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Library Trends

*Current Trends in Library
Administration*

ERNEST J. REECE, *Issue Editor*

January, 1959

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Introduction

ERNEST J. REECE

WHEN THE PRESENT ISSUE EDITOR became interested a while back in studying certain fringe responsibilities of library administrators, it soon appeared that some other aspects of library administration might deserve renewed attention. A plan for this was approved by the Publications Board governing *Library Trends*, and this issue is the result. It has been made possible by the generous aid of the several collaborators, whose papers have claimed substantial time and effort on their part and should prove useful to the library profession.

The aim has not been to achieve a finished treatment, but to bring out phases of present concern in directing libraries, especially where they have attained considerable size. For example, it has seemed profitable to consider how the administration of libraries is related to that of other institutions, what it presently embraces, how generally its principles are invoked in practice, whether the accepted sharing of responsibility for it is ultimate, what forms of organization it indicates, and the direction in which it is tending. On such matters the accompanying papers furnish expressions which appear to possess weight, even if not finality.

In setting up the issue the hope was to minimize distinctions among libraries of the several kinds and sizes and to view library administration as indivisible. That is, the concern is with principles, and hence universals, before applications. This approach is prominent in a number of discussions. True, several articles reflect largely experience and interest in libraries of particular types, coming from authors who have spent their professional lives mainly in a single sort of environment and could not be expected to be equally familiar with others. The value of such papers need not be restricted to their own fields, however, since

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so far as library administration is integral what is relevant in one sector must be translatable to others.

To regard this issue as limited to current trends in a strict sense is less than precise. Its concern with the future has been mentioned, and the present departs so gradually from the past as to offer little more than a fresh page in a continuing record. Furthermore, developments in library administration largely are dispersed, and often identifiable only after some lag. To portray them with confidence often would require extended investigation. Doubtless for such reasons one of the contributors declares that while changes are taking place in library administration, there appear little plan and no clear tendencies. What the participants in the number could be asked to provide is excerpts from the thinking and observation discernible among the heads of libraries.

The sections making up the number are rich in their range, and even more so in the reiterations which render certain matters pre-eminent. Some have to do with practice, and others with fundamental ideas, needs, prospects, and possibilities. This introduction can do little beyond indicating their direction.

The conditions most easy to pin-point are those relating to organization, methods, and status. Centralized administration seems on the increase, as affecting both structure and operation. Departmental plans are undergoing evolution, in pace with the growth of libraries and with a view to compact control. Participation in management by staffs is becoming conventional, and that by laymen increasingly favored. And among public libraries where government through city managers prevails, encroachment upon the authority of head librarians, and even more upon that of library boards, has been working mischief in some cases and rousing apprehension in others. Although so far this cloud may be no larger than a man's hand, it seems to merit the attention two of the authors have accorded it.

Plainly library administration can not be considered from now on as a tight, self-contained pre-occupation of a few interested persons. Executives and governing bodies seem to be realizing actively that their action is shaped largely by others, and accordingly that awareness of what is being thought and done in their environment must be intimate. Unhindered rapport and two-way commerce are imperative therefore, in relation to constituents, community, peers, clientele, and associates, and among the parties to administration. Aside from knowing the commonplace needs, the opportunities and possibilities must be

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sensed, ways and means explored by conference and perhaps through trial-balloons, and avenues for collaboration discovered. As part of the process understanding and appreciation are to be fostered. Contributors to the number have wrapped up these ideas in the term "communication," which can be useful as they particularize it, however well-worn it may be otherwise.

Sensitiveness to opinion and reactions brings stress to a library and its heads, of course, and the necessity for decisions. Is the institution to be "all things to all people," or is it to limit and sharpen its aims? What guide shall it follow when, amid financial cut-backs, it must choose between shortening the quantity of service and diluting the quality? How far shall it take the initiative, attempt pressures, employ political devices, when it descries open doors or is alerted to perils? The contingencies here are numerous and may be perplexing, but no author suggests that antennae be lowered in order to evade them.

