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## **Understanding forces that influence role construction and enactment : a study of mid-level managers at Paradox University.**

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UNDERSTANDING FORCES THAT INFLUENCE ROLE  
CONSTRUCTION AND ENACTMENT: A STUDY OF MID-LEVEL  
MANAGERS AT PARADOX UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation Presented

by

SUSAN M. ROBERTS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1994

School of Education

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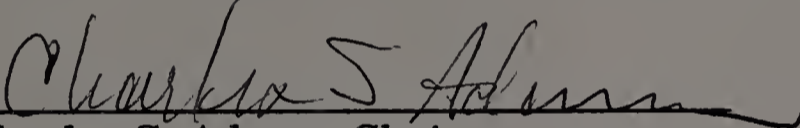
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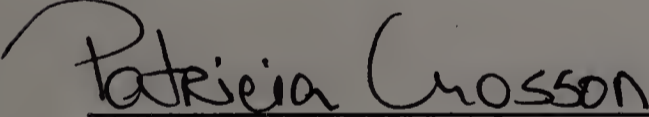
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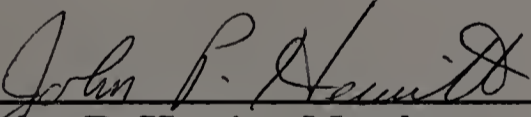
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Susan M. Roberts  
February 1994

## ABSTRACT

### UNDERSTANDING FORCES THAT INFLUENCE ROLE CONSTRUCTION AND ENACTMENT: A STUDY OF MID-LEVEL MANAGERS AT PARADOX UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 1994

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This study explores the forces that influence role construction and enactment through the experiences of two mid-level managers in student affairs at Paradox University, a large, public, research university. To guide this interpretive study of roles, Symbolic Interactionism was used.

Qualitative methods of interview, observation and document review were used to gather data for this descriptive, exploratory study.

The data revealed the complexity of the role-making, role-taking process and highlighted the internal and external forces that influence role shaping and enactment. Family and educational experiences, experience with management positions, and professional ambition were identified as among the internal forces that influence role construction. External forces were categorized as proximate and distant, and included perceived clarity of



organizational mission, experiences with predecessors, and managerial expectations. Directions for further research and practice were suggested that would help contribute to a further understanding of higher education organizations, and the construction of managerial roles.

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# CHAPTER I

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

### Introduction and Significance

Discussions about the management of higher education seldom focus on the significance of mid-level managers to the organization. Research and conventional wisdom suggests that collegiate mid-level managers are not intimately involved in formally shaping the policies of their organizations (Scott, 1978), that they are generally more committed to their positions than to their institutions (Austin, 1984a, 1984b; Thomas, 1978), and that they are hired for their technical expertise (Scott, 1978). However, it is also generally agreed that their expertise is critical to higher education administration (Austin & Gamson, 1983; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Birnbaum, 1988). Some even view it as essential to organizational decision-making. For example, speaking from a business perspective, Drucker (1974) suggests that mid-level managers "contribute the essential knowledge without which key decisions cannot be made, at least not effectively" (p. 450). Yet, within higher education, our knowledge about collegiate mid-level managers remains limited as the population is a relatively understudied one (Austin, 1984a, 1984b; Austin & Gamson, 1983; Sagaria, 1986). The majority of research on collegiate mid-level managers has focused upon specific areas such as career patterns and mobility (Scott, 1978; Miner & Estler, 1985) and organizational commitment and/or job satisfaction (Thomas, 1978; Austin, 1984a, 1984b), and is fast becoming dated.



If mid-level managers are critical to higher education administration as interpreters of policies and implementers of procedures, more ought to be known about the nature of mid-level management, the significance of mid-level management within higher education organizations and, perhaps most important, how mid-level managers approach their work within the organization. This study's intention is to contribute to what is known about mid-level managers by learning more about how they understand and approach their work through an exploration of role construction and enactment.

As a study of roles, this work explores how mid-level managers construct and enact their roles within their organizations. It attempts to understand the forces that influence the shaping of roles and to understand mid-level managers' approach to management as those relate to higher education organizations.

This study will not elevate the status of collegiate mid-level managers from the yeoman term coined by Scott (1978) to leader and chief. Rather, this study hopes to contribute to our understanding of how colleges work from the perspective of those who are actively engaged in the day to day management of the enterprise. From the mid-level management perspective, much can be learned about administrative roles and approaches to the management of higher education.

### Purpose, Approach, and Questions

This study explores the forces that influence role construction and enactment through the experiences of two collegiate mid-level managers. The two managers who participated hold dean/director positions in student affairs at a large, complex university. These administrators fit the conventional definition of collegiate mid-level managers suggested by Scott (1978) in his first research and used by others who have studied this population (Austin, 1984b; Thomas, 1978).

mid-level collegiate administrators [are]...the deans and directors of support services to whom their assistants and first-line, most often nonexempt, supervisors report, and who themselves report to or are an officer at the vice-presidential level. (p. 3)

Symbolic Interactionism, an interpretive perspective that has, as a primary focus, the study of roles, guided this exploration. From this point of view, roles reflect patterns of expected and potential behaviors that emerge and are shaped from the interpretations people have of prescribed role requirements, of their previous experiences, and through interaction with others. Roles are, in essence, the perspectives from which people base their actions. Emerging within an organizational context, roles are developed that reflect a person's interpretation of the requirements of a social situation. While each role interpretation may be different, exploring role construction and enactment can lend insight into how these roles emerge. The following questions lead to understanding the forces that influence role construction and were used to guide this study:

1. What roles do collegiate mid-level managers construct and enact as managers in higher education organizations?
2. What forces influence the shaping of roles and role enactment?
3. How can these roles be understood within their organizational contexts?

### Grounding the Study

The research and scholarship from which this study emerges are multiple. First, what is now understood about collegiate mid-level managers helped to shape the view that this is an important population around which to frame a study. The empirical works of Thomas (1978) and Austin (1984b) and the review of research by Sagaria (1986) indicate the extent to which collegiate mid-level managers have been studied and point the way to future studies from their own research perspectives. Synopses of their findings are located in the Appendix.

Second, there are a number of key concepts which are critical to this study. The first of these is the concept of role and the approach that is taken to study role construction and enactment. To understand how the concept and study of roles is approached, an understanding of some of the basic premises of symbolic interactionism is in order. As has been mentioned, the study of roles is a primary interest of symbolic interactionists, so it makes sense to talk concurrently about the theoretical

framework and the concept of role. Both guiding and focusing the inquiry, symbolic interactionism and the concept of role are discussed Chapter II.

This study explore how collegiate mid-level managers construct and enact their roles within a particular organizational context, that is, higher education. A number of models of higher education organization have been posited by scholars, including a bureaucratic model (Stroup, 1966) that builds upon Weber's (Gerth & Mills, 1946) notions of rationality, efficiency, and effectiveness; a collegial model (Millett, 1962) that speaks to the particular nature of higher education as an academic enterprise and as a community of scholars; a political model (Baldrige, 1971) which suggests that conflict is an inherent part of organizational life, particularly as members compete for scarce organizational resources; and an anarchical model (Cohen & March, 1974) that addresses the complexity of college and university life with its multiplicity of ideas and problems and constantly changing environment. The most recent model of higher education organization is Birnbaum's (1988) cybernetic framework that attempts to integrate the other four models. An understanding of these models is important to understanding role construction and a review of them is found in Chapter III.

Two additional concepts that are important to this study are those of social power and organizational culture. The roles that collegiate mid-level managers construct in this study are managerial roles that reflect who they

are as managers and how they manage, that is, how they influence others to move toward organizational goals. At any one time, mid-level managers have multiple sources of power available to them. In order to understand the enactment of managerial roles, some understanding of how mid-level managers use the sources of power available to them is important. The discussion of the social bases of power (French & Raven, 1968) is included in Chapter III.

Finally, there are a number of views concerning what organizational culture means. Is it "out there" or not? The notion of organizational culture used in this study is an interpretive one that thinks of culture as the patterns of beliefs and assumptions that are mutually shared by organizational participants. An organization's culture, then, should reflect and be reflected in the roles that organizational members construct for themselves. With the exception of Clark's (1970) Distinctive Colleges, the study of organizational culture in higher education is a relatively recent topic of interest to higher education scholars. To frame a perspective about organizational culture, the discussion in Chapter III traces the current thinking about culture, drawing first upon the work of Schein (1985) and then considering how this concept is treated in higher education organizations.

## CHAPTER II

### GUIDING THE INQUIRY: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND THE STUDY OF ROLES

This study uses symbolic interactionism to guide the inquiry.

Symbolic Interactionism, as an interpretive perspective, maintains that reality is socially constructed and emerges from the shared meanings that individuals have about the physical, ideological, and social things in their environment. These meanings emerge as people interact with each other and share their interpretations of and experiences with these things-- sometimes this sharing is revealed in conversation and always through how people act. The crux of Symbolic Interactionism then, is understanding how people interpret and experience their worlds through analyzing how they act and behave. It is a view that denies an "out there" reality in favor of one that is created and maintained by people. Symbolic Interactionism:

rejects any view which attributes to the social world a reality which is independent of the minds of men. It emphasizes that the social world is no more than the subjective construction of individual human beings who, through the development and use of common language and the interactions of everyday life, may create and sustain a social world of intersubjectively shared meaning. The social world is thus of an essentially intangible nature and is in a continuous process of reaffirmation or change. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 260)

Far from being solipsistic, symbolic interactionists do subscribe to the notion of structure, but it is a structure that consists of mutually shared meanings that result from interaction. The structure that emerges is a social order, does not exist outside of mutually shared meanings, and is as stubbornly resistant to change as the social order of a more positivistic

view. Unlike a more positivistic social order that is "out there," unchanging, and unchangeable, the symbolic interactionist social order is immersed in a paradoxically continuous process of change and resistance to change.

Inherent in symbolic interactionism are assumptions about how interpretations emerge and how they are incorporated into individual behavior. Jacob (1987) explains that, to symbolic interactionists, individual experience is mediated by the individual's interpretations of his or her experiences; interpretations which arise through interaction with others. Her assumptions are actually rephrasings of the basic premises posited by Blumer (1986). As the noted "founder" of this perspective, Blumer suggests that the essence of symbolic interactionism rests with the notions of meaning and interpretation. First, human actions toward things are shaped by the meaning ascribed to those things by people. Second, things acquire meaning through the interactions of people. Finally, the particular action a person takes toward things depends upon his or her interpretation of the acquired meaning. To use Blumer's (1986) words, symbolic interactionism,

rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them....The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.  
(p. 2)

Blumer's first premise places symbolic interactionism within the interpretive paradigm. A single "out there" reality is denied in favor of

multiple realities that are based, created, and sustained within individual human experience. As a human being, I assign particular meanings to the various things in my environment. For example, I assign the term "file cabinet" to the four-drawer metal physical object that stands next to the window in my office and holds the significant (and often insignificant) pieces of paper related to my job. When I subsequently hear the term file cabinet the physical object in my office is conjured up in my mind. By the same token, I assign the term "supervisor" to the person who conducts my yearly performance evaluation. Finally, I assign the term "love" to the abstract emotion that captures my feelings toward my future spouse.

Blumer's second premise places the construction of reality in a social context. The meanings I have assigned to the physical, social, and ideological things in my environment are meanings I have adopted through interaction with others. I have learned that a file cabinet is used most often for office paper placed in manila folders and not as a place to store shoes. If I lived in a place where I interacted with people who used file cabinets for shoe storage, I would begin to modify the meaning file cabinet has to me. Interaction provides individuals with the opportunity to modify their own beliefs, attitudes, and understandings toward and about things based upon their interpretation of others' reactions to the same. It is through the interpretive process, Blumer's third premise, that shared meanings emerge and are maintained. This interpretive process takes place during social



interaction. I suggested above that in another environment or culture where file cabinets conjured different meanings for people, I would begin to evaluate and make decisions about the meaning I had assigned to file cabinet. I might replace the former meaning with the new and act as though the previous meaning did not exist, I might add the new meaning to my repertoire of meanings assigned to file cabinet or, I might reject the new meaning entirely and hold on to my original view of file cabinet. While I would take some of my cues about the meaning of file cabinet from my own experiences and beliefs, I would also take into consideration the meaning those around me and with whom I interact assign to file cabinet. This evaluative process whereby I think about my own views and those of others is known by Symbolic Interactionists as "indication"-- it is the process individuals use to interpret and assign meaning to their experiences (Blumer, 1986).

Not all things can be indicated. Some things produce a meaning over which people have no control. For example, when I touch a hot wood stove, messages of "hot" and perhaps "pain" shoot through me and I quickly and automatically remove my hand and hopefully remember not to touch the stove again. The hot wood stove has elicited a response from me; a response over which I have no control--the response is an automatic one that, for me will not change over time. Things that can be indicated such as file cabinet, an ideology, or marriage, are things, the meanings of which

individuals do have control. I assign meaning to file cabinet (e.g., file cabinets hold office paper), I assign meaning to my religious preferences (e.g., catholicism or something else), and I assign meaning to my feelings about my significant other (e.g., love or indifference). Blumer (1986) describes this process of indication and the difference between a stimulus and something that can be indicated:

to indicate something is to extricate it from its setting, to hold it apart, to give it a meaning.... anything that an individual indicates to himself is different from a stimulus; instead of having an intrinsic character which acts on the individual and which can be identified apart from the individual, its character or meaning is conferred on it by the individual....In any of his countless acts...the individual is designating different [things] to himself, giving them meaning, judging their suitability to his action, and making decisions on the basis of the judgment. This is what is meant by interpretation or acting on the basis of symbols. (p. 80)

I have referred to what can be indicated as things--physical, social, and ideological. In symbolic interactionist terms, the things to which individuals can assign meaning are known as "objects" and are classified into three categories: physical, social, and abstract (Blumer, 1986). Physical objects are inanimate and are signified by such things as books, chairs, houses, etc. Social objects represent people such as mother, friend, teacher, banker, etc. Abstract objects are those based in ideas and values such as compassion, ethical principles, justice, etc. The nature of the object depends upon the meaning the individual assigns to that object.

This study is concerned with the indication of social objects. In particular, this study explores the meaning that collegiate mid-level

managers assign to themselves as professionals in a college or university with specific responsibilities. In the language of symbolic interactionism, this study is one of situated identity, that is, I am exploring the professional lives of two collegiate mid-level managers. I am not attempting to explore every aspect of these individuals' lives (professional, personal, recreational, etc.), only their lives as mid-level managers, that is, their work lives. Thus, the identity I am studying is "situated"--it is bounded by the organization for which these mid-level managers work and by the responsibilities the organization has formally defined for them. Because this study is situated, it is really a study of social roles and the process of indication whereby these roles are defined. Role is a critical concept for symbolic interactionism and one this perspective addresses thoroughly. In the study of roles, the process of indication is more specifically known as role-making and role-taking.

While often defined as social position or status, role reflects more: it "is better defined as a perspective within a defined situation " (Hewitt, 1989, p. 155). In the particular situation, behaviors make sense only if they are interpreted by others as relating to the specific situation (Hewitt, 1989).

Although role is manifested through behavior, Hewitt is careful to caution against confusing actions with role. Actions are based upon a perspective of role within a particular situation. As he clarifies:

Although social scientists often speak of such sets of action (or the expectations on which they are based) as roles, it is more accurate to

define the role as the social perspective on which such actions are based. The pitcher's role is not what the pitcher does or is expected to do, but rather the point from which the pitcher views the activities of the game of baseball and the basis on which he calculates his own actions. The role of the sales representative does not consist of the things the individual does, but of the vantage point she occupies relative to the customer, a perspective on which her actions are based. (Hewitt, 1989, p. 155)

Clearly this vantage point is situationally bound and serves to shape an individual's social behavior.

The relationship of role to the situation has support from other social psychologists. Rose (1962) refers to role as "a cluster of related meanings and values" (p. 10). He also makes clear that role guided behavior is situation-, or context-bound.

For Heiss (1981), "a role is a set of expectations in the sense that it is what one should do" (p. 95, emphasis added). These expectations are expectations of self, once again influenced and shaped by the social context.

The above perspectives on role move us away from constituting role as identifiable and distinct, and toward role as "a sort of ideal conception which constrains people to render any...situation into...collections of interacting roles" (Turner, 1962, p. 21). From an interactionist's point of view, people act in social situations as if roles really did exist. Behaviors are enabled or constrained by the self's perception of what is expected in a particular situation. Further, this perception is constantly modified through the interaction process, whereby individuals act out their understandings of their role and are then responded to by others in the social situation. This

responding, in turn, provides information to the individual and is used to affirm one's expectations of self in the situation or used to modify those expectations. Turner (1962) says this more explicitly:

Roles "exist" in varying degrees of concreteness and consistency, while the individual confidently frames his behavior as if they had unequivocal existence and clarity. The result is that in attempting from time to time to make aspects of the roles explicit he is creating and modifying roles as well as merely bringing them to light; the process is not only role-taking but role-making. (p. 22)

The roles people construct for themselves are the result of one's own perceptions of boundaries or constraints that exist (e.g., interpretations of job descriptions, or interpretations of one's ability to influence the behavior of subordinates), and are reinforced or modified by the extent to which these boundaries are played out in context (e.g., decisions cannot be made that are perceived as outside the position description, or one may influence subordinate's behavior in budgetary arenas, but not in ways that affect the informal organization). This represents a reciprocal process whereby we act and react in relation to significant or generalized others. This role reciprocity suggests that interaction is a tentative process which reinforces role construction not as one's ability to perform a concrete, extant role, but to shape one's role, drawing upon a multitude of possible role performances within a social context. Further, role definition is always tentative, for the perceptions of others toward the self can never be truly known but only inferred (Turner, 1962). However fragile, the reciprocal process in which people engage to formulate role definition, is role-making and role-taking.

Through this process, in social situations, individuals construct for themselves roles based upon their own interpretation of what that role means to them. This is the process of role-making. However, the individual's interpretation of a role is modified as he or she interacts with others, who have their own interpretation of what the role means. Through interaction, these interpretations collide, are modified, and behavior is changed. This modification process through interaction is role-taking.

The notions of role-making and role-taking reinforce the interpretive view that roles do not exist "out there": they are not things into which people conform and learn how and what to do, such as learning how to "do" the father role, the teacher role, the student role, etc. Interactionists contend that individuals bring to situations some notion of what behavior is appropriate, and conduct themselves in accordance with those expectations. Further, the created role is an individual one, mutually shaped through interaction.

