

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY: DEANING IN ACADEME

Adams, Hazard. *The Academic Tribes*. 2d ed. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1988. 185p. alk. paper, \$21.95 (ISBN 0-252-06000-8). LC 87-19051.

Martin, Josef (pseud.). *To Rise Above Principle: The Memoirs of an Unreconstructed Dean*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1988. 180p. alk. paper, \$19.95 (ISBN 0-252-01507-X). LC 87-27227.

Morris, Van Cleve. *Deaning: Middle Management in Academe*. Urbana, Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1981. 182p. \$19.95 (ISBN 0-252-00871-5). LC 80-26119.

Announcing new books in 1988, the University of Illinois Press called attention to the above three titles on academic administration. The one with the most intriguing title, and also the most fun to read, is the work of Josef Martin, a pseudonym used to "protect the innocent." *Deaning*, by Van Cleve Morris, a former Dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is more pedestrian but does contain useful information. His book is a somewhat cynical view by someone who obviously had his problems as an administrator of a major unit on an urban university campus. Hazard Adams's book is not really a new edition but is essentially a reprint of a book that appeared in 1976. The U of I Press has reissued the book in paperback, with a new preface and with three speeches entitled, "A Triptych of Appendixes" at the end. The cover describes it as "a wise yet witty excursion down the halls of academe by a seasoned veteran of departmental and administrative politics." In my review of the earlier edition I noted that

Adams is not as "wry" and more "bitter" than the jacket indicates, a view I have moderated this time around.¹

All three books are worth reading by librarians, especially those who know little about how higher education operates or who haven't experienced academic administration firsthand. The authors share the frustrations of being "middle managers in academe" and claim that deans have little power (except to keep the wrong things from being done), but they do help the reader understand more clearly both the constraints on administrators and the political context in which universities operate. This reviewer recommends to all academic librarians Martin's chapters on evaluations, tribal stereotypes, and tricks of the trade. Despite his biases (and there are a good many C&RL readers won't like), Martin's chapters explain processes in academia that may be poorly understood by most librarians and teaching faculty. And he is a delight to read, even when one disagrees with him.

There are a lot of similarities in these three books. All three deal with the academic environment, specifically its human relations aspects and its politics. Adams declares his book to be "good-natured musings that have arisen out of personal experience," while Morris declares that his book is not a technical treatise but "an individual perspective on an unlit corner of academic life." Martin, who found it "exhilarating to be dean" (as did I), claims that nothing has been written about the "extraordinary incidents that flavor a dean's life." His numerous,

and humorous, war stories certainly illustrate his principles. Despite the book's title, it is clear that Martin indeed has principles; they are frankly old-fashioned, classic, liberal principles.

Both Martin and Adams take a dim view of the social sciences, which try to be scientific and rarely succeed. Adams's book opens with the famous quote from W. H. Auden: "Thou shalt not sit with statisticians nor commit a social science." Martin also has a bias against social scientists and professional schools, but then both he and Adams obviously come from the humanities. Not that either exempts their humanistic colleagues from criticism, some of it aimed at their unfortunate attempts to ape the scientists.

One might dub all three authors as neoconservatives, especially in the areas where they had to deal with restrictions imposed by the federal government, whether in grants and contracts, affirmative action, or dealing with the urban environment. They are committed to scholarship but realize that much posturing goes on in this area. The manner in which different disciplines disparage another discipline's methods and approaches reminds

one of Walter Prescott Webb's comment on historians: that he had never known two historians to agree on anything except that a third historian was not a good historian!

Among other qualities that mark a good dean, ability to listen is regarded by the writers as at least as important as dealing with issues. Martin suggests that it is always better to talk face-to-face with individuals than to write memos, because this way "one is less likely to attribute unworthy motives to people with whom one disagrees" (p. 154). He follows this with one of his (and my) favorite injunctions: Never attribute to malice what can be explained by [simple] incompetence.

All three make passing references to libraries and books, of which they obviously approve. Adams is more concerned with a small, well-selected collection for undergraduates than a massive research collection (p. 125-26). However, their strictures concerning general university service units that support scholarship and teaching could also be applied to libraries. These units come in for criticism as the authors fulminate against an increasingly bureaucratized university, with staff more



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concerned about rules than service. All three confess that the faculty (from whence they came and to which they returned) do not understand administration but *think* they know what administrators do. (Shades of Herbert White's comments vis-à-vis faculty who *think* they understand libraries and librarianship!)

In an earlier paper on "Defining the Academic Librarian," this reviewer suggested that librarians, in addition to their basic skills, need to understand the history and development of higher education.² As a former director and dean, I can fully appreciate the frustrations of which these three ex-deans speak. But I do not buy their argument that deans have little power, nor do I think their examples substantiate that view. Hazard Adams is right, though, about the importance of administrators returning to the faculty (p.8). Most deans have a limited time to be effective; fixed terms for deans/directors is one way to ensure that the length of their administrative terms does not outlast their effectiveness. In a recent article, Anne Woodsworth has suggested other avenues to deal with the problem of middle managers in service areas who have no place to go after their term of service in one position.³

Other observations that should be useful to librarians are Morris's chapters on "Salary, Promotion, and Tenure," "Outreach," and "Governance"; Martin's principles in chapter 18, "To Rise Above Principle"; and Adams' essay on "How Departments Commit Suicide." Academic librarians have been struggling

with similar problems for a long time. One wishes that these issues were more often discussed in the context of higher education at annual conferences.

In the last twenty years, Jossey-Bass and other publishers have issued numerous books on higher education. There have been a few good "how to" textbooks and several decent histories. But these three authors chose a different genre for sharing their experiences in administration at the decanal level, that of personal observation. In such a genre, background and bias are obviously present. But so are insights that are often not present in other approaches. Many librarians will find that they can relate well to many of the illustrations and principles.

What these authors do best is provide the reader with their observations on the very human failings of academicians and the structure of the academic enterprise. Librarians need to understand both the personal element and the structure of higher education better. These books, generally well written and often entertaining, should help them.

1. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 3:311-12 (November 1977).
2. Edward G. Holley, "Defining the Academic Librarian," *College & Research Libraries* 46:462-68 (November 1985).
3. Anne Woodsworth, "Library Directors as Middle Managers: A Neglected Resource," *Library Administration & Management* 3:24-27.

—Edward G. Holley, *School of Information and Library Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Leadership for Research Libraries: A Festschrift for Robert M. Hayes. Ed. by Anne Woodsworth and Barbara von Wahlde. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1988. 255p. \$25 (ISBN 0-8108-2129-X). LC 88-6634.

The authors note in the introduction that this book is "in celebration of a leader in the library and information profession, still at the zenith of his professional activities, who has significantly impacted infor-

mation policy, library services, and education for information and library science in many countries." The occasion is the decision of Robert M. Hayes to relinquish the Deanship of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, to devote himself to research and teaching.

The festschrift includes an assessment of the impact of Robert Hayes, ably chronicled by Dorothy Anderson. Beyond the