Beyond the conditions above rehearsed, such trends as can be imagined grow speculative. The very concern about them in the minds of contributors, however, may attest that some are in the making. It must have meaning, for example, to find even a few leaders recognizing that the attitude of librarians to administration has been hamperingly empirical; that their professional literature on the subject has been scant and immature; that research so far has imparted little to its history and rationale; that the administration of libraries does not differ materially from that of other organizations; and that librarians could profit from the knowledge and experience gained and the practice tested in other fields where administration is requisite. Remedies for the shortcomings thus implied would seem to invite attention.

But what specifically can be hoped for? One of the authors has pointed his paper to this, and notes in the articles of others are pertinent.

With the present linked closely to the past, as has been recalled, the future seems likely to embody a good deal of the present, and forecasting therefore to be relatively free from hazard. Contributors to the issue apparently anticipate that out of current exertions some gains will emerge. These might include prompt re-appraisal of the position of libraries as changes in their milieu call for it; more tenable canons and patterns of organization; sharper attuning to the waves of opinion amid which libraries operate; nicer awareness of the breadth of their responsibilities; heightened skill in the duties imposed by altering conditions; improved preparation to breed that skill; the sloughing

off by administrators of tasks that impede their efficiency; and, perhaps most important of all, detached study of administrative problems, with eagerness to look over fences and seize upon the wealth of guidance in other pastures. There can be no assurance that all this will happen, but plenty of logic in believing it ought to come.

Perhaps as a preliminary, perhaps along the way, a sound definition of library administration could unfold, to replace the loose notions that have prevailed. Beginning with the truism that administration essentially means "getting things done through people," it might make clear what a library head ought to be at. Any such statement of course would need to be elemental, and apposite in whatever situation. It could be a governor everywhere, even in those major institutions which have been forced by sheer bigness to insure order in their conduct. Possibly indeed it is a prerequisite to the adoption of correct principles and means. Certainly the issues in library administration can not be talked about intelligently without agreement on what it comprehends. And very likely the production of competent administrators, upon which the remaking of libraries and the warrant for a library profession hinge, will drag until the responsibilities they face are made clear and cogent.



Institutional Administration

PHILLIP MONYPENNY

THE TITLE OF THIS PAPER is somewhat misleading if it implies that what follows is concerned primarily with hospitals and orphanages. Neither is it concerned primarily with trends, but rather with a statement of administrative principles thought to be applicable to the special situations under study. It starts with the elements which all types of administrative organizations have in common. Since other papers in this series are concerned with specific topics, some of the deductions from the general scheme will be left to the reader to make for himself.

The onset of contemporary thinking about management problems is marked roughly by the publication of Mary Parker Follett's *Creative Experience*.¹ When she wrote, administration, or management, was considered to be largely a matter of impersonal technique. Both the external, or political, relationships of agencies and their internal operation were treated formally and statically as matters of technique and structure. The point of departure today is to treat administration as a matter of interpersonal relationships, as the reference to Ivan Belknap shows.² The climax of this development is the treatment of administrative organizations analytically as social systems as in the works of C. I. Barnard³ and H. A. Simon.⁴ With respect to internal relations there is no question that the trend of managerial opinion has followed that of writing in the field. Managerial institutes and human relations courses flourish. It is not possible to know whether practice has been as strongly influenced as opinion. What is presented here is the current state of doctrine.

In discussing any administrative organization it is useful to make a distinction between the internal and external aspects of organizations. All organizations have memberships which are made up immediately of their officers and paid staff, and ultimately, in the view of some

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writers, of their customers or the users of their service.³ In the almost universal patterns of private as well as public administration the full-time career staff is legally accountable to a person or a group who represents the public, or the stockholders, or the original incorporators. The formally prescribed pattern of responsibility among these persons is the organization's structure.

Administrative organizations have not only structure but relationships. They exist through an interchange of services between each organization as a whole and its environment, and between the organization and its staff. Control in any organization lies with those who determine the terms of these dual exchange relationships; who determine what the organization will produce and what it will receive, what the staff will produce and what it will get in return. These are critical decisions since inducements for the staff must come out of the organization's receipts from the external world. Formal responsibility for control is usually vested in the body which represents the public or the stockholders; the full-time paid head of the staff is usually regarded as its agent. Together the full-time head and the representative body constitute the control group.⁵

The relations between this group and the environment of the agency are the dominant features of its external aspect. The external relationships imposed by law or custom determine whether the agency is self-contained, whether it has independent revenues, free of the necessity of dependence on appropriations or of finding a market for its services. Public agencies are self-contained, or autonomous, which have segregated revenues and coopting boards. Private agencies which depend on the uncertain income of contributions or fees are scarcely so. Therefore, there are several categories into which institutions may be divided according to their external aspect: public and private, and, independently of these, autonomous or dependent. Such distinctions do not necessarily indicate radically different conditions of administration, however. Some problems they have in common, and others vary in degree rather than in kind.