I'll use my role as a graduate student to clarify this process. As a graduate student, I bring to the formal education situation a package of expectations of how I will conduct myself in the classroom, in the library, and in interaction with faculty members, etc. These initial expectations are shaped by previous experiences I have had with student life, stories that have been transmitted to me by friends and family members who have been graduate students, and experiences I have had as a teacher and college

administrator. My expectations of being a graduate student get played out in how I conduct myself; these expectations, in turn, are reinforced or modified through my interactions with others. For example, one expectation of the graduate student role is that graduate students are supposed to say profound things in the classroom setting; this behavior is expected of them by faculty members. So I attempt to do that and am not positively reinforced by the faculty member. At this point I go through a process of interpretation that may serve to modify this expectation and change my behavior in the future. Was my comment not profound? If reinforced by other classmates that indeed, my comment was profound, then I search for another interpretation of my rebuff. Am I not liked? Previous interactions with this faculty member have seemed to prove otherwise, so I continue my search. Does this faculty member not want graduate students to speak in class? In examining the faculty member's reactions to other students who speak, this interpretation seems to fit and I modify my conduct and, in turn, my own understanding of the graduate student role as it relates to this class.

In this instance, I am in the process of role-making and role-taking. I am modifying my understanding of what it means to be a graduate student in this situation, but I am only able to do so through an interpretation of other's reactions to my own construction of the role. While I entered the situation with my own set of experiential luggage which I believed was

similar to that of others, I was faced with a need to figuratively unpack and repack as I learned that those expectations did not quite fit; that others had different expectations of my behavior. I then modified my behavior, taking the expectations I perceived others to have and remaking my role.

This example demonstrates the process nature of role construction that is so fundamental to the symbolic interactionist perspective. This process remains intact even when behavior and relationships are formally defined as in, for example, position descriptions in organizations. This is because position descriptions do not serve as prescriptions for behavior, but as the skeletal frame of rules that constrain and enable behavior (Turner, 1962). In essence, position descriptions do not instruct us on what to do, they provide the boundaries within which we may act.

Symbolic Interactionism's strength as a theoretical framework for this study is that it has emerged as having the study of roles as a primary focus. As an interpretive perspective, symbolic interactionism assumes that each social situation is different and that the roles that are constructed and enacted are unique to that social situation. The perspective challenges researchers to design studies that will lead to a rich understanding of the context, or environment, in which people interact and of the meanings they assign to the things in their environments. Symbolic Interactionism calls for careful and thorough observation and interviews with those being researched. Research using symbolic interactionism underscores what we



all like to think--we are unique, our perspectives are unique, and our situations are unique. However, this view suggests that while research findings may reveal themes and general tendencies in specific cases, and provide clues for further research, generalizability of results across cases is more difficult. Thus, Symbolic Interactionism does have some limitations as a research perspective. Proponents of the framework recognize these limitations and are attempting to address them.

### Limitations of Symbolic Interactionism

With its primary focus upon role and situated identity, symbolic interactionism has difficulty grappling with notions much broader in scope. In particular, this framework does not deal especially well with identity, nor with the concept of culture. However, symbolic interactionists recognize these voids and have attempted to fill them.

For example, Hewitt (1989) has begun to construct a symbolic interactionist theory of identity that would address the relationship between personal and social identity and rest them within a cultural context. The cultural context to which he refers is modern American culture. Most notable about modern American culture is its complexity. This complexity, suggests Hewitt (1989) has moved American culture away from the tight-knit, homogenous, organic community of the past toward an emergent, modern society which is less tight-knit, more heterogenous, and more temporal in nature.

Hewitt (1989) suggests that identity is not only a multiple phenomenon, representative of the conventional wisdom of symbolic interactionists, but also a bi-faceted phenomenon. In modern American culture, individuals have personal identities and social identities, the former referring to those identities reflecting the need for autonomy and the latter gleaned through association with others.

Hewitt (1989) also addresses and attempts to define the concept of culture. While he maintains that culture is external to the individual, it is not the same as the structural-functional view of external. In Hewitt's view, culture is an environment; an environment that emerges and is sustained through the shared meanings individuals, interacting in that environment, ascribe to things in the environment. Ultimately, then, culture is the world of things or, to use symbolic interactionist terms, "objects." This world of objects provides the boundaries that constrain or enable our behavior.

That symbolic interactionism considers each social situation unique limits the generalizability of results and makes, I think, most studies, except those with extraordinary sample sizes, mostly exploratory in nature. Conclusions that are drawn from studies using symbolic interactionism are tentative in nature, always subject to change as the social participants change. Yet, the findings can always lead to new directions for further

research and provide for the presentation of general tendencies for the interpretation of objects and actions.

Chapter III continues the grounding of this study with a review of literature related to the key concepts of: colleges and universities as organizations, organizational culture, and the social bases of power. How this study was designed and what data was collected begins in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER III

### KEY CONCEPTS: COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AS ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND THE SOCIAL BASES OF POWER

To further ground this study, the literature that treats colleges and universities as organizations, organizational culture, and the social bases of power is examined. In particular this literature is intended to provide a general understanding about the organizational contexts within which roles are constructed, the nature of an organization's culture as viewed from an interpretive perspective and, the sources of power that are available to mid-level managers as they construct their roles.

#### Colleges and Universities as Organizations

When compared to the study of business organizations, the study of college and university organizations is a relatively contemporary field. One of the first major works that looked at the higher education organization was published by Stroup in 1966, whereas for business organizations many works can be pointed to that were published much earlier, e.g., Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1946, etc. The youth of the field notwithstanding, what follows is a review of the major works that treat colleges and universities as organizations. Through the literature, colleges and universities are understood as complex and unique.

## Colleges and Universities as Bureaucracies

Perhaps the most widely known model of organization is Max Weber's (Gerth & Mills, 1946) bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, with its internal hierarchical structure, was conceived as a way to promote efficiency through the development of systems of communication and formal chains of command. The bureaucracy moved away from systems of governance that relied upon status and social rank and toward an impersonal system that placed competency in the highest regard. Weber suggested that as organizations became increasingly complex, the bureaucracy was a natural consequence to promote efficiency and rationality.

The view that universities are most aptly described as bureaucracies suggests that they share many elements in common with Weber's ideal type. Stroup (1966) is one who holds this view. Baldrige (1971) summarizes some of the characteristics that Stroup suggests supports this view:

1. Competence is the criterion used for appointment.
2. Officials are appointed, not elected.
3. Salaries are fixed and paid directly by the organization, rather than determined in "free-fee" style.
4. Rank is recognized and respected.
5. The career is exclusive; no other work is done.
6. The style of life is centered around the organization.
7. Security is present in a tenure system.
8. Personal and organizational property are separated.

(Baldrige, 1971, p. 3)

Although Baldrige (1971) is ultimately critical of applying the bureaucratic model to universities, he does agree that the university has several bureaucratic characteristics. Among these are:

1. The university is a complex organization chartered by the state, and in this respect it is like most other bureaucracies.
2. The university has a formal hierarchy, with offices and a set of bylaws that specify the relations between those offices.
3. There are formal channels of communication that must be respected, as many a student or your professor finds out to his dismay.
4. There are definite bureaucratic authority relations, with some officials exercising authority over others.
5. There are formal policies and rules that govern much of the institution's work.
6. The bureaucratic elements are most vividly apparent to students in the "people-processing" aspects of record-keeping, registration, graduation requirements, and a thousand other routine, day-to-day activities that are designed to help the modern university handle its masses of students. (pp. 3-4)

That universities have bureaucratic characteristics is, in general, agreed upon by most. What moved theorists toward contemplating other models of organization to describe universities, however, were those characteristics that did not fit so neatly under the rubric of the bureaucracy. Blau (1973), Baldrige (1971), Birnbaum (1988), and Millett (1962) have suggested the inadequacy of the model in describing the totality of the university. Blau (1973) quite succinctly indicates that while colleges and universities have bureaucratic characteristics such as a division of labor and

an administrative hierarchy, these do not apply to the academic side of the organization. For the faculty, there is no direct day-to-day supervision nor are there any standard operating procedures to guide performance of academic responsibilities.

It was within a context of attempting to take into account these more non-bureaucratic attributes that Millett (1962) pursued the university as a community of authority. This model does presume a hierarchical administrative structure with organizational authority vested in the presidency. Its focus is primarily on the decision-making process. This focus centers around the university's primary mission as preserving, transmitting and advancing knowledge (Millett, 1962) and the reliance and presumption that decisions are made through a process that utilizes the expertise and consensus of the organization's professionals. It is most commonly referred to as the collegial model of organization.

#### Millett's Community of Authority

Millett's (1962) pursuit of a descriptive model of organization for colleges and universities begins with a conviction that universities are unique. He says,

the internal organization of a college or university does not resemble that of the Army and Navy,....a steel company, a department store, a bank, or a hotel. Colleges and universities are different. They are different in institutional setting, in purpose, in operation, and hence in internal organization. (pp. 31-32)

Millett begins his case for the uniqueness of higher education with the concept of purpose. He says that the purpose of higher education is a special one--"to preserve, transmit, and advance knowledge" (p. 34). The nature of this objective is unusual for it harbors religious, social, economic, and governmental interests, thus making the institutional characteristics resemble, in part, the organizations that represent these interests. Millett's argument, however, is that higher education remains unique because of its practical relationship with these other interests, that is, that higher education enables "individuals to develop their talents for the service of others" (Millett, 1962, p. 54).

At the heart of Millett's argument is that this unique purpose and unique relationship to society dictate a unique organization that is effective in advancing knowledge, as well as developing the talents of individuals. The accomplishment of this purpose presupposes a degree of insulation between colleges and universities, and government and societies.

Millett argues that the organization of higher education seeks to avoid a single authority, making the concept of hierarchy a bad fit. Instead, Millett replaces hierarchy with the notion of community, whereby power, is shared by four different constituent groups in the academic entity. These groups are faculty, students, alumni, and administration. Each group possesses substantial power....In practice, the power of each constituent group is brought together in a community of authority which enables each college and university to pursue its noble purpose. (p. 62)



It is the faculty, according to Millett, that gives meaning to the enterprise. They are "the key element in the academic process and in the academic community....There is no other justification for the existence of a college or a university except to enable the faculty to carry on its instructional and research activities" (Millett, 1962, p. 65). Students are important as they hold a critical position in the knowledge advancement, preservation, and transmission process, and, through the self-selection of their interests, they also hold a position of economic power within the organization. Alumni hold direct and indirect influence on the higher education enterprise. Directly, they may serve on boards of trustees, and indirectly, they may participate in fund-raising activities. The administration, according to Millett (1962), performs three functions:

(1) to provide educational leadership and to cultivate an image of the college or university; (2) to augment and to allocate the scarce economic resources of the college or university; and (3) to maintain the college or university as a going, viable enterprise.(p. 180)

Millett's notion of shared power suggests the need for collaboration and cooperation. Millett's concept of community is thus not one dictated by a chain of authority, but through a dynamic of consensus.

While this collegial model is compelling on paper, Baldrige (1971) contends that this model is probably more the result of someone's fantasy rather than a description of reality. He suggests that Millett's model doesn't adequately account for conflict as a naturally-occurring phenomenon in any decision situation.

## The University as a Political Organization

Although Baldrige (1971) is critical of the incompleteness of both the bureaucratic and collegial models of university organization, he is careful to point out that his political model is not intended to replace either of them. He advocates that each model has different foci and that, "taken together, they often yield complementary interpretations" (Baldrige, 1971, p. 24). The political model (Baldrige, et. al., 1977) presumes that the structure of higher education organizations is necessarily fragmented, that the social context of the organization is pluralistic, that conflict is natural, and that decision-making reflects a process of negotiation and bargaining. In Baldrige's (1977) view, this more accurately reflects the reality of higher education organizations. As he comments,

When we look at dynamic processes that explode on the modern campus today we see neither the rigid, formal aspects of bureaucracy nor the calm, consensus-directed elements of an academic collegium. On the contrary, student riots cripple the campus, professors form unions and strike, administrators defend their traditional positions, and external interest groups and irate governors invade the academic halls. All these activities can be understood as political acts. They emerge from the complex, fragmented social structure of the university, drawing on the divergent concerns and life styles of hundreds of miniature subcultures. These groups articulate their interests in many different ways, bringing pressure to bear on the decision making process from any number of angles and using power and force whenever it is available and necessary. (p. 8)

The political model, according to Baldrige (1971), focuses on the policy-making process as policies commit an organization to particular goals and strategies to achieve them. In general, the background assumptions of

the political model are that complex organizations can be studied as political systems and that conflict among interest groups is natural and expected. As applied to the university, these background assumptions include: 1) that conflict is natural and expected, 2) power is fragmented with blocs and interest groups actively engaged in attempting to influence policy to promote their own values and goals, 3) major decisions are usually made by an elite few, 4) the organization has a democratic tendency, in spite of elite control, 5) most decisions are negotiated compromises among competing groups, as opposed to formal edicts as would normally be prescribed by a bureaucratic system, and 6) the influence of external interest groups make it impossible for internal groups to make policies in a vacuum (Baldrige, 1971).

Baldrige likens the political model in operation to a process that has five points of analysis including: a) social context factors, b) interest articulation, c) legislative transformation, d) policy, and e) execution of policy. As Figure 1 indicates, this process also has a feedback loop which provides for the generation of new conflicts.

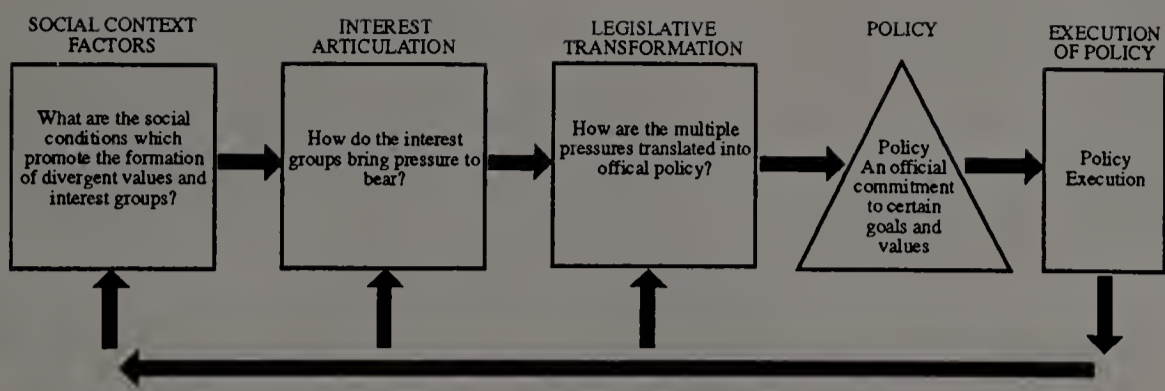


Figure 1

Policy Formulation in the University: A Simple Political Model  
(Baldrige, 1971, p. 11)

Since its original development, Baldrige has modified his model to account for the routine bureaucratic processes inherent in a college or university, to expand upon the model's applicability to different kinds of institutions, to stress the role of environmental influences on the process, and to account for the extent to which the institutional structure may shape events and outcomes (Baldrige, et.al., 1977). Baldrige applies his political model to higher education organizations, acknowledging that conflict is a naturally-occurring part of any organization and not unique to higher education. In their model, which is also a decision-making model, Cohen and March (1974) choose to focus upon those characteristics that are unique to higher education organizations.

### Cohen and March's "Organized Anarchies"

The thrust of Cohen and March's (1974) model that treats colleges and universities as organized anarchies rests in the premise that colleges and universities have characteristics that clearly distinguish them from traditional bureaucracies: they exhibit an ambiguity of goals, unclear technology, and fluid participation in decision-making. As a result, the coordination of the enterprise is not centralized, but decentralized (Cohen & March, 1974; Birnbaum, 1988; Baldrige, et al., 1977). Cohen and March (1974) describe an organized anarchy in this way:

In a university anarchy each individual in the university is seen as making autonomous decisions. Teachers decide if, when, and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support. Neither coordination... nor control [is] practiced. Resources are allocated by whatever process emerges but without explicit accommodation and without explicit reference to some superordinate goal. The "decisions" of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one. (pp. 33-34)

Cohen and March submit that organized anarchies utilize a particular decision-making strategy in which there exists a confluence of streams of problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities. In this situation, "a decision is an outcome (or an interpretation) of several relatively independent 'streams' within an organization" (Cohen & March, 1974, p. 82). This model is one of organizational choice in which an organization,

is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions

looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work. (Cohen & March, 1974, p. 81)

As with the bureaucratic, collegial, and political models, Cohen and March's (1974) anarchical model attempts to distinguish itself as a model that reflects how decisions are made within a higher education organization. Birnbaum (1988) suggests that while all of these models are valuable, none of them presents a complete picture of the university as an organization. He attempts to be more complete with his cybernetic framework.

### Birnbaum's Cybernetic Framework

Birnbaum's (1988) cybernetic framework is an integrating model. It acknowledges that the preceding models (bureaucratic, collegial, political, and anarchical) are each valuable lenses through which to explore university organization and processes, but that individually each is incomplete in explaining reality. As with Baldrige (1971), Birnbaum (1988) suggests that an institution may demonstrate collegial, bureaucratic, etc. elements in any particular situation, but that the reality is that an institution is not always acting in any one of these ways. Birnbaum's cybernetic model takes the constructs inherent in these other models and places them in a self-correcting process, a cybernetic process.

A cybernetic system is a self-regulating one in which systemic equilibrium is maintained through the process of information exchange. The self-regulating behaviors of a cybernetic system are dependent upon the

system's capacity to utilize negative feedback to warn it of imbalance. This negative feedback moves the system to action to restore balance. (Morgan, 1986)

In applying cybernetics to colleges and universities, Birnbaum (1988) suggests that colleges and universities are complex social systems where coordination comes not from the efforts of one leader, but

through the self-correcting mechanisms that monitor organizational functions and provide attention cues, or negative feedback, to participants when things are not going well....Thus, coordination is provided not by one omniscient and rational agent but by the spontaneous corrective action of the college's parts. (p. 179)

Since a cybernetic system must be able to monitor its environment, it must also understand the acceptable and unacceptable in terms of that environment. Birnbaum clearly indicates that different institutions have different operating environments and utilize different processes to maintain systems. It is culture, suggests Birnbaum, that bounds the system.

Colleges and universities are inventions that arise from the interaction of social norms, hierarchical structures, contending preferences, and cognitive limits and biases. Different institutions are identified by the relative importance of these processes and by the characteristic patterns in which their elements are loosely or tightly coupled. These patterns define, and function within, the institution's culture. The culture does not prescribe specific behaviors and relationships, but it does establish the likelihood that participants will behave in certain ways rather than in others. Culture thus develops the boundaries of the probable. (p. 176)

Culture thus shapes what will be attended to and what will not. One of the critical elements of a cybernetic system, according to Birnbaum, is that it will only respond to correct those values which are important to the

system. It does not have the capacity to respond to extraneous values. Thus, the system is not interested in change, it is interested in describing the maintenance of the status quo. Birnbaum presents a model (Figure 2) to depict the process through which negative feedback is addressed in a cybernetic system.

