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Factors associated with statutory consortium effectiveness : a case study of one Virginia consortium for continuing higher education

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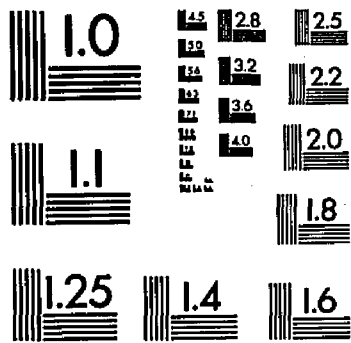
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**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STATUTORY CONSORTIUM EFFECTIVENESS:
A CASE STUDY OF ONE VIRGINIA CONSORTIUM FOR CONTINUING
HIGHER EDUCATION**

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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**A Dissertation
presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education**

**by
Mark W. Poland
October 1986**

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STATUTORY CONSORTIUM EFFECTIVENESS:
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Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

Introduction

In recent years the pool of prospective traditional college students has decreased, the condition of many college and university buildings has deteriorated, and the tenured faculty has grown older. Colleges and universities have considered various strategies to overcome these problems. Their strategies generally fall into two broad categories: compete against each other for declining numbers of students and scarce resources or cooperate with one another for their mutual well-being. For state-supported institutions, this has created a dilemma: Can a state permit two or more institutions of higher education to offer identical programs and courses to the same population? If this situation is not acceptable, is there a way state-supported colleges and universities in the same geographic region can share their resources to serve effectively the region's citizens? Can states set up agencies to manage competition and encourage cooperation among higher education institutions?

Cooperation

Cost-effective institutional cooperation is desirable for a wide range of educational activities including adult and continuing education. According to Millard (1978),

[How states react to issues in higher education may well determine] "the

shape and direction of postsecondary ...
education for the rest of the century....
There are few areas in which the need for
effective planning to meet intelligently
the educational needs of citizens is more
acute than in the area of adult, continuing
education and lifelong learning (pp. 8,11).

Millard's warning has been heard by officials in higher
education institutions and various state agencies concerned
with higher education. Virginia and other states have
attempted to bring order and coherence to their continuing
education programs state-wide. One way they have done this
is by setting up organizations (such as consortia) to oversee
and coordinate the continuing education offerings of the
state institutions.

However, higher education has historically cherished the
principles of institutional autonomy, territoriality, and
self-sufficiency as foundations of postsecondary education
(L. Patterson, 1979b, p. 37). This independent attitude
naturally does not encourage cooperative efforts. Grupe
(1971) has observed that this posture by colleges and
universities makes competition rather than cooperation the
more likely plan of action. "Self-sufficiency has been the
watchword for too long a time to be abandoned [by academe]"
(p. 752). Yet there are examples of effective cooperative
efforts by colleges and universities which point out the
benefits of such arrangements.

"Integration of resources" is the term Neal (1984a) uses to describe the sharing of educational and financial resources among schools. Such sharing enables institutions to develop "excellence and enrichment" instead of mediocrity (p. 25). According to Neal (1984a), sharing resources and building on the various strengths each school possesses "is a sensible and real response that accommodates the nation's multiplicity of institutions and takes advantage of the diversity that now exists, and will continue to exist" (p. 26). Lewis Patterson (1979a) has observed that "cooperative activities can avoid costly and unnecessary duplication.... The consortium offers an efficient and non-duplicative alternative as an answer to meeting future identified needs....When institutions can agree to cooperate by limiting their competition then the greatest efficiency can be achieved" (pp. VIII 1-VIII 3).

As noted, though, cooperation among institutions of higher learning can be difficult to cultivate since the very nature of the enterprise encourages competitive tendencies. Nevertheless, Lewis Patterson (1979b) believes that educators must "cultivate forms of interinstitutional cooperation and coordination that enhance efficiency and enrich quality..." (p. 3).

Voluntary and Statutory Consortia

An organization formed to encourage and develop cooperation among institutions of higher education is generally referred to as a consortium. A consortium formed

by the free association of institutions is known as a voluntary consortium while a consortium formed by the mandate of law is called a legislated or statutory consortium. The statutory consortium has a membership which has a legal requirement to cooperate and is generally created when a state perceives that its public colleges and universities are not efficiently and effectively serving the needs of the population. Berdahl (1971) has observed that institutions have tended to emulate the model of the "elite university," and that, in turn, has created "much unnecessary duplication" (p. 252). Thus, by establishing a consortium to control this duplication, the state recognizes its responsibility to "hold down current operation costs and divert meager new funds (if any) to emerging needs; improve program and service effectiveness and efficiency; develop new student markets...and so on." The state also attempts to address "the issues behind the blunt question coming from so many consumer and societal sectors: 'Why can't people cooperate for the common good?'" (Konkel & Patterson, 1981, p. 12).

There is literature written about voluntary consortia and the factors which contribute to their effectiveness. Recent research (for example: Offerman, 1985) has looked at voluntary consortia and their organization, programs, and policies. Statutory consortia, on the other hand, have not been the subject of much research. Yet, as Konkel and Patterson (1981) have pointed out, "Ever present when voluntary efforts do not succeed is the potential for the

long arm of the state to require coordination" (p. 15). Given this situation, research on statutory consortia is both appropriate and needed as enrollments decline, funds diminish, and other significant problems confront higher education.

Virginia's Consortia For Continuing Higher Education

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) was established by the General Assembly of Virginia to coordinate the higher education activities of the state (McKeon, 1976, p. 2). As established, it "was primarily a sanctionless advisory board charged to make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia with respect to higher education policy" (McKeon, 1976, p. 101). As several major state higher education institutions expanded their extension offerings and several regional institutions began to enter off-campus continuing education, SCHEV was given in 1966 the responsibility by the Virginia General Assembly to coordinate the off-campus extension and continuing education programs offered by state colleges and universities. This action came at a time when Virginia was in the midst of developing its community college system while encouraging the growth of several of its smaller regional institutions. However, SCHEV continued to interpret its role as one which was advisory rather than regulatory in nature (McKeon, 1976, p. 46).

Because of SCHEV's interpretation of its role as advisor rather than regulator, many in the General Assembly and in

higher education perceived that unnecessary duplication of continuing education offerings was not properly controlled and that there were some geographic areas of the state that were not receiving sufficient continuing education opportunities for their citizens (McKeon, 1976, pp. 98-100). Therefore, the Virginia General Assembly passed, in 1972, legislation that set the groundwork for the establishment of regional consortia for continuing higher education. As passed, Senate Joint Resolution 44 (1972) served as an indication of the General Assembly's "interest in seeing institutions of higher education provide more continuing education opportunities that would meet the needs of people in [each member's own community]" (McKeon, 1976, p. 26). That same year Senate Joint Resolution 67 called for the establishment of a regional center or consortium in the Northern Virginia area with its main office at George Mason University (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1972, October 19, p. 1).

In 1973 an amendment to Section 23-9.10 of the Code of Virginia was implemented by House Bill 1054 which provided additional legislative emphasis on the need to provide continuing education opportunities with economy and without duplication. By this amendment the six regional Consortia for Continuing Higher Education were authorized, thus firmly establishing a vehicle through which SCHEV could accomplish the reduction of unnecessary duplication while encouraging the growth of regional continuing education (McKeon, 1976, p.

75).

Each regional consortium for continuing higher education is required to provide cost-effective and useful continuing education to the citizens in its area through the coordination of cooperative efforts of member schools. Specifically "the objective of this [consortium] plan [is] to provide adequate opportunities for the continuing education of the adult population of the Commonwealth with maximum economy compatible with the maintenance of quality and with optimum utilization of the facilities and the expertise of the various state-supported institutions of higher education....The cooperative arrangement of the consortia [is to] rely upon the cooperation of the member institutions in a partnership of equals" (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1972, October 19, pp. 2,3). With the establishment of the consortia, then, the state assigned each consortium the responsibility for "assessing the needs for continuing higher education [in its region] and for developing a plan to provide maximum interchangeability of credits and to facilitate the earning of degrees by continuing education students" (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1973, December, p. 3).

Among the duties assigned to each consortium are:

- To assess the needs for continuing higher education programs in the consortium region.
- To provide maximum higher education opportunities for continuing education students.

- To encourage mutual acceptance and interchangeability of course credits among participating institutions.
 - To make efficient and appropriate use of the resources of all state-supported institutions within the consortium region.
 - To report to the State Council of Higher Education on the desirability and need for educational services from state-supported institutions not engaged in continuing higher education within the consortium region when educational expertise is not available within the member institutions of the consortium.
- (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1972, October 19, pp. 7-8)

By stressing "interinstitutional cooperation through regional consortia," Virginia planned to provide added continuing education opportunities to its citizens in a more economical and cost-effective manner (State Council of Higher Education, for Virginia, 1973, p. 2).

Effectiveness of Virginia's Consortia

A review of several documents published by SCHEV indicates that there is some disagreement within that organization on the effectiveness of the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education. In the Virginia Plan for Higher Education--1979, SCHEV reported: "The primary goal for the [Consortia for Continuing Higher Education] was to strengthen and coordinate continuing education offerings for the citizens of Virginia. Another goal was to provide a

framework within which the regional institutions could develop their continuing education programs....Both of the goals have been fulfilled for the most part" (p. 48). Yet in 1982 SCHEV reported to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) that "the Council is not convinced that off-campus [continuing] education in Virginia is as good as it can be and should be or that the duplication of course offerings and the competition for students are sufficiently controlled" (p. 76).

These contradictory conclusions raise important questions. In particular, are Virginia's Consortia for Continuing Higher Education useful organizations? Do they possess traits or attributes which contribute to consortium effectiveness?

Research Question

This study focuses on those factors which are related to the effectiveness of consortia in general and legislated or statutory consortia in particular. From an examination of the literature on voluntary consortia a list of attributes which contribute to consortia effectiveness was developed. These attributes were then applied to a selected Virginia Consortium for Continuing Higher Education to determine if the factors identified as contributing to voluntary consortium effectiveness are present in this statutory consortium. The study also investigated whether other factors may play a significant part in statutory consortium effectiveness.

The research question examined is: Does a selected Virginia Consortium for Continuing Higher Education possess the attributes which contribute to the effectiveness of voluntary consortia?

Definition of Terms and Limitations of Research

Consortia are cooperative alliances of institutions of higher education. For the sake of this report a consortium will be defined as an association of two or more institutions which possesses several broad characteristics:

It shares two or more programs or purposes;

It is managed by a professional staff;

It receives regular financial support from its members (Neal, 1984a, p. 23).

Consortia may be formed voluntarily or through the mandate of law. A voluntary consortium has members which came together on their own volition to engage in cooperative programs perceived to be in each school's best interest. A statutory consortium is created through the force of law by governing bodies which believe such an arrangement can create better and more efficient use of state resources. Although there are some (e.g., Neal, F. Patterson, L. Patterson, the Council for Interinstitutional Leadership) who recognize only organizations formed through voluntary agreements as consortia, for the sake of this paper any cooperative endeavor which is organized according to the characteristics outlined above will be considered a consortium.

In this dissertation:

Interinstitutional cooperation, cooperation, cooperative programs and similar terms refer to programs colleges and universities share. This sharing usually includes financial resources as well as physical resources and personnel.

Organizational effectiveness refers to the accomplishment of an organizational purpose or goal which produces an intended or expected result. This is achieved through efficient use of resources (both people and money) and reflects the maximum each resource can produce (see Katz & Kahn, 1966, pp. 149-170).

Continuing education is defined as "educational experiences both credit and non-credit provided by institutions of higher education primarily for adult citizens who are fully employed or for whom education is not their immediate and primary interest" (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, October 19, 1972, p. 1).

This study is limited to research on one Virginia Consortium for Continuing Higher Education. This consortium was selected because: (1) it is a statutory consortium, (2) it possesses the broad characteristics of a consortium defined above, and (3) it is representative of the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education, both in the mix of types of member institutions (large and small four-year senior institutions along with two-year colleges of different sizes) and in its geographical make-up (rural, suburban, and urban settings) as well as in the consortium's organizational arrangements and program activities.

Design of the Study

This study is based on the thesis that effective consortia, both voluntary and statutory, possess certain general attributes. A review of the literature on this subject reveals that several common attributes tend to be present in the voluntary consortia generally considered by experts to be effective. These attributes form the framework for this research; namely, whether a statutory consortium exhibits the attributes of effective voluntary consortia.

A case study of a selected Virginia Consortium for Continuing Education is the vehicle through which the thesis is examined and questioned. An in-depth study of one statutory consortium provides a view of its operation, an understanding of the role of key people associated with it, and a verification of the presence or absence of the attributes of effective voluntary consortia. Through interviews with key people associated with the consortium and an examination of consortium documents, an understanding of the organization emerges.

The remaining chapters of this dissertation present the research. In Chapter 2 the pertinent literature is reviewed. Both an examination of the historical background of consortia in general and a discussion of the attributes of effective consortia developed from the literature review are included. In Chapter 3 a description of the study's design and implementation is provided. A report of the findings of the research is contained in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5 the

conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study are presented.

Chapter 2: Review Of Related Literature

Introduction

The founding of the Claremont (California) Colleges is considered to be the beginning of the higher education consortium movement in the United States (Patterson, 1974, p. 6). From this beginning the growth of consortia has been uneven although the past fifteen or so years have witnessed a dramatic spurt of growth. Lewis Patterson (1970) states that "between 1925 and 1965 nineteen consortia were established; four by 1948, five more by 1958, and an additional ten by 1965. In the next five years, from 1965 to 1970, thirty-two more came into being" (p.1). Today the number of general purpose higher education consortia has grown to more than 130 (Neal, 1984a, p. 23). It is clear that many colleges and universities have discovered the benefits of such cooperative agreements.

As noted, the early days of the consortium movement were marked by slow growth. The Claremont Colleges consortium, founded in 1925 to share a library and other facilities in the Oxford University tradition (Clary, 1970), was alone until 1929 when the Atlanta (Georgia) University Center was begun. This slow development continued until the 1960s when colleges experienced a great influx of students upon less-than-adequate facilities and staff. At the same time, the veritable explosion of knowledge and the escalating economic inflation created a situation which encouraged cooperation.

Joining forces maximized each school's advantages and minimized its deficiencies (Patterson, 1974, pp. 5-6). Later, Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-329) provided support for "cooperative arrangements" among "developing institutions." Thus the time was ripe for the birth of many new consortia (Patterson, 1974, p. 7). Burke (1981) concurs: "[Many cooperative endeavors] were launched with Sputnik and fueled by federal and foundation dollars in the decade of the 1960s" (p. 3).

Interestingly enough, though, while expansion in higher education was the main force behind the remarkable growth of consortia in the 1960s, it has been retrenchment and decline in the 1970s and '80s which have sparked another growth period. The need today to trim budgets and restructure programs and services for a shrinking pool of students and to deal with a graying faculty and aging facilities are forcing schools to consider more seriously the advantages of engaging in cooperative ventures, both service-oriented and academic (Glazer, 1982, p. 177). As Finley (1976) has pointed out: "...the motivation for schools [to cooperate] is now consolidation, not expansion" (p. 52). Additionally, Lepchenske (1975) has observed that "the knowledge explosion has made many single schools realize that one lone institution can not encompass all the knowledge generated by man" (pp. 1-2). Cooperation can be one solution to this dilemma. The Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, Inc., for example, has encouraged member

cooperation which, in turn, has created "a level of program diversity that provides a broader range of educational opportunities to students" (Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, Inc.).

Speaking at the 1985 Council for Interinstitutional Leadership Annual Conference, Arthurs (1985) discussed the benefits, as she viewed them, of cooperative endeavors by colleges and universities. She noted that a consortium should address not only its member institutions' concerns but also issues related to change. As a representative of several institutions, the consortium is in a position to voice the views of many as one strong voice. Arthurs emphasized her belief that a consortium should act as an agent for change while serving its members' day-to-day needs.