It is the terms of the exchange between the institution and its environment, rather than the form of its structure, which determines the policies and procedures it follows. These terms are defined by the things which the institution must receive in order to exist, and from whom and on what terms these things are available. In a city-manager city, where the city manager appoints the librarian, public acceptance of the library and its services may be such as to give the library staff

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virtually a free hand in determining service, subject to income limitations. The interposition of a library board, which appoints the librarian—an arrangement usually regarded as leading to independence—may make the library the servant of the community group from which the board members come. As Oliver Garceau shows, such boards may be virtually coopting, even though formally appointed by the political head of the city, and they may be not at all responsive to those to whom that head owes his election.⁶ A university librarian is chosen by the president and trustees, who also appoint the teaching staff. Yet the teaching and research staff, who cannot control the president who selects the librarian, nevertheless have a considerable influence on library policy. In each case the formal structure does not indicate what the institution must have in order to survive, nor who controls it.

Money is a principal need for any administrative organization, and differences in the terms on which it is available are probably the most important differences to be found between institutions. But more than this is needed for institutional operation; there must be a using clientele, necessary professional and nonprofessional services, which money alone will not always buy, and the prestige and recognition which come from being associated with a respected institution. The conditions on which these are available from the external world are those to which the policy of the organization must be adjusted.

The conditions of support not only influence policy; they determine the points in the organization at which policy will be made. A public library with an active and vocal clientele, which is well satisfied with services, and anxious only that they be expanded, need not be overly concerned about its relationships with a city council. The identity of outlook, and of interest if you will, between the library staff and the public makes the library staff a political force and permits it to initiate policy. A library with an inactive clientele may be at the mercy of a board for which the library is a source of satisfactions quite irrelevant to official library goals. As noted above such a board may be the servant of the community group from which its members come rather than representative of the whole community. Recognition by their peers is the satisfaction they seek, and it is the point of reference from which they judge library policy.⁶ In their view a genealogical collection, or one on local history, may seem more important than children's services.

These considerations make the usual statements about the proper relations between the professional staff and lay control groups some-

what irrelevant.⁷⁻¹⁰ The question is less what definition of relationships ought to be set up than what relationships will be established in the particular circumstances. The advantage of the usual definitions of the respective functions of professional services and lay members of boards of control is that they constitute a sort of Platonic myth to persuade recruits coming into a given system that it is legitimate. If those who govern libraries can be brought to the belief that there are areas of professional decision with which they should not tamper, the doctrine is effective, unless there is a stronger countervailing force. Further, the professional group has bargaining power if its services are regarded as essential. If persons of a desired specialty can be hired only on certain terms, these are the terms which will prevail.

Although there are deliberately created divisions between what are regarded as lay and as professional concerns, there is no natural division of administrative decisions between policy matters and technical matters, nor among technique, goal, and value, by which to regulate the relations of career professionals and lay representatives.^{11, 12} It is not the objective content of the decisions which determines whether they should be made by the professional staff at its discretion, or by a representative body in consultation with professional subordinates; it is a question of the emotions which cluster about the point at issue, of what persons are concerned about it, and of its meaning to them in terms of their future relations to the institution. It is difficult to anticipate the points around which emotions will surge and what persons and groups will thereby battle.

Issues which have become emotionally charged must be classed as policy matters, whatever their standing otherwise as points of technique and not of substance. They cannot be considered without reference to those on whom the library depends for its support. This is not to suggest that matters of principle should be subordinated to the requirements of organizational or personal survival, but only that decisions of such grave import should be recognized for what they are.¹¹

Whatever the form of library organization and whatever the disposition of its supporting clientele, the professional staff will always have a large responsibility for the determination of library objectives. It is not safe to assume, however, that the professional staff can afford to function as a self-contained entity which can work in disregard of forces outside of the library walls.