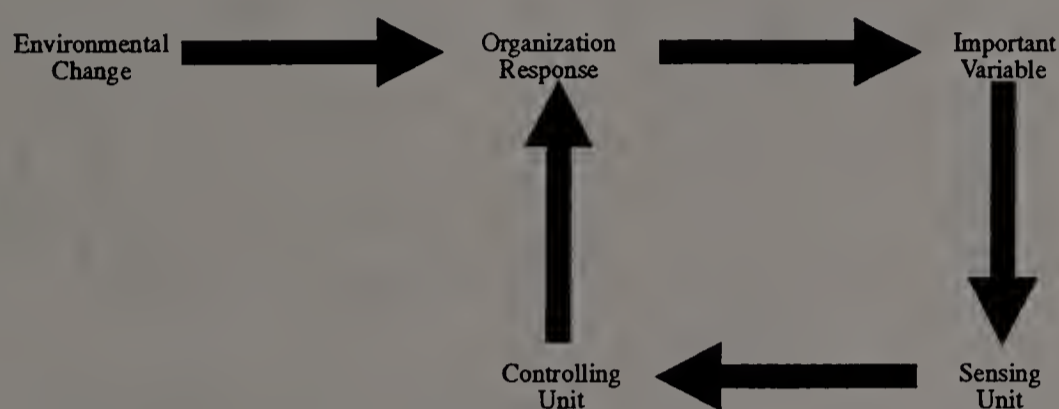


Figure 2

Birnbaum's Cybernetic Loop  
(Birnbaum, 1988, p. 192)

Birnbaum's cybernetic model provides a framework from which to understand how organizations work. Developing this framework allows the other models (bureaucratic, collegial, political, anarchical), with their focuses upon how decisions are made and leadership, to be included in the cybernetic process. In this regard, Birnbaum's model does not attempt to type an institution, it attempts to understand its internal workings.

What these models do not reflect is the human side of the organization. How groups of people come to understand and share goals and organizational meanings is considered in the study of organizational



culture. Schein's (1985) model is a general model of organizational culture and is representative of the structural-functionalist perspective. Ott's model, a modification of Schein's, is also a structural-functionalist model. Kuh and Whitt (1988) begin to apply notions of culture to the higher education organization. Although a beginning, their analysis is not as complete as Chaffee and Tierney's (1988), which is an interpretive model of organizational culture that is consistent with that used in this study.

## Notions About Organizational Culture

### Introduction

In talking about his cybernetic framework for higher education organizations, Birnbaum (1988) talks about culture as guiding what is or is not attended to within an organization. The implication is that, within an organization, there are sets of values, beliefs and systems of meaning that serve to preserve the organizational status quo. This section discusses some of the existing models of organizational culture, two from a psychological, structural-functionalist perspective, one that is descriptive, and one that is interpretive.

### Schein's Model of Organizational Culture

In Leadership and Organizational Culture, Schein (1985) talks about organizational culture as a pattern of assumptions that a given group uses to maintain itself as a viable group within an organization. These

assumptions guide the perceptions, thinking and emotions of members and have worked well enough over time to be considered valid and therefore are taught to new members as being correct.

Schein (1985) believes that in order to understand culture, one must look beyond the visible manifestations of culture (i.e., overt behavior) and examine all cultural elements. These elements include visible and less visible physical representations of culture, i.e., cultural artifacts; the more internal representations of culture, i.e., norms and values; and the deeper philosophical underpinnings of a culture, i.e., basic assumptions of the culture. These cultural elements are found in Table 1.

Table 1

Levels of Culture and Their Interaction

Artifacts and Creations

Technology

Art

Visible & Audible Behavior Patterns

Visible but often not  
decipherable

Values

Testable in the physical  
environment

Testable only by social  
consensus

Greater level of  
awareness

Basic Assumptions

Relationship to environment

Nature of reality, time and space

Nature of human nature

Nature of human activity

Nature of human relationships

Taken for granted

Invisible, Preconscious

Source: Schein, 1985, p. 14.

Schein (1985) contends that the most visible elements in a culture are its artifacts and creations. These represent the physical and social environments of the culture. One cannot conclude, however, that one understands culture if one only examines these artifacts. Determining what meaning these artifacts hold within a culture requires, according to Schein, an exploration of the values and basic assumptions of the culture.

Values, in Schein's (1985) model, initially reflect an individual's "sense of what 'ought' to be, as distinct from what is" (p. 15). Individual values, that have stood the test of time for a group, become shared values. In addition, through the process of "cognitive transformation," a shared value has the potential of becoming a belief as well as a basic assumption that guides the behavior and decisions of the group. These basic assumptions are invisible, incontestable, and represent the philosophical underpinnings of the culture. The basic assumptions around which culture forms include: 1) relationship to the environment, 2) the nature of reality, time and space, 3) the nature of human nature, 4) the nature of human activity, and 5) the nature of human relationships. Table 2 provides Schein's (1985) framework for understanding these assumptions.

Schein's (1985) model is a psychologically based model of organizational culture and one that is rooted in the structural-functionalist perspective. His focus is upon the individual as an individual in a group and not upon the individual as a social participant. Further, the thread

that runs through Schein's (1985) analysis, and that which firmly places it within the structural-functionalist perspective, is that there is a "right" way to behave and it is defined outside of the individual or individuals who comprise the organization. The culture pre-exists, it is "out there" and thus, individuals do not shape the culture, they are integrated into it and, in some sense, products of it.

Table 2

Basic Underlying Assumptions Around Which  
Cultural Paradigms Form

1. **Humanity's Relationship to Nature.** At the organizational level, do the key members view the relationship of the organization to its environment as one of dominance, submission, harmonizing, finding an appropriate niche, or what?
2. **The Nature of Reality and Truth.** The linguistic and behavioral rules that define what is real and what is not, what is a "fact," how truth is ultimately to be determined, and whether truth is "revealed" or "discovered"; basic concepts of time and space.
3. **The Nature of Human Nature.** What does it mean to be "human" and what attributes are considered intrinsic or ultimate? Is human nature good, evil, or neutral? Are human beings perfectible or not?
4. **The Nature of Human Activity.** What is the "right" thing for human beings to do, on the basis of the above assumptions about reality, the environment, and human nature: to be active, passive, self-developmental, fatalistic, or what? What is work and what is play?
5. **The Nature of Human Relationships.** What is considered to be the "right" way for people to relate to each other, to distribute power and love? Is life cooperative or competitive; individualistic, group collaborative, or communal; based on traditional lineal authority, law, charisma, or what?

Source: Schein, 1985, p. 86.

Ott (1989), modifies Schein's (1985) model. His modification divides Schein's first level of cultural elements, that of Artifacts, into two categories, thus distinguishing behavioral from non-behavioral elements.

### Ott's Modification of Schein's Model

Ott (1989) takes Schein's (1985) model one step further by creating a typology of organizational culture. He separates the constructs in Schein's first level of culture, that of Artifacts and Creations. He does so to distinguish between those artifacts that are products of human behavior and those that are or are reflected in human behavior. Thus we have, in Level 1A, art and technology that, while visible signs of a culture, are sometimes difficult to decipher as reflective of a particular culture. We also have, in 1B those elements that are reflected in human behavior, either directly or indirectly (See Table 3).

Ott (1989) uses this revised model to present a typology of elements of organizational culture. His typology is intended to be used as a frame of reference for those studying, managing, or changing an organization's culture. Table 4 presents a sampling of the elements Ott identifies.

Table 3

## Levels of Culture and Their Interaction

Level 1A - <u>Artifacts</u> Technology Art	Visible but often not decipherable
Level 1B - <u>Patterns of Behavior</u>  Familiar Management Tasks Visible & Audible Behavior Patterns Norms	
Level 2 - <u>Values</u> Testable in the physical environment Testable only by social consensus	Greater level of awareness
Level 3 - <u>Basic Assumptions</u> Relationship to environment Nature of reality, time and space Nature of human nature Nature of human activity Nature of human relationships	Taken for granted Invisible Preconscious

Source: Ott, 1989, p. 62.

Table 4

## A Typology of Elements of Organizational Culture

<u>Elements of Organizational Culture</u>	<u>Levels of Culture</u>				
	Patterns of Beliefs and Assumptions				
	<u>Artifacts</u> <u>1A</u>	<u>1B</u>	<u>Behavior</u> <u>2</u>	<u>Values</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Assumptions</u> <u>Not Clear</u>
anecdotes, organizational	x				
art		x			
assumptions that people live by					x
attitudes			x	x	
climate, organizational					x

Source: Ott, 1989, pp. 63-64.

Both Schein (1985) and Ott (1989) explore the key elements of organizational culture. The culture they explore is generic, that is, applicable to any organization. There is some research and scholarship that explores culture within particular organizations. Kuh and Whitt's (1988) review and interpretation of the literature describes the culture of higher education organizations, and Chaffee and Tierney (1988) empirically explore the culture of higher education.

### Kuh and Whitt's Cultural Framework

In The Invisible Tapestry, Kuh and Whitt (1988) posit a framework or model for analyzing culture in higher education organizations. They also provide an overview of some of the theoretical underpinnings of organizational culture research. Their cultural analysis framework attempts to be more interpretive than structural and more sociological than psychological or anthropological. Their model looks at the notion of culture from four perspectives that include elements in the external and internal environment. The external environment is that which surrounds the institution and includes external constituencies. The internal environment involves the institution itself, the subcultures within the institution, such as faculty, staff, students and, finally, the individual actors and roles they play. These elements, according to Kuh and Whitt (1988), are to be carefully analyzed in order to understand the culture of a college or university.

Kuh and Whitt's (1988) model, although useful in identifying the elements of culture, is more descriptive than analytic in that it does not reflect upon the interrelationships between and among elements. Their work reflects the status of organizational culture research at the time it was written and, as such, is a timely piece of scholarship. However, the descriptive nature of the model may not capture the dynamic nature of an organization nor of the processes used for decision-making. The model proposed by Chaffee and Tierney (1988) seems to place these cultural elements into a dynamic context.

#### Chaffee and Tierney's Institutional Analysis Framework

Like Kuh and Whitt (1988), Chaffee and Tierney (1988) describe the elements of a framework for analyzing culture in higher education. Their model, however, places organizational culture into a dynamic, interactive framework. They pull together many of the elements posited by Schein (1985), Ott (1989), and Kuh and Whitt (1988) and, working from an interpretive perspective, create a Venn diagram for analysts to understand the interrelationship between and among these elements.

Chaffee and Tierney (1988) describe three dimensions of culture that all organizations have. These dimensions are: 1) the structural, 2) values, and 3) the environmental. These dimensions are highly interrelated. In addition to these dimensions, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) posit that there are three themes that run through these dimensions. These themes relate



to time, space, and communication. The relationship of these dimensions and themes is pictured in Figure 3. The representation in this figure depicts an institution in what Chaffee and Tierney (1988) refer to as a state of dynamic equilibrium, the ideal organizational state.

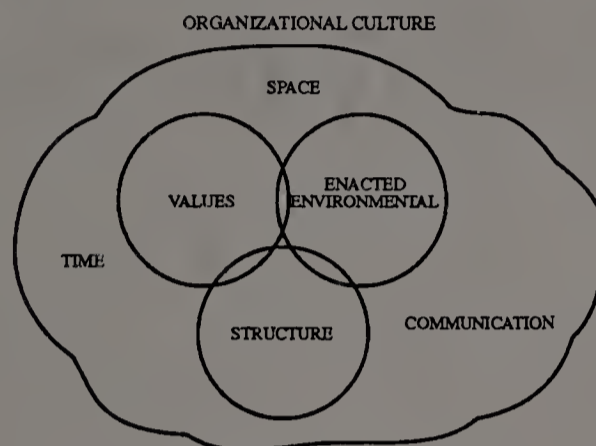


Figure 3

Dynamic Equilibrium in Organizational Culture  
(Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 19)

The structural dimension "refers to various ways in which the organization accomplishes its activities, including programmatic, fiscal, and governance mechanisms" (p. 18). This dimension includes more than the reporting relationships as delineated in organizational charts. It includes the spectrum of formal and informal relationships within the organization and is reflected in the decision-making process and the role of the leader. The environmental dimension "includes, but is by no means limited to, the objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (p. 20). The environment of the organization is

created by the organization's interpretation of these people, events, demands, and constraints.

The values dimension represents the norms and beliefs held by the individual members of the organization. These may be shared by members of a subgroup or subculture, or by members of the dominant group of culture. This dimension is similar to Schein's (1985) model. The time, space, and communication themes reflect historical and future perspectives of the organization's membership, the relationship between and among individuals, and the "vehicle through which members perceive and interpret their worlds" (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 21).

Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) model of cultural analysis is an operational one and one that can be used in organizational diagnosis and decision-making. As they put it,

the framework provides a means of diagnosing the points at which an institution's progress toward dynamic equilibrium may be hampered by elements that are out of balance. (p. 22)

The models and frameworks described highlight the complexity of culture and how difficult it is to define and describe this concept. In this study, culture is considered from an interpretive perspective, one embraced by symbolic interactionism. Culture, in this instance, denies the existence of preestablished forms of joint action:

It is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life. (Blumer, 1986, p.19)

This view of culture reflects the mutual sharing of beliefs and assumptions inherent in an interpretive view of culture. Culture is not "out there," but is shaped through the experiences and interactions of people.

From this interpretive perspective, enacted managerial roles simultaneously reflect and are reflected in a particular organizational culture. The enacted role should also reflect the ways in which the manager is able to influence others to achieve organizational goals, in essence, the use of power. The next section explores the sources of power that managers have available to them.

### The Social Bases of Power

Pfeffer (1981) suggests that the concept of power is fundamental to understanding organizational behavior. Definitions of power refer to it as a force, as characterizing relationships among people and as context specific (Pfeffer, 1981). Pfeffer (1981) further suggests that power, as a force, reflects potential influence and thus is a property of a system at rest and politics of power in action.

Power is a property of the system at rest; politics is the study of power in action. An individual, subunit, or department may have power within an organizational context at some period of time; politics involves the exercise of power to get something accomplished...(p. 7)

In each of the models of higher education organization (i.e., bureaucratic, collegial, political, anarchical), power is shaped differently. In a bureaucratic organization, power is legitimized through positions and

authority; in a collegium, as identified by Millett (1966), power might be diffused or it might be vested within the primary source of collegiality, that is, the faculty; in a political model, power is constantly shifting as contexts and external environments shift; and, in an anarchical model, power is constantly shifting, only with less rationality and predictability than in the political model (Birnbaum, 1988).

Pfeffer (1981) indicates that it is "generally agreed that power characterizes relationships among social actors" (p. 3), and that most definitions describe power as relationships between and among social actors where one social actor or group of actors has influence over another actor or group. By definition, managers have an influence relationship with those they supervise and rationality would suggest that this position of authority is where managers derive their ability to influence people in their organizations. However, this may not always be true. This emphasis on the importance of legitimate power may mask the other sources of power that social actors have at their disposal. French and Raven's (1968) work on the social bases of power identifies five common sources of power.

French and Raven's (1968) research on the bases of social power identifies five common sources of influence a social agent (individual or group) may have over an actor. Using the concept of manager as the holder of power to describe these sources, they are: 1) reward power, where the manager has the ability to administer positive rewards or decrease

punishment, 2) coercive power, where the manager has the ability to administer punishment, 3) legitimate power, where the manager holds position power or otherwise has the authority to make decisions about employees, usually conveyed by title and job description (Pfeffer, 1981), 4) referent power, where the ability of the manager to influence employee behavior is based upon the employee's identification with him or her and, 5) expert power, where the manager's influence comes from his or her perceived technical expertise or knowledge base.

### Reward Power

Interpreting French and Raven's (1968) research, the ability of a manager to provide positive rewards or to decrease punishments has the effect of increasing the attraction of that manager to employees. Over a period of time, say these researchers, reward power will be replaced by referent power. At this point, rewards are no longer necessary to influence the employee as he or she associates with the manager and will respond even in their absence. The effective use of reward power is limited to those areas in which employees view the manager as having legitimate responsibility (legitimate power).

### Coercive Power

The effect of coercive power, according to French and Raven (1968), is the creation of a dependent system whereby the threat of punishment

constrains the behavior of employees and must be present to maintain the system. This is different from the independent system created by the use of reward power where, with the emergence of referent power, the absence of reward does not extinguish conformity. In addition, the threat of punishment must be of a sufficient strength so that employees conform, rather than withdraw from the threat.

### Legitimate Power

Inherent in the notion of legitimate power are the concepts of rights and obligations. From an organizational perspective, a manager holds legitimate power if he or she has a "right" to that power and others have an obligation to conform. In an organization, the right to influence others usually stems from a formal appointment, for example, the president of a campus or the chair of a faculty senate. However, as French and Raven (1968) note, "legitimate power also involves the perceived right of the person to hold the office" (p. 265). Thus, while a manager may hold a legitimate position of power within an organization, the use of power associated with that position will only be effective if employees believe the person in that position has the right to hold that position.

### Referent Power

Sometimes confused with reward and coercive power, referent power is associational power. It is the influence a manager has over an employee

because that employee identifies in some way with the manager. It may be that the employee wishes to be like the manager or behave in ways similar to the manager. In any event, the employee will conform to the wishes of the manager regardless of the presence of rewards or the threat of punishment. In many cases, the manager is not aware of his or her influence over the employee (French & Raven, 1968).

### Expert Power

Expert power relates to the credibility of the manager in situations and the acceptance by the employee of the manager's knowledge base in a given area. French and Raven (1968) distinguish between expert power, which is based on the credibility of the manager and informational influence, which is based on the content of the information. Informational influence, according to them, is a secondary influence as it occurs after acceptance of the manager as an expert. "The range of expert power...is more delimited than that of referent power. Not only is it restricted to cognitive systems but the expert is seen as having superior knowledge or ability in very specific areas, and his power will be limited to these areas, although some 'halo effect' might occur" (French & Raven, 1968, p. 268).

While French and Raven (1968) acknowledge that there are other sources of power that individuals have available to them, they suggest that the five bases noted here are the most common and important ones. These are also the sources of power to be explored in this study.

Having explored the theory and literature that frames this study, it is time to talk about how this study was designed, how the research was conducted, and how the data was analyzed. Chapter IV discusses the methods used to conduct this study and includes an important section on the biases I brought to the research situation and how those were resolved, or at least acknowledged as research challenges.



## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

In order to understand the roles that mid-level managers construct and some of the forces that influenced the shaping of these roles, research strategies consistent with exploratory and descriptive research approaches were used. The study of the roles of collegiate mid-level managers is a little understood phenomenon. Thus, this study breaks new ground and, as such, is exploratory. Further, in order to understand these roles and the forces that helped shape them, a strategy that would uncover and allow for the rich description of how mid-level managers experienced their roles was also appropriate.