Voluntary Consortia Programs

In what types of programs have consortia engaged? The list is varied, yet a pattern does emerge. Neal(1984a) has indicated that programs of "cross-registration or student exchanges, library cooperation, international education, meetings of counterpart administrators, faculty and staff development, and community education seem to be especially common ones" (p. 23). The Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) and the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) both have been active in international education (Neff & Fuller, 1983). The Atlanta University Center and Five Colleges, Inc. have had over the years various "sharing" arrangements, such as library resources, upper-level course

offerings for low enrollment areas (Smith, 1979, pp. 18-20), and international studies (Ziff, 1980, pp. 62-64). Additionally, the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, Inc. supports and promotes student cross-registration among the member schools, interlibrary loan programs, and summer study abroad programs for students, as well as cooperative academic and cultural planning (Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, Inc.). Education for the "non-traditional" student has been enhanced by the National University Consortium (NUC) (Hershfield, 1981; Fehnel, 1982), the Compact for Lifelong Educational Opportunities (CLEO) (Lamdin, 1982), and the Consortium for Lifelong Learning in Arizona (CLAIM) (Axford, 1980) through the use of telecommunications, thus permitting the creation of a sophisticated (and expensive) delivery system of learning to the community. The Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, the Massachusetts Higher Education Consortium, and others have used cooperative purchasing agreements to the advantage of all (Neal, 1984a, p. 30). In an effort to serve industry, higher education, and its community, The Association for Higher Education of North Texas (AHE) serves "as a bridge between industry needs and the resources of the local university community, ...ensuring the most effective use of available resources." Among its programs are joint purchasing, cooperative academic programming, and cooperative support systems for students, faculty, and libraries (The Association for Higher Education of North

Texas).

These examples show that consortial relationships have allowed colleges and universities to enter new areas of interest by sharing the risks with other institutions. At the same time these institutions have been better able to serve their students, faculty, and communities through cooperative activities. Neal (1984a) believes that sharing and cooperating can, "in fact, strengthen the institution as an individual institution" (p. 25). This list also indicates the diverse areas in which such organizations cooperate. As Konkell and Lewis Patterson (1981) have pointed out, "cooperative endeavors now encompass almost every area of individual institutional activities" (p. 7). Institutions believe that, through teamwork and cooperation, they can enter the period of retrenchment and decline and emerge strong and viable with each member sharing the strength and vitality.

Statutory Consortia

The consortia discussed so far consist of members who voluntarily entered into cooperative agreements. That is, participants saw that consortium membership could be to their advantage and willingly entered into such relationships. Yet some consortia have been formed through the mandate of law, created by a state by grouping institutions in some manner and calling them a consortium. These statutory consortia are formed by a state in response to a perceived or actual need that cooperation may be able to fulfill. Generally the

member institutions are linked geographically. By doing this the state can better coordinate the schools' activities. The reduction of duplicated course offerings, the use of common facilities and faculty, and the consolidation of services are often the goals of such arrangements. The state gives the consortium the freedom to meet its goals in the manner deemed best by its members but closely monitors the consortium's activities and outcomes. While there is evidence that voluntary consortia have been fairly effective, it is not clear that statutory consortia have been as effective. It appears that such legislated agreements have been able to reduce the duplication of effort of the member schools and help create a better fiscal posture for the governing body (Konkel & Patterson, 1981, p. 14), but the potential for success may be far greater than the consortia have been able to realize. Why is this the case?

Dichotomy

"Perhaps the most crucial structural issue relating to interinstitutional cooperation endeavors is the voluntary-involuntary dichotomy" (Kreplin & Bolce, 1973, p. 47). This dichotomy is at the crux of the argument as to whether consortia created by law can be fiscally responsible, innovative and open, and oriented toward state goals. While statutory (involuntary) consortia can certainly be established by the state, it is not clear whether they will be effective in fulfilling their mission. Berdahl (1971) has noted that some major state colleges and universities do not

share the proclivity of their state toward emphasizing state-wide goals. These schools see their mission as national or international in scope rather than limited to the boundaries of their state (p. 259). Additionally, some of these same state schools see their role as being "all things to all people." Cooperation with other state schools on "local" issues, therefore, does not fit into the schools' notion of what they should be doing educationally. This tends to produce duplication of effort (schools in close geographical proximity offering similar programs and services) and, at times, poor utilization of facilities and faculties. For state officials examining reports on the use of institution facilities, resources, and money, this situation has created an atmosphere which makes mandated cooperation more attractive.

What is this dichotomy between voluntary and involuntary (or statutory) consortia? Simply stated, voluntary consortia tend to establish linkages and relationships of trust and agreement among member institutions creating truly cooperative endeavors. Statutory arrangements tend to form linkages and relationships of distrust and disagreement which promote competition rather than cooperation among the members (Kreplin & Bolce, 1973, p. 54). This situation is created because the schools are coerced into cooperating. The groundwork is not set for breaking the historic leanings institutions have toward survival through competition, and therefore, competition and institutional self-interest tend

to cause serious problems for a statutory consortium (Wallenfeldt, 1983, p. 158). Lewis Patterson (1979b) has noted that institutional autonomy, territoriality, and self-sufficiency tend to create competition rather than cooperation among schools, and considering the historical context, he observed that "[colleges and universities] are organized, governed, and administered largely to serve status quo interests" (p. 37), and the status quo does not include very much cooperation. Grupe (1971) concurs: "The historical insularity of institutions of higher education and their deliberately distinctive nature prevents [cooperation].... Self-sufficiency has been the watchword for too long a time to be abandoned" (p. 752). Considering this, one can sense that, while voluntary cooperation may be able to overcome these barriers, forced, legislated cooperation has a harder time tearing down the walls of competition.

In a sense, all public higher education institutions within a state are interrelated since all draw from the same state monetary well. Advances by one school often must be offset by a decline (or at least non-growth) in another. This interrelatedness, whether desired by the schools or not, is controlled by the state. That is, the state, through some type of agency of control, decides which schools can get new programs, additional funds, or new facilities. The state, through control of the financial resources, controls her institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is important that consortia set up by law be effective in bringing about a

spirit of cooperation and a program of action which discourages competition among state schools and encourages cooperation. An effective consortium can serve as a "suitably sensitive mechanism" (Berdahl, 1971, p. 9) for the transmission of the desires of the state to the member institutions and vice versa. As Berdahl (1971) notes, "It is important to have a continuing vehicle for transmitting the state's wishes to higher education and higher education's needs to the state" (p. 15). Finley (1976) has a similar view. Writing about Virginia's Consortia for Continuing Higher Education, he concludes that "the appropriate vehicles for the further enhancement of coordination and cooperation are the regional consortia for continuing higher education established throughout the state." He further observes that these consortia "should not establish policy dictating cooperation, but move judiciously to encourage cooperation" (p. 186). An effective consortium, then, can be a mechanism through which states can coordinate the programs and activities of its colleges and universities.

What, then, contributes to a consortium's effectiveness? Are there some conditions that, if met, tend to increase the likelihood that a consortium will be effective?

Consortium Effectiveness Introduction

An examination of the literature reveals that the effectiveness of consortia tends to be uneven. While there are examples of effective consortia, there are an equal number of stories of ineffective ones. Yet the Carnegie

Commission in 1972 stated unequivocally that: "The number of effective consortia is increasing" (p. 127). What factors, then, create the conditions for a consortium to be effective? Are there common attributes which characterize effective consortia?

Effectiveness Traits

A review of the writings of consortia practitioners and researchers reveals several attributes which seem to be associated with a consortium's effectiveness. These can be summarized in six areas. An effective consortium: (1) has clear, concise goals, (2) has open, two-way communication with its members, (3) has the support of the member school presidents, (4) utilizes incremental planning, (5) has effective leadership, and (6) is perceived by its members as useful. It is possible that a consortium possessing these traits could be ineffective, but it is more likely that it would be effective in meeting its mission.

Clear, concise goals. Martin (1981) observed that "[A consortium's] founding principles must be uncommonly clear to all the leaders of the membership....Careful consideration of what principles unite the members and what joint activities might reasonably be expected to succeed is essential" (pp. 37-38). It is obvious that, unless each member understands totally the raison d'être of the consortium, the future of the organization will be in jeopardy. Lepchenske (1975) offers a complementary view: "Consortia which have been successful are those sensitive to the goals and objectives as

the organization was formulated" (p. 14). In the 1984 Annual Report of the Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center one major strength of the organization is recognized to be its "clearly defined mission statement" (Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center, 1984, p. 5). Listed as its first strength, it is clear that the consortium believes that this is a crucial requirement for effectiveness. In a similar vein, Godbey, Coordinator of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, Inc., noted at the 1985 Council for Interinstitutional Leadership Annual Conference that clear goals which relate to a consortium's mission are essential for an effective operation (Godbey, 1985).

Lepchenske (1975) believes that a consortium must be faithful to its intended mission unless formally changed by the governing board. The "key activities" of a consortium are determined by the original goals established and are the "seeds of growth" for future expansion (p. 14). Lepchenske also notes that the consortium goals must be in consonance with the member institutions' goals. Since schools enter the consortium based on a stated mission/purpose statement, it is imperative that the consortium maintain that original mission as its guiding beacon. Lick (1981) states it simply: "Each [consortium] should have an institutional mission statement....The [consortium] has to understand these...statements and work within the constraints imposed by them" (p. 44). This mission statement is crucial to the effectiveness of a consortium and must be clearly

communicated to all prospective members.

"Clear identification of, and dedication to, common goals must precede effective action." (Bunnell & Johnson, 1965, p. 252) Bunnell and Johnson recognize, though, that this is a difficult task since each member institution has its own particular mission and plan for carrying it out. Nevertheless, they believe that a conscientious attempt to articulate the consortium's goals and adhere to them as the organization grows can help the consortium be effective in the eyes of its members. In addition, Goode and Ellis (1981) have pointed out that these goals must be "clearly stated" to be useful (p. 1). Scott (1977) has written that "institutions planning to enter a consortium must perceive an approximately equal commitment [of all members and the consortium administration] to the goals [of the consortium]" (p. 430). Unless the consortium and its members share a common commitment to one or more stated goals, the organization is not likely to be effective in its work. In a more pragmatic statement, Neff and Fuller (1983) note that, in order to have an effective program, enough members must want to have the program (p. 282). If the clients are not served by the consortium, it cannot be effective.

For his doctoral dissertation Offerman (1986) examined three higher education consortia which terminated their operation after being in existence for five or more years. One of the reasons that each terminated its operation, he concluded, was "the pervasive failure [of each consortium] to

clearly establish and articulate consortium mission and goals....None of the studied consortia developed concise statements of mission....When goals were established, they were not articulated" (p. 133). Offerman noted that this failure was considered by his interviewees to be the primary reason one consortium failed and a major reason the other two terminated operation.

From the literature it seems clear that the establishment of clear, concise goals and the faithful adherence to them are part of the foundation which helps assure the effectiveness of a consortium.

Open, two-way communication. "One of the essential elements in successful interinstitutional cooperation is open communication....Lack of communication becomes a major block to cooperation" (Lick, 1981, p. 47). The dialogue between the consortium and its members must be open, honest, and factual. If there is the perception that anything less is the case, members will be less likely to support projects. Therefore, such communication must be "factual and complete" and delivered in a "regular and timely" manner (Lick, 1981, p. 47). In his study of terminated consortia, Offerman (1986) found that "communication channels were not attended to" (p. 134), thus contributing to the decline and ultimate demise of each.

To whom should this communication be directed? Certainly the member institution representatives must be kept well-informed. Neff and Fuller (1983) believe that the

consortium leadership must "provide information about the programs to presidents and deans on a regular basis" (p. 283). Their view is that these individuals are keys to consortium effectiveness, and their full support is always needed. Providing them timely and accurate information is essential to the operation of the consortium. Neff and Fuller also believe that "strong campus liaison networks" are needed to ensure effectiveness, and these are cultivated through good communication channels (p. 282). In this regard Bunnell and Johnson (1965) noted that: "Everything depends on awareness of common purposes..." (p. 252). This awareness is developed by good communication. Peterson, Associate Coordinator of Five Colleges, Inc., noted in her presentation to the 1985 Council for Interinstitutional Leadership Annual Conference that the successes enjoyed by her consortium have rested on good communication among the consortium staff, the presidents of the member schools, and the member schools' faculty and staff (Peterson, 1985). Finally, Moore (1968), after studying 1017 consortia, concluded that consortium success "will depend to a large extent on the establishment of clear and accessible lines of communication" (p. 21).

To encourage active participation in and support of a consortium, strong, open lines of communication should be developed and maintained. Unless each member school believes it is getting the "whole story," it is unlikely that a consortium can be effective. According to the literature deception and secretiveness can only lead to a consortium's

ineffectiveness and possible failure.

Presidential support. "Presidential involvement and support is always a critical factor in assuring that the birth of a consortium is not aborted....Presidential support and encouragement are needed to ensure that each institution's personnel approach the consortium as a potential vehicle for programmatic changes..." (Grupe, 1971, p. 758). History tends to support this assertion. Elkin (1982), in her writing on the founding and development of the Great Lakes Colleges Association, a consortium of twelve private, liberal arts institutions in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, indicates that one reason for the successes of the organization has been the support of the member institutions' presidents. They serve as the Board of Directors and are responsible for program approval and evaluation of the consortium president's job performance. They are involved and support approved programs (p. 101).

Franklin Patterson (1983), in a speech prepared for the 1983 Council for Interinstitutional Leadership (CIL) convention, said that "[college] presidents...[must] provide positive leadership in shaping the prospects for intelligent cooperation....What the real prospects for cooperation are will depend on how much the effective leadership of the higher education community can realize their responsibility to insist on it" (p. 17). Patterson believes that effective cooperative efforts can only be developed and maintained through the total support of higher education leaders,

especially college and university presidents. Lick (1981), a college president himself, has written that "chief executives...need to continually reaffirm their belief in cooperation for programs to survive" (p. 48). This is crucial since, if any part of the member institution "family" perceives that the president does not totally support consortium programs, the seeds are sown for dissension and possible hostile reaction to the consortium. Lick (1981) declares: "The support from the administration should be visible." He also states that: "The best environment [for cooperation] is one in which the institutional leaders, particularly the chief executives, understand and enthusiastically support cooperation" (p. 42). If the institution is engaged in a cooperative venture, everyone at the school should know that the president does, indeed, support the endeavor. As Baus (1984) has pointed out, "cooperation will not happen if the institutional partners do not want it to happen" (Baus, p. 2). A president's overt support can exert much influence which can, in turn, translate into college-wide support. Peterson considers the support from the presidents of the members of Five Colleges, Inc. has enhanced the successes the consortium has had over the years (Peterson, 1985). Neal (undated) has noted that "...no consortium can survive long, at least today, without presidential knowledge, involvement, and commitment....If the presidents of the ...member institutions...do not evince this support and exert leadership within the presidential circle,

the consortium will have great difficulty being successful" (p. 8). L. Patterson (1970) has stated bluntly, "If presidential cooperation does not exist, it is likely little else will follow" (p. 3).

With a president's support a consortium can survive and be effective; without his or her support, the literature suggests that it cannot.

Incremental planning. "Consortium planning is essential for the creation of viable cooperative programs" (Grupe, 1975, p. 67). Grupe has noted that, frequently, a considerable amount of time and money are expended on consortium projects only to find that they "never had a chance [to succeed]." A systematic planning strategy is the solution to this problem, according to Grupe (p. 68).

Elkin (1982), in her overview of the history of the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA), wrote that one of the reasons the consortium has been effective is that the consortium presidents have not "urged the Board [of Directors] to ever more heroic deeds" (p. 128). The planning and programming of the consortium is based on the member institutions' needs and desires. Therefore, all planning is done step by step with no forays into areas that hold little interest or value to the members. Lepchenske (1975) believes that successful consortia need "careful supportive planning and realistic operations" (p. 23). This can be accomplished by the development of "cooperative projects which support institutional values and purposes" and by the active

participation of the consortium in long-range planning for the best use of educational resources of the members. Both of these are based on the identification and ordering of values of the member schools in order to establish a consortium's priorities (p. 23). Glazer (1982), in her study of the development of consortia, found that one factor which affected the effectiveness of interinstitutional cooperative agreements was the area of planning. She found that "incremental long-range planning succeeds better than grandiose schemes....It may be wise to avoid building expectations with quantum leaps from project to project. Marginal changes sustain support..." (p. 190). As Neal (1984b) has pointed out, members of a consortium need to "build a sense of interinstitutional commitment to a common goal...." Unless there is this sense of "ownership on the part of each [member]," the consortium is probably doomed to failure (p. 158).