The questions which must be faced in the decision of policy questions are: in view of their cost, what support is there for these objec-

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tives, and whose support is necessary to a favorable decision; what price can be paid in terms of the other objectives, which may have to be abandoned if these are to be won^{12, 13}

The term "disposition of the clientele" has been used in this discussion. The analogy is spatial; it is intended to mean the goals to which the various library clienteles are attached and how these groups are related to the governing machinery. Capable management requires that staff goals be negotiated in relation to clientele goals so as to secure the maximum possible support of a defensible program without too much attention to the niceties of what is a professional question and what is not. In summary the problem of institution-clientele relations, or of staff-board relations, is one of winning support for a program rather than of establishing an area within which administrative discretion is unquestioned.¹³

If negotiation and management of contending forces are the characteristic of the external relations of a library or of any other institution, they are not absent in its internal operations. Nor can internal operations be separated from external. The staff of the institution must produce the services on which the life of the institution depends in interaction with each other and with the external world.

From the standpoint of internal relations, organizations staffed with professional persons have some special characteristics. A large part of the staff identifies itself with the profession within whose competence the functions fall. Its members therefore take and feel justified in taking an independent view of the goals and methods of the organization.¹⁴ Despite the unifying element of professional training and standards, they are divided among operations constituting specialties which may be carried on in relative isolation. This characteristic libraries share with schools, hospitals, health departments, and other organizations whose staffs are part of the same profession but which have developed a high degree of specialization within the general field.

The position of the hierarchical head in relation to his subordinates is therefore more than usually difficult. His administrative style can scarcely be modelled on that of the old-line factory superintendent. The head of any enterprise must manage the incentives available so as to secure from the members contributions necessary to the success of the organization and its program.^{3, 12} In dealing with professionals the mere use of authority is inadequate. It is necessary to treat the staff as collaborators who have wills and purposes of their own.¹

In spite of this limitation it is the peculiar responsibility of hier-

archical chiefs to achieve some sort of common result out of the operations of the separate parts of the enterprise. Most of the subdivisions of work in any organization do not result in products which are useful in themselves. Those which are so, such as the provision of books and services to readers, are not independent enterprises, but require the concurrent operation of technical departments. The recombination of these elements into a stream of meaningful activity is partly provided in the prescribed routine of any organization, but it is not automatic or self-regulating.

The desired result will be obtained only when the people in each division are aware of each other's tasks and needs and how these relate to the goals of service set for the whole enterprise. Particular crises can be resolved by the direct intervention of the organization head, but day by day operation must depend on habits and attitudes built into the staff.

Doing those things necessary for reintegration, creating an awareness of general goals, defining these goals in terms of the operations needed to realize them, and creating an awareness of the relationship of the parts to the whole are the special responsibilities of the top administrator.^{12, 13} The conditions of cooperation in a complex enterprise can exist spontaneously in a poorly led organization, but it is not likely. One of the disadvantages of hierarchy is that so much depends on the people on the top: the whole scheme of organization makes coordination and control from any other point quite difficult. Hierarchy is the pattern of our time, however, and the responsibility of organizations to the public or to other sponsoring groups requires it. Staff self-sufficiency and accountability to outside control are incompatible conditions.

The recognition of hierarchical responsibility and of its usefulness in the management of cooperative enterprises does not imply that simple legal authority is a sufficient base for the management of internal relations. In current theory authority is not concentrated in a single person or office, and distributed by an act of will. It is a result of the specialization of functions, inheres in the whole organizational working, and may run horizontally, or even from lower to higher, as well as from top to bottom. In professional organizations particularly, staffs are apt to take independent views of policy goals and work standards. Insofar as they have charge of certain operations they are the authorities in their fields, and to ignore them would cause a serious disruption of working relationships.¹⁵

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The best efforts of a professional staff can be secured only if it is able to accept the policy and work standards of the organization as defensible under the standards of the profession. Collaboration in policy-making and in the definition of organization and method is indispensable in avoiding a gulf between the top administrator and his staff which neither can readily bridge.¹⁶

The administrator's role within the organization is particularly difficult because the staff is likely to be more intransigent on the question of defensible goals than he can afford to be, since he must regard the availability of resources and support and it need not. Perhaps for this reason a collaborative relationship will permit a fuller exchange of experience so that each may understand, if not fully accept, the standpoint from which the other makes his judgment.