This study, as an exploratory, descriptive study, relied upon the use of qualitative data gathering techniques, specifically, interviews, observations, and document review. This study relied most heavily upon the use of interviews, particularly during data analysis, as these data provided descriptive accounts of how mid-level managers experienced and understood their roles within their organizations. The interview data also provided accountings of how others within the mid-level manager's organization experienced the manager, providing important information with which to triangulate these data.

### Research Design and Data Collection

The selection of the site for this study was guided by interest and access. A major public research university was selected because of my interest in and experience with public universities and the role of student affairs in these institutions. In addition, this type of organization was more geographically accessible and the people in student affairs more familiar, making research participants more readily available.

The selection of the two collegiate mid-level managers was guided by Scott's (1978) definition of collegiate mid-level managers as deans and directors of non-academic areas, the size of the manager's department, and the willingness of the people to participate in the study. At the time this study was designed, Paradox University was undergoing some major organizational change within student affairs. One potential participant took on new leadership responsibilities which took her out of the definition of collegiate mid-level managers. Other directors had few subordinate staff members or were not willing to participate in the study. The two mid-level managers selected are in charge of complex departments, have several people reporting to them, and were willing to participate in this study, as were their staff members. The two managers who participated in this study were Ron, the Director of Residence Life and Barbara, Dean of Academic Services.

Exploring the role construction process for collegiate mid-level managers also involves understanding how their staff members understand the manager's role. Permission was sought from staff members who reported to Ron and Barbara to interview them. The willingness of staff members to be interviewed also influenced the selection of the participants in this study. The primary organizational site of the study is the department over which the mid-level manager is in charge. This organizational site was selected to intentionally bound the research for manageability. However, in order to more fully understand each department, it is important to understand its relationship to the Division of Student Affairs. Thus, part of this study attempts to understand this primary organizational site (i.e., Residence Life and Academic Services) within the context of the Division of Student Affairs.

The context for this study is framed by the formal position of the mid-level manager. Through the use of interviews, observations, and document review role construction and enactment is explored.

### In-depth Interviews

Three extended, in-depth interviews were conducted with each mid-level manager for periods of approximately 1 1/2-2 hours each. Each interview had a particular focus and a general protocol to guide discussion. The first interview was intended to gather general information about Ron and Barbara. Questions included those related to educational background,

how each made career decisions, and general expectations about what it meant to them to be a person holding a particular role in this institution. The second interview was concerned with management style and the relationship of each of them to their respective subordinate staff. Questions were posed to glean from Ron and Barbara a sense of expectations of self and others in decision situations as well as metaphorical descriptions of self. The third interview probed questions that remained unanswered, such as the economic stress the campus was experiencing, the notion of tension between student and academic affairs, and to bring this aspect of the research to closure.

In order to explore role construction, understanding the perspectives of others is important. To explore these perspectives, interviews were conducted with subordinate staff members who reported directly to the mid-level manager. These interviews had the specific purpose of examining expectations of behavior that subordinate staff had of the mid-level manager. Only those staff members who attended the collegiate mid-level managers' staff meetings were interviewed. When allowed by the interviewee, interviews were taped; when not allowed, field notes were taken. In Academic Services, nine staff members who reported directly to the Dean and who sat as a member of the Executive Staff were interviewed. Seven of the interviews yielded data that could be easily transcribed, checked for accuracy by the interviewee and was, subsequently used in this

study. In Residence Life, seven staff members were interviewed, with all data considered usable.

### Observations

A minimum of two observations of at least 1 1/2 hours in length were made of each mid-level manager, in addition to the initial contact and observation. The settings for observations generally took place during regularly scheduled staff meetings. In addition to observations made during staff meetings, another a half-day long observation was made with each. These extended observations took different forms for each mid-level manager. For Ron, the Director of Residence Life, the observation included a tour of residence hall facilities. For Barbara, the Dean of Academic Services, the extended observation took place in her office and involved observing a variety of interactions with staff members as well as being present at a meeting/discussion of a new program idea. The specific goal for these observations was to observe interactions between the mid-level managers and staff members. How do they communicate with each other? Who sets the tone for the interaction occasions? What is discussed and what isn't discussed and how is the agenda established for what is and is not talked about during meetings and other interactions? Who is in control of discussions? What is the nature of the eye contact and other body language? The information from the observations was used to support or

not support tentative interpretations from the interviews and review of documents.

### Document review

In addition to interviews and observations, correspondence and departmental documents were reviewed to corroborate data collected from other sources. To gather data about context, institutional documents, including accreditation self studies and planning documents were used. Additional materials included university catalogs, brochures, alumni magazines, student newspapers, as well as local and regional newspapers. Information from these sources was used to more fully understand the organizational culture of Paradox University, of the Division of Student Affairs, and of the areas of Residence Life and Academic Services. Information from catalogs and brochures identified what the institution wanted the outside world to understand about itself. The question that emerged from these documents was whether or not what Paradox said it believed in and subscribed to is reflected in its internal policies and procedures and the behavior of its members. Newspaper articles, both local, regional, and student, reflected major issues facing Paradox. These issues were also used to understand how the external messages Paradox sends corresponds with the internal ones reflected in policies, procedures, and staff actions.

### Analyzing the Data

To make sense of the data gathered during this study, a constant comparison type of approach, such as that advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used. The constant comparison approach involves the grouping of data that seems to relate to each other in some way, and then categorizing or naming those groupings. Throughout data analysis, categories are considered tentative as data is constantly checked and compared to determine the category's appropriateness in making sense of the data. The constant comparison approach encourages a continuous scrutiny of data and a shuffling and reshuffling of categories to come up with an analysis that is an accurate reflection of the data collected. Goetz and LeCompte (1981) describe this approach and its potential:

This strategy combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed. As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they also are compared across categories. Thus, the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as new relationships may be discovered. (p. 58)

What emerged from the analysis of interview, observation, and document data were categories that seemed to describe the constructed roles of Ron and Barbara. These descriptors were initially quite fluid and changing as data from the three sources was examined and introduced. Some descriptors were eliminated, particularly when it seemed as if the

data was being made to fit the descriptor, rather than vice versa. Descriptors were kept if data from the interviews and observations supported the category.

Once the data were organized in a manner that would allow for analysis, the next step was to develop a preliminary story that would pull together the data and reflect the phenomena under study. The story developed is framed by the question, "What observations about role construction and enactment are suggested by these data?"

The first step in the analysis for this study was to identify the roles that emerged for each mid-level manager from the interviews, observations, and documents. These roles are described using language that reveals how the role is enacted. These roles are situated in relationship to the manager's own view of management and, specifically, the management of higher education organizations. From here the factors that may have influenced how these roles were shaped are identified and supported with evidence from the data. Finally, observations from the data are made that attempt to understand the complexity and dynamic nature of the role construction process, attempts to relate role construction to the organization's culture, and explores the relative importance of each of the factors that influence role construction to the process.

One of the most difficult parts of doing this study has been controlling my own biases. In some cases, I have accomplished this task; in



others, a lack of control has taken me back to the drawing board for additional conceptualizing and rewriting of text. As an administrator in student affairs at a university, my biases are many and include my own perceptions of what it means to be a mid-level manager and how I believe higher education organizations ought to be managed. Having spent ten years in mid-level management positions, the challenge to suspend my own notions of what constitutes an appropriate role for a mid-level manager was a big order--especially for one with tendencies toward self-righteousness. However, I think this challenge was more easily met than others. During the gathering of data, I was ever-conscious of my preconceived notions about mid-level management and consciously strived to suspend those notions as I listened, asked questions, and observed. The same was true during data analysis.

The task of analysis would have been made easier if I had focussed, if not forced, the data into the initial categories or descriptors I had developed--but the analysis would have been wrong. The challenge was to continue to examine the data until such time as the category seemed to fit the data and the category felt intuitively right. Where my biases were more difficult to overcome was in deciding how to approach data analysis. Initially, instead of holding true to the premises of symbolic interactionism, I held on to attempting to test theory. In retrospect, this attempt to test

theory ended, in the final analysis, to be a case in which the data was being forced to tell a story, rather than have the story emerge from the data.

Finally, I suppose, every study has limitations. In my opinion, this study has at least four. First, this study is intended to be exploratory and, as such, is more useful in guiding further research than in drawing conclusions with significance beyond the mid-level managers in this study. What do these data suggest to us about collegiate mid-level managers and higher education organizations and is this research approach a valuable one to use to study these phenomena are the questions that this study may be useful in answering.

Second, the strength of the data in leading to some of the conclusions regarding forces that influence role construction is such that it precludes being much more than speculative. These limitations are duly noted in the directions for future research in which additional, more focussed data gathering is recommended.

Third, the size of the study precludes any significant conclusions about collegiate mid-level managers and the organization. Future studies should expand the number of participants and consider expanding the study beyond student affairs.

Finally, this study is a study of situated identity and, as such, is a snapshot in time and space. This situated identity specifically reflects how collegiate mid-level managers construct their roles in this particular

organizational context. To more fully understand how collegiate mid-level managers construct their roles, a more longitudinal study of collegiate mid-level managers as they progress through their professional lives in different positions and, perhaps, different organizations would be in order.

In this chapter, the methodology and limitations of this study were discussed. Chapter V begins the process of interpreting the data that was collected.

## CHAPTER V

### MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA COLLECTED

The roles people construct for themselves reflect the behaviors they have determined to be appropriate in particular settings. These behaviors are determined through interaction with others. Symbolic interactionism would suggest that the roles that people construct for themselves in one setting, may not be those they construct in another setting. This is because the contexts are different, that is, the organizational setting is different, the internal and external influences (human and technical) on that setting are different and, most importantly, the people in the organizational setting are different, with different sets of expectations of their own and other people's behavior. Further, each context or setting has its own culture, that is, a body of assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that serve to constrain and enable behavior.

The two collegiate mid-level managers who participated in this study construct and enact their roles within particular organizational contexts. Ron constructs his roles primarily in the Department of Residence Life and Barbara shapes hers primarily in the Division of Academic Services. A major part of this chapter attempts to understand and describe the roles that Ron and Barbara construct for themselves as director and dean of complex units.

Yet, both Residence Life and Academic Services are part of a larger, complex organizational system. Both Ron's and Barbara's areas

organizationally rest within the Division of Student Affairs and Student Affairs is one of five major divisions of Paradox University, a large, public, landgrant research university located in a rural part of the state. For example, Residence Life has its own set of organizational rules and a particular culture has emerged, it is also very much a part of Student Affairs and the rest of Paradox. Residence Life performs a function that is integral to Student Affairs and to Paradox--it provides housing to students. Residence Life cannot dramatically change its function say, to decide not to provide housing to students under the age of 19, without having an impact on other areas of Student Affairs and/or the rest of Paradox University (fewer students in housing may equate with fewer students at Paradox). The same would hold true of Academic Services. The context is a complex one as both Ron and Barbara relate simultaneously to their own areas of responsibility (i.e., Residence Life and Academic Services), to the Division of Student Affairs which has authority over their areas, and to Paradox University as a whole. Understanding the roles that Ron and Barbara construct for themselves suggests a need to understand the multiple organizational contexts within which their roles are shaped and performed. Three of these areas explored in this study are: 1) each manager's area of responsibility (e.g., Residence Life and Academic Services), 2) the Division of Student Affairs, and 3) Paradox University.

## The Paradox University Context

### Paradox University in 1990-91

Nestled amidst a rural valley known as much for its contributions to art as for its contributions to history and higher education, Paradox University sprawls over 1200 acres of countryside and is the state's landgrant institution. Paradox's programs and services are as many and diverse as its student population. With programs that range the gamut from associate degrees in business and liberal arts to doctoral programs in science and engineering, Paradox serves an FTE undergraduate and graduate student population of about 23,000.

Steeped in the traditions of landgrant universities, Paradox refers to itself as the flagship campus of a multi-campus system. It is true that Paradox is the public research university for the multi-campus system; a system established in the late sixties, at a time when many states were engaged in creating multi-campus systems.

Paradox is proud of its distinction as the flagship campus. To be the flagship raises Paradox both in stature and responsibility and establishes for this campus its special place within the multi-campus system. From its own commentary, Paradox must not only emulate the highest of standards for educational quality and achievement, it must also consistently be on the cutting edge of new scholarship and research. It is an institution, as the academic vice-president says that,

is in the middle of its growth phase...[it is a university] that comes out of a small agricultural college only a few decades ago [and until 3 years ago] had moved steadily towards being one of the large public, research, and teaching universities of this country.

Paradox does hold high aspirations for itself. Planning documents and accreditation reports reflect this campus' desire to be a state, regional, and national leader among state universities. The mission of Paradox, as noted in its most recent accreditation self-study, is similar to that of other major landgrant universities: "the acquisition, advancement and dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research, and service." The academic affairs vice-president captures Paradox's development in these three areas:

to provide to undergraduates an education as good as any public education in the country; ...a research responsibility, to continue the forwarding of basic and applied knowledge...and to forward the economic affairs of the state and the nation by the research we do;...as a landgrant, to make available our special expertise to the communities around us.

This vice-president views Paradox as an exciting campus where all of these activities truly do take place.

In a place, you know, we have some 5,000 souls apart from students, you expect a lot of things to go on and certainly find it...every one of those pieces I described is pursued in someplace by somebody with terrific vigor.

Paradox's objectives and campus initiatives have taken on new dimensions as the institution has attempted to respond to emerging educational needs and growing fiscal constraints. The special initiatives relate to such issues as campus diversity and affirmative action, reassessing

the undergraduate curriculum, and providing additional attention and resources to graduate education. Unfortunately, as with many campuses across the nation, Paradox has been necessarily inwardly focused toward survival in difficult economic times. So, while the importance of these initiatives is acknowledged, implementation has been much slower, ostensibly because of resources.

The administration of Paradox is complex. As part of a multi-campus system, Paradox holds some accountability to the system-wide central governing body. This relationship between what tasks are central (like computing support and program review) and what are strictly under the purview of the campus (like decisions about tenure and organizational structures) have been worked out over time. The usual disgruntlement with "the central office" is always expressed, but there doesn't seem to be any movement to do away with the structure. Of more concern to most is the oversight organization at the state level. Established after the campus/central administrative structure, there is concern over the role and the authority of this state board, which has its own organizational and administrative structures. At present, the state board is in an organizational transition and the questions of purpose and authority continue to weigh on the minds of many. Some hope for its demise.

That Paradox tenaciously holds onto tradition and simultaneously breaks new ground is evident as one walks around the campus and looks at



the physical plant of the campus. The eclectic nature of the architecture seems to reflect Paradox's need to hold fast to traditions, yet venture out into the new and unknown. On one hand, there are buildings that reflect the history of the institution: the chapel, now no longer used as a chapel, but as the home of an academic program; the old library, the interior being half renovated and half preserved and used for administrative offices; and the old residence halls, many of which continue to be used for student housing. Then there is newer construction, embedded with stories, some flattering, some not, which will become the mainstay of historical recounting. For instance, there is the library.

Towering above the campus, the story is that the architecture was not one designed for this campus, but was an unused set of plans for an urban office building that was never constructed. The blueprints, dusted off by the state, were shipped to the campus to save time and money. The building is constantly subject to ridicule for this and because of the structural and locational flaws which necessitated the construction of a fence to prevent people from being injured when bricks, detached by wind from the building's exterior, fall to the ground. Or the reference to the central administration building as "the fort" by students and even some staff because of its concrete exterior, its recessed windows and its appearance of having been built into the side of a hill. This metaphor also distinguishes the administration as "them" and the students, faculty, and

staff, as "us"--not unlike the traditions of campuses elsewhere in the country. Then there are the current construction projects, as if belying the prevailing economic distress of the region, that temporarily returns the campus to tradition, with red brick exteriors, but manages, through height and overall size, to be a reminder of this institution's growth, its place in the present, and its aspirations for the future. From a distance, Paradox has a skyline representative of a small American city, with buildings that tower far into the clouds, and others sprawling, like groundcover, over the massive acreage of the campus.

Marketing for the campus, both print and non-print, portrays Paradox as a high quality campus that is the public equivalent to many significant Ivy League schools. Its faculty is well-prepared, most holding Ph.D.s, and even though they are involved in scholarship, the publications say this is a faculty who cares about students. The picture is of a campus of faculty intimately involved in student learning. A small campus environment within a large campus community.

Students are involved in student life. While many are engaged in the major campus concerns regarding budget and promoting tolerance for diversity, lounge and campus conversations seem to be about normal student stuff: classes and professors, entertainment on weeknights and weekends, and relationships. "Promise you won't say anything to...., but here...," "Does my hair smell like hair?," "I have to go to class, now, what

are you doing later?" are all typical beginnings of conversations one hears. This focus on the daily concerns of student life (presumably undergraduate) seems far-removed, at times, from the programmatic and fiscal realities faced by the campus organization.

The base budget for Paradox has been reduced over the past five years by approximately 25 percent and it would appear as if additional reductions are in the offing. This stress has placed increased pressure on Paradox to downsize and limit new program initiatives that require funding. Paradox has tried to downsize through attrition, but of late the nature of the budget cuts have forced the campus to dig deep into program review and evaluation and even redefine that most sacred of concepts, that is, tenure. Needless to say the budget stress has had a negative impact on morale. Faculty and staff are concerned about job security, and students are concerned about the level of programs and services. Will I be able to keep my job? Will I ever see a raise again? Will I be able to graduate within a reasonable timeframe? These are all questions that loom large on community members' minds. Yet, while people try to assess whether or not they need to leave or will be able to stay, they are also distressed over the developmental threat to an institution that had overcome a negative reputation as a school not to be taken seriously academically, and was rapidly achieving the regional, state, and national image to which it aspired. In addition, the pressure on staff to perform feels quite high.

There is an overall sense by employees that the expectation is to do more, to do it well, for less and with less. This expectation contributes to lowered morale as employees, feeling overburdened, remain certain they cannot continue to meet institutional expectations.

### Campus Update: 1992-93

Circumstances of late have forced Paradox to respond more immediately to its goals related to diversity. Over the past five years, the campus has focused its programmatic and service attention to the needs of minority students. The campus has experienced some racial strife in the past and more of late. About five years ago, there was an incident with a fraternity in which members of the fraternity reportedly harassed and injured a person of color. More recently, there have been altercations between races in the residence halls and graffiti both of a racial and homophobic nature splattered on residence hall walls. These incidents have resulted in the administration re-funding programs that were to be terminated as a result of budget constraints and hire additional personnel to insure the safety of students. Task forces have been created to explore the issues and to develop educational programs for the campus community. More importantly, the central administration has requested a federal mediator to review and assist the campus in resolving the racial tension. The news media, both local and regional, have been focusing heavily on this campus' unrest. Yet, amidst this turmoil, when Paradox is presented to the

external community, as in a recent open house for potential students, what is mentioned as a Paradox uniqueness is its belief in and support of diversity.