Unless a consortium develops a planning strategy which considers its member schools' mission and priorities, it is not likely to be effective. Careful incremental planning based on the needs and desires of the member institutions appears to create a favorable setting for consortium effectiveness.

Effective consortium leadership. "The executive director is the single key individual in the operation of the consortium" (Patterson, 1974, p. 57). The effectiveness of any consortium depends on the quality and competence of the

administrator to thread his way along the narrow path between institutional concerns and consortium programs. Neal (1985b), the executive director of the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, has written extensively on this subject. He has described the leadership of many consortia as "men and women who enjoy the challenge of kneading productive collaborative creations from the unpromising clay of jealously autonomous (and often suspicious) separate [member] institutions" (p. 96). In order to accomplish "productive collaborative creations," Neal (1984a) believes that the consortium administrator must persuade and cajole in diplomatic and tactful ways. The administrator (and the consortium staff) must be patient, diplomatic, persistent, and persuasive" (p. 31). Neal (undated) also believes that "the consortium's director must be sure to keep his or her political fences well mended" (p. 8). This is crucial if the director wants to assure all members the he is not "playing favorites."

Finding the "shared ground" (Elkin, 1982, p. 128) of all the member schools and building on it is one way to foster effectiveness for a consortium. Each school brings to the consortium its own "unique flavor" which can add vitality and variety to the organization. An effective consortium director realizes this and builds on each flavor (Neal, undated, p. 12). Although he must be neutral in his dealings with all members, the director must continually cultivate and encourage each member to participate to the fullest in the

consortium's programs. Neal (1985b) puts it this way: "The consortium must be strictly neutral and even-handed in its attitude toward members" (p. 96). Neal (undated) also believes that a consortium's "very success or failure can be laid directly at the door of [the consortium administrator]" (p. 14). Offerman's (1986) research points this out. For the three defunct consortia he studied, ineffective leadership was a contributing factor in the collapse of each (p. 136).

An administrator's visibility when promoting consortium programs is important. An administrator who supports the consortium with his physical presence (e.g., visits member campuses regularly; attends social and cultural events at member institutions) can be extremely influential in shaping others support for programs. Grupe (1975) believes a consortium administrator's success comes from his "effective use of presence," since that is generally his strongest and most useful leadership tool available. Grupe also observes that the administrator must be a "catalyst and spark plug" who "prods, cajoles, convinces, and stimulates," but never "forces," the members to action. He must also be somewhat of a "salesman" who continually resells his clients on the value of cooperation. Grupe notes that the consortium administrator faces demanding tasks which require a variety of personal and professional qualities in order to do his job with some degree of success (pp. 53-60). Burke (1981) believes that the administrator should be a "catalytic agent"

who causes reaction and change (p. 4).

The personal and political issues faced by a consortium require a leader who can manage them effectively. Such an individual can cultivate needed support from members for existing programs as well as for new ones. He or she must be sensitive to the needs and contributions of each individual member while still keeping the consortium true to its mission and must have a mix of abilities that includes political, social and educational components. According to the literature, the consortium administrator is one of the more important keys to ensuring consortial effectiveness.

Perception of usefulness. "To be successful, interinstitutional cooperation must offer practical advantages for the [consortium members]" (Neal, 1985a, p. 12). Neff and Fuller, both experienced consortium directors, believe that "it is important at the outset to make sure that enough people want the program" (Neff & Fuller, 1983, p. 282). There is, after all, no point in undertaking a cooperative venture if there is no benefit for the members. Since the consortium exists to serve its members (Neal, undated, p. 12), it is necessary to tailor programs and activities around the members' needs. Additionally, the members must believe that their needs are being served by the organization. "A consortium that is not responsive to its members is hardly useful to them" (Neal, 1985b, p. 96).

After conducting an in-depth study of three consortia which ceased operation, Offerman (1986) found that member

institutions, over time, came to perceive their consortium as "one more source of competition" (p. 138). Because of this, they tended to withdraw their support for new consortium programs and proposals, electing instead to seek other ways to have their needs fulfilled. Stated simply, the consortium did not meet their needs, so the membership ceased to support the consortium.

For his doctoral dissertation, Bradley (1971) engaged in a study of the factors that affect a voluntary consortium's effectiveness. Finding no research vehicle on which to base his work, he created his own and surveyed representatives of institutions which belonged to consortia to formulate the list of effectiveness criteria. Bradley discovered that a consortium must fulfill certain "needs" in order to be considered effective. In other words, the member institutions must perceive that the consortium is fulfilling their cooperation "needs." In answer to his question, "What is consortium effectiveness?" Bradley found five "needs" "which consortia are, in some sense, expected to meet" (p. 205). These include the expectations that the organization will expand student and faculty opportunities, both educationally and professionally; will promote better managerial efficiency of programs in which the school alone is engaged; will encourage innovation and change; will promote and encourage interpersonal contacts among peers at other institutions; and will be an external agent which can take their concerns and "story" to various governmental

agencies and private foundations (pp. 205-206). Effective voluntary consortia, according to Bradley, fill most of these "needs" for their membership. While it is clear that not every member of a college community will respond in the same way when asked if a consortium is fulfilling the institution's "needs," Bradley found that, if the overall perception is that the "needs" are being met, the consortium generally will be considered effective by its membership.

The literature from active voluntary consortia support Bradley's claim. Elkin (1982) notes that the "GLCA's effectiveness cannot be measured in isolation, but only through its impact on its member colleges, their students, faculties, and administration" (p. 123). The Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center (1984) maintains an on-going assessment program to ensure that it is "responsive to needs" (p. 5). Clearly a consortium does not exist in a vacuum, but in a relationship with all its members.

Unless the members perceive that the consortium is making a difference, their support will probably wane. Therefore, according to the literature, the consortium must be seen as useful to its membership; worthy of member investments of money and time. As Martin (1981) put it: "Member satisfaction is the only valid measure of success or failure" (p. 36).

Summary

In order to be judged effective, a voluntary consortium must satisfy several criteria. Based on the writings of

practitioners and scholars of consortia, six attributes are identified as necessary for a consortium to be classified as effective: goals are clear and concise, communication is open and two-way, member presidents support the organization, planning is incremental, consortium leadership is effective, and members perceive that the organization is useful. While each of these factors is not mutually exclusive of the others (e.g.: Member presidents probably support a consortium because it is "useful."), each does offer a somewhat unique ingredient to the effectiveness recipe. A voluntary consortium that does not possess all six attributes could still be effective, but it appears that one which attempts to maintain all six is more likely to enjoy greater and longer effectiveness.

The literature on voluntary consortia of colleges and universities raises important questions that deserve careful study. Do the attributes of effectiveness developed from the literature on voluntary consortia apply to a statutory consortium? Does a statutory consortium possess any or all of these effectiveness attributes? Does statutory consortium effectiveness rest primarily on the achievement of these six attributes, or are there other important attributes which affect statutory consortium effectiveness? These questions are explored in the remainder of this dissertation.

Chapter 3: Design of the Study

Population and Sample

Virginia has six Consortia for Continuing Higher Education. Organized by dividing the state along planning district lines, each consortium is required to establish policies and programs which eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort in the area of continuing higher education and assure the best and most efficient use of faculty and facilities. In addition, each is charged with the responsibility to determine how best to serve the continuing higher education needs of the citizens in its region. In each consortium the membership is comprised of all state-supported institutions of higher education in the region: four-year universities and colleges and two-year colleges. Each consortium administrator is responsible for monitoring continuing education efforts in his district and for representing the membership interests in disputes with non-regional institutions when the latter attempt to offer duplicative courses in the consortium's area. Additionally, the administrator is expected to organize the consortium planning effort and serve as a liaison among the member schools in matters concerning continuing higher education. However, there are unique qualities in each individual consortium (e.g., several consortia permit membership by non-regional universities, all consortia have some unique

cooperative programs, several consortia have adopted variations in the dues formula for their members).

In selecting from this population one consortium for this study, an attempt was made to choose a consortium which fairly well represented a cross-section of the state; one which served a diverse clientele and had a combination of institutions reflecting the institutional mix in the state.

The consortium selected has an assortment of senior and two-year institutions in urban, suburban, and rural settings. In addition, though not members, there are several private colleges in the district served by this consortium. The four-year schools include one large, comprehensive urban public university (which serves as the "focal" or "host" institution of the consortium) and one smaller public university. There are three public two-year institutions in the consortium on five campus sites. These colleges are located in diverse geographic regions of the state and serve an equally diverse population--urban, suburban, and rural including all socio-economic classes. Within the consortium boundaries are several military installations which add a large military population to the potential continuing education student pool.

The programs and policies of the consortium are comparable to the types and scope of the other consortia (e.g.: promote the consortium and its members' programs and courses, establish interlibrary loan, create special cooperative degree programs among the members, develop

cooperative faculty and staff development programs). Likewise, the administrator is employed one-half time by the consortium and one-half time by one of the senior institutions. This staffing arrangement is similar to the majority of the other statutory consortia in Virginia.

This consortium is illustrative of statutory consortia in Virginia serving continuing higher education concerns. It was, therefore, a logical choice to examine for the presence of effectiveness attributes in a statutory consortium.

Research Method Introduction

Determining the presence or absence of effectiveness attributes required the development of an understanding of the perceptions held by those people closely associated with the statutory consortium. It required knowledge of how key people interpret the consortium's role in higher education, understand its operation, and perceive its usefulness to each member institution. It also required an understanding of how the consortium conducts its "business." In short, the determination of the existence of effectiveness attributes required that the research develop a complete and holistic picture of the consortium.

Therefore, a research design was sought that would be flexible enough to permit an in-depth examination of the organization and operation of the consortium from many perspectives yet reliable enough to provide accurate and valid data. Review of the methods commonly employed in education research (Babbie, 1983; Best, 1977; Bodgan &

Biklen, 1982; Borg & Gall, 1983; Galfo & Miller, 1970; Good & Scates, 1954; Mouly, 1978) led to the selection of descriptive research as the examination tool. This method "involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of conditions that now exist. It involves some type of comparison or contrast and may attempt to discover relationships that exist between existing nonmanipulated variables" (Best, 1977, p. 15). Good and Scates (1954) view descriptive research as a valuable research tool because it "afford[s] penetrating insights into the nature of what one is dealing with..." (p. 258). They note that, "for constructive thinking about practical affairs, knowledge of the existing situation is essential" (p. 255). Descriptive research can provide this knowledge since it is "oriented toward the description of current status" (Mouly, 1978, p. 179). It "describes and interprets what is" since it is "concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing" (Best, 1977, p. 116).

Data collection for descriptive research is varied and includes face-to-face interviews as well as document evaluation. Rich data can be cultivated from this type of collection system, and these data, in turn, can result in useful analysis and synthesis. The end product is a study which offers an in-depth examination and evaluation of the subject.

Research Method

The type of information needed to examine a statutory consortium suggested that a case study be undertaken since case studies "have the potential to generate rich subjective data that can aid in the development of theory and empirically testable hypotheses" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 489). A "situational analysis case study" of the statutory consortium was conducted because, "when all views of [the major participants] are pulled together, they provide a depth that can contribute significantly to understanding the [activity] being studied" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 489). Through an in-depth case study of one legislated consortium it was possible to examine many facets of the organization and discover what opinions and beliefs people associated with the consortium hold concerning its objectives and operation.

Methods of Data Collection

The literature on voluntary consortia suggests that an effective voluntary consortium possesses six attributes that contribute to its effectiveness: 1) it has clear, concise goals; 2) its communication is open and two-way; 3) its member presidents support it fully; 4) it uses an incremental planning process; 5) its leader is effective; and 6) it is perceived as useful to the membership.

To determine the presence or absence of each of the six effectiveness attributes in the statutory consortium, information was gathered from two sources: interviews with key people associated with the consortium and consortium-

related documents.

Interview. An interview protocol was developed to garner opinions and perceptions from the interviewees concerning the consortium under study. Interviews were held with people most closely associated with the consortium: the consortium administrator, the member institution presidents (or their representatives), the dean or director of continuing education for each member institution, the dean of the school of education where one exists, and officials from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) knowledgeable about the consortium. To examine how the consortium assists in serving the continuing education needs of public school educators (since they are the largest group of "users" of continuing education services in the region), professional development officers from public school divisions in the region were also questioned. (Although not actually part of the attributes of effectiveness study, the perceptions and insights these subjects offered about the consortium and its programs and activities added to the overall understanding of the consortium and provided a view of how the consortium and its members serve the region.) When permitted, the interviews were recorded on audio tape. Field notes were prepared for all interviews.

The interview instrument (Appendix A) was developed to provide data which could answer the primary research question and subsidiary questions. Supplementary versions of the basic instrument were employed when interviewing SCHEV

officials (Appendix B) and the public school professional development officers (Appendix C) to make the interview questions more appropriate to their areas of knowledge. Questions were developed for each of the six effectiveness attributes identified in the literature review on consortia to provide insight concerning how each interviewee viewed the consortium in relation to the attribute. The questions attempted to get beyond a simple affirmative or negative response by inquiring into reasons respondents held particular views and by requesting examples to support their positions. Interview questions were designed to elicit opinion as well as fact.

Two or more questions on each effectiveness attribute were developed. In addition, several questions were designed to inquire about respondents' general perceptions concerning statutory consortium effectiveness and specific perceptions of the effectiveness of the consortium under study. To determine whether the consortium had clear, concise goals, interviewees were asked to define the goals or mission of the consortium as they understood them and to describe some of the activities in which the consortium engages to support its goals (interview instruments, Section A). To discover whether the communication structure was open and two-way, respondents were asked to explain how they receive and send communication concerning consortium business. They were also asked about the frequency of this communication (interview instruments, Section B). Presidential support was examined

by asking questions concerning how active each president of a member institution is in the consortium and how each president demonstrates his or her support (e.g., public speeches expressing support, mentioning the consortium at staff meetings, favorable references to the consortium in school/public press) (interview instruments, Section C). Questions concerning planning by the consortium were asked to gain an understanding of the consortium's planning process and its frequency (interview instruments, Section D). Questions concerning the leadership style of the consortium administrator and the interviewees' views of his effectiveness were prepared to test the presence of the fifth attribute, effective leadership (interview instruments, Section E). The sixth effectiveness attribute, perception of usefulness to the membership, was explored through questions asking specifically about the value of consortium membership and its activities to each interviewee's institution (interview instruments, Section F). To understand how they viewed the effectiveness of the statutory consortium under investigation, interviewees were asked to respond to questions concerning its overall effectiveness vis-a-vis both its stated mission and goals and any informal or unstated mission and goals commonly attributed to it (interview instruments, Section G, questions 1 and 2). Finally, respondents were asked to share their own personal ideas on what factors are essential to the effectiveness of statutory consortia (interview instruments, Section G, question 3). As

noted above, for respondents from SCHEV and the public school divisions, questions were modified to be more appropriate to their areas of expertise about the consortium and its operation (e.g., in Appendices B and C, Sections C and F) .

Field test of interview instrument. The basic interview protocol was field tested with three persons who were well acquainted with the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education in general and the sample consortium in particular. After each field test the responses were analyzed, and unclear, ambiguous questions were either modified or deleted. In addition, each field test subject was asked to evaluate the interview session and make recommendations for improving both the interview content and the interview process. By the third administration, the questions were producing responses that demonstrated the presence or absence of each effectiveness attribute. The pilot interviews suggested that the interview instrument was adequately focused and asked questions which were not subject to misinterpretation or confusion on the part of the interviewee. The consistency of the responses generated by each question gave credibility to the interview document.

Document Review. At the interview site each participant was asked to provide documents related to the consortium for as many years as possible. The purpose of this request was to locate official letters, memoranda, position papers, newspaper articles, draft resolutions, speeches, catalogs, schedules, consortium meeting minutes, personal papers, and

the like which would support or qualify comments made by the interviewees. Records were kept which compared materials at one site with those found at other sites. Special note was made of unique document collections and of documents common to all locations. The expectation was that there would be ample documentation to back up subjects' comments and verify their statements (e.g., If a person said that the consortium engages in long-range planning, it was expected that various planning documents would be in the files.).

