" is one's reputation or influence as a result of achievement or rank. Therefore, I speak of trading of school status for position prestige.

therefore no need to allot hard-pressed budget dollars to training; there is a constant supply of recent graduates and faculty who have either been denied tenure or who wish to move out of their laboratories into administration; and administrators with a desire to learn will somehow get the training they need (Scott 1978e).

The lack of sympathy for professional training, salaries, and prospects for mobility (Millett 1977), together with the low status of middle-managers on campus (Perkins 1973), make it small wonder that a group such as the American Association of University Administrators (AAUA) has developed. The question is why more administrators do not participate.

AAUA was founded in 1970 by six administrators at SUNY Buffalo. Now there are more than 1,600 members of AAUA, who join for reasons including the annual conference, a clearinghouse on career advancement, regular newsletters, a professional development program, and a task force that offers both individual and group help on grievances. The latter is a major service headed by lawyers and legal experts (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 22, 1978, p. 8).

The organization has not made the impact it might have and is now subject to a form of splintering after achieving a degree of maturity. This is because it has tried to include both presidents, for status, as well as middle-managers, their natural constituency, and has been directed by a group with a strong student personnel orientation. The latter is a middle-management group with relatively low status and is believed by some to be a "necessary evil" rather than an important segment of university administration (Scott 1976c).

In addition, AAUA has not attracted more members because it is "one more" organization for administrators whose time, budget, and motivation are already stretched by equally attractive organizational demands. Then too, AAUA would serve a group whose members are already well-served by specific occupational organizations. Moreover, it appears to be dominated by public institutions, which tend to be large, so that many private institution administrators think of the organization as representing the interests of schools that do not fit their profile in the important area of administrator rights.

In an excellent statement on administrator rights, McInnes (1971) comments that the principle right for an administrator is "sufficient authority to do his job"; his responsibility is to be accountable. McInnes briefly reviews the development of faculty and student statements of rights, the AASCU "Basic Rights" for presidents, and

the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators "Statement of Desirable Conditions and Standards for Maximum Effectiveness of the College Administrator." According to McInnes, the last are not sufficient statements for administrators because the AASCU statement is limited to presidents and concentrates "more on procedures than on fundamental principles and value judgments" (p. 377). McInnes then states his own principles and values.

He follows the form of the statement of student rights to present the basic freedoms of an administrator under four headings: freedom of access to the university, including the freedom to be considered for a job; freedom in his office, including the freedom to administer and be accountable; freedom on and off campus; and freedom of due process. These are the basic freedoms of a person, citizen, and member of an academic community.

Such a statement is not known widely, and the reports of ombudsmen (*Cornell Chronicle*, March 9, 1978, p. 3), AAUA, and groups such as the Organization of Professional Administrators at C. W. Post suggest that administrators are in a difficult situation. The recommendations that follow will offer suggestions for improvements.