The staff has been considered as if they were one in their relationship to the administrative chief. Of course this is not the case, wherein lies one of the principal problems of administration. Administration is essentially an interpersonal activity, not a manipulation of non-human objects. The persons on a staff are divided both by their own individual differences of character and by the values and goals which are most significant in the individual jobs they perform. This particularity of outlook is one of the strengths of all administrative organization. It limits the area of choice and the limits within which rationality must operate. It therefore increases the predictability and reliability of individual performance. It increases output since the individual's attention is constrained to cover a more limited field. On the other hand it may well lead to different evaluations of the situation which confronts an organization by members who come from different parts of it. Particularity of responsibility may therefore result in intransigence when there is conflict over procedure or policy, and in refusal to cooperate since differences loom larger than what is common.⁴

The minimizing of conflict and the promoting of cooperation are pre-eminently the responsibility of those in positions of general authority, that is, those high in the hierarchic structure. Conflict is partly mechanical—it follows from the subdivision of work and the definitions of responsibility. A given structure may reduce some types of conflict, but will inevitably increase others. It is obvious that the organization of work should suit the goals considered dominant for the enterprise, so that the largest number of people can identify with those ends even as they identify themselves with their own unit of organization. The tendency to identify with one's own unit, with one's own colleagues, to

accept the values and goals they accept, is one of the strongest forces at work in any organization. To utilize this force is one of the most important requirements of management. The division of work therefore, so that shared aims bulk as large as possible in the official structure of the organization, is a most important consideration in determining that structure. It tends to insure that a maximum area of decision will be influenced by goals which the hierarchic superior wishes to be dominant.^{4, 16}

The structural solutions will never eliminate conflict; they will merely provide new, perhaps more defensible or manageable, kinds of conflict. Securing the attachment of as many people as possible to the general goals of the organization is the surest way of attempting to combine the advantages of the specialization of labor and responsibility with a shared awareness that no one activity is an end in itself and that the performance of socially significant work can be achieved only by a combination of activities. In the process of getting goal acceptance the procedures of group discussion, conference, indoctrination, training, and consultation play their well publicized parts. The tone is set and the occasions for discussion and the sharing of experiences between the different parts of the organization are provided by the hierarchic chief.

The incentives and techniques open to the executive are extensively discussed in other places.^{3, 12, 16} The purpose of this paper is to reiterate a point often made, but perhaps insufficiently appreciated, that organizations consist of interacting people, set in an environment which must sustain their cooperative effort, and that legal authority and a legally autonomous position are an insufficient base for the management of any organization. In external relations an awareness of the interests which cluster around the institution and which must be accommodated in the development of service and program is a necessary element of success. In internal relations an awareness of staff goals and values, and the ability to relate the library program to these goals and values and so win support for the program, are equally necessary. This means staff participation in the development of both policy and method. It means the development of staff collaboration across the lines of organization and specialization. It means a due appreciation of the contributions which the staff make as collaborators in a common enterprise.

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Current Concepts in Library Administration

E. W. McDIARMID

THE TERM "ADMINISTRATION" in librarianship has been subjected to various interpretations and definitions. One may readily recall the typical course in library schools labelled administration, which dealt with such diverse things as the mending of books, posting of bills, and relations with the library board. In many respects, the term library administration was synonymous with librarianship or library work. And in the minds of many people today, there is still difficulty in distinguishing administration from library work generally.

In the literature of library administration of recent years, however, one may see certain limitations to the former inclusive interpretations. Two types seem to be emerging: that to certain kinds of library activity, such as board relations, personnel, and budgeting; and that to certain levels of activity, such as planning and organizing. Under the former, for example, cost accounting would be included almost completely, even the detailed activities involved in keeping cost records. Under the latter, the activities in cost accounting involved with planning, organizing, and personnel would be labelled as administration, but not the detailed maintaining of cost records.