Reviewing consortium documents supplemented the interview responses. However, these documents were subject to the two biases Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Sechrest and Grove (1981) identify as "selective deposit and selective survival" (p. 79). Nevertheless, by examining documents located at various institutional locations in the consortium, and by combining the views and opinions of the interview subjects with the document material found at the institutions, the likelihood was reduced that bias colored the data collected. As Webb et al. (1981) have pointed out, "The greater the number of observers with different qualifications, the less plausible the hypothesis that the same systematic error exists" (p. 81). Document review provided valuable data which complemented the interview data and established its own unique perspective on the consortium.

Analysis of Data

In order to analyze the interview responses, categories were developed from the participants' responses. For these

categories, response frequencies were recorded in order to test for the presence of each effectiveness attribute in the consortium under investigation. When it was not possible to categorize responses to questions, each statement was evaluated in light of the effectiveness attribute under consideration. These unique responses provided additional insights concerning the presence of each effectiveness attribute.

In any investigative effort there is always a danger that a research instrument may not be as reliable or valid as planned. It is of the utmost importance, then, that the researcher attempt to reduce the chance that this might occur. The researcher who collects data using two or more research methods is more likely to develop conclusions free from bias and distortion than the researcher who uses only one research instrument. The procedure of collecting data using diverse yet complementary research techniques and then comparing them to each other is referred to as triangulation (Babbie, 1983; Webb et al., 1981). Webb et al. (1981) have written that, "once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement process" (p. 35). In short, the more independent sources the researcher taps to obtain data, the more likely the chance that the analysis will result in the development of valid conclusions.

Webb et al. (1981) note that, under certain conditions, interview research can leave "unanswerable rival explanations" (p. 315). In that case, other types of research can "bolster these weak spots and provide intelligence to evaluate threats to validity" (p. 316). By triangulating interview responses with the review and evaluation of consortium documents located at various sites, the chance of leaving "unanswerable rival explanations" was reduced.

For the participants from higher education, comparisons were made among responses of persons holding the same type of position (e.g., two-year college presidents), among persons holding similar positions (e.g., continuing education directors/deans), and among persons holding different positions within the same type of institution (e.g., all interviewees from a senior institution). In addition, comparisons were made among the responses of interviewees from the senior institutions and from the two-year schools. Responses of officials from SCHEV were compared with the responses of the other interviewees. Likewise, the consortium administrator's responses were compared with all other responses. In all cases, all higher education subjects' responses were examined in relationship to the effectiveness attribute under examination.

The comments provided by the public school division professional development officers were used to add to the overall understanding of the consortium and its operation.

While their comments were not used to determine the presence of the effectiveness attributes (since the attributes deal with internal factors associated with the member institutions), they were used to evaluate how the consortium serves its region and how the recipients of consortium services view the consortium. The opinions of the public school professional development officers contributed to the overall understanding of the consortium and its role in fulfilling the continuing education needs of the region.

To determine the presence of each of the effectiveness attributes, it was important to ascertain just how each group of interviewees viewed the consortium in relation to the various attributes. For example, do the university presidents have a view different from the community college presidents?; do the directors of continuing education have the same opinions as their presidents?; does the consortium administrator share the same perception as the SCHEV officials? These comparisons and their triangulation with the document review provided data which could be interpreted with confidence. Therefore, the presence of each effectiveness attribute in this consortium could be determined with an amount of certainty.

In summary, the composite responses of all subjects for each question or set of questions coupled with an evaluation of consortium documents found both at the consortium office and at the member institutions provided an indication of whether the consortium under investigation possesses the

various effectiveness attributes. This procedure permitted the development of a profile of the consortium vis-a-vis the six effectiveness attributes.

Research Method Summary

Through a study of one of the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Education, an attempt was made to determine whether a statutory higher education consortium possesses the attributes of effectiveness identified from a review of literature on voluntary consortia. The case study methodology was employed as the research vehicle, and data were gathered through interviews and document review. Through data analysis, responses of all study participants were examined and categorized when possible. Also, comparisons were made of the responses of participants who work in the same institution, of the responses of participants who have similar positions at different institutions, and of the responses of participants who have different positions at the various member institutions, at SCHEV, and at the consortium office. Responses of the public school division professional development officers were used to determine how and to what extent the consortium serves the continuing education needs of the region (in the view of those who are served by the consortium and its members). Through triangulation techniques the data were substantiated, and conclusions were developed. In Chapter 4 the findings of the study are presented.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the data gathered through interviews with key people associated with the consortium studied and a review of related consortium documents. The goal of this study was to determine if the key attributes of effective voluntary consortia are present in a selected Virginia (statutory) Consortium for Continuing Higher Education. The study also sought to determine if other attributes play a part in the consortium's effectiveness. In this case study, the six attributes of effectiveness ((1) has clear, concise goals, (2) has open, two-way communication, (3) has the support of the member school presidents, (4) engages in incremental planning, (5) has effective leadership, and (6) is perceived as useful by the membership), developed from a review of consortium literature, provided the framework upon which the investigation was based. A review of consortium documents located at each interview site was conducted to verify and reinforce the interview reports.

During the months of February and March, 1986, interviews were held with fifteen higher education officials and three public school division professional development officers. The higher education personnel included three two-year college presidents, two university School of Education

deans, three university continuing education directors, four two-year college continuing education directors, two officials from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the consortium administrator. The presidents of the two four-year universities were not available for interviews, but each authorized his institution's senior continuing education director to speak on his behalf. During this same time, the document review was conducted. Quotations in this chapter come from these interviews unless otherwise noted. Interview responses and document review data were tabulated. These tabulations were subsequently compared and contrasted to determine similarities and differences of viewpoints and opinions of the respondents vis-a-vis the consortium effectiveness attributes developed from the literature review. Data related to each effectiveness attribute were examined to determine the attribute's presence or absence.

This chapter presents the data concerning each of the effectiveness attributes. Each section of the chapter includes a discussion of the relevant findings and draws a conclusion about the apparent presence or absence of the attribute under consideration.

Analysis of the Data

Clear, concise goals. An effective voluntary consortium tends to have clear, concise goals which are part of the foundation which helps assure the consortium's effectiveness. Such goals are generally outlined in a mission statement.

Interviewees were asked whether they knew the mission or goal of their consortium and could adequately articulate it. Document examination attempted to locate at each site the mission statement or original charter of the consortium in order to verify the presence of a written statement of mission.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that this attribute is present in the consortium. With only one exception, each interviewee explained the mission clearly and described some of the activities and programs the consortium has in place to meet this mission (e.g., library exchange program, cooperative undergraduate degree program, a telecourse, formal procedure to notify members of a non-regional institution's request to offer courses in the area). The only exception occurred at the largest two-year college. The directors of continuing education at that school were not fully informed of the goals of the consortium for two reasons: (1) each is fairly new at his job, and (2) the primary point of contact with the consortium is the supervisor of the continuing education directors. Therefore, they are not actively involved in the consortium to any great degree although consortium decisions and activities directly affect their own programs.

For those who did explain the goals and mission of the consortium, their comments covered all the major components of the consortium's raison d'être: "the consortium eliminates unnecessary duplication of [continuing education] offerings

[in the region] to take the strain off taxpayers' pocketbooks" (two-year college president); "the consortium identifies areas of need [in continuing education] and coordinates member efforts to meet these needs" (two-year college continuing education director); "the consortium brings some coordination effort to the delivery of educational services in the region" (School of Education dean); "the consortium enhances educational opportunities of people in the region with as little duplication or excessive competition as possible" (university continuing education director).

A mission statement could not be located at every site. One reason for this is that the original agreement was signed over ten years ago, and it is the policy at some institutions to destroy files after a certain period of time. Nevertheless, copies of the agreement are available from the consortium office on demand, and several of the member presidents are original signers. This suggests that first-hand sources are still available to articulate and interpret the mission.

Of particular interest to this study is the apparent shift in emphasis of the elements of the consortium's mission. All interviewees acknowledged that one of the primary goals of the consortium, when founded, was to establish and protect institutional and regional "turf." This served two purposes, as one School of Education dean observed, both mission related: (1) It helped eliminate

unnecessary duplication of effort in the continuing education area; and (2) It helped the regional institutions establish themselves and mature without excessive outside interference. This "turf" establishment also solidified the role of the community college to offer all lower division continuing education courses while the senior institutions offered the upper division courses. Today this mission continues as the consortium's primary objective although, as one interviewee noted, "the consortium may have blended into the fabric of higher education." A continuing education director at a four-year school put it this way: "The consortia idea may have 'peaked.' Consortia got schools to change the way they perceived their role in continuing education; institutional thinking about off-campus continuing education has changed to a regional perspective from a state-wide perspective. Now the consortia simply maintain [this new perspective]." Thus, the consortium's active role in defending "turf" and promoting a "regional perspective" has been reduced as these issues have become, more or less, resolved.

The presence of clear, concise goals in this consortium is apparent. Most interviewees were fully aware of the goals of the consortium and could articulate them clearly. Based on the data gathered, one may conclude that this attribute of effectiveness is present in this statutory consortium in essentially the same degree as it is in an effective voluntary consortium.

Open, Two-way communication. Communication in an

effective voluntary consortium, according to the literature, is open and two-way. Through various communication media (letters, phone calls, meetings) information is passed back and forth between the consortium office and the member schools. It is designed to keep everyone up-to-date on all consortium activities and programs and to facilitate the free flow of information among all members. An effective communication system increases member's awareness of the consortium and its value to them, and it facilitates the active participation of all members and their willingness to engage in cooperative ventures.

Based on the responses offered by the interviewees it appears that this consortium does have an open and two-way communication network. Each interviewee indicated that letters and telephone calls are received from the consortium office (both on an as-needed and regular basis) and that responses to the consortium are made in the same way. In addition, meetings take place both on a regular basis and as needed among the member presidents and the consortium administrator. Files at the interview sites contained copies of letters written by both the consortium administrator and the interviewees (or an institution representative) concerning consortium business. Minutes of meetings, notices and agendas for meetings, reports, position papers, and general correspondence filled most files.

Nine respondents noted that communication takes place on an "as-needed" or "occasional" basis. That is, letters are

sent and telephone calls are made when the need arises. There are no newsletters or regular communication devices used. The administrator does send copies of several publications dealing with administrative or higher education issues to member presidents and continuing education directors/deans, and he often sends them copies of journal or newspaper articles he believes would be of interest. Likewise, he sends to all presidents and continuing education deans and directors of the member schools the composite off-campus credit course list that each member school provides him at the end of each term. Several interviewees noted that the administrator serves as a "clearinghouse" for issues and concerns that affect the consortium and its operation.

The administrator said that he tries to communicate with all member presidents on a fairly regular basis if for no other reason than to "keep in touch." He believes that it is an important part of his job to let the member presidents know he is on-the-job and functioning.

The administrator, for the most part, directs his communication efforts toward the member presidents although copies of all correspondence are sent to all directors/deans of continuing education and to other selected parties. At the focal institution the administrator often deals with the official who coordinates the off-campus credit instruction program rather than with the school president. The administrator did note, though, that he can be in touch with all member presidents when he needs to.

Each college and university interviewee noted that their faculties and staffs, if they know anything at all about the consortium, found out about it through the regular college/university communication channels or their institution's "grapevine." However, the consensus was that, for the most part, faculties and staffs are ignorant of the consortium's presence and role. The apparent reason for this "ignorance" is that schools tend to involve only those who have a need to know about the consortium. The consortium, however, does keep its primary institutional contacts apprised of all cooperation matters and leaves it up to the individual institutions to pass the information along as each sees fit. As the administrator noted, "the schools do not want too much structure in the [consortium] communication process." Therefore, key people receive the communication, and they assume the responsibility to disseminate it as they wish.

Among the member schools (when they are not using the consortium communication channels [e.g., meetings, reports]) only informal communication takes place concerning consortium business. Interviewees indicated that telephone calls and occasional letters comprise the communication vehicles used among members. For the most part there is no need to discuss consortium business outside of the regular consortium communication channels. Any cooperation-oriented communication that takes place is generally between two institutions attempting to resolve mutually a problem or

issue quietly and unofficially. As one two-year college president noted, because each school knows exactly what type of continuing education courses it can offer, and because the operating boundaries of each school for offering continuing education courses are so well-defined, and because of the friendships between and among the member presidents and other officials, informal conversations often are sufficient to resolve any cooperation problem that may arise. A School of Education dean reported, "Institutions are comfortable with the informal communication that takes place."

This same School of Education dean noted that, in the early days, when the consortium was attempting to establish itself in its region and coordinate the continuing education offerings amidst a morass of duplication and competition, a more formal communication structure was used. Now, however, the dean observed, things are more organized and defined, so a less formal (and less frequent) communication structure suffices. Nevertheless, the consortium administrator, according to fourteen of the fifteen higher education interviewees, does attempt to keep all interested parties apprised of every issue which may affect the way each institution does business in the region, and he encourages information and opinion to flow back to his office.

When asked specifically about the consortium's communication structure, the consortium administrator said that, in his opinion, the presidents did not want to have a formal, rigid communication structure in place. Rather, the

less structured communication described by the interviewees, in the view of the administrator, serves the consortium well.

Based on the interview responses and the documents found at each interview site, it is apparent that communication in this consortium is open and flows both ways. Communication is apparently sufficient to keep the members apprised of the issues and concerns facing the consortium, and it allows for interaction between and among the member institutions and the consortium. The consortium administrator, who is responsible for initiating most communication, attempts to provide timely information to the membership so they can contribute in an informed manner to the decision-making process. The formal and informal communication that takes place seems to serve the consortium well and appears to be sufficient to handle the issues and problems which have arisen to date.

Presidential support. The visible and enthusiastic support of the presidents of the members of a voluntary consortium contributes to consortium effectiveness. The literature suggests that such support encourages the active participation of the president's entire institution and lends credibility and importance to the consortium. When presidential support is absent, the likelihood that the consortium will be effective is reduced.

This attribute is present in the statutory consortium under study, but not to the degree that the literature suggests presidential support is present in an effective voluntary consortium. It is apparent that, with one

exception, the member presidents support the consortium, but their support is not always energetic. Interviewees tended to indicate that each institution's president is "as active as the other [member presidents]," and supports the consortium "as well as the others," but no interviewee indicated that any member president was enthusiastically behind the consortium.

Even the presidents' comments reflected somewhat perfunctory support of the consortium. In response to a question concerning presidential activity in consortium business, of the three two-year institution presidents, one considered himself "very active," one said he was "as active as any," and one considered himself having "low activity." Other representatives from these schools either echoed their presidents' remarks or took the middle road ("as active as the others"). At the four-year institutions the officials interviewed stated that their presidents are active in the consortium. However, this activity was often described as "He attends all the meetings," or "He provides information when needed," or "He offers staff and resources when appropriate." A SCHEV official described presidential activity as "low; they are active only when there is a problem."

Interviewees (including those presidents questioned) acknowledged that consortium membership is considered important to most of the presidents since it does help them define their institutions' roles in off-campus credit

continuing education and sets limits and boundaries on the continuing education off-campus programs in which each can engage. The consortium helps define "turf" (two-year schools offer lower division continuing education courses and four-year schools offer upper division and graduate continuing education courses) by monitoring course offerings in the region. It is a vehicle through which disputes can be settled both among members and between the consortium and non-regional schools. However, this role, while still important today, does not have the same importance to the presidents that it had in the early days of the consortium. As a SCHEV official pointed out, "The consortium is not something [the presidents] want to spend much time with."

Five interviewees noted that the consortium, in its early days, helped define the boundaries within which each member school could offer off-campus credit work. It guaranteed that the two-year schools would have the sole responsibility to offer lower division courses off-campus and the senior institutions the responsibility for offering the upper division courses off-campus. It set up a barrier to non-regional schools which permitted the consortium's focal institution to "grow and mature", according to the School of Education dean at the focal institution. During this time the presidents were extremely active and supportive of the consortium and its activities. Now, since the "consortium has eliminated most of the chaos in continuing education," according to the consortium administrator, "the presidents

don't want the consortium to do too much." With the resolution, for the most part, of the "turf" disputes, enthusiastic support of the presidents for the consortium is not as critical.