One gets the sense that Paradox is an institution in conflict with itself, hence the choice of pseudonym. It is an institution that feels trapped by fiscal reality and the need to scale back in order to survive, feels frustrated by not being able to move forward with its aspirations for the future, and is now caught in a position of not having responded for so long a period of time, that the pressure to respond is inevitable and the need to respond unavoidable. With weekly reports of incidents of racial insults and sexual assault, this campus faces major issues related to racial tension and ultimately in maintaining a safe campus environment.

#### Student Affairs at Paradox

Student Affairs at Paradox is not unlike student affairs divisions at other public universities. The Vice-President for Student Affairs is one of five Vice-Presidents reporting to the President. Under this Vice-President is an eclectic grouping of areas held together by the common thread of providing services to students outside of the classroom. The mission of Student Affairs, as reported in the accreditation self-study, is "to create and maintain a stable environment that enhances and extends a student's education, providing educational opportunities in ways and settings not available in the classroom." The Division is to provide leadership for the

teaching of values of respect, diversity, and social justice, and to be a focal point for the integration of the classroom experiences with a student's living situation, job, and leisure experiences.

These themes for student affairs are not only on paper, but reinforced by the campus leadership. Students Affairs, in the words of the area's vice president, is "integral to the mission [of Paradox], as providing for and contributing to the educational mission of the institution." This person elaborates:

Our focus is clearly outside of the classroom...as opposed to in the classroom, but we feel that what we do in all our areas in some way contributes to the growth of the individual being educated.

The Division of Student Affairs, as the academic vice-president puts it,

As with any university, student affairs is very heterogenous, I was going to say a 'grab-bag', but that is too negative...It is a colossally-complicated and large vice-presidency.

There are six major departments in the Division of Student Affairs at Paradox. These include the Health Center, Police and Safety, Student Activities, Residence Life, Dean of Students, and Academic Services. Each individual department is headed by a dean or director, and each has a number of support staff and coordinate a host of activities.

One senses that this student affairs division is fairly typical of other student affairs divisions. The typical "second-class citizenship" expressed in the literature about student affairs professionals seems to be the case here,

although bridging the gap between student affairs and academic affairs is one of the successes of the division pointed to by campus leaders. Another success has been with programming for minority affairs, where a sensitivity to the needs of multi-cultural students has been addressed with the establishment of cultural centers in which students may gather, be advised, and be heard.

During this past year, the Division of Student Affairs experienced a turnover in leadership. The Vice-President for Student Affairs, after a long tenure, left Paradox for another position. An interim vice-president was appointed from the ranks of the division and was ultimately selected for a two-year term from an internal search process. No one seemed to be particularly surprised with this choice. However, the search did pit colleagues against one another in a competitive process. This meant that the person chosen needed to prove herself to the campus leadership and to her own colleagues who also applied, who were skeptical in light of dashed aspirations and personal beliefs that their own qualifications were superior. The choice of leadership, however, did not change the fundamental mission or purpose of student affairs at Paradox.

Some of the major issues facing Paradox fall under the purview of student affairs. Previous planning documents for Paradox have focused on the need to examine the integration of living and learning on campus. The response to this has been a reshaping of courses and programs that are held

in the residence halls. There is also the ever-present issue of diversity and civility. Student Affairs, from the viewpoint of the Division's vice-president, holds particular expertise and responsibility for moving this campus agenda forward:

I think we probably take particular pride in being the area where commitments to access and support for students is probably best articulated and most strongly acted on. The tradition [of] Student Affairs as being one that supplies support services to students, I think, lends itself to that notion and so that a lot of our programming takes into account issues of access and issues of social justice and issues of support to students.

There is also a great deal of pressure on the Division of Student Affairs and, in particular, on the Division of Academic Services for the recruitment of students. The number of applications for admission to Paradox has dramatically decreased by 50% over the past three years so, whereas in the past, the Admissions office served as a filter through which an appropriately prepared entering class of about 4,000 was selected, the office now finds itself in the position of actively marketing Paradox's programs and services. The same pressure is found in the area of housing, where the number of students interested in campus-based housing has decreased over the years, as rent in the surrounding area has made off-campus living affordable and attractive.

The budget crisis has hit Student Affairs particularly hard and has taken its toll in terms of program cuts. The Vice-President for Student



Affairs feels that the division has had more than its share of the budgetary pain.

The climate right now as we face budget cuts is not as supportive to student affairs as it has been. Student Affairs has taken proportional, to what it receives in certain kinds of funds, the greatest cut...But we have now gone through several years of this and one is beginning to feel as though "alright now,...in an organization with shared responsibilities...some of the pain does have to be shared a little more too." There is a real tension around that...

Yet, programs in Student Affairs continue to be questioned and the division has moved toward prioritizing its programs and services. However, deciding what the priorities are for the Division has been a challenging and tense process for the vice-president to facilitate in and of itself. The process she adopted was a participative one; a process somewhat foreign to this eclectic group that has historically maintained themselves as somewhat autonomous from each other. Not unexpectedly, with the current budget crisis, the Vice-President found the department heads to be less forthcoming and more protective of turf than ever. The vice-president finds herself particularly challenged by this participative process, for it mandates a management style that feels intrusive. This is somewhat antithetical to what she thinks her department heads' expectations of her as a manager happen to be:

Let's put it this way, they want me to know their areas very well, so that I can talk about it as well as they do. But they want me to stay out of it and they really don't want a hands on manager...And the only time that they want it to be differently is when they are feeling some pressure from within their own organization that they feel they can't sustain and then of course they want to have a back-up....So

they really just want me out there making the environment positive for them to do the kinds of things they like to do and giving them enough resources.

Yet, because of a feeling of pressure that Student Affairs would once again be called upon to respond to budget cuts, the vice-president pressed forward with study groups to evaluate division-wide programs and services. While the primary purpose of the group process is to develop a sense of division-wide priorities, the vice-president also hopes to build a cohesive team among department heads and other divisional staff members. This has been a difficult process, yet the vice-president seems to think there has been a breakthrough with the last meeting in which the tension was not as high and, when people walked out, they didn't leave with a sense of "Thank god, no more for six more days."

There is some unanimity in the division about the need for cohesion, particularly in these stressful economic times. The need is to build a better mousetrap, not only figure out what the top priorities are, but to figure out how to shore up programs and services that need to be better. The metaphor mentioned by Ron was one of moving the ship, of how we can "convert our rowboat into an ocean liner."

#### Student Affairs Update: 1992-93

1992-93 brings some change to the Division of Student Affairs at Paradox. The administration searched for and hired a permanent Vice-President for Student Affairs. The person who served as interim vice-

president returned to her position within the Division as part of the senior management team. The Dean for Academic Services resigned to take another position and, thus this area has an interim dean, identified from the ranks of the Academic Services area. A search is currently being conducted for a permanent dean. There is also discussion about restructuring this area.

With the campus unrest around racial tension, much of the attention in terms of press appears to be focused on the housing area, as there have been several incidents over the past few weeks in the residence halls, such as graffiti, harassment, and even charges of assault. The other area most directly affected is Academic Services. This division is home of the support services for the multicultural student population: recruitment programs to improve the diversity of Paradox's student body, academic support programs to help to ensure success of minority students, and the multicultural centers to provide a cultural haven for the increasing numbers of minority students on campus.

#### Understanding Paradox and Student Affairs as Bureaucracies

Paradox is an incredibly complex institution and when students, faculty, and staff describe it as a bureaucracy, their remarks are not intended to be kind. The bureaucracy they describe is not the rational one described by Weber (Gerth & Mills, 1946), that is intended to protect, be logical, and based upon fairness and equity. It is more described as an

impersonal organization constantly creating policies and procedures designed to frustrate its members and that are not conducive to good management. An example mentioned by Barbara, Dean of Academic Services, is Paradox's personnel policies. Particularly in this period of economic stress at Paradox, Barbara is concerned that she will lose good people and that the personnel policies make it impossible for her to fire those who, in her view, are not productive. These policies, she feels, are not only a disservice to the university, they disserve the employees they are designed to protect.

I feel that the personnel policies in this university are killing it. You can't fire anybody here unless they have had sex with two undergraduate students of opposite sexes in Macy's window at noon in New York....It means you just can't fire anybody. And so what happens is you have all these people that have been here, and they couldn't cut it here, so we don't fire them, we just move them there. And they can't cut it there either, so we move them over here. And now the person is totally alienated. They've really been roughed up and they don't feel they owe the university anything.

Paradox's size prevents it from creating the collegial atmosphere one might encounter in a small liberal arts college of 500 students, faculty, and staff, where all feel very much a part of the community and decision-making process. With over 5,000 employees scattered in campus buildings on 1200 acres of land, it is virtually impossible for people to know all of their co-workers. While there are forums for people with similar interests to gather to discuss and decide upon issues of mutual concern, such as the faculty senate, individual departments and divisions, rather than the campus as a

whole, provide a more manageable way for people to get to know and relate to each other and learn about the goals of Paradox. One can only imagine how difficult administering a campus the size of Paradox might be and it is no wonder that the management of Paradox is more decentralized than centralized.

Reporting to the President are five vice-presidents who represent finance, graduate studies, student affairs, development, and academic affairs. Further, reporting to each of the vice-presidents are several deans and directors, each with responsibility for managing an even more specific area. For example, reporting to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs are the deans of the schools and colleges of Paradox, such as, health sciences, engineering, management, humanities and fine arts, etc. The same kind of structure exists in Student Affairs, the organizational home of Ron and Barbara. Both Ron and Barbara, as Directors of Residence Life and Dean of Academic Services, respectively, report to the Vice-President for Student Affairs, as do student activities, health services, and police and safety. Management responsibility for the major divisions of Paradox is delegated to the Vice-Presidents who, in turn, delegate the responsibility to the individual department deans and directors.

As the management head of student affairs, the Vice-President does not see herself as being intimately involved in the day-to-day affairs of the deans and directors of the departments who report to her. She is a planner

and her expectation is that her deans and directors run their own shops. As she says of herself:

I view my role primarily as at the highest leadership level articulating and advocating for the overall needs of Student Affairs and ensuring that as the University makes decisions, that 1) we participate and contribute to it and 2) that the impact of any decision is favorable to our whole division. So I really see myself much more at the conceptual level, at the planning level, at the broad organizational level...I don't see my role as being tightly involved in day-to-day management in the ideal world.

But, as this vice-president notes, this is not an ideal world and there are times when she finds that she is involved in the daily management of some of the areas that report to her. Most often she ends up dealing with people who, because of the large size of the institution feel their issues are not being heard by the area head and just want someone at the top to listen. Her job, as she notes, is to refer the person back to the appropriate place in the organization where the issue can be handled "with sensitivity and effectiveness." This is usually back to the department head. Her deans and directors, she implies, are hired for their technical expertise and are expected to appropriately manage their areas.

I expect my first line (department deans and directors), to really take care of their particular areas and handle the management issues....they are all brought in at a level, both by training and by education and by experience, that I really ought to be able to expect that my major work down to the division is with that group of six. They, in turn, are responsible for articulating to whatever their divisional areas are, that aspect of the student affairs mission that applies to them. So whatever we achieve, whatever comes to us from the University's mission, as we carve out the piece that is ours, I expect them to be actually the doers to turn that into action.

This vice-president believes that the expectations that she has for herself and her department heads are in line with those they have for her. These expectations, she says, are indicative of the relationship they had with her predecessor as vice-president.

Let us put it this way, they (department heads) want me to know their area very well, so that I can talk about it as well as they do. But they want me to stay out of it and they really don't want a hands on manager. And I think that reflects the degree of experience I have in the group. Most of them have been in the business quite a while and have had a fairly independent relationship with their previous supervisor. Pretty hands-off. And their perspective is that should remain that way. And the only time, the only time that they want it to be different is when they are feeling some pressure from within their own organization that they feel they can't sustain and then, of course, they want to have a back-up. For the most part, I think they want to have a relationship with me to be one to comment, talk about what they are doing, talk about their new ideas and brainstorm, if it is a research issue, where we can get the money, or if it is something that demands cooperation with another vice-president, then that is my role.

Serving as a point of referral for difficult situations for department heads and being viewed as the "top" and place to go for disenfranchised employees clearly point to this vice-president as the legitimate authority for student affairs. The way she is able to influence decisions within her division is through the use of her position. From her own remarks, it is this legitimate power that she is able to exercise and that her department heads expect her to exercise. The cues for her to use this power, however, seems to come from the department heads or people within the departments themselves. Unless she receives a cue to act, her job as she understands and defines it, is to leave departmental management to her deans and

directors. When she tries to influence department heads in other ways, such as the time she attempted to have group discussions about division priorities and tried to gain consensus through the use of charismatic or referent power, she is less successful. She felt she had made some progress, but she also felt that this process was very much a struggle with a group not used to working together. This facilitation process seemed to be antithetical to the department heads expectations of her and violated their senses of autonomy as department heads. For whatever reason, be it the stress of the economy, the multitude of tasks that departments feel they need to accomplish, or plain protection of turf, the departments in student affairs are autonomous from each other and turn inward among themselves.

### Residence Life at Paradox University

The primary mission of Residence Life is to provide a high quality residential experience for students. Paradox houses over 11,000 students and, while some of the residents are graduate and married students, the majority of these 11,000 students are undergraduates and live in traditional residence hall facilities. The residence hall complexes at Paradox almost frame the campus--there are large clusters of residence hall facilities at three different corners of the campus.

Organizationally, Residence Life has a fairly traditional structure yet, with over 11,000 residence hall students, one can only begin to imagine how complex this organizational structure is. Under the director, there are two



associate directors, one responsible for housing administration and operations and the other responsible for residential education. There are also three assistant directors, one for maintenance and operations, one for residential support services (e.g., housing assignments, telecommunications, etc.) and one for finance and personnel. These assistant directors report directly to one of the Associate Directors. The executive staff of Residence Life consists of the director, the two associate directors, and the three assistant directors, and the administrative assistant for the office. In addition, and what makes Residence Life at Paradox a bit different from other institutions, is the fact that Child Care Services reports to Residence Life. In talking about the history of this reporting relationship, the current child care services director speculates that resources were an issue.

I think [the administration] probably figured out that some of the expertise Child Care needed was administratively found in Residence Life, particularly along the lines of budget. Budget and fiscal management....I think, also, Residence Life has a whole lot more resources that are available to them and the sense was that Child Care needed more support than they could get from the Dean of Student's office which has limited resources.

The director of Child Care Services also sits on the executive staff of Residence Life. Underneath this executive structure is a massive operational infrastructure composed of area coordinators, student development coordinators, operations managers and assistant operations managers for the residence hall complexes, a multitude of assistant residence hall directors, and an enormous support staff consisting of clerical

personnel to handle paper and technical/service personnel to deal with the maintenance of a huge physical plant.

As with any organization, there are formal and informal rules that define acceptable and unacceptable behavior and, in order to be a part of the Residence Life community, people must learn these pretty quickly. These rules of behavior have been shaped, and continue to be shaped, by Ron, the director, who is the legitimate authority in residence life. That Ron defines acceptable and unacceptable behavior is reflected in small things, such as who determines staff meeting agendas, what topics are acceptable or not acceptable to discuss at the staff meetings, and how residence life integrates itself with the rest of Paradox. As director, Ron sets the stage for virtually all that happens in residence life and expects that people will respond appropriately and be loyal.

The major issue facing residence life of late is the same one that is plaguing Student Affairs and Paradox as a whole, that of racial tension. Recently there have been several incidents in which minority students have been assaulted in the residence halls and graffiti written on residence hall walls, evidence of a low tolerance for diversity. There is a clear charge to stabilize the housing environment. This concern with tolerance for diversity is also an issue within the Division of Academic Services, yet given the multiple missions of this division, the stress of this issue is felt differently.

## Academic Services at Paradox University

Members of the Division of Academic Services have a more departmental than divisional view. The title of the division speaks to its somewhat fragmented nature and determining the threads that hold it together is difficult. One staff member spoke directly to how difficult it is to define this division:

I think...in all honesty...outside of third-floor administration and, possibly, on the academic side, the deanship level...if you say you work in Academic Services [they say] "What's that?." Academic Services is basically more well known by the population at large as composed of departments. You know, students think of financial aid, they think of admissions, or the deans think of, or faculty think of admissions, or financial aid, or placement services...They don't think of it as a...division.

Department heads verbally suggest that they expect the Dean's office to provide leadership for the division. Yet, more evident in department heads' behavior, is not so much an expectation of leadership as an expectation of technical support with the administrative tedium inherent at Paradox. Several members of the Division refer to the Dean's office as the "central office" and, in terms of the administrative support services this office provides, it does seem to act as one. The Dean's office is the budget and personnel administration center for the Division. Organizationally, the central office is composed of Barbara, the Dean, and three assistant deans. At the time of this study, there were four assistant deans, but one was taking a position in another area and, due to budget constraints, the position was not going to be filled immediately. The three assistant deans

each have different responsibilities; one is in charge of budget, one handles personnel, and the third is more directly involved with the multicultural centers and access programs to improve the diversity of the student population. Beyond the central administrative office, the Division of Academic Services is composed of seven departments: Admissions, Financial Aid, New Student Programs, the Career Center, and support programs for black and minority students, bilingual students, and Asian students. Each of these departments has its own mission and office structure to support the functions of the area, yet they all share a common concern of enrollment management. It is generally agreed by department heads that enrollment management is the Division's mission, and, not unexpectedly, they each seem to define this concept from the vantage point of their own position within the organization.

Each department head has established clear patterns of communication with other sectors of Paradox as each sees appropriate. Department heads do not really look to Barbara for leadership and direction as much as they expect support and validation for what they do through the securing of needed resources. In return for her support, department heads offer their trust and loyalty. Departments are autonomous in this division and the heads of areas spoke to their expectations that Barbara will help them deal with the most difficult of issues, not their daily operations.

The campus tension around racial issues is experienced a bit differently by Academic Services than by Residence Life. As the division responsible for the cultural centers, Academic Services is the advocate for minority concerns. Whereas Residence Life must directly contend with trying to control student behavior in the residence halls, Academic Services concerns itself with policies and programs that respond to the particular needs of students of color. Thus, the current concern about racial tension becomes an opportunity for Academic Services to advocate for additional resources for its multicultural programs.

#### Ron and Barbara: Roles and Role Performances

The roles that are revealed in this section are those that emerged from the accounting of both Ron and Barbara, members of their staffs, and other members of the Paradox community. It is unlikely, and unrealistic to believe that the roles identified here are the only ones that Ron and Barbara enact. There are certainly several that were not revealed by the data collected in this study. The roles that emerged in this study revealed something, but not everything, about Ron and Barbara as mid-level managers in Student Affairs at Paradox--about their relationships with members of their departments, and about how they approach their management work.