Is there a workable definition of library administration? This writer knows of no one which would delimit the subject clearly for the purposes of this paper. For, though there are numerous definitions of administration, they usually involve either a very broad concept, or one that is almost too narrow. Obviously, a broad description would mean a change in the title of this paper to "current concepts in librarianship." A narrow one could, on the other hand, limit the subject to the activities of only one or two persons connected with the library organization. Neither would be desirable, and the dilemma will be avoided by discussing, instead four attributes of administration: alternatives, analysis, authority, and accountability.

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Current Concepts in Library Administration

The first element, alternatives, separates administration from routine doing. The administrative process enters when two or more pathways are open and custom or rule has not designated the route or method. But this is not enough if administration is to be distinguished from such an operation as deciding which stairway to take on the way to the card catalog. The second factor, analysis, remedies this deficiency, by requiring that the administrative process include consideration of choices. For some alternatives, one might need extensive collection and analysis of data; for others, careful subjective evaluation of possible outcomes. But the administrative process must involve some analysis of data and the weighing of anticipated results. The third attribute of administration, authority, means simply the right to make decisions and expect them to be followed. The fourth, accountability, is almost inevitably associated with authority in any good organization. This term is used in two senses, responsibility for success or failure of a given process or procedure, and responsibility for communicating information regarding success or failure. These four attributes—alternatives, analysis, authority, and accountability—characterize the most widely accepted concept of administration in librarianship today, one which phrased in less verbiage might be described as that of administration as management.

A second concept current in library and other fields of administration is that of central administration. This is almost antithetical to the idea of administration as management. The latter term implies administrative processes as permeating the entire organization and involving many members of the staff. Central administration tends to emphasize concentration of directive processes in the hands of a very few people. Though this author knows of no library where there is actual use of the term central administration, a glance at the literature of librarianship indicates a good deal of feeling that the main practitioners of administration are the librarian or director, and his immediate staff.

A part of the influence behind this concept would seem to be the military organization, where the general staff connotes in the minds of many people a central group, as contrasted with a departmental or regional group. Furthermore, in large organizations the tendency is for administrative decisions to be based upon staff analyses of data and materials—hence the presumption that the staff officers make the decisions. Perhaps the most notable example in higher education is at the University of Chicago, where a certain part of the hierarchy was specifically labelled as the central administration. In other large

colleges and universities now, even though there is no officially adopted term, the phrase is used frequently.

The use of the concept of central administration has certain advantages as well as disadvantages. First, it implies single-minded devotion to the objectives of the organization and its greatest good. Second, it involves the thought of a central pooling of information and data, and an analysis and evaluation of this for the benefit of the organization rather than fragmentary regional or departmental analyses. And, finally, it emphasizes accountability and responsibility. The disadvantages of the concept of central administration lie in the fact that it implies some bifurcation or separation, the central administration being somewhat remote from the actual operations of the organization and looking at them in terms of a few budget figures rather than of specific activities for achieving goals.

Central administration should not be permitted to become a divisive element. This means that it must communicate regularly its concern with the achievement of even the specific goals of separate units, and on the other hand that the various units must make certain that central administration is informed about their specific activities.

A third concept current in library administration seems also to be influenced by developments in other areas and particularly in the field of business administration, namely that of economy. This would be a suitable place to review and discuss some of the arguments regarding librarianship as an art or a science, and likewise the always interesting issue of library service as a mass service to popular needs vs. a limited service to quality needs.

There is no gainsaying the fact, however, that the concept of economy figures largely in library administration today. The reasons for this are obvious. Population growth, which provides more potential users of library work, together with the increasing flow of materials useful to library objectives, the rising cost of service in materials and personnel, balanced against the traditional slowness with which public support is given to public activities, illustrates the setting of the problem. It would be easy to cite example after example of the steps that have been taken to meet the issue: the cooperative library storage activities, the review and analysis of library routines—all of these have had behind them a large share of concern for economy. In many respects the major criteria in a given decision is that of expense, and in recent years methods of obtaining respectable cost information have been designed for libraries and have been employed in libraries.

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In days of rising costs on all sides, one should certainly not decry the emphasis on economy if one is aware of the dangers. The easiest way to achieve economy would be to sacrifice quality. And in an organization whose greatest service may be through quality, this would be disastrous. Another way of seeming to achieve economy would be by an increase in quantity. This, too, has perils. Luckily, in librarianship today there seems to be a healthy appraisal of the proper place of economy, and its use has resulted more in improvement and simplification of library methods and procedures than in their dilution.