The presidents of the member institutions serve as the Board of Directors of the consortium with the focal school president as the chairman. Each president discusses and votes on issues which come before the board. However, it appears that some agreements are arrived at outside of the regular board meetings. One interviewee noted that, since the senior institutions are most affected by competition in off-campus continuing education, their presidents, at times, discuss these conflicts and reach a consensus prior to the board meetings. At the meetings the remaining members of the board often show their support by voting in the best interest of the senior institutions. One two-year college president was blunt: "Decisions are based on what [the focal institution] says."

Four interviewees noted that, while the consortium, in and of itself, is not extremely important to the presidents, the opportunity it allows for personal communication and discussion among the presidents is perhaps more important than the formal reason they get together. The consortium serves as a "forum for discussion," and that, in the view of these respondents, is very important. The opportunity for this face-to-face meeting to discuss issues, concerns, and viewpoints serves a useful and important role in the region.

For this reason alone, some interviewees believe that the presidents support and endorse the consortium.

Document review, however, failed to reveal much overt presidential support. No where were presidential position papers, speeches, or memos found indicating that the presidents offered their support in places outside of the board meetings. The minutes of meetings show that the presidents have been very regular in their attendance and, from time-to-time, one or more presidents have offered proposals or suggestions for improving the consortium. However, documents do not provide evidence that the presidents express their support of the consortium to any great degree beyond that which is required for membership (attend meetings, consider proposals, vote on requests, provide financial support).

In summary, interview responses from all sources do indicate that, for the most part, the member presidents support the consortium. This support, however, does not appear to be enthusiastic. No documents were found which indicated any presidential support beyond that which is required for membership, and no respondent demonstrated that the presidents look at consortium membership as anything more than a "forum for communication" and a "barrier to non-regional institution intrusion" or "protector of turf." While these reasons are not inappropriate ones for supporting a consortium, they do not seem to indicate the kind of presidential support which is related to the effectiveness of

voluntary consortia.

Incremental planning. The consortium literature indicates that effective voluntary consortia engage in incremental planning. That is, they use the successes and failures of the past to determine their future course. Such planning is typically based on an analysis of the needs of the members, the availability of resources to meet the needs, and the likelihood that such needs can, in fact, be met. Incremental planning is done to provide order and continuity to consortium programs and to move the consortium in directions which have been carefully anticipated. Such planning tends to encourage success because it is careful and deliberate in nature.

The statutory consortium studied does not exhibit this attribute to any degree. The administrator noted that the consortium does "anticipate" problems and their solutions, but it does no real planning. Each president interviewed remarked that no planning is done. This was echoed by all other interviewees. Interviewees either said the consortium did not engage in any planning, or they said they were unaware that any planning takes place. A review of consortium documents did not reveal any planning materials or reports at any of the interview sites.

One college president expressed the opinion that it is "not the role of this statutory consortium to plan. [Its role is to] react to the planning done by others: member schools, non-regional schools, and the public school systems

in the region." Another interviewee said that the consortium cannot and should not plan since it "cannot set its own goals and objectives." These, he said, must be determined based on what others do outside of the consortium. A SCHEV official described the consortium planning as "ad hoc."

However, one interviewee at the focal institution observed that, on an irregular basis, some planning has been done. When the consortium set up cooperative degree programs among member institutions, developed a telecourse, and helped establish a cooperative library loan program, planning was done. However, the committees assigned to these projects actually did the planning, according to the interviewee. Once these programs were completed, the committees disbanded, and their planning function ceased.

Because of this void in planning, two interviewees (a two-year college president and a four-year university continuing education director) offered the opinion that planning should be done. Their view is that the consortium cannot afford simply to sit back and attempt to react to outside influences. They indicated that the consortium, with proper planning, could take the lead in resolving some issues the interviewees believe will be critical in the future (e.g.: shared degree programs in low-enrollment disciplines, innovative delivery systems of educational services). However, as noted above, other respondents believe that it is not the role of the consortium to do any planning at all, and they do not support the idea that the consortium should

assume a planning role.

Very little evidence could be found that indicates the consortium engages in any type of formal planning, and certainly it engages in no incremental planning. The consortium merely reacts to internal and external forces when needed. This attribute of effectiveness is essentially absent from this statutory organization.

Effective consortium leadership. The administrator/director of an effective voluntary consortium, according to the literature, acts as a spark plug, cheerleader, and persuader. He or she is dynamic and visible. This person is recognized as the consortium's spokesman and publicizes the consortium at every opportunity. Effectiveness of leadership is measured by the amount of money he or she generates for the consortium and its programs and by the extent that the programs the administrator oversees serve member needs.

While the statutory consortium studied does attempt to fill member needs, and while the consortium administrator is recognized as the organization's spokesman, other parallels to effective consortium leadership cannot be drawn. The consortium administrator cannot be described as a spark plug or cheerleader; that is, one who aggressively manages and promotes the organization. In fact, the administrator describes himself as, first and foremost, a "communicator." His job, as he sees it, is to keep the membership informed of all significant matters of concern to the consortium and to consult with members as needed. He keeps things running

smoothly and attempts to "shield" the presidents from problems he can solve himself. He uses personal and professional contacts to glean information as well as to persuade. He considers himself politically astute and able to mediate disputes but does not see himself as an initiator or active promoter of the consortium and its membership. The latter two roles, in his opinion, are not what the membership expects of him.

Many of the interviewees concur with the administrator's personal assessment. Ten respondents commented on his communications skills and his ability to bring people together to discuss problems. Six mentioned his ability both to obtain and provide needed information when requested. A review of the documents at the various interview sites support the interviewees' assessments. In every office there were numerous copies of letters sent by the consortium administrator informing the members about requests by non-regional schools to offer courses in the area. These files also contained copies of budgets and budget proposals, meeting minutes prepared by the administrator, newspaper and magazine articles on higher education subjects that the administrator felt would be of interest to his contacts, and correspondence between the administrator and various interviewees concerning topics relating to cooperation.

Ten interviewees mentioned that, within the framework in which he must work, the consortium administrator does a good job of running the consortium. However, three interviewees,

including the administrator, observed that, for the most part, the presidents do not want the administrator to assume any responsibility for the promotion of any of the institutions and their programs. In fact, one School of Education dean noted that his institution turned down the administrator's request to allow him to market members' programs in the region. This, according to the respondent, is a role each institution must fill itself.

Two interviewees (a four-year school continuing education director and a two-year school president) observed that, as the consortium is set up, the administrator is not actually in a leadership role at all. The administrator serves in a staff capacity to all the member institutions. That is, he serves at their beck and call. A SCHEV official noted that it is not the administrator's role "to initiate." Rather, his role is to "simply give facts and act accordingly." Another SCHEV interviewee described the role of the consortium administrator as that of a "clerk -- he keeps records." Certainly the administrator must operate within the guidelines of the enabling legislation and the consortium charter, but his main role is to respond to the wishes of the membership.

When asked to comment on who has the greatest impact on the consortium's effectiveness, the responses were varied. Only one interviewee, a two-year college president, identified the administrator as the individual having the most impact on the effectiveness of the consortium. Two

interviewees said that the Board of Directors has the greatest impact on the consortium's effectiveness (since it is the governing/decision-making body) while seven believed that the person at the focal institution responsible for coordinating all of that institution's continuing education efforts has the greatest impact on the consortium's effectiveness (The focal institution is the largest and most powerful in the region. Its representative to the consortium has been involved in continuing education for many years and is very influential). When asked how the administrator contributes to the organization's effectiveness, ten respondents said that his ability to communicate issues and concerns, garner and distribute information, and encourage principals to get together to discuss problems are his offerings to the consortium's effectiveness.

This research indicates that the leadership of this consortium does not, in any great measure, resemble the leadership of an effective voluntary consortium. Part of this difference is due to the nature of the statutory consortium studied; it is not set up to explore new and innovative ways to cooperate. It also is not granted regulatory authority; it has only advisory powers. It is set up to encourage regional institutions to cooperate in their off-campus continuing education work and to control, to an extent, the incursion of non-regional institutions into the area. In large part, according to interviewees, this objective has been accomplished. Therefore, the

administrator is more of a "caretaker" now (in the words of one respondent). He "articulates matters of concern" and "provides the medium for resolution of problems" as one two-year college president noted, and the location of his position in the center of the off-campus continuing education arena makes him the perfect person to handle the "clearinghouse" functions for the members.

As the leader of the consortium, the administrator is effective for the types of responsibilities and duties he is expected to fulfill, according to most interviewees. However, his leadership is different from the leadership generally found in effective voluntary consortia; the administrator of this statutory consortium tends to react to situations while an effective voluntary consortium administrator tends to be proactive. However, while this attribute, as identified and described in the literature, is not present in this consortium, the leadership has been called effective by many interviewees. Therefore, within the narrowly defined leadership requirements of the organization, this statutory consortium can be considered to possess the attribute of effective leadership.

Perception of usefulness. Effective voluntary consortia, according to the literature, are perceived as useful to their member schools. That is, the members believe that they receive benefits from membership equal to or greater than their investment and that membership in the consortium fulfills their cooperation needs.

The responses to the interview questions concerning the usefulness of the consortium to each member institution varied according to both the position held by the interviewees and the type of institution where each worked. As the consortium has aged, its usefulness to all members seems to have changed.

As noted by fourteen respondents, when the consortium was founded it helped establish the responsibilities of each member institution in providing off-campus continuing education to the citizens of the region. Specifically, the consortium ensured that lower division continuing education courses would be offered only by the two-year colleges and that upper division continuing education courses would be offered by the four-year institutions. The consortium also helped protect these area institutions from non-regional institution intrusions as the regional schools matured and grew during this period. The focal institution, especially, benefitted from this "protectionism" offered by the consortium. As the focal university's School of Education dean said, "It helped us get into off-campus work easier by defining each school's territory and its specific role in off-campus continuing education work." The focal institution's officer who coordinates that school's continuing education efforts said, "The consortium solidified [my university's] position as one of the major providers of continuing education in the region."

Today, however, this consortium role is not as

significant. Five of the seven two-year institution interviewees suggested that the consortium is not particularly useful to their institutions; four of the five four-year institution interviewees suggested that their universities' continuing education needs are met by the consortium. This variation occurs because most off-campus credit instruction offered by a non-regional institution in the area is upper division or graduate level work. This level of instruction is only offered by the four-year institutions and is where the majority of "turf" disputes take place. The two-year schools' territory is defined clearly by the state. Hence, disputes of this nature do not occur. Since most respondents identified the "protection of turf" as the main reason for the consortium's existence, this activity serves primarily the four-year schools, not the two-year institutions.

Ten respondents noted that the consortium today is most useful as a vehicle for communication among the member presidents. Two referred to the consortium as a valuable "forum" for discussion and interchange, and eight interviewees made specific mention of communication as an important consortium role. One two-year college continuing education director summarized: "The consortium is an important forum for communication among the presidents."

It was assumed that, if membership in the consortium was important to a member school, interviewees would mention the various benefits of membership when asked why their

institutions are members of the consortium. Almost without exception, the respondents first comment was that their institutions are members because the law requires it. However, five of the thirteen persons interviewed who are associated with a particular institution did elaborate on this question. They mentioned the cooperative arrangements which define each school's "turf" and the value of the communication role of the consortium as important reasons for membership. SCHEV officials shared this same point of view. One SCHEV interviewee commented: "The consortium keeps the fence around the garden. It protects turf."

When asked if consortium membership was the best way to have an institution's off-campus continuing education needs met, most people said that, while it was not necessarily the best way, it was one way to meet their needs. Their rationale was that, since it is already in place, it could be made to work better if the membership desired it. If the consortium was not in place, something like it would probably have to be set up, according to two interviewees. As one SCHEV official said, "The consortium does offer collegial support to fight battles." Another SCHEV official said that, in his opinion, there would certainly have to be some "mechanism in place to resolve 'turf' disputes." The consortium, he continued, while not necessarily the best organization to do so, does keep "institutional boundaries clean."

When asked if there were other needs that the consortium

could meet but does not at this time, three respondents representing both two- and four-year institutions noted that the "new markets" created in the region should be a concern of the consortium. For example, the needs of business and industry for work force training, the necessity for neighboring institutions to share degree programs for disciplines with historically low enrollments, and the growth of telecourse instruction are current issues that interviewees see as legitimate consortium concerns. Two interviewees (one two-year college president and one four-year university continuing education dean) noted specifically that needs assessments and analyses should become a consortium responsibility in order to examine how, collectively, the members can serve these "new markets" efficiently and effectively.

The two representatives from SCHEV noted that Virginia is currently looking at the entire area of continuing education and the delivery systems used to present such instruction. They suggested that the consortia within the state might have to assume a different role as new delivery systems for continuing education offerings are established (e.g., instruction delivered by satellite to distant locations). However, they noted that SCHEV was only now beginning to study this issue and had no definitive answers. One SCHEV respondent did note that, with technology changing the way educational services can be delivered, a "space- or geographically-bound consortium will have limited utility [to

a region and to the state.]" He suggested that consortia which deal with programs and disciplines (and the new technology to deliver them anywhere in the state where a need is identified) will be of more value in the future than the "space-bound" consortia.

Is this consortium perceived by the membership as useful? Do the members perceive that the consortium meets their needs in the same way that a voluntary consortium meets its members' needs? Certainly it still helps protect "turf" and mediate disputes. Clearly it encourages the cooperation of the members when they attempt to serve the region's continuing education needs. However, the real recipients of this benefit are principally the two senior institutions. The two-year schools do not receive much reward for their membership. One two-year college president suggested that his institution would leave the consortium if it were permitted by law. Another two-year college president said, "The consortium is a waste of money." However, he also said that, simply for the communication opportunities offered by the consortium, he still supports its existence. Therefore, the consortium's usefulness for some derives from a secondary benefit of membership, not a direct one. While it does not directly fill all members' cooperation needs (e.g., eliminate all competition from non-regional higher education institutions, develop new cooperative programs), the consortium provides a channel for presidential communication, and that does fill a need. Whether the consortium is the

best way to have this particular need met, according to eight interviewees, is not clear. Nevertheless, since the consortium is in place, fourteen of the fifteen higher education respondents are willing to use it to meet needs as well as possible. Clearly, though, the effectiveness attribute of perceived usefulness to the member institutions is not strongly apparent in this consortium.

Attributes Perceived as Essential to Statutory Consortium Effectiveness

In addition to questions related to the six effectiveness attributes developed from the literature on voluntary consortia, interviewees were questioned concerning their perceptions of statutory consortium effectiveness in general. Each respondent was asked to define the conditions he or she considered essential for a statutory consortium to be effective. Since most of the study participants have worked with the consortium for at least two years (and three respondents have been affiliated with the consortium since its inception), it was felt that their opinions on this subject, joined with the other research findings, would be valuable in further defining the necessary attributes of effective statutory consortia.

In response to interview question G3 (Appendix A), participants identified five attributes that a statutory consortium, like the one studied, should have if it is to be effective. They are:

- the desire on the part of institutions to cooperate.

- a clear reason for the consortium's existence.
- an incentive for institutions to cooperate.
- a mutual sense of responsibility among members.
- good communication.

Four interviewees noted that institutions must want to cooperate in order for any organization established for that purpose to work. A two-year college president said, "Schools must be sold on cooperation." Another two-year college president noted, "People involved [in cooperative programs] must want the consortium to work."

Second, according to four participants, "there needs to be a 'problem', a reason for consortium existence," as a SCHEV official put it. Unless there is a legitimate reason for a consortium to be established and supported, it is unlikely that it has much of a chance to survive and thrive. As one School of Education dean said, there must be a "legitimate purpose or goal for the existence of a consortium which institutions can buy into. It must serve their needs and be in their best interests." A four-year school continuing education director noted that "there must be a specific goal or agenda established to serve particular constituents in the region. A consortium can assist institutions as each serves its constituents." The senior continuing education director at the focal institution put it this way: "[An effective statutory consortium must have] clear operating guidelines and establish clear expectations of the member institutions." By doing this the consortium

clearly defines both its own role and the role of the members. Those participating in cooperative ventures know both what to expect from the other members and what is expected from them.