## Ron as Director of Residence Life

Ron is the quintessential residence life manager. He has been at Paradox in residence life for over ten years and, professionally, has always been in the housing area. He got involved in residence life as an undergraduate student as a Resident Assistant (R.A.).

As an R.A. he started doing program development early on by bringing in speakers to talk with students in his hall. This programming was well received by the students in his hall, and brought him recognition for doing good work. This excited Ron and turned him on to the possibilities for education in the residence halls.

I decided to do some interesting things as an R.A...and that was to use my position to invite people from the placement center to come in. And I really felt that the whole experience, in terms of how they viewed education, how they viewed career development, was really kind of an interesting thing and I began sharing that information with students in the halls I was working in. And I just really got excited about my job as an R.A. and sharing and helping people to grow and develop and to do some things that they thought normally they couldn't do.

With these successes in programming and his excitement about the potential that residence halls held, quite naturally, when Ron decided to go to graduate school, he looked to working in the residence halls as a way to help fund his education. By this time he was also married and had a family, so the financial benefits of housing and board really appealed to him.

As a hall director, his activities were also greeted with success and he was quickly promoted to managerial positions within the housing area. One of his first experiences, which was also his first success, was the time he decided that what his hall needed were activities that would bring students together, to create a sense of community. Ron went out and bought games that members of the hall could play at night. They did play and Ron received many kudos for the success of this program. It was held up as a model to others. From Ron's perspective however, he didn't really succeed, in fact, he failed. It was true that he helped to develop a sense of community in his hall, but his students did poorly in classes. As he says,

I didn't know how to make that exciting, the academic stuff. I made them excited about other things, and I felt bad because I knew that I contributed significantly to their failure.

He never revealed his failure to his boss and he was promoted to a Resident Director, he says, because they only looked at his successes. As R.D., he says, he failed again. This time because he didn't delegate, manage, or supervise. In a residence hall of over 300 students, he took on the responsibility of making sure all the administrative tasks were done, instead of delegating responsibilities to the R.A.s and teaching them how to handle the jobs. So, when it was time for semester break, Ron found that he had let all of his R.A.s go home early, instead of using them to make sure that the hall was in order. His counterpart in another hall had delegated this responsibility to his R.A.s. After break, when his building

was touted as exemplary and his counterpart's criticized because some tasks weren't completed properly, Ron was promoted. In his opinion, however, he had failed as a manager whereas his counterpart had succeeded but, again, he didn't tell anyone. According to Ron, he was always sure "to cover all of my mistakes."

When Ron first entered graduate school, he had planned to major in educational psychology and become a clinical psychologist. However, during his clinical experiences, he became frustrated with his inability to have a significant impact on individual development:

what I found when I was in some of the counseling practicums [was] I began being upset with myself and with the experience because while I would visit with the people, students primarily, who had counseling problems, [they] kept coming, and coming, and coming, and I felt I should be able to give them some answers, provide solutions, and make it better...and it wasn't happening.

It was during this period that Ron's professional goals and career path began to become clear to him:

when I worked in the residence hall I found that the impact that I could have on people was a lot, lot greater and...I found good people, who were tremendous and powerful role models for me and then the other thing is that a lot of my education [was] really fitting into what people in student affairs were trying to do in a variety of different ways.

Ron realized that his own interests and training as an undergraduate psychology major and in his graduate counseling program were similar to those embraced by student affairs. He also believes that his education and experiences in learning theory and developmental theory have served him



well as a manager because he understands individual differences and the nature of learning. This "early training in developmental theory and learning theory has helped me tremendously in shaping and changing behavior," says Ron.

Once he decided that he wanted to be a director of residence life, Ron sought out experiences that he thought were essential: understanding buildings, food service, and budget. Ron believes that understanding nuts and bolts and dollars and cents are extremely important in being a good manager in housing. From his perspective, having these understandings are sources of power:

He who controls, or she who controls the purse strings in a college or university setting, usually has a tremendous impact on how decisions are rendered.

He discovered that he was pretty good with numbers and in attending to operational details. In the director's position he held prior to coming to Paradox, he had to learn quickly. Shortly after arriving in his previous position, he was informed that he had to make a presentation to the Board of Trustees about the residence hall budget and room rates for the next year. He asked for information about occupancy rates, multiplied that rate by the cost that was currently being charged and compared that to the revenue that had been generated. He discovered he had less than what he was supposed to have and realized that there was no information about true occupancy rates for the campus. He scrambled for information, found none,

and decided to go with the normal yearly increase percentage for rooms. During his presentation, he used information about futures markets he had read in the Wall Street Journal and managed, from his perspective, to answer the questions in an acceptable manner, even though he admits that he was grasping at straws. He also knew that he needed time to get the information he needed to make a solid presentation the next time. One of his primary roles is to always paint a good picture for the housing area and for himself:

I have to look good when I go into the Board of Trustees meeting. I have to make sure that housing comes across looking good. And I have to be able to explain the relationship between all of these numbers.

Ron believes that his understanding of developmental theory has helped him in being a good manager. As he says, he considers himself a situational manager.

My management style is situational in that I think you have to have a different style for different people. There [are] some folks that like lots of direction, and there [are] some folks that don't want any direction. There [are] some people who are extremely bright, some people that are not that bright. There are different needs that they have and so I have to be flexible with that, situational in understanding where an organization is. It goes back to my theory...that at different stages of development, different approaches are necessary.

Ron also admits that he doesn't believe in the traditional bureaucratic hierarchy. What he is really saying is that at times he is very much a hands-on manager and will, if the situation dictates, work with employees who report to some of his assistant and associate directors to reshape their

behavior. As he says, "that gets some people upset, but that's my style." That his style can and does violate the formal reporting structure of Residence Life is corroborated by his staff--as is the fact that it can sometimes be confusing.

These are the experiences that Ron has had that he thinks have shaped his desire to be a director of residence life and his approach to management. What descriptors can be used to describe Ron's roles as director of residence life? How were these roles shaped--what evidence is there of the role-making, role-taking process?

#### Ron: Parent, Entrepreneur, and Player

While certainly not the only roles that Ron constructs and enacts, three emerged from these data that captured Ron's actions as Director of Residence Life. These are: 1) parent, 2) entrepreneur and, 3) player. These descriptors seem to reflect permanent roles within Paradox, Student Affairs, and Residence Life, and not temporary ones taken on in response to the economic crisis facing the college. These roles reflect his relationships with staff and superiors.

Parent. The term "parent" holds many meanings. In the strict sense of the term, to be a parent means to have off-spring, to have been a part in the creation of a living being. In another sense of the word, the word parent means, "the material or source from which something is derived" (Webster's, 1988, p. 855). The term parent also connotes a responsibility for

shaping behavior. In this regard, being a parent means not only being a part of creation, but being a part of the future development of what is created. For many, the term parent also connotes the concept of family and Residence Life at Paradox appears to be very much of a family. Ron's charge when he came to Paradox was to reshape the Residence Life organization, and thus, Residence Life at Paradox is very much a reflection of Ron. It could be said that Residence Life at Paradox is Ron. He was brought in during the tenure of the previous director with the charge to make change. He was brought in to professionalize a staff that was, in his view, "at best glorified graduate students...with no training and there were no cooperative efforts. The quasi-professional staff had a greater allegiance to the students in their building than they did to housing." Ron says he set out to build a team, to build a community. He set out to act.

Initially, he used a very authoritarian management style and then moved to something more participative. But this change only occurred as people came on board. In the beginning, he says, he had to be very dictatorial. But now his style is less hands-on with particular managers. As one manager says about his style and the division,

For the most part, each of [Ron's] division heads are independent. [He makes clear as] to what our expectations are and the rules are just to go do it...and to check in every so often. Ron kind of bumps in and out depending on what is on his mind.

This theme of setting expectations and holding staff independently accountable for the accomplishment of tasks, is one that is clear to the management team. Typical of comments by staff members were:

[What is important to Ron] is that he has competent staff that he has confidence in, that he knows that we can in fact do the job and that he is not gonna get called for every little thing. Also he does not want to get "tagged," that is his expression, "tagged for anything," meaning he does not want us out there screwing up and his boss calls him saying, "Ron, you know your people are screwing up again." So he expects us pretty much to handle those kinds of situations and if something is coming up to let him know, this is coming up, so there are no surprises.

Ron...encourages people to work out their problems among themselves and explore stuff outside of the residence life area without necessarily getting his approval.

My guess is that he expects me to be responsible no matter what's going on. I'm supposed to have judgment about whether a situation requires close hands-on, more direct stuff or more stand-away. He doesn't even get involved in that. I just make all the stuff happen.

Ron's relationship with his parents and the kinds of topics they discussed and issues they shared, challenged him to continually look inside himself, to seek out his value system, and to see what he could do to promote change. In talking about his decision to pursue a career in residence life, he speculates about himself and the influence his family had on his development:

Well, I think that I was always a very introspective person. Always interested in what made me do things. Part of that came from, coming from a family with a very strong religious background and I think that religious background also fits into what I do and plays a very important role in what I do...what's really important is leaving this world a little bit better than you found it when you came into it.

Ron and his family spent "a lot of time...at home talking about values, talking about relationships and from real traditional Catholic perspectives." And, while his parents did not have much formal schooling, they were loving, caring people. Ron's family was a large, extended one,

that had a very important impact on me and that sense of community. For example, today, I recognize the value of community and so as I moved around the country, I would select where I was going to live based on where and how can I develop a sense of community.

Ron talks about the decision to move to the community where he and his family have settled. It is a community that is small, active, engages all people, and encourages people to be active without fear:

Being able to look at community, and seeing its importance, having the skill and the freedom to jump in, that's important too because I think often communities are there, but people don't know how to jump into a community because we're all afraid, how come my neighbor is not inviting me over to their house.

Being a part of a community carries with it a responsibility to make it a better place. This sense of responsibility is a theme to which Ron holds fast. He describes two incidents that he was apprehensive about approaching, but about which he felt so strongly that he needed to act. The first situation, at another institution, involved an assistant dean who was also advisor to fraternities and sororities. He really felt that this person was working against the organization's goals and decided, after much agonizing, that he needed to confront him with his perceptions of his actions. What Ron discovered was that the assistant dean was more

apprehensive of meeting than Ron was and they were subsequently able to work things out.

The second was a situation in the residence halls in which a student was involved in selling drugs. Ron tried to talk with the student, but was promptly, and not unkindly, told to go away. Instead of merely going away, Ron kept visiting the student's room every couple of hours to try to talk. This had the effect of discouraging students interested in buying from coming to the student's room for fear of being identified. In essence, he had destroyed the student's market. His hope, as he put it, was that he would say something magical and convince the student of the error of his ways. But, as he says, he was effective, just not in the way that he had hoped.

What these incidents describe is Ron's propensity to act--even if it means that he may make a mistake--he always acts:

I'm put into a number of situations that are awful and difficult. One of the things I do is I always act. Rather than spend hours worrying about something, you don't have to worry if you act. Because you get it over with.

His association with his community is what leads him to act. He has a responsibility to make things better, to do what he can even if it is, at times, uncomfortable.

Of all the various roles he plays--father, son, community-organizer--the majority of his time is spent in his role as director of residence life. For him, work enables him to "incorporate some of those other things in life that are important." The relationship between values and behavior is

important to Ron. In talking with him, he brings up the notion of value-discrepant behavior often--mostly in the context of speaking about faculty. One of the reasons that Ron decided to live in one of the surrounding towns, was because of what he termed as the "value-discrepant behavior" of faculty. He

decided that [this town] was not a good place to live, in a sense that the academic, the university community--a community I love--has got people that have a lot of value discrepant behavior, a lot of elitist behavior and really don't have commitment to people. And yet [they] have commitment to heady issues and get lost in their heady issues.

For Ron, the community in which he lives, as well as the community in which he works, has to be one in which he feels comfortable, one in which he believes he has the skills, or at least the capacity to get the skills he needs, to succeed, to be loved, to feel a part. This theme plays through Ron's work role and his community membership.

Ron works hard at maintaining his residence life community. He is described as working very hard to ensure that his staff members are aware of developments and initiatives within the Student Affairs Division as well as the rest of campus; he works hard at being accessible to staff; in essence, he works hard at ensuring that he is on top of issues that are affecting his organization.

To keep staff informed, Ron holds staff meetings each week. The agenda for these meetings is 80-90 percent Ron's and are intended to inform



people about major issues, not to be forums for lengthy discussions of issues.

Ron's staff meetings are not places in which to raise new agenda items that might be a surprise to other staff members and to Ron. It is best, as staff members recount, not to put Ron on the spot, particularly in terms of decision-making.

He retains a lot of control over decisions and a lot of control over information. So it's often--he's very controlling so it's often not very effective for me to go in and ask for a decision if what I am going is running up against that controlling need. It may be easier for me to get the decision by marshalling some other kind of activity. By sending him a memo he can read then asking him about it three days later--you know there's sort of this informal indirect kinds of ways. ...I've learned not to put him on the spot...

If significant issues are brought up at staff meetings and Ron has not been previously informed, he may take action or, if he is impatient with the person and the issue, he may not take action. When action is taken, it may not be quite what the manager had in mind. However, that is the risk one takes in transgressing the rules and involving Ron in decisions that should be taken care of by department heads. As one staff member commented:

I've seen stuff come up in the [staff] meetings that should have been handled in the field...To me that's abandoning your responsibility for something and you're kind of defaulting to Ron which is not good in a couple of senses. One, you shouldn't be doing that as a [manager] and the other is it's a lousy precedent to set. Ron may not want to be put in that position, but once he's there, he should feel free to step in on the same level all the time.

Not only is it perceived to be inappropriate to surprise Ron, it is inappropriate to surprise any member of the staff:

People will bring issues to the table that they have not raised with the different individual department head...if I have a problem with the way someone is communicating information to my staff in the field...and I bring it to [the staff meeting] without talking to that person first, then that's not fair. And it's not professional but it's also not fair to lead-pipe somebody at a staff meeting.

Staff meetings, to most residence life staff, are forums for Ron to report out information he wants and needs them to hear. They are informal and injected with much humor. Some seem to think that staff meetings are a reflection of Ron:

I think a lot of the culture [of residence life] is humor, humor is valued quite a bit. I think Ron's [background] carries through the organization and there is a sense of that inner family orientation that comes with his background. There is a sense of boisterous. Staff meetings probably like his family dinners. And I'm sure Ron's told you his philosophy...lose your breath, lose your turn.

As a religious person--he teaches Sunday school and even sings in the choir--Ron has difficulty when he feels he is being deceived or believes that people are abusing the system. But it appears to be more than this--he gets most upset when the community is threatened, when people are not part of his team. On one occasion, he had an employee who wanted access to an area in which he was not authorized. Because access was denied, the individual reportedly retaliated by going outside the organization to create trouble for residence life. Ron was angry. To him, this individual had threatened the security of the community, of the family. In describing his reaction, he says,

It [his reaction] certainly was 'My kingdom at all costs'...very personal...my initial reaction was totally very selfish, very...and then

I began justifying it...saying that it was students, and dollars,...but no, it was totally a gut, emotional, vindictive thing that I wanted to do.

To work with Ron, one must be willing to be a part of the team, to be honest, admit one's mistakes, be tolerant of the variety of directions Ron wants to move in, and, above all, be loyal. He has built his staff well, for they are all of these things. They view themselves as part of a family, with Ron as the major decision-maker and leader. The staff expect him to make decisions and understand that, on major issues facing the residence life area, while they may provide some input to influence decisions, Ron makes the decisions. This is reflected in the activities of staff meetings where people may banter around ideas, but the final decision rests with Ron. As one department head commented:

What's typical is that Ron primarily sets the agenda. Periodically one of us puts something on the agenda but it's not all that often. What's typical is that Ron customarily tells us what he's thinking about, what that agenda item is, and then he asks for input but he asks for it in a variety of ways. He more now, than he did when I got here, asks for input that would influence his thinking...it's now typical to talk about things. We are not permitted to make decisions. That's not what Ron expects of us, although occasionally we make them...but that's not really what he asks of us many times. It's typical for him to set the agenda, it's typical for him to take the lead on what the topic is, it is typical for us to talk a lot and to tell him what we think, more and more so about things. Occasionally we make decisions as a group.

Entrepreneur. To be an entrepreneur implies being able to take advantage of opportunities, to see opportunities where others fail to see them, and to understand the skills one needs to keep and protect what one

has previously established. The term used over and over again by members of Paradox University to describe Ron is that of entrepreneur. He is perceived as one who sees opportunity in the face of adversity and tries to organize activities to take advantage of challenges. Whereas in more stable economic times, this term could be used disparagingly, the top administrators use these terms to describe Ron in thoughtful, almost bemused sorts of ways--as if they wished they could be like him. The Vice-President for Student Affairs says there are two entrepreneurs in student affairs, Ron being one of them:

These two are always looking, well, they are very creative, sometimes outlandish, but they are two that have the capacity to turn an idea around and really just, you know, flip and sometimes when you flip it, it is outrageous and you say no, we got to go back where we started, or you flip and you say well, you know, maybe. They, from a really financial point of view, are able to really make good use of monies, they are very resourceful and have in both instances come up with some ideas in the last year or two that have proven to be public relations-wise and quality of the operation-wise, some key things--that people were very suspect about. And they went with it and really had garnered support in the community for their ideas....I never worry about having to tell [them] I have got to cut your budget because I know, I mean besides being upset with it and telling me you can't do it, they will eventually come out and manage it, do something with it and probably do it [well].

This description fits with the one Ron holds of himself, particularly in seeing opportunity in economic adversity.

The economic stress placed on Paradox brings with it, according to Ron, some tremendous morale problems. Whereas in the past, professionals could be counted on to give 100 percent to their jobs, it is clear now that

people are exhibiting leaving behavior, both physically and mentally.

Regarding the economic situation, Ron says,

the biggest factor is just that there does not seem to be concern about where this institution is going. And what kind of an institution will it be....so, associated with that has been the number of faculty members who have jumped ship...And what happens...is the sense of enthusiasm diminishes. The sense of not being part of a team, the loneliness increases, because you see yourself in essence floating part, and saying where am I going to find another job...you have a tendency to be less professional. Because you are not eating and sleeping and drinking the job. You're thinking about somewhere else.

Ron believes that residence life will be ok. There are still a number of people who want to work for Paradox and, in his view, it is important to realize that Paradox is not alone in this fiscal crisis:

The reality is, the University of -----, University of -----, the University of -----, all of them are experiencing similar problems...we tend to just be so inner focussed and look for those kinds of problems. [I think] you look at the possibilities...what about a change of programs, do I change the programs? do I get rid of the ones that I think are less useful? effective? do I use the economic situation in order to make changes that I could not make otherwise? That's what you do...now, that gives me personal satisfaction because I was able to get something done, that I could not do before.