The fourth concept is that of lay participation in administration. Lay participation in administration seems much more common in educational institutions as schools, colleges, and libraries, than in business or professional organizations or institutions. While in a big business concern it might be said that the board of directors represents lay participation in administration, this is hardly comparable to the lay public library board or the citizens' advisory committee, or the parent-teacher association, or the alumni association. Furthermore, in recent years there seems to be a trend towards greater lay involvement in the affairs of educational institutions than formerly. The most notable example of late has been the widespread activity in trying to influence the standards and goals of education—a literally astounding outcry of ideas, pet theories, judgments, and proposals to improve the educational system by whatever means the particular individual happened to hold most dear. Such efforts have been directed towards influencing decisions, without authority or accountability, and, in the minds of many people, frequently without analysis. This illustrates the grave danger of over-emphasis upon lay participation. The lay person has little time for learning the details of an institution, and therefore must rely upon his own experience and knowledge in other fields, treating it as transferable to the institution he is concerned with at the moment.

The great advantage, of course, of lay participation is the gain in communication and in public relations. Certainly the more people that are concerned and informed about a library or any other institution, the better chance it has of gaining public understanding and support. At the same time, there are corresponding values of interpretation to the institution or organization itself. One of the great benefits of the current discussions of public education is that educators at all levels are now more aware of some of the difficulties faced by institutions at other levels than their own, and some of the things that are expected of their products. If people could now do less shouting at each other,

and get together to see how each could serve the other better, great good would be achieved. Generally speaking, the concept of lay participation in administration seems to be moving in the direction of responsible action through such groups as boards and advisory committees, with such groups made more intimately acquainted with the organization concerned.

It would logically follow here to introduce a comparable concept in library administration, that of staff participation. This entails an anomaly, for it seems apparent that there can be no organization of any kind involving professional people without staff participation. The question is one of degree, and the discussions of staff participation concern whether or not a staff should participate in every administrative activity or decision, rather than whether or not it should participate.

The arguments for wider staff participation in administration revolve around two factors: first, the wider base of information and experience upon which decisions can be based as more people are drawn into the discussions of them; second, the great increase in morale that is presumed to occur when staff members feel they have a part in shaping decisions which directly or indirectly affect them.

The dangers of wide staff participation in administration are well known: (1) the delay that is involved in bringing many persons into a situation which otherwise might be settled effectively and efficiently, and (2) the likelihood of irresponsible decisions being made, either through the influence of people who have no accountability for them, or by the accountable person but influenced by the effect anticipated upon those participating.

In view of the general acceptance of staff participation in administration, it seems almost heresy to suggest certain qualifications. It is proposed, however, that the basic gain to be achieved here, that of improved morale, is to be attained through understanding and communication, rather than through wider participation in the administrative process of facing alternatives, analyzing them, acting upon them, and being accountable for them. It would follow that staff participation should be looked at carefully with a view to growth in staff understanding, rather than to actual administration.

Observation in the field of higher education, where participation is currently of great interest, certainly supports the above view. In one institution where there seems to be very high morale, decisions are made by those charged with the authority for making them, but communication and the conveying of information are regular and ongoing

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activities. On the other hand, reports come occasionally of another institution where there is much more widespread participation in administration but apparently not superior morale. Coming back to the library, one might well applaud the current concept of the importance of staff participation if it is reasonably directed towards widespread discussion and information, rather than to unwise delegation or shirking of responsibility and authority.

Another factor certainly to be recognized here is the role of the expert. Turning again to the academic scene, no one would argue that the faculty generally should advise and decide in which direction a certain professor of English should pursue his research in the next few years. One may well doubt therefore whether the research professor of English should have a strong voice in deciding which new building was most needed by the university.

The sixth concept in administration deals with organization, or the grouping of activities into units or departments. Whereas formerly there was a tendency to consider the organization as static or stable, the current concept treats it as dynamic, subject to change, and indeed frequently changed. When library administration some years ago was drawing upon the experience of public and business administration in evaluating the bases for departmental organization in libraries, substantial discussion occurred regarding the forms of administrative organization most suitable for libraries. There were arguments in favor of organization by region, type-of-reader, type of material, and subject. Generally, as one reviews the experience of libraries, this trend has served to determine, with some stability, the major bases of organization, yet leaving the boundaries and groupings of various units more flexible than, for example, political boundary lines.