A third essential condition for statutory consortium effectiveness, according to nine respondents, is the establishment of sufficient incentives for cooperation. The incentives could be positive (as in offering financial rewards for cooperative ventures) or negative (as imposing fines or levies for non-cooperating schools). All nine interviewees, however, offered the positive alternative as the better way to encourage cooperation among higher education institutions. A School of Education dean suggested that "carrots" or rewards must be offered to institutions for cooperative efforts. Among those rewards, according to five interviewees, is the necessity to have acceptable funding of the consortium. Fair and equitable funding formulas must be established, according to a two-year college president, and the legislative organization which sets up a statutory consortium must provide the funds for the consortium's operation. Unless this is done, the president concluded, member institutions may consider the efforts on the part of the legislative body as merely "lip service" to cooperation. Monetary rewards for cooperation can create an atmosphere which encourages cooperation and, ultimately, the effectiveness of a consortium. With financial support withdrawn, incentive is lessened. Similarly, each

institution, according to a four-year university continuing education director, must perceive that the others in the region are contributing their fair share to the funding of the consortium. They must also perceive that they are getting their fair share of the benefits of cooperation. In sum, incentives for cooperation must be established, according to nine respondents, if a statutory consortium is to have a chance to be effective. This incentive must include adequate funding of cooperative endeavors from the establishing agency.

As a fourth essential condition for statutory consortium effectiveness, four interviewees noted that member institutions must assume responsibility for the effectiveness of the consortial arrangement. They suggested that each member must assume the responsibility for the successes and failures of the organization. Likewise, each must be active in cooperative matters and share in the entire operation of the consortium. Essentially, this means that each member institution should be represented on all consortium committees and participate in policy development and decision-making. A School of Education dean noted that members must also respect each other and their programs for an effective cooperative relationship to develop.

For a fifth attribute, a good communication system, was cited by three respondents as essential to an effective statutory consortium. They noted that a communication system is vital if members are to keep current with consortium

matters and react appropriately when called upon. A director of continuing education at a four-year school said that "solid communication among the members" is essential for statutory consortium effectiveness.

The five effectiveness attributes developed through a synthesis of interviewee responses parallel, to some extent, those attributes derived from the literature on voluntary consortia. However, only an interviewee from SCHEV mentioned consortium leadership as a critical factor for a statutory consortium to be effective and only one two-year college president suggested that planning is essential for effectiveness. No one referred to presidential support as an essential element. Of the six effectiveness attributes derived from the literature, only clear goals, effective communication, and perception of usefulness were mentioned by at least three respondents as vital to a statutory consortium. However, nine interviewees added incentives for membership (which includes the need for adequate funding) and the desire to cooperate as additional effectiveness attributes.

The desire to cooperate tends to be the prerequisite for any type of organization to establish cooperative activities. For a voluntary consortium, if no one wants to cooperate, the organization will cease to exist. For a statutory consortium, cooperation is often thrust upon unwilling institutions. The interviewees suggest that, if institutions desire to cooperate, the consortium will more likely be

effective. This would bring a statutory consortium on a parallel course with a voluntary consortium. Both would then have a membership that recognizes the value of cooperation.

Perceptions of Effectiveness

One set of interview questions (interview questions G1 and G2 [Appendix A]) concerned interviewees' perceptions of this statutory consortium's effectiveness. For example, do those who work under the consortium umbrella perceive it as a vital and valuable organization?; do they regard membership as worthwhile? The purpose of these questions was to determine if, in the view of the interviewees, the statutory consortium under study is an effective organization. It was believed that their answers could help to develop conclusions on the relevance of the various effectiveness attributes under study to a statutory consortium.

When asked if the consortium is effective, the respondents in general answered both yes and no. On the positive side all said that the consortium has encouraged cooperation among schools and has kept duplication of effort to a minimum. Some participants suggested that the consortium is an effective communication conduit and a forum for presidential debate and interchange. Fourteen interviewees noted that in its early days it helped establish institutional "turf" and protected the regional institutions from outside pressures as they grew and matured. Today, however, it tends to maintain the "status quo," according to a four-year university continuing education director. As one

two-year college continuing education director said, "It exists."

On the negative side, the consortium has not taken the initiative to explore new avenues of cooperation. As one interviewee noted, "It has only a negative role to play in the region. It tends to deal only with issues of who can and cannot offer courses in the area. It serves to limit rather than encourage cooperation." One two-year college president said that it "doesn't do anything but try to keep non-regional schools out, and it spends lots of money to do that." A SCHEV official considered it to be a "consortium by exception." That is, the consortium does not act unless there is a problem. He also referred to it as a "crisis consortium:" it is active only when a problem arises. One School of Education dean observed that "institutions in the consortium do not see a need for the consortium since most are not heavily invested in [off-campus continuing education] services." In fact, since most off-campus credit instruction consists of graduate education courses, and only the four-year institutions deliver these classes, the two-year colleges are not even involved.

For the most part, this consortium is perceived to be effective, according to the interviewees. However, this effectiveness is based on secondary goals. Only one interviewee mentioned the effectiveness of the consortium vis-a-vis the established goals and mission of the consortium. It appears that this consortium is not in a

position to encourage new cooperative ventures in the region nor to explore new avenues for cooperation in continuing education. This is because, in part, "the presidents don't want the consortium to do too much," according to the consortium administrator. Rather, the consortium exists to defend "turf" and to serve as a communication link among the member schools. According to interviewees, it is in this latter role that the consortium is considered effective. It is in the former role of encouraging new cooperation that it is not perceived as effective. However, since the former role is not necessarily the role most interviewees see the consortium fulfilling, its ineffectiveness in this area is moot. As one two-year college president said, "It is doing what it is supposed to do."

Views of Public School Division Professional Development Officers

The Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education have a basic mission: to serve the continuing education needs of their regions through effective and efficient cooperation. The interview responses and document review conducted at the member institutions of the consortium investigated offer one view of how this mission is carried out. However, it is also important to consider the views and perceptions of those who receive the consortium's services: Is the consortium perceived as truly serving the region's needs? Can these recipients verify that useful and efficient continuing education services are, in fact, provided by the

consortium in the region?

The majority of off-campus continuing education work offered in the consortium's region is directed toward public school teachers. Schools of Education of both regional and non-regional colleges and universities offer courses to public school systems to meet teacher recertification requirements and professional development needs. In an effort to determine how this consortium coordinates the activities of its members as they serve the region's continuing education needs, interviews were conducted with three professional development officers who each work for a different public school division within the consortium region. The professional development officers' basic responsibility is to determine their division's faculty and staff needs and then invite colleges and universities to offer courses in their school districts. Interview questions were asked to determine if the consortium assists these officers in meeting their school districts' needs. Additional questions concerned the usefulness of the assistance provided. The answers to these questions helped determine how the consortium and its members serve the region.

The researcher assumed that, since the conflicting "turf" issues have been settled and the regional institutions have been established as the "major providers of continuing education in the region" (according to interviews with representatives of higher education institutions and SCHEV,

as noted earlier), these professional development officers would consider the regional institutions the primary providers of continuing education courses and seek assistance from them first when designing their faculty and staff development programs. They would not actively and regularly solicit non-regional universities' bids to provide courses which would duplicate those available from regional institutions. Only when a special need could not be met locally (e.g., consortium members do not have a particular course) would the professional development officers look to the non-regional institutions for assistance.

However, the three public school system professional development officers interviewed were unanimous in their belief that, for the most part, the consortium did not help them meet their own continuing education needs. Each described the consortium's mission as coordinating off-campus instruction in the area. However, none of the three has had any dealings with the consortium personally; all their contacts have been directly with the regional colleges and universities.

All three feel the consortium hinders their efforts to get courses for the staffs and faculties in their school divisions. One interviewee said that the consortium "prevents my school system from doing business with whomever it wants [including non-regional institutions]. It [the school system] should be able to spend its money where it wants to get the best programs." Another participant

stressed the benefits, in his opinion, of an "open marketplace." That is, public school systems are likely to get higher quality courses for less money when colleges and universities have to compete. He said that his school system "shops where it can get the best bargain." All three agreed that the consortium is simply an unnecessary hindrance as they develop their teacher education programs. As one professional development official stated, "The consortium is an irritation."

It would appear, then, that the regional institutions have not established strong enough "linkages and relationships" with the area's public school systems to be considered the primary providers of off-campus continuing education courses, as a four-year university continuing education director noted. Non-regional institutions are as likely to be asked to offer courses in the area as regional schools are. This creates the situation whereby regional needs are met, to an extent, by non-regional rather than by regional institutions as the consortium charter requires. The consortium, therefore, does not seem to have been completely effective in helping to establish the regional member institutions as the primary providers of education to serve the region's needs. Based on the comments of the three professional development officers interviewed, each is just as likely to seek assistance from institutions outside of the consortium as to seek assistance from consortium members.

This tends to verify the observations made by SCHEV and

college/university participants who noted that the consortium has not been completely successful in encouraging the "users" of continuing education services to seek help from the regional higher education institutions. The reluctance of the member presidents to allow the consortium administrator to "market" their institutions' programs/offerings and the overall reactive posture of the consortium may be two overriding reasons the public school division professional development officers have not looked to the consortium as the primary provider of continuing education services.

Summary

The interview data and document findings reveal that the statutory consortium under investigation possesses several of the attributes associated with effective voluntary consortia: it has clear, concise goals; it has open, two-way communication; there is some degree of presidential support; the leadership is considered effective for this type of consortium; and it is perceived to serve members' cooperation needs to some extent. There does not, however, seem to be much evidence that the consortium engages in incremental planning.

When asked to describe the factors which, in their opinions, are essential for statutory consortia effectiveness, interviewees identified institutions' desire to cooperate, clear reasons for cooperation, an incentive to cooperate, a mutual sense of responsibility among all members for the programs of the consortium, and good communication

among all parties as the essential elements. These parallel, to some degree, those attributes deemed necessary for voluntary consortium effectiveness. However, several attributes considered essential for statutory consortium effectiveness (especially the establishment by the state government of incentives to cooperate [including adequate funding]) have not been identified as essential for voluntary consortium effectiveness. For a statutory consortium, this incentive provision may be a necessary requirement if the organization is to have a chance to be effective. The incentives of adequate state funding and official state recognition and promotion of successful cooperative programs can serve as "clout" when a state establishes cooperation agencies.

Based on the responses of the public school division professional development officers, the consortium apparently has not established itself and its member institutions as the primary providers of continuing education services in the eyes of these people. The consortium is viewed as an "irritation" and an unnecessary hindrance as these professional development officers build their programs. Clearly, this consortium has not convinced this segment of its constituency that the regional colleges and universities should be the primary providers of continuing education services to the school systems. This failure has created a situation whereby both regional and non-regional institutions are as likely to be asked to provide services for a school

district.

In Chapter Five the conclusions based on this analysis are presented with implications for the application of the conclusions. Recommendations for further research are also discussed.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

Lewis Patterson (1979a) has suggested that cooperative activities [among higher education institutions] can avoid costly and unnecessary duplication.... The consortium offers an efficient and non-duplicative alternative as an answer to meeting future identified needs.... When institutions can agree to cooperate by limiting their competition then the greatest efficiency can be achieved (pp. VIII 1-VIII 3).

Voluntary cooperative efforts among colleges and universities have attempted to limit competition and encourage the sharing of programs and activities, but these efforts have not always been successful. Konkell and Patterson (1981), recognizing this fact, noted that, "ever present when voluntary efforts do not succeed is the potential for the long arm of the state to require cooperation" (p. 15). Virginia established just such cooperation agencies when voluntary efforts to limit duplication of off-campus continuing education were not successful (see McKeon, 1976).

An effective voluntary consortium, according to the

literature, possesses attributes which collectively contribute to its effectiveness. These attributes include the possession of clear, concise goals; open, two-way communication; support of the member presidents; an incremental planning process; effective leadership; and the perception by the members that the consortium fills their needs. It is not clear, however, what attributes contribute to statutory consortium effectiveness; there is little written on this subject. Therefore, this case study of a statutory Virginia consortium sought to determine: 1) if the attributes associated with effective voluntary consortia are present in a statutory consortium, and 2) if other factors are perceived as related to statutory consortium effectiveness.

Possession of Effectiveness Attributes

Through interviews with people associated with one of the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education and review of consortium documents located at each interview site, a case study was developed. The research suggests that the consortium studied does possess several of the effectiveness attributes identified from the literature on voluntary consortia. The consortium has clear and well-articulated goals; it has open, two-way communication; it has some support from the member presidents; its leadership is, within the narrow mission of the consortium's responsibilities, described as effective; and it is generally considered by those interviewed to be useful to its members.

However, unlike effective voluntary consortia, it does not engage in incremental planning.

The degree to which this statutory consortium possesses each effectiveness attribute varies. It appears to possess completely the attributes of clear, concise goals and open, two-way communication. The support of the member institution presidents, though present, does not seem as strong or extensive as the support presidents give to consortia their institutions join voluntarily. Leadership roles and styles also seem to differ in this mandated consortium when compared with voluntary consortia. The statutory consortium leader studied is a passive and reactive coordinator rather than an active initiator as is often the case in effective voluntary consortia. Nevertheless, the leadership was considered effective by most interviewees. Finally, although participants acknowledged that the consortium does, to some extent, meet their needs, they seemed to believe that it could provide additional services.

Discussion of Attributes

Clear, concise goals. This consortium, according to interview responses, has a clear, well-defined mission and goals. Every interviewee articulated the consortium's mission and explained several activities which support it. However, it appears that most interviewees believe that the original and stated mission of serving regional needs through cooperation is not as important as is a secondary function. That secondary function is to serve as a "forum" for

communication and understanding among the presidents of the member schools. Interviewees said that the original cooperative mission and the attempt to keep non-regional institutions from offering too many courses in the area are, generally, fulfilled. This secondary role now seems to be more important and the one which justifies the consortium's existence.

Open, two-way communication. The consortium has an open and two-way communication structure which uses letters, telephone calls, meetings, and personal contacts as vehicles to exchange information. Based on this research, there is little reason why any member school should not know of any consortium proposal, problem, concern, program, or activity. Besides the formal communication structure, there is an informal structure among the presidents of the member schools and among the continuing education directors which is used to solve problems (e.g., A non-regional institution proposes to offer a duplicative course in the area) and to express concerns (e.g., Are all members sharing proportionally in the benefits of the consortium?) and ideas (e.g., Should the two universities develop a shared degree program in a traditionally low-enrollment discipline?).

Presidential support. Member presidents support the consortium to the extent that it helps them when a problem arises. They attend the regular and special consortium meetings and respond to consortium requests for their opinion on various issues. However, they do not seem to express much

overt support to either their own faculties and staffs or to the community at-large. Also, they apparently do not allow the consortium administrator to explore new and innovative ways of cooperation. The presidents tend to use the consortium as a communication channel and as a "barrier" when they oppose a non-regional school's effort to offer a duplicative course in the region.

Incremental planning. Essentially, this consortium engages in no incremental planning. In fact, it has no systematic planning process at all. According to the interviewees, the pattern of the consortium is to react to external forces. Planning, it appears, is not a role the consortium should or even can perform, according to some respondents.

Effective consortium leadership. Interviewees describe the leadership of this statutory consortium as effective. However, its style is different from the leadership style found in an effective voluntary consortium. The administrator of this consortium is a conduit through which information flows. He maintains records on off-campus continuing education courses offered in the region; he communicates extensively with the consortium members on issues, concerns, and problems of mutual interest; and he maintains a close working relationship with the member presidents and most of their continuing education directors. However, he does not (and perhaps cannot) initiate ideas and plans for new cooperative ventures. He leaves the initiative

with member institutions. This passive stance, though, appears to be what the member presidents want. In spite of the cooperative atmosphere created by the consortium, many of the member institutions (and especially the two four-year schools) want to compete for students. True cooperation has not totally penetrated the traditions of autonomous behavior higher education has maintained for so long. Therefore, the consortium administrator can work only within the narrow confines of cooperation permitted by the presidents. He does all they ask of him, and he does it effectively. However, the presidents simply ask little of the administrator beyond that described above.