In talking with Ron about what the literature says about the tension that exists between student affairs and academic affairs, he agrees that it exists, but there was opportunity in that tension. So many of his colleagues focus attention on why faculty didn't participate more. From Ron's perspective, if this kind of participation wasn't forthcoming, and it was a void to be filled, he was more than happy to fill it:

One of the things I have been frustrated by to some degree, is some of my colleagues in Student Affairs who every time there is a problem

say "where is the faculty, how come the faculty is not supporting us..." If there is a problem, I'll own it. I'm gonna solve it, I am gonna throw the variables around. That is seizing opportunities and many university people don't seize opportunities. They are afraid of them.

Ron's staff also view him as an entrepreneur. While centralizing services can be viewed, on one hand, as an attempt to build an empire, staff see it as good management. The criteria for incorporating a function or a service under the wings of residence life is not only whether residence life can perform the function, but whether the move will save money and improve service. In the words of one staff person,

He's not dogmatic about let's run everything ourselves. I think he's more these days concerned about, if we can run it ourselves and it's a huge dollar savings, and we maintain control it's [appropriate] that we do that.

Ron's entrepreneurial nature is also seen in the kinds of activities in which he involves himself. He likes new technologies and, if he thinks an idea is a good one, will run with it. The staff acknowledges and accepts these ventures as part of Ron and seem to embrace these efforts as one of the unique aspects of residence life.

Ron likes to get involved with new things, things that are challenging to him, personally and professionally, but things that kind of add to residence life's image. Telecommunications and cable systems, I think are examples of that.

He typically has a big thing a year he likes to work on and [that consumes] a lot of his time. It was cable last year. The cable is in and running, what's next? He's going to find something.

Player. In any team sport, there are members of the team who are identified by the coach as those who will play a lot and there are those who

will sit on the bench during most of the season. Those members who sit on the bench observe the game from a distance, that is, they watch the game's action and hear about the plays during time outs, but they are not active participants--they are not privy to being a part of the action. So, too, in an organization, there are those members who are active players in the decisions of the organization, and there are those who are not. There is a part of Ron who would very much like to be an active player in the senior administration of Paradox, to be one of those people who help to shape the formal goals of this institution. But this would mean developing associations with members of the Paradox academic community, and it is from this community that Ron shies away and retreats into the safety of residence life. Evidence of Ron's wanting to be a player came when he admitted to applying for the position of interim vice-president for student affairs. He didn't get the position and, almost admittedly, rationalizes his disappointment:

I didn't get the job...do I look at that as being disenfranchised? Lack of power? What I do is I look at...I had fantastic interviews. I felt that my interview certainly had to be the best. That may not be reality, but I tell myself that. ...I don't see it as a personal issue. I elect not to see it as a personal issue. I make my meaning...I develop my own sense of reality...as opposed to someone else allowed to do that. For example, I've had some subordinates come in and try to tell me that I didn't get the job for this reason or that reason and what they were trying to do was to get me to not like or like somebody else. I say...no, that's not the reason I didn't get the job...and that's because I...I define what is success or not success, what is power and not power.

Did this rejection serve to reinforce in Ron his already clear distinction between his role and that of faculty? Did this rejection reinforce that he was not an academic? Did this rejection reinforce in Ron that while he may want to be a player, he cannot? Did he apply because he wanted the position, or did he apply because he had a responsibility to try to help? Ron acknowledges that he applied because he saw a lack of leadership at the top. There had been so many changes and there were so many acting positions, that Ron felt that "the institution right now has absolutely no leadership. No one wants to act. Everyone is afraid to act. This place could have closed."

Ron brings to his professional life some understandings about who he is and what he is able to do. As an undergraduate, Ron pursued several career options because he didn't think he would be admitted into graduate school. Even when he describes his interactions with members of his community, he is surprised when they refer to him as an intellectual. He finds that "interesting..." as if almost antithetical to his very being. When Ron describes some of his ideas, that side of him that is entrepreneurial comes through, but so does his sense of boundaries. Of one particular idea related to financing students' educations, he says that no one is listening to him...he has this really great idea, but no one will pick up on it. Why? Ron says it is because it "is not his area."



Ron is very careful to skirt the academic arenas. He has voiced concerns about students registering for courses across schools and colleges, but is reluctant to actively influence the process of change. When asked why, he explains,

That's an area in which my influence has been limited to being frustrated....There are certain things that we do and work on and get excited about because they are good and we believe in them, but are not necessarily going to change the world. I spend a lot of time dealing with alcohol and alcohol education. But it is a major societal problem and I'm not sure I'm going to change the whole world. One of the things that is very important is knowing what are the things that you can change, what are the areas that you have control over and you can make a difference...and what are the success criteria that you are going to choose. Some people choose as goals things that they can't control and things in which they can't change and they are setting themselves and their organization up for failure. So, it is a case of, "I see the world and what are the things that I can pick on that I can win?" ...You have to choose objectives that are indeed accomplishable.

The roles that Ron has created for himself, those of parent, of entrepreneur, and of player, all seem to relate to a theme of legitimation. Being viewed as the legitimate authority of residence life and as an expert in his field are important to Ron and he seems to have influenced the shaping of the culture of his area to perpetuate these perceptions. Ron, as revealed in his comments and those of his staff members, sees himself as the glue that holds residence life together and shapes its future, as the primary spokesperson for residence life, and as the creative master for the residence life agenda. He also believes that the members of residence life should adhere to the tenets of the organization and do all they can do to

promote its purposes and support its leadership. Further, as will be discussed later, these roles of parent, entrepreneur, and player are not only reflected in the norms of the culture of residence life, but also in Ron's view of higher education organizations and his understanding of management. Ron's view of higher education and management in general influences how he views Paradox and the roles he constructs reflect an identification with particular organizational features of Paradox. These are different from those with which Barbara identifies. However, before exploring these notions, an understanding of Barbara as the dean of Academic Services is in order.

#### Barbara as Dean of Academic Services

When Barbara went to graduate school, her plans were to become a faculty member. As an undergraduate, she was encouraged by her professors to keep pursuing her education. She was told that she was an excellent student, indeed, one of the best they ever had.

I...had a lot of encouragement in undergraduate school from professors. You don't know what it means, you don't know if you're good or bad or not good, but I had professors who would say to me, "you're outstanding, you're one of the best students I've ever had. You ought to be thinking about going on to graduate school."

She had a number of faculty members invite her to their homes and she really liked what she saw and she liked the atmosphere--being surrounding with books and ideas. So, she went to graduate school.

According to Barbara, it was an exciting time to be in graduate school and she thought she knew what her career path was going to be:

It seemed in that era, which was the Kennedy era, that government was the answer to society's problems and so [my degree] seemed like where the action was and I thought...I had thoughts at that time of maybe working for Housing and Urban Development. And then by the time I got my degree, those were no longer things that people did. You didn't want to work for government, government was tainted.

While at graduate school, Barbara met and married her husband, who was also a graduate student. Together, they decided to seek faculty positions at institutions that were in close proximity to one another. They found jobs and relocated after graduation.

Soon after beginning her faculty position, Barbara's institution began to experience a severe budget crisis and rumblings about who would stay and who would be fired became commonplace. As one of the two most junior members of the faculty, Barbara was pretty nervous most of the time.

[I arrived in September] and by November the department was taking votes about who to hire and who to fire. It was awful...and so I was constantly hearing, "Well, should we fire Barbara or should we fire Mary?" It was very, very difficult and I did not lose my job, much to my amazement, but I went through this all the time, it was constant. I would get through one hurdle and then we'd be told we were going to lose another position and then should we fire Barbara or should we fire Mary?

Barbara was kept, she believes, because of her teaching record and student following. At one point, she was teaching one-half of all the students in the department. As an added pressure, while she was teaching over 800 students, she began getting questions about scholarly work...when

was the department "going to see some scholarly output?" She had to think about tenure and promotion. Barbara finally reached a point at which she made a decision about her preferences:

I was just teaching constantly and...one day I would get that "You are the best thing that ever happened to this department" and then the next day, "well, we're not sure, we may have to get rid of you." So I decided that I wanted a job, above all things else, where they were going to have one and the only question was "am I a good one?" And if I was a good one, then the message was we keep you and we're satisfied and if I wasn't a good one then I could get some feedback about how I might improve my performance and either succeed or fail.

Circumstances made it possible for Barbara to try something different at her institution. The director of admissions left abruptly and Barbara was asked if she would take the job for a year. She had been in her faculty position for four years, hadn't published anything, felt a little placebound because of her spouse's position, and decided to try administration. She found she loved it and, when faced with the decision of returning to her faculty position, or continuing with administration, she chose the latter.

I managed staff people for the first time and I was given a staff that I was told over and over again was very difficult and I was able to gain the support and build a team. I had never had that experience before and I loved it. It was just an overall very happy experience and the University promoted me from Director of Admissions to Director of Admissions and Associate Dean, so there was a lot of reward....then I had to make a decision what direction I was going to go in and I decided I was going to stay [in administration]. I was appointed permanently to the position and so that was the transition from academic life to administrative life.

After eight years of working in the same institution, an institution that continued to face economic crisis which meant there was little or no

money to do anything creative or inventive, Barbara decided she: 1) had done all she could do at the institution; 2) could not ask her staff to do more than they were already doing; and 3) wanted to see something else. She began her search for other positions and, in the process, began to develop some preferences for where she worked.

In looking at schools, Barbara looked at a lot of places all over the country. She interviewed at two private schools. The first was a Catholic institution. She was a bit concerned about how she might fare in a parochial school, but given it's location, Barbara thought,

Hell,...how Catholic can it be? So I got on the airplane and I flew out there and a man met me at the airport...he had a cross on...I think out of it, I came to have a sense that I wanted to be in public education.

This preference was reinforced when Barbara went to interview at another private college. During the interview, she was informed that while on admissions visits, staff typically stayed with alumni in their homes.

I had this vision that having worked all day and being exhausted...having to get up at six the next morning and coming back [and] having to defend to the Alum some aspect of life at \_\_\_\_\_ was not great. So I finally fixed on a desire to be in a public, flagship university...

Barbara was subsequently hired at a public institution and had, for three years, "a wonderful professional relationship and experience."

At this public institution, Barbara remained in admissions. She felt she had a mentoring relationship with her supervisor who would reinforce her ideas, give feedback when necessary, and reward her regularly for jobs

well done. Even when Barbara was faced with what she viewed as incredibly difficult decisions, she always found her supervisor supportive, able to make her feel as if she was right on top of things, reinforce that her decisions were sound and, that the situations were not as unsolvable as they appeared. While this relationship was somewhat therapeutic, she found that her supervisor would also constantly challenge her.

When I worked at \_\_\_\_ I often used to really feel that what my boss did for me came as close to therapy as something else. I can remember going over to her office thinking, this is so difficult, I just don't know how to do it, and coming out thinking this is a piece of cake...and some part of what she would say is yes, I understand and that is difficult and I think you have made the right decision about that and I really agree. And now because you've done that, I want you to consider doing this.

Barbara's preference for public institutions was shaped in part by her interview experiences, but also by her family:

I've always had a public sector orientation. And that probably has to do with my father, who for many years, was on the regional planning staff for the Tennessee Valley Authority. He had a distinguished public service career. He gave me some sense that you give back. I never really considered going into business, stock broker, etc...

Barbara has moved around a lot and describes herself as a person who "probably has more friends and fewer family than average. I am an only child, so I have no brothers or sisters. No children of my own..And so, in the family department, I am somewhat shorter than average but I think that I probably have more close friends than it is usual for people to have."

The Division of Academic Services at Paradox was large when Barbara started and became larger shortly after she arrived. When

Barbara accepted the position, she had agreed to become dean over some of the core areas in students affairs: admissions, financial aid, new student programs, and career planning and placement. Paradox, however, had been experiencing a lot of tension around diversity and, in fact, had a number of racial outbursts on campus, including the harassment and assault of a black student by white students. Paradox clearly needed to address these tensions and multicultural programs were added to Barbara's area. This has proven to be a pretty difficult situation. As one department head said of Barbara's entry to Paradox,

Barbara came into a very difficult time. It was a position that was new in the sense that, as she came in, all the multicultural programs were given to her to do as, just as an add-on. And those were traditionally done, previously, by another deanship....There were sort of two deanships combined into one. Then, given the, incredible challenge of both offices--one, recruiting and providing financial aid, which was the old support for academic programs, and then, beside it, running programs for students of color, and being the minority student person on campus--you put those two offices together and ask them to run without adequate budget or resources or staffing, and you're gonna have a very difficult situation. So, I think Barbara stepped into an almost impossible situation.

That the Division of Academic Services is complex is widely accepted by department heads. This complexity brings with it a tacit understanding of how difficult Barbara's job is.

The consistent thread that runs through this seemingly disparate group of areas under the Division of Academic Services is that of enrollment management. When staff talk about the Division, they speak of recruitment, they speak of retention, they speak of career services--of taking

a student from when he or she enters Paradox through to his or her graduation and movement into the world of work. In the words of one staff member:

The mission is to provide support to students who are going about trying to navigate and get through and finish their program. The academic departments provide the academic opportunity for them to study in various areas. We, as a Division, provide support for those students on another level--which is also integral to their ability to be successful at Paradox. We reach out and provide an opportunity for the student to come here, through the admissions process, then, once they get here, we provide the kind of support they need to enable them to stay here.

One department head even thinks the division is misnamed, given the thread that ties them together:

The theme that runs through [the division] is enrollment management, or enrollment services. I would call the office, instead of Academic Services, it's the Office of Enrollment Management.

Even with this thread linking the various departments together, each department appears to operate independently from one another. Barbara's primary style is to deal with each individual department head one-on-one.

As one staff member understands Barbara's style:

She uses the standard administrative model, which is, meeting with an individual every other week, or, depending on the situation, every week. It depends upon the individual situation in which you find yourself, and the amount of time you have to devote to those kinds of meetings or those individuals' needs.

Staff meetings provide some opportunity for sharing information. It is generally agreed, however, that Barbara sets the agenda and controls the discussion. Some members confess to not being interested in some of the



other areas. With staff meetings as information sharing sessions and not issues resolution sessions, there is some sentiment that Barbara's one-on-one style with department heads to resolve issues sometimes leaves out some key players. One department head commented:

[Barbara] will talk to an individual when it might even have something to do with three or four individuals in departments, and it does make sense to get them all together--which might even happen.

Themes of order, protection of resources, and the garnering of resources seem to run through the Division of Academic Services as appropriate roles for the dean. In order to provide this kind of support, to meet the expectations staff have of her, Barbara had to modify her management style and come to terms with what it meant to be dean.

Not unlike the Vice-President for Student Affairs, Barbara's department heads expect her to let them have some autonomy in running their own organizations. Initially, however, Barbara tried to be more hands-on in her management:

I was somewhat naive about the extent to which I would actively direct what people did. And I suppose I thought that I would come and I would replicate [my previous institution] after a year and just do it that way...then I would go on to figuring out what I wanted them to do and I would tell them. And it really is not that straight forward.

Barbara admits that, for the first couple of months, she tried to tell her department heads what to do. Then she started to make the distinction between being a department head and being a dean--between having time to deal with all of the issues and not:

[as a director] there's a way in which you can be on top of everything that's going on and make it work out right because you really do run it all. And when I came here as Dean, I tried to do it all. I said, it's really important to have a faculty mentoring program, I'll run one. And by the time I had been here about three months, I was working 80-85 hours a week and I was trying to meet with [department heads], hear [their] concerns, and at the same time sort of run operational things out of here. And I'm in a job where I simply cannot do it all....It's just not possible.

In order to coordinate, instead of micro-manage this complex group of areas, Barbara adopted a participatory style of management. She tries to take issues, particularly those difficult ones related to budget decisions, to the group. She wants the department heads to be a part of decisions, to own them for his/her own area, and to make recommendations that make sense for his/her area and for the University. This has been a difficult process for Barbara to coordinate. While overtly department heads might agree and own decisions, privately, some would make it clear that the budget decisions were unfair and ought not to apply to them or their programs.

In essence, for the most part, Barbara's department heads want to feel as if their departments' interests receive equal treatment from Barbara. They want to know that she understands their issues and appreciates the challenges they face and will provide any support she can to help them meet their own organizational goals. Privately, a great deal of bargaining goes on seemingly to try to elevate one's department's issues on the priority scale.

However much Barbara may feel caught between a rock and a hard place, she says that sometimes there is little one can do--particularly with budget cuts:

The only thing you can do which would be viewed positively is to say, "You can have all the money you want and you don't ever have to answer to anyone about how you spend it." And in a management organization that's not ever a real world possibility so you just understand it as a fact of life and you try to do what your conscience tells you is right independent of the personalities of the people.

Making difficult decisions that involve conflict is hard for Barbara.

Her administrative experiences in the past did not prepare her for the complexity of this environment. The atmosphere in her previous positions was a very supportive, caring, and rewarding environment. It was an environment in which Barbara received many rewards. Now, she has to deal with conflict around decisions that she feels she has to make. She doesn't feel as if she has anyone she can talk to about her own difficulties--she no longer has the support system she had at other institutions. She feels as if she is constantly faced with making difficult decisions and dealing with unhappy people, alone. She thought things at Paradox might be similar to what she had experienced elsewhere:

I didn't say to myself, "It'll be just like it was" but you...that's the way the future is. The future is going to be different than the present in ways that you cannot imagine. And so I'm sure that I had a set of very implicit expectations which were that this job would be every bit as emotionally rewarding and easy to do and I would have it by the tail in a couple of weeks...and it has not been that way. I'm just at a different level of the organization. I work with my

supervisors. I see them rarely and I see them on issues of urgent business where we have to make decisions and there just isn't that [closeness]..And I think that is the way it should be.

Barbara's experience at Paradox has been difficult, not the most positive one of her career, yet she believes that this experience will influence how she shapes her next position. Clearly, the budget presents a particular set of difficulties, but Barbara also feels as if she is caught between a rock and hard place in terms of multi-cultural issues. On the one hand, she feels she is making strides in providing levels of support for multi-cultural programs; on the other she doesn't feel a reciprocal sense of support, and sort of "ripped off" in that she hasn't been able to do the things she would like to do at Paradox. In her words,

I would not describe this as the happiest time of my life, but it certainly has been a personally strengthening experience and it has been very interesting. There are two things which have overshadowed it all; the one of course is the budget crisis, except this time instead of being the person who is trembling in the corner, I'm the person who is in the position to make decisions and it has meant really that. You know, when you go through the search committee, you tell them all the wonderful new initiatives that you can bring to the University; and I said all those things in good faith; but it has certainly not been that way. It has been a constant process of trying to protect the key functions in the department, and there's just a lot of saying "no." ...That's been very painful.