While continuing and strengthening the basic types of organization, however, libraries and other educational institutions have subjected these to modifications and variations. There have been groupings of several lesser units into a single larger one; there has been the accretion of certain functions of library service in a department which formerly did not have them; and there has been the example of formerly independent or separate departments actually merged or combined into one.

There are two basic reasons for these developments. The first is that as institutions increase in size and complexity, activities formerly performed relatively simply become complicated and require distinct administrative units, which must be recognized in the administrative organization.

As for the second reason, it is very clear to any administrator of a large agency that the chances of finding exactly the right person for each administrative part in that organization is very difficult, and with the increasing shortage of personnel this has become a problem of even greater moment. As a consequence the institution, instead of going out to find the person ideally qualified to head the particular activities which are combined in a division at the moment, chooses the one who most nearly fits the qualifications. If he has other responsibilities these are frequently added to the section which he is promoted to head. There seems to have been much more of this in the auxiliary services, such as personnel, purchasing, budgeting, than in the line departments such as reference, circulation, and branch libraries. In a few instances, such changes have been made to reduce the span of control at a certain level, that is, to group into one unit as many diverse functions as can be conveniently placed there, in order to cut down the spread which the officer above will have to encompass. But, generally speaking, the major direction has been to utilize the talents of the person involved, rather than to fit the individual's talent to an organizational scheme or framework.

At the moment, this trend appears to be struggling against another in institutions of large compass, namely, the maintenance of the organization as it exists and the establishing of new administrative qualifications. If one reads the literature of business today, with its strong emphasis upon the need of liberal arts training for the successful executive, he cannot but surmise that practical problems of personnel are partially responsible. It is no longer possible in many organizations, and indeed in many libraries, for the mine-run executives to have had basic practical experience in all of the units. As a result, for persons who have authority and accountability over widely varying activities the important thing is to be broadly and liberally trained, and able to remedy deficiencies in practical experience by broad leadership and understanding qualities, those which a liberal education is designed to provide. In this sense, the search is for persons who can fit into the organization rather than for those who may amend or alter it to suit their competencies.

It is obvious that a little of both is essential to good administration. An organization should neither be constantly overhauled, nor be so rigid and static that it becomes confining. This is an area in which administrative theory could be tempered by careful analysis of the practical problems involved; and in institutions of education, includ-

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ing libraries, this tends to happen. Thus, administrative organization changes, not according to whim or the vagaries of the time, but upon reappraisal of objectives, alteration of functions and activities as times change, and the qualifications of the individual for whom the organization is but a framework for accomplishment. The concept of organization as dynamic deserves to be widely understood and accepted in educational administration.

The seventh concept is that of administration as reflecting in some mysterious or esoteric way the wishes and needs of the community to be served. In libraries, as in other educational institutions, the function of administration has been held to be that of providing for community needs. The educational institution does not exist to create needs, which it then attempts to supply; it exists to analyze, appraise, and recognize needs which are either present in our society or implied, and which therefore require attention. Now this concept, which certainly has had a great influence in educational institutions, often produces more confusion than clarification, arising perhaps from the fact that the problems of communication are difficult, indeed almost insurmountable.

To be more specific, two of the questions upon which libraries receive from their clientele most communication, using the term broadly, concern things people think ought not to be on the shelves, and things of which they believe the library should have more. In educational institutions generally the questions are (a) why does the institution bother with this type of service? or (b) why doesn't the institution offer this type of service? Communications on such questions can be helpful, but hardly guides to administrative action, since they may be temporal, one-sided, or influenced by special interest. As long as the library is thought of as existing to serve certain needs, either better ways must be found of providing the communication necessary to appraise these, or the library must face its problems with imagination and insight rather than by direction.

This matter has a reverse side, the difficulty of communicating to the community itself, even where the goals of the library are relatively clear, what these goals are. The old saying, "One is judged by what he is rather than what he says," is pertinent here. The library is judged more by what it is to any given individual than what it says to that individual, and this means many varying attitudes in the community. And because there are many varying needs and interests, the library evidently is forced into trying to be all things to all people. Because of