Perception of usefulness. Originally, the consortium assisted the member institutions' off-campus continuing education programs to grow and mature by serving as a "barrier" to non-regional institution intrusion and by helping define "turf" and the off-campus continuing education responsibilities of the membership (e.g., two-year colleges offer lower division courses while the senior institutions offer upper division and graduate work). In this way the consortium was extremely useful to them. Today, however, these "barrier" and "turf" roles are not as important since disputes over who-can-offer-courses-where have, for the most part, been resolved. Now, according to the interview subjects, the consortium is useful because it fills a more important role as a communication vehicle. Consortium business requires member presidents and directors of

continuing education to communicate on a regular basis for the resolution of conflicts among institutions both within and without the consortium. Many interviewees said that the consortium's role in enhancing and encouraging communication is the most important function the consortium performs. Therefore, the consortium's perceived usefulness to the membership is in its ability to foster and encourage communication among presidents and continuing education directors.

Additional Statutory Consortium Effectiveness Attributes

When asked what conditions they believe are essential for statutory consortium effectiveness, interviewees identified five attributes: 1) the desire of schools to cooperate; 2) the presence of a clear reason to cooperate; 3) the provision of incentives to cooperate (including adequate consortium funding); 4) a mutual sense of responsibility among members for the effectiveness of the cooperative effort; and 5) a good communication structure.

Desire to cooperate. Interviewees expressed the feeling that institutions must truly want to cooperate if any consortium is to be effective. The common view was that no amount of coercion or cajoling on the part of any agency can overcome the resistance to cooperation resulting from the autonomous nature of colleges and universities. Only when each member institution sees the potential benefits of collaboration can a mandated cooperative endeavor have a chance to be effective.

Reason to cooperate. Closely related to this condition is the need for a clear reason to cooperate. Institutions must believe that, through cooperation, some recognized problem or concern can be addressed and solved. With no reason to cooperate, there is no reason to form a consortium.

Incentives to cooperate. Respondents also suggested that incentives for institutions to work together are essential to the effectiveness of a statutory consortium. Participants expressed their belief that adequate funding of the statutory consortium would be an incentive for member institutions to cooperate. This money, according to those interviewed, should come, preferably, from the agency which establishes the consortium, generally a state government. If, on the one hand, the consortium membership does not initially desire to cooperate willingly, such funding can make required cooperation more palatable. If, on the other hand, the cooperation is entered into freely, adequate funding can enhance the cooperation. In addition, interviewees suggested that financial rewards (e.g., institutions receive special grants or awards to support a cooperative program) or increased prestige (e.g., institutions receive special recognition for a unique or special program) are two other incentives which can help assure the effectiveness of a statutory consortium. They also suggested that negative incentives, such as levies or the withholding of funds for failure to cooperate, could also serve this purpose. Basically, participants in this study

believe that incentives for cooperation are essential to the effectiveness of a statutory consortium.

Responsibility for cooperation. Participants also concluded that member schools must assume the responsibility for the success of the programs and activities of a statutory consortium if the consortium is to be effective.

Interviewees expressed their belief that, if all members accept the responsibility for the entire cooperation program rather than letting either the consortium administrator or one or two member institutions shoulder the responsibility, the consortium's effectiveness is likely to be enhanced.

Good communication. As in an effective voluntary consortium, interviewees in general believe a good communication structure is essential for statutory consortium effectiveness. A good communication system can assure that each member school is completely informed of all consortium plans and programs and that each member institution is aware of how it fits into the total scheme. Each member can feel it is a part of the organization if it has the assurance that it is kept totally informed. Interviewees suggested that a good communication system might include: periodic newsletters or "occasional papers" series; frequent correspondence on important issues; telephone contact as needed; regular meetings (Board of Directors and committees) to discuss programs, issues, and concerns; open circulation of interim and final reports on cooperative projects and activities as well as proposals and suggestions for new programs and

initiatives; and the establishment of networks of persons within the consortium who share similar concerns and problems.

Summary. Does this consortium possess these five effectiveness attributes? It appears from this study that only the second attribute, clear reason to cooperate, and the fifth attribute, good communication structure, are clearly present in this consortium. The presence of the other three attributes was not established through this research.

Dichotomy of Voluntary and Statutory Consortia

As noted in Chapter 2, voluntary consortia and statutory consortia are at opposite ends of the cooperation continuum. Kreplin and Bolce (1973) have observed that attitudes of trust and agreement are generally developed among institutions which voluntarily enter into cooperative activities while institutions mandated to cooperate do not generally form such relationships. Grupe (1971), L. Patterson (1979b), and Wallenfelt (1983) noted that institutional proclivities toward autonomy and competition are strong barriers that required cooperation may not be able to overcome. Therefore, effective cooperative efforts are likely to be difficult to cultivate in a statutory consortium unless these barriers are removed. Yet, as Berdahl (1971) has written, states do need mechanisms in place to control and oversee institutions of higher education and their programs as funds and students dwindle.

What are the reasons that encourage colleges and

universities to engage voluntarily in cooperative activities? What do effective voluntary consortia do to nurture the support and cooperation of their members? An effective voluntary consortium is perceived as useful by its member institutions and as filling their cooperation needs. An effective voluntary consortium also seeks to serve its members and enhance their position in the various areas of cooperation by providing cost-effective and efficient programs. Additionally, an effective voluntary consortium often explores new avenues of cooperation and develops new cooperative programs. It engages in a systematic incremental planning process to discover how it can better serve its members. An effective voluntary consortium tends to be a vital and dynamic organization that reacts to and changes with the forces which shape higher education. In short, the primary reason institutions voluntarily cooperate is because they realize that growth, and even survival, is enhanced when risks and benefits are shared.

A statutory consortium, on the other hand, often has a more limited focus. Especially in the case of the statutory consortium studied, the mission was limited to defining "turf" and establishing "boundaries." It never seemed to get past this focus and into the exploration of new ways to cooperate and serve the region's continuing education needs. Even though several people interviewed did suggest that the consortium should attempt to cooperate in more ways, it appears that the member institutions never really perceived

that there was any reason to cooperate beyond the narrow field of activities originally prescribed. As that prescribed mission was fulfilled, the consortium has had an increasingly smaller role to play on the cooperation stage. The reasons to cooperate through the consortium have become less important in the eyes of the membership.

In addition, the consortium's importance to those it serves (e.g., the public school divisions in the region) also appears to be minor. As noted earlier, the school division professional development officers do not consider the consortium nor its members to be the primary providers of continuing education services to the region. Their description of the consortium and its role in negative terms emphasizes the minor part the consortium plays in its region.

Several complex questions remain to be answered. Can a statutory consortium be established and operated in such a way as to encourage cooperation among the member institutions? Can a statutory consortium be the "suitably sensitive mechanism" Berdahl (1971, p. 9) suggests states should use to coordinate higher education activities and programs? What implications does this research have for those either involved in the operation of a statutory consortium or contemplating the establishment of a statutory consortium?

Implications of this Research: Policy and Practice

This research of one Virginia Consortium for Continuing Higher Education suggests that there are several factors that

should be considered when a general purpose or special purpose statutory consortium is established and operated to increase the likelihood that the consortium will be effective:

(1) Institutions must want to cooperate if the consortium is to have any real chance of surviving and thriving. Voluntary consortia, as the name implies, are formed by institutions which willingly enter into the cooperation process. Statutory consortia do not necessarily have members with this same willingness to cooperate. Therefore, it is necessary that those involved in the establishment and operation of a statutory consortium do everything possible to generate and nurture a cooperative "spirit" among the members and potential members. Setting the cooperation stage is an action officials can take to help encourage the effectiveness of a statutory consortium.

One way this can be done is to attempt to involve representatives from all affected institutions in the initial planning process when the consortium is on the "drawing boards." If these representatives participate in the establishment of the organization's mission, management structure, communication structure, funding formulas, and incentives and rewards for cooperation, the organization will stand a much better chance of being effective.

(2) Institutions joined together to cooperate must perceive that there are genuine reasons for mandated cooperation, and such reasons should be clearly spelled out.

As in the case of an effective voluntary consortium, mission and goal statements must be clearly stated and articulated to the membership so that each institution knows exactly what is to be accomplished and why.

It is important that statutory consortium members be given both clear reasons and justification for cooperation and the opportunity to plan for and shape the cooperative endeavor. As the member institutions and the consortium mature, the needs for cooperation will also mature. The consortium must have the capability to change to meet the new cooperation needs of its membership. In this way it will provide genuine and valid reasons for member institutions to cooperate. As with voluntary consortia, each member must believe that sharing risks and benefits will be to its advantage.

(3) Incentives for cooperation must be available to the members of a statutory consortium in order to foster their active participation and support of the consortium. Initially, member institutions must receive adequate funding from the establishing agency to support the consortium and its programs. Rewards must also be established for effective and successful cooperative activities. Such rewards can include the allocation of additional funds to support the cooperative activity, the granting of additional funds for other projects, or the recognition of and support for a unique or special program sponsored by the member institutions or the consortium. Other perquisites (e.g.,

exemption from selected state regulations governing enrollment numbers or faculty-student ratios) may also be used as incentives for cooperation. The key, though, is that sufficient incentives be made available to entice institutions of higher education to cooperate willingly and actively with other colleges and universities.

Ideally, the consortium should be in the position to offer the rewards and incentives for cooperation. In this light, the consortium administrator should have some discretionary funds available for his use. Such money, awarded to institutions engaged in particularly effective, innovative, or risky ventures, should stimulate the development of more cooperative endeavors. If institutions are aware that the administrator has at his disposal discretionary funds to support cooperation, they may be more willing to engage in cooperative programs and activities, knowing there is a chance their efforts will be rewarded. If such reward comes from the consortium administrator, his position as the leader is enhanced, and the consortium's position among the membership is strengthened. Obviously, the administrator must insure that these awards are made in an even-handed and fair manner. Handled correctly, the opportunity for the consortium administrator to control some discretionary money would be a great incentive for cooperation.

(4) To be effective, a statutory consortium's membership must perceive that all member institutions are contributing

their "fair share" to the cooperative effort and that each school is receiving an equitable return on its investment. Member institutions must also assume the responsibility not only for the successes of their own portion of the cooperation activities but also for the successes (and failures) of the entire consortium program. Each institution must be actively involved in the total cooperation endeavor. It is important that some provisions be made which encourage this active role by all member institutions. Requiring representation of all institutions on major standing and ad hoc committees of the consortium and developing programs which serve all institutions' needs are two ways this might be accomplished.

(5) The development of a good communication system among the members and the consortium office is considered an essential ingredient for both an effective voluntary consortium and an effective statutory consortium. Such a communication system assures that all interested parties involved in the cooperation activity are informed and consulted on issues, problems, and concerns affecting cooperation. Such a system must be open and two-way. It should include the scheduling of regular face-to-face meetings among the principals of the organization, the establishment of an approval/disapproval structure for all major issues of consortium concern, the creation of a vehicle through which all members are informed of others' (and the consortium's) programs (e.g., newsletter), and the

involvement of people from various institutional levels (e.g., faculty, staff, administration) in consortium planning and implementation committees.

Through such a communication system information can be shared to encourage the development of the several other essential elements necessary for effectiveness described earlier. A poor communication system can only hurt cooperation by creating an atmosphere of distrust and secrecy. Members must believe that every issue involving them is shared and discussed freely.

In addition to the attributes offered by the interviewees, additional effectiveness attributes developed from the literature on effective voluntary consortia should also be considered for statutory consortia:

(1) The member presidents should be supportive of the cooperative enterprise. Because of their leadership position in the higher education community, presidents can, through their active support, increase the credibility and importance of cooperative activities. The more actively the presidents support mandated cooperation, the more likely it is that the consortium will be effective. This research suggests that, were the member presidents of the subject consortium more openly supportive of the consortium, it might have been more effective and useful both to the membership and to the region as a whole. However, since, as a group, the presidents have not been particularly enthusiastic in their support of the consortium, it has not done more than the absolute minimum to

serve the region.

(2) Effective consortia, both voluntary and statutory, should develop a systematic planning process to evaluate the past and anticipate the future. Personnel, equipment, programs and funding needs cannot be projected unless planning is done. The fact that the consortium under study has done no real planning contributed, no doubt, to its narrow focus and limited service to the region.

(3) The consortium administrator is an important factor in the effectiveness of a cooperative organization. Leadership style will vary from individual to individual. However, it is clear that the administrator must believe in the importance of the consortium and its mission. This person must be able to convey his/her enthusiasm to the membership and convince them of the importance of cooperation through the consortium. Clearly, the administrator must be the one person who champions the consortium and keeps it in front of the membership and those the members serve.

(4) If a statutory consortium is set up to assist its members in serving an external population, then that population must be convinced that it will be better served by the consortium. This research suggests that little or no effort was made to persuade the recipients of the continuing education services (e.g., regional public school divisions) that the consortium is the best way to have their needs met. It is possible that, if the consortium and its members had undertaken an active attempt to explain the consortium and

its role and expectations, the public school divisions might have been more inclined to seek all continuing education services from the regional institutions before requesting them from non-regional colleges and universities. However, since this effort was not undertaken, the public school professional development officers have continued to seek services from higher education institutions both within and without the regional consortium.

In summary, it seems likely that an effective statutory consortium can be established and operated if certain conditions are met. According to the study participants, essential conditions include:

(1) A willingness on the part of the membership to cooperate.

(2) Clearly defined reasons to cooperate that, as needs change, can be redefined.

(3) Incentives to encourage institutions to cooperate.

(4) The perception that all members are sharing equally in the consortium and are receiving equitable benefits.

(5) Open and two-way communication.

(6) Strong support from the member presidents.

(7) A productive planning process.

(8) A consortium administrator who can lead in an enthusiastic and influential manner.

(9) A strategy to persuade those external populations which might receive consortium services that the consortium and its members are, in fact, the best providers of those

services.

Before a statutory consortium is established, though, several questions must be considered:

(1) Why is this organization being formed?

(2) What benefits will accrue from the establishment of this consortium?

(3) Can these benefits be achieved through other means?

If the answers to these questions point to the need to establish a statutory consortium, the recognition that certain conditions are related to effectiveness will help create an organization which can serve both the state's and its institutions' needs in many educational and organizational areas.

The Future of Virginia's Consortia for Continuing Higher Education

Two significant facts underlie the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education and affect both their present role and their future role in continuing education. First, like many states, Virginia elected to establish an agency (the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) to coordinate the public higher education efforts within the state with advisory rather than governing authority. In doing this the state, to an extent, acknowledged that institutional autonomy is a necessary part of the higher education scene. Such institutional autonomy, coupled with the competitive nature of colleges and universities, was in place when the Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher

Education were formed. Although cast as independent entities comprised of regional public institutions, these consortia, nevertheless, possess advisory power similar to that of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). That is, neither SCHEV nor the consortia can completely control the programs and activities of the state-supported institutions of higher education.

A second significant fact affecting the consortia is that the delivery of off-campus continuing education is changing. With the advent of new technologies for transmitting education, no longer do institutions think of their "service area" as region-bound. Instead, some see their region as encompassing the area reached by either microwave signals or satellite transmission. Virginia's continuing education consortia are not set up to deal effectively with an issue of this nature; they are set up to handle only issues related to geography. With this new technology, geographic concerns are no longer germane. The issues of which institutions can offer continuing education courses in what areas are now larger and more complex than they were when the regional consortia were established.

It is unclear just what the future of the Virginia consortia will be. In light of the new technological delivery systems for education courses, Virginia appears to have two alternatives available for controlling course offerings to avoid unnecessary and expensive duplication of effort among the state institutions. It can either

significantly redefine the mission of the existing consortia for continuing higher education and recast their role in off-campus continuing education or establish a different kind of organization altogether. Whichever tack the state takes, the effectiveness of the organization will depend, in part, on the attitudes of the institutions required to cooperate. Clearly, the organization will be assigned the job of establishing roles and responsibilities for the public higher education institutions in the state engaged in off-campus continuing education work and encouraging a cooperative spirit among colleges and universities. Encouraging such an organization to adopt and sustain the attributes of effective cooperative agencies may be the important first step toward developing an effective statutory consortium to handle this new continuing education issue.

Implications for Future Research

Several questions deserving further investigation have emerged from this research:

1. Can state-mandated cooperation among public higher education institutions be effective?
2. Are there effective ways states can encourage cooperation among their institutions rather than through the mandate of law?
3. Do statutory consortia generally judged to be effective possess the effectiveness attributes developed through this research?
4. Are the attributes of effectiveness developed through

this research sufficient to explain statutory consortium effectiveness? Related questions include:

- a. To what extent must member institutions want to cooperate before a statutory consortium can be effective?
- b. How specific must the reasons for cooperation be spelled out before a statutory consortium has a chance to be effective?
- c. What types of incentives are actually necessary to help assure statutory consortium effectiveness?
- d. How much responsibility must the member institutions assume for the statutory consortium's cooperative programs to increase the likelihood that the consortium will be effective?
- e. What constitutes a good communication system in a statutory consortium?
- f. In what manner and to what degree must member presidents express their support of a statutory consortium?
- g. How extensive must a statutory consortium's planning process be, and who must be involved in it?
- h. What leadership styles are most useful and effective for a statutory consortium administrator?
- i. How can external populations receiving statutory consortium services be convinced of the value of

the consortium?

Berdahl (1971) has called for a "suitably sensitive mechanism" to coordinate higher education activities (p. 9). More specifically, Finley (1976) has suggested that Virginia's Consortia for Continuing Higher Education are the "appropriate vehicles" to encourage cooperation among the state colleges and universities (p. 186). However, no organization can accomplish such goals unless it is created in such a way as to assure its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. States certainly have the right and responsibility to insure that tax money is spent in an efficient and effective manner, providing the maximum return for each dollar. The establishment of statutory consortia which foster and encourage cooperation among the state's colleges and universities is one way that this can be accomplished. Including those attributes which effective consortia demonstrate in new or existing statutory consortia certainly is one way states can encourage consortia effectiveness.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name _____ Date _____

Institution _____ Position _____

All answers will be kept in confidence unless otherwise noted. Please answer based on your own perspective or point-of-view. Answers reflect your understanding or opinion about the topics raised in the interview.

A. Clear, concise mission/goals

1) As you understand it, what is the fundamental mission of the _____ Consortium?

knows.....fair idea.....does not know
Comments:

2) What kinds of activities or programs does the _____ Consortium undertake to fulfill this mission?

knows.....some idea.....does not know
Comments:

B. Open communication

1) How does the _____ Consortium communicate with your institution concerning consortium programs and activities? (for instance, monthly newsletters, quarterly meeting notices, telephone calls weekly) Frequency of the various forms of communication?

2) With whom at your institution does the _____ Consortium regularly/normally communicate?

3) How does your faculty and staff find out about _____ Consortium activities and programs?

4) In what ways does your institution communicate with the _____ Consortium? (for instance, weekly telephone calls, monthly progress reports, annual reports)

5) How often do you personally communicate with the _____ Consortium?

6) What communication takes place among the institutions which belong to the _____ Consortium concerning consortium business? Can you give some examples?

C. Support of member presidents

1) How active is your president in the _____ Consortium?

very active.....somewhat active.....low activity.....none

2) Can you describe some of this involvement?

3) How often is your president involved in _____ Consortium decision-making?

often.....sometimes.....rarely.....never

4) In your opinion, how important is the _____ Consortium to your president?

very.....somewhat.....little.....not at all

Would you say he feels:

the consortium supports the primary mission of the institution?

ambivalent toward it?

the consortium is an inefficient/ineffective use of funds/personnel?

Comments:

5) Who from your institution attends regular _____ Consortium meetings?

6) How does your president support _____ Consortium programs? (for example, through formal memos to the faculty and staff, through public speeches, through interviews with school and public press, by disseminating information to faculty/staff, by encouraging faculty/staff participation)

D. Incremental planning (alternate terms:consider,anticipate)

1) Would you say that the _____ Consortium does any planning? (For instance, does the consortium do financial planning on a year-to-year or biennial basis as it anticipates programs, or program planning on a year-to year or biennial basis to anticipate the budget?) Would you say that most consortium planning is long range or short range? Can you explain?

(if needed: does the consortium look at what was done this year and then look toward the next in deciding what to do?)

2) Would you say that planning is done in a routine and systematic manner or in an irregular and haphazard manner? Describe?

systematic.....irregular
Comments:

3) Would you describe the process that is typically followed when the consortium is planning for the future?

(plan--consider--anticipate)

Who initiates the ideas?

Who feeds information into the process?

Who considers the merits of the ideas?

Who has input into the final proposal?

Who decides which proposals are presented to Board?

Who decides which proposals are accepted for implementation?

Who is responsible for seeing that the program/activity is carried out?

E. Effective leadership

1) Do you know the _____ Consortium administrator?

knows.....does not know

2) What are the _____ Consortium administrator's principal duties?

knows...knows somewhat....knows little....does not know

Comments:

3) How would you describe the _____ Consortium administrator's leadership style?

leader...coordinator...mediator...arbitrator...broker...agent
facilitator...laissez-faire...manager...initiator

Comments:

4) Within the last year, has the _____ Consortium administrator taken the initiative to start or terminate any programs? What were they?

5) Within the past year, did your institution take any action in response to the _____ Consortium administrator's proposals? (for example; supported, lobbied against, rejected) Can you explain some of the responses?

6) Does the Board usually concur with the administrator's recommendations? Can you elaborate with some examples?

7) In your opinion, who has the greatest impact on the effectiveness of the _____ Consortium? Why?

8) (if not the administrator) How does the administrator contribute to the effectiveness of the consortium?

F. Perception of usefulness

1) What are the reasons your institution is a member of the
----- Consortium?

2) Does membership in the ----- Consortium serve your
institution's needs?

yes.....some.....little.....no

Comments:

3) If yes or some, can you describe some of the ways it is
useful to your institution?

4) Is consortium membership the best way, in your opinion, to
have these needs met?

yes...no...not sure(maybe)

Comments:

5) Does your institution have other needs which the
consortium could meet but it does not? What are they?

yes...no...does not know

G. Other

1) In your opinion, is the _____ Consortium effective?
Why?

yes.....no

Comments:

2) Could anything be done to make the _____ Consortium more
effective? Can you describe what you mean?

yes.....no

Comments:

3) In your opinion, what conditions are essential to the
effectiveness of a statutory consortium?

Appendix B

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name _____ Date _____

Position _____

All answers will be kept in confidence unless otherwise noted. Please answer based on your own perspective or point-of-view. Answers reflect your understanding or opinion about the topics raised in the interview.

A. Clear, concise mission/goals

1) As you understand it, what is the fundamental mission of the _____ Consortium?

knows.....some idea.....does not know
Comments:

2) What kinds of activities or programs does the _____ Consortium undertake to fulfill this mission?

knows.....some idea.....does not know
Comments:

B. Open communication

1) How does the _____ Consortium communicate with its institution concerning consortium programs and activities? (for instance, monthly newsletters, quarterly meeting notices, telephone calls weekly) Frequency of the various forms of communication?

2) With whom in your office does the _____ Consortium regularly/normally communicate?

3) In what ways does your office communicate with the _____ Consortium? (for instance, weekly telephone calls, monthly progress reports, annual reports) Frequency?

4) How often do you personally communicate with the _____ Consortium?

C. Support of member presidents

1) How active are the member school presidents in the _____ Consortium?

very active.....somewhat active.....low activity.....none

2) Can you describe some of this involvement?

3) How often are the presidents involved in _____ Consortium decision-making?

often.....sometimes.....rarely.....never

Comments:

4) In your opinion, how important is the _____ Consortium to the:
two-year school presidents?

very.....somewhat.....little.....not at all

Comments:

: four-year school presidents?

very.....somewhat.....little.....not at all

Comments:

5) How do the presidents support _____ Consortium programs?
(for example, through formal memos to the faculty and staff, through public speeches, through interviews with school and public press, disseminating information to faculty/staff, encouraging faculty/staff involvement)

D. Incremental planning (alternate terms: consider, anticipate)

1) Would you say that the _____ Consortium does any planning? (for example, does it do financial planning on a year-to-year or biennial basis in anticipation of programs or do program planning on a year-to-year or biennial basis in response to proposed budget figures) Would you say that most consortium planning is long range or short range? Can you explain?

(if needed: does the consortium look at what was done this year and then look toward the next year in deciding what to do?)

2) Would you say that planning is done in a routine and systematic manner or in an irregular and haphazard manner? Describe?

systematic.....irregular

Comments:

3) Would you describe the process that is typically followed when the consortium is planning for the future?

(plan--consider--anticipate)

Who initiates the ideas?

Who feeds information into the process?

Who considers the merits of the idea?

Who has input into the final proposal?

Who decides which proposals are presented to the Board?

Who decides which proposals are accepted for implementation?

Who is responsible for seeing that the program/activity is carried out?

4) At the state level, who decides which consortium programs are accepted or rejected?

E. Effective leadership

1) Do you know the _____ Consortium administrator?

knows.....does not know

2) What are the _____ Consortium administrator's principal duties?

knows...knows somewhat.....knows little.....doesn't know

Comments:

3) How would you describe the _____ Consortium administrator's leadership style?

leader...coordinator...mediator...arbitrator...broker...agent
facilitator...laissez-faire...manager...initiator

Comments: .

4) Within the last year, has the _____ Consortium administrator taken the initiative to start or terminate any programs? What were they?

5) Does the consortium board usually concur with the administrator's recommendations? Can you give some examples?

6) Within the past year, did your office take any action in response to the _____ Consortium administrator's proposals? (for example: supported, lobbied against, rejected) Can you explain some of the responses?

7) In your opinion, who has the greatest impact on the effectiveness of the _____ Consortium? Why?

8) (if not the administrator) How does the administrator contribute to the effectiveness of the consortium?

F. Perception of usefulness

1) What are some of the reasons the institutions are members of the _____ Consortium?

2) Does membership in the _____ Consortium serve institution needs?

yes.....some.....little.....no

3) If yes or little, what are some of the ways the consortium serves the institutions' needs?

4) Is the consortium the best way to have institution needs met?

yes....no....not sure....does not know

Can you explain what you mean?

5) Does the consortium serve state needs?

yes.....some.....little.....no

Comments:

6) Are there other ways the state needs could be met in a more effective manner?

yes...no...not sure...does not know

Could you describe some of these ways?

G. Other

1) In your opinion, is the _____ Consortium effective?
Why?

yes.....no

Comments:

2) Could anything be done to make the _____ Consortium more effective? Can you describe what you mean?

yes.....no

Comments:

3) In your opinion, what conditions are essential to the effectiveness of a statutory consortium?

Appendix C

SCHOOL SYSTEM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name _____ Date _____

Institution _____ Position _____

A. Clear, concise mission/goals

1) Have you ever heard of the _____ Consortium for Continuing Higher Education?

yes.....no

2) As you understand it, what is the mission of the _____ Consortium?

knows.....some idea.....does not know

Comments:

3) What kinds of activities or programs does the _____ Consortium undertake to fulfill this mission?

knows.....some idea.....does not know

Comments:

B. Open communication

1) Does the _____ Consortium communicate with your school system concerning consortium programs and activities?

yes.....no

2) If yes, how does it communicate with your school system? (for instance, monthly newsletters, quarterly meeting notices, telephone calls weekly) How frequently does this communication occur?

3) With whom at your office does the _____ Consortium regularly/normally communicate?

4) In what ways does your school system communicate with the _____ Consortium? (for instance, weekly telephone calls, monthly progress reports, annual reports)

5) How often do you personally communicate with the _____ Consortium?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| C. Support of member presidents | No questions |
| D. Incremental planning | No questions |
| E. Effective leadership | No questions |

E. Effective leadership

1) Do you know the _____ Consortium administrator?

knows.....does not know

2) As you understand them, what are the _____ Consortium administrator's principal duties?

knows...knows somewhat.....knows little.....doesn't know

Comments:

3) How would you describe the _____ Consortium administrator's leadership style?

leader...coordinator...mediator...arbitrator...broker...agent
facilitator...manager...initiator

Comments:

4) Within the past year, did your school system take any action in response to the _____ Consortium administrator's proposals? (for example; supported, lobbied against, rejected) Can you explain some of the responses?

5) In your opinion, who is responsible for the effectiveness of the _____ Consortium? Why?

6) (if not the administrator) How does the administrator contribute to the effectiveness of the consortium?

F. Perception of usefulness

1) Of what value is the consortium?

G. Other

1) In your opinion, is the _____ Consortium effective?
Why?

yes.....no
Comments:

2) Could anything be done to make the _____ Consortium more effective? Can you describe what you mean?

yes.....no
Comments:

3) In your opinion, what factors or conditions have the greatest impact on a statutory consortium's effectiveness?

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF REQUEST

February 1, 1986

Dr. -----

Dear Dr. -----:

As a student in The College of William and Mary's Higher Education Doctoral Program, I am interested in state mandated consortia of colleges and universities. I have chosen the ----- Consortium for Continuing Higher Education (as a representative of the six Virginia Consortia for Continuing Higher Education) as my dissertation research subject.

In order for me to get a complete understanding of the consortium's operation, it is necessary that I interview the key people in the region who are involved with the consortium. Additionally, I need to review institutional documents which are concerned with the consortium.

I would appreciate having the opportunity to come to your office to discuss this subject. I will call you to answer any questions you may have about the study and to set up an appointment with you.

I believe that a study of the ----- Consortium for Continuing Higher Education can enhance the understanding of all six Virginia continuing education consortia and assist other governing agencies which might desire to establish statutory cooperative organizations.

Should you desire further information concerning the purpose and scope of my dissertation research, please feel free to contact either me or my dissertation advisor, Dr. Roger Baldwin (804-253-4562).

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Poland

Home phone: -----
Office phone: -----

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Abstract

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STATUTORY CONSORTIUM EFFECTIVENESS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE VIRGINIA CONSORTIUM FOR CONTINUING HIGHER EDUCATION

Mark W. Poland, Ed.D.

The College of William and Mary in Virginia, October 1986

Chairman: Roger G. Baldwin, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a statutory higher education consortium possesses the attributes generally associated with effective voluntary higher education consortia. Also, the research attempted to discover if there are other attributes which would contribute to the effectiveness of statutory higher education consortia.

A review of the literature on voluntary consortia revealed that those voluntary higher education consortia regarded as effective generally (1) have clear, concise goals; (2) have an open, two-way communication system; (3) are supported by the presidents of the member institutions; (4) engage in incremental planning; (5) have an effective administrator/director; and (6) are perceived as useful by the members. The higher education consortia literature does not discuss factors that influence effectiveness of statutory consortia.

Using case study methodology, one Virginia Consortium

for Continuing Higher Education was examined both to determine if the effectiveness attributes of voluntary consortia were present in this statutory higher education consortium and to determine if other attributes might also be essential for statutory consortium effectiveness. Interviews were held with the key people associated with the consortium under study: the consortium administrator; member institution presidents, continuing education deans and directors, and School of Education deans; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia officials; and public school division professional development officers. Consortium documents located at each interview site were examined. The data were evaluated through triangulation techniques by comparing information gathered through interviews and document review. Conclusions were developed concerning the presence of the effectiveness attributes in this statutory consortium based on the data evaluation.

This statutory consortium did have a clear, concise mission and did have an open, two-way communication system. Presidential support was found to be limited and the consortium's usefulness to its members was restricted to secondary factors. The consortium leadership was viewed as effective although within a more narrow conception of leadership than that generally found in an effective voluntary consortium. Finally, evidence indicated that the consortium had no incremental planning process.

This research suggests that, to encourage the

effectiveness of a statutory higher education consortium (both general purpose and special purpose), the establishing agency should insure that several criteria are satisfied: (1) institutions must want to cooperate, (2) the reasons for cooperation must be clear, (3) incentives for cooperation must be provided, (4) all members must share equitably in the cooperative endeavor, (5) communication must be open and two-way, (6) the member institution presidents must support the consortium, (7) a planning process must be put in place, (8) the consortium administrator must be an effective leader, and (9) the external population the consortium plans to serve must be encouraged to use the consortium's services.