She also feels that the environment of Paradox possesses an undercurrent of racial tension. This is, for her, pretty demoralizing.

And then one of the things that characterizes Paradox from some other places I've been...there is just a level of race politics here that prevents in some ways a collegial, working together at a time when I really needed people to work with me around some issues. The fact that I am a white person with management responsibility for

programs that are designed to serve blacks, hispanics, American Indians, asians is that varied issues and so that has been kind of a constant context of my work...it is kind of complex, my take on it is that just as there are a certain number of white people in the world who don't like anyone who isn't white, there are a lot of people in the world who are from other backgrounds who dislike and distrust everyone who is white. And I suppose it is a good experience, it is perhaps the nature of the profession, but I haven't historically been treated that way,...it isn't fun...and it doesn't make you happy.

Her reputation at Paradox reflects her difficulty in dealing with conflict. She is known as a manager who prefers to avoid conflict and has a desire to be well-liked by her staff and peers. This reputation acknowledges Barbara's strengths and the difficulties she faces. As the academic vice-president commented:

Barbara is most like an academic because she comes up from the academic side and I think she feels herself somewhat ill-at-ease in her surroundings and has a tough time achieving all the good things she'd like to do.

Her vice-president acknowledges the complexity of the Academic Services, and speaks to Barbara's style and nature.

[I]t is a division that has in it a bunch of programs which by their nature serve people that have a lot of demands...there is a sort of ongoing stress factor in that environment and I think this person has a very hard time...Very gentle, very traditional.

#### Barbara: Counselor, Enabler, Career Professional

As with Ron, while not the only roles that Barbara enacts as Dean of Academic Services, these data did reveal three that seemed to be important ones to highlight. These roles are: 1) counselor, 2) enabler, and 3) career professional. Partially in light of the difficulties Paradox faces with the

budget, Barbara has assumed the role of counselor, meeting with department heads sometimes three hours at a time to listen to their concerns. She is also an enabler whose role is to make sure that her department heads get what they want, sometimes without questioning the initiative--mostly to avoid conflict and being disliked. Finally, a role that emerges from staff and from other administrators on campus, is Barbara's personal role, that of career professional, one who is concerned with being recognized for doing a good job and looking to future jobs at other institutions.

Counselor. To be a counselor, one must be able to maintain a professional distance from one's clients. People expect the counselor to be understanding, knowledgeable, and even help to solve problems. Barbara's staff seems to require this distance and support.

The expectation of her department heads isn't that Barbara be routinely and intimately involved with their day to day business. In fact, this could appear to be an infringement, particularly if it meant that decisions for and about departments were made at the dean's level. As one staff member explains:

One thing that I never want to see happen, is that I never want to see the decision-making leave [my area]. In other words, I want to be making decisions specifically for the \_\_\_\_\_ [area]. If someone wants to give advice about something, that's one thing.

Another staff member agrees and highlights the expertise each department head brings to management:

I think that, for each of us [department heads], we bring a certain expertise to the party....Usually each person is an expert in their division. [in the dean's position] we need someone who, who respects that kind of terminal knowledge and challenges us to improve it over time, and that's a role, that's a tough role, because, by definition, the person may not know, intimately, what we do. We need someone who knows enough about the field to allow us to do more, to be creative, but not to micro-manage. I wouldn't like it if my supervisor said, "Well, I happened to be visiting a friend at \_\_\_\_\_ the other day, and they have a computer that notifies students about ['x'], and I want you to have that one." No. That would be inappropriate.

While staff don't expect Barbara to be an expert in each of their areas, it is clear that her department heads do expect that she have a working knowledge of each area so as to understand the issues each faces, that she be an advocate for additional resources (and protect against cuts), that she listen to their issues and provide guidance when appropriate, and that she be the "bad guy" when a bad guy is needed.

Barbara's record in understanding all of the areas that report to her is improving. Her main focus, many say necessarily, over the past three years has been in addressing multi-cultural issues. When Barbara had originally applied for the position, multicultural programming was not a part of her division--these programs were added to her responsibilities when she arrived. This means, according to some of Barbara's department heads, that some areas haven't received the kind of attention that they needed, either by Barbara or the institution. In the words of one staff member:

I think student affairs on this campus has been preoccupied with student activities and multiculturalism, for better or for worse. And I think some of the ongoing regular functions have sort of gotten somewhat shorter shrift because, you know, you deal with the crises,

and then, students generate crises more than ongoing administrative functions...I think, within the last few years, admissions and financial aid have not gotten the attention or the resources they should have gotten, given the enrollment crisis. I don't think it was intentional, I just think it happened over time. It's just sort of institutions fighting for resources on any campus, I think student affairs is gonna come behind academic affairs in terms of priorities and resources, as it has on this campus.

An example of this lack of appropriate attention was the physical movement of admissions to a new location--away from financial aid. As one staff member comments,

I was very concerned two years ago when they moved...as the future trend was for admissions and financial aid to be really holding hands, to be almost working side by side, as they were. And, now, they're so far apart physically, that, now I feel like they have to set a precedent to actually meet more regularly. They never really meet, which is a mistake. In some ways, it's too bad that they moved out of our building, because I think it would be much easier to mingle the two offices if they were physically both here, together, where they were two years ago.

Having information about specific areas is important. Assistant deans and department heads don't want to feel as if they have to educate Barbara about an issue every time they talk with her. In the words of one staff member,

I expect her to be on top of these issues. I don't want to walk in and talk to her about something she knows nothing about...She should know about the business that we're all dealing with.

Mostly, staff expect from Barbara a supportive, caring manager who listens to their concerns, understands, and responds. Another staff member explains,



What I expect is to have an audience. I expect her to pay attention, to listen, to be focused, to be right there with this major task, this big job...So I want to know that the person is in the room with me.

And another,

[I expect] first that she'll hear me, and that she will listen and, the second [expectation], I suppose, is that she'll appreciate the significance and the relative priority that I give the issue. And, you

know, third, that she'll be able to provide some intervention, you know, help, with the solution..or an answer to it.

And a third,

[I expect] that she'll first listen to what I have to say and, then, together we will be able to focus on whatever the concern is, and reach some resolution or understanding as to exactly how to go about resolving--if it's a problem--resolving the conflict, or the problem. Or moving in whatever direction we need to move in.

Barbara believes she listens--a lot, particularly about the difficulty people are having with the budget situation. In her words,

Sometimes the sessions that I have with them are as much therapy as anything else. They will come and sit for two hours and tell me what is so difficult about their lives. And it doesn't necessarily solve any problems, but it gives them the sense of support and the venting enough to go back and deal with some of those problems that they have. So there will be days when I'll have a couple of two-hour meetings with directors and maybe half an hour of it is devoted to making decisions about what we are going to do about particular things and the rest of it will be about how difficult it is to manage under these circumstances.

There are days when Barbara gets home that she feels like she has been kicked. Yet, she tries to figure out what happened and how she can turn seeming adversity into an opportunity for her directors. Mostly, however, she ends up counseling them to alleviate their fears and assuage

their hostilities toward the institution and, perhaps, even toward her. As Barbara has indicated, at this point in time she thinks that enough progress has been made so that her department heads don't believe that she is out to do them in. They also want Barbara to act.

Enabler. The connotation of an enabler is of one who spends his or her time "making things ok" for other people and alleviating others of taking responsibility for their own behavioral change. The enabler wants to be loved and believes that one of the ways to do this is to avoid conflict, mostly by giving in to the wants, desires, and demands of others.

Descriptions of Barbara by campus administrators begin to validate this role for her. In the words of the academic vice-president:

I think she is a very driving, very effectively intelligent person, who, for hard-to-understand reasons, isn't able to make those around her love her and therefore faces continuing uphill fights.

Her own supervisor has a more direct observation:

As I have directly observed and learned about how situations are handled, it is clear that this person's style is to very quickly give people what they want in this context without necessarily taking time to think all the way through the implications for other groups or new ideas that come along that might raise the same questions but not lead to the same result.

Barbara's staff has come to understand Barbara to behave in ways that attempts to preserve her relationships with others. As one member commented:

She wants to be loved by everybody.....being liked by everybody...and try[ing] to make people like her.

This need to receive approval from her staff is interpreted by some as Barbara not being able to make difficult decisions. As her own vice-president comments,

She manages from the heart, I think....She is a very kind, a very kind person. She's not a tough manager in the sense....

A clear example of her interest in preserving relationships with her staff is the process Barbara used, or didn't use, to create a new multicultural center. Her focus was on a particular person, and not the organizational implications of her actions. As one staff member describes the situation:

[Barbara decided] that [this student] population ...should have its own support center. Well, she went and did it and then really checked in.... She made commitments...without, I feel, having done her homework.... The decision itself--and the direction, is fine. The timing of the decision, I did not think was fine, and I think that the timing was influenced by what she was perceiving as, "Oh, my God, I'm gonna lose this person." And I can't afford to lose this person....

This particular incident created some bad feelings among department heads and reinforced that decisions were sometimes made for reasons other than for organizational well-being. As one staff member commented,

I feel bad...about the cultural center, that it was not handled well. Not handled well. I take it as, that it was an egoistic kind of thing, to do for a friend.

There are times when Barbara's avoidance of conflict behavior is viewed as a "shoot from the hip" management style, as if she hasn't given enough thought to her decisions. And, while Barbara now believes that her department heads don't view her as threatening, her inclination to avoid

conflict does have some implications for staff expectations. Some expect Barbara to protect them from budget cuts--or else. She uses as an example a budget cutting exercise she was asked to do by the Vice-President for Student Affairs, during which she was accused of racist behavior:

We were asked...to do a budget cutting exercise in which we said what we would do if we had to take 25% of the revenues away from our operating budgets. So I tried to have an open process with those who report to me and say, this is what I'm being asked to do, and I going to do it in good faith because I think it is a real threat and I need you to tell me what, if you had 75% of the resources you think you might have, how might you manage appropriately? And I had people say to me that the question itself was racist--how could I even assume that programs designed to serve students of color could do this? And I suppose that's a point of view. But it's not helpful, you know?

The theme of racial tension is one that Barbara sees as an undercurrent for all she does at Paradox. She also believes that these accusations are very tiring and misdirected. Barbara, whose staff numbers 120, was perplexed by the racism charge made during this budget exercise because, as she says,

I suppose again, it is a point of view, but I only have [a few] white males in my division, so to start on me about impacting women and minorities, I don't have anybody else to impact--two of the people who are white males are directors of my departments and I'm not clearly going to get rid of the director. That's a subtext of everything that is done.

Career Professional. People who work in professional positions, particularly those for which they have received formal education to do, often refer to what they do not as a job, but as a career. In using the descriptor

"career professional," I am trying to convey a strength of conviction about one's professional life and ambition.

By her own admission, Barbara is very ambitious, very interested in moving her career forward. It is no surprise, then, that she has high aspiration career goals. She has a strong sense of "professional ambition, and the desire to be successful in my chosen field." As she says,

And [in] a field that I think was chosen, in part because I would hope that in the course of my life I could make some kind of contribution to the well being of the world and of the next generation. And probably the reason I don't have children of my own has a lot to do with my inability to understand exactly how one works 16 hours a day and raises an infant. And what would happen if...I had to balance those poles between being good to that real little person that was there, and following what I saw as my ambition. So I am a very ambitious person and I hope to see my career unfold yet further.

One of the primary reasons Barbara applied for and accepted the position at Paradox was because she has aspirations of someday becoming a vice-president for student affairs. She knew that one didn't do this right after being an admissions director, so she sought and found an intermediate position, the position at Paradox. She was thrilled at being offered the job, a position she thought was unique for student affairs:

Many divisions of student affairs really aren't organized in such a way that the vice-president has the departments report to them, so the kind of dean, assistant vice-president...a lot of the assistant vice-president jobs are staff jobs--people who don't manage departments but support the vice-president; so when this job opened, I really felt that it was a very good opportunity to have the opportunity to take over...

Barbara is married, yet, with the exception of her first position as a faculty member and then admissions director, Barbara and her husband have had a commuter relationship, spending more time with each other on the telephone than in each other's presence. Barbara clearly has the freedom, in this relationship, to pursue her career ambitions.

Barbara's professional ambition is no secret to her staff. They describe her as being very much interested in career growth and in being viewed as competent by outsiders who look in. Typical of staff comments are:

I think that, professionally, she wants to be viewed by her peers--people who work for her and people above her--as being, an effective administrator, by accomplishing the job that needs to be done,...so that she can feel good about herself and the job that she's doing--to make a positive mark where she is such that it provides an eventual stepping-stone to the next level.

I think she's very career-savvy. I think she, she has high aspirations and ambition.

I think she wants...to be successful at this level of management. I think she wants the [ ] office to work well, she wants her support programs to work well.

Barbara lists a number of things as successes the division has witnessed under her leadership. Among them is a stabilization of the programs for people of color:

I think that I have managed to provide some order and stability for my department and I think I have protected them and I think I have helped them get the resources that they absolutely had to have that were essential....Another contribution has been, however uneasy, there has been relative stability in the students of color support program. And prior to my assuming this job, they were truly in an

uproar all the time...constant issues, constant uneasiness and I think that I have produced at least a civil climate...it is sometimes better than that...I don't think that most people in their heart any longer believe that as soon as I can I am going to do them in.

Her staff would agree. In talking about their expectations of

Barbara, they also spoke of her successes:

My expectation, and one that she's met very well, is that she's an advocate for students of color. When two or three years ago, her office took responsibility for the multicultural support programs, I think that really facilitated that role, and I think something we've done very well is to improve and invigorate the multicultural admissions effort and the enrollment effort.

Finally, in talking about her own management style as being democratic and process-oriented, Barbara suggests that she continues to look for positions, when she says:

This is the only place I've ever been a dean, so I'll know better when I go on to another administrative assignment....

Barbara wants to learn from her mistakes and successes. She is interested in continuing to learn the skills she need to achieve her career goal of a student affairs vice-presidency.

The roles that Barbara has constructed, those of counselor, enabler, and career-professional, relate to her previous success with and reliance upon referent power and reflect her struggles to employ this notion in an atmosphere that is more political than collegial. Her roles also reveal her desire to be seen as doing a good job. Barbara, as revealed in her own comments and those of her staff members, has an intense desire to be liked and seen as the leader of a close-knit team. However, her previously

successful centralized strategies are not effective in the Division of Academic Services where department heads prefer to be recognized as the legitimate authorities of their own areas. The complexity and size of the Division also made it impossible for Barbara to maintain a centralized management approach. A decentralized approach was more in keeping with department head preferences and expectations that Barbara would provide leadership, particularly in terms of resource advocacy, rather than day-to-day assistance with their operations. The decentralized nature of Academic Services made it difficult for Barbara to create the team she desired and has experienced in previous positions. There is no sense of team in Academic Services.

Barbara's roles of counselor, enabler, and career-professional and Ron's roles of parent, entrepreneur, and player are reflected in their views of higher education organizations and their understanding of management. These views, understandings, and features are explored in the next section.

#### Making Sense of Roles: On Higher Education Management and Being a Manager

The roles that Ron and Barbara enact at Paradox reveal their personal views of higher education management and their views of themselves as managers. In the case of Barbara, these data also reveal the organizational implications when the roles that are constructed are incongruent with one's expectations. To explain, I use the roles that Ron



and Barbara construct and associate them with some of the typical higher education organizational models.

Ron's roles as parent, entrepreneur, and player reveal his view of higher education as a rational organization, that is, as a bureaucracy to be run efficiently and effectively and of his managerial responsibility to be in charge. The forces that influenced the shaping of these roles also reveal a strong motivation to personally succeed that masks a deep fear of being revealed as a failure. To protect himself from failure, Ron exerts a powerful control over his organization which offers him success and also reflects his rational organizational view.

Ron talks about his family experiences as being important to him and how that early family influence helped to shape for him the importance of being around people who care about you and whom you care about. His was a very religious family and one gets the sense that his parents guided his value development and were probably in charge.

During college he experienced some success as an R.A. and continued to be involved in the housing area. He didn't view himself as an exceptional student, so his positive experiences with residence life were important to him. He continued his association with housing in graduate school where he began to learn how to manage; he also learned to be successful in making sure his failures were not known. Ron learned that what was rewarded for him was managerial behavior that ensured that tasks were

completed efficiently and effectively--or at least were perceived as being completed efficiently and effectively. Through the experiences he described, Ron viewed himself as not being successful, yet, paradoxically, he was rewarded for the things he viewed as failures. In essence, he never saw himself as doing a good job, but for some reason his performance looked good to his superiors. While he acknowledges he didn't understand why his failures were viewed as successes, he adopted a pattern of behavior in which the focus was on making sure that what he perceived as failures were not visible within the organization. In his first director's position, he notes that he had no solid information to present to the board of trustees to justify rate hikes, but he was bound and determined to look good before the Board--and he succeeded. He has expectations that his staff members will help to make him look good by ensuring that he is not blindsided by issues. In order to ensure he looks good, Ron learned that he needed to control events and activities. So he did and does.

When Ron entered his first managerial position after graduate school, he began to utilize the sources of power available to him to enable him to succeed. While he had at his disposal legitimate power associated with his position, he learned early that the use of expert power served him well--even though he did not perceive himself as an expert. In that early dealing with a board of trustees, he used information as a means to appear as if he had everything under control, to appear as an expert. He admits he didn't,

but didn't want to look bad, as he says it. His belief in the power of expertise led him to learn more about areas that related to housing, such as food service and, most important from Ron's perspective, budgeting.

When he arrived at Paradox, new sources of power became available to Ron. As a person brought in to make radical change in structure and personnel, he learned that he had the power to reward and punish and these were effective means to make change and to maintain control. The structure he set up was one that was hierarchical with a distinct chain of command. The norms that arose from this structure were ones that maintained Ron's position as legitimate authority, including the fact that the one person who could violate the hierarchical structure was Ron. Residence life at Paradox is hierarchical, is run efficiently and effectively, and has a distinct chain of command. Ron's view of himself is as the legitimate authority of residence life. He has a need to be informed and a need to have an organization of loyal members.

Ron is a bureaucratic manager and views Paradox as an organization that could use some rationality, yet he is careful to avoid confrontation with the academic side. He negotiates on the periphery of the academic organization of Paradox, only absorbing and changing those things that can clearly be identified as under the purview of residence life. For example, his area is involved in residential education, that is, the offering of classes in the residence hall facilities. When this became important to Paradox and

identified as such, Ron moved forward on the agenda. In essence, inasmuch as he views himself as the legitimate authority of residence life, he views the academic areas as holding more legitimate authority than he within Paradox. While he is an entrepreneur, he is a safe entrepreneur, never venturing out to make connections beyond housing that for him might reveal his own sense of inadequacy as a player. He seems to buy the notion that student affairs is second to academics at Paradox and clearly defines his turf as being housing, yet his entrepreneurial nature leads him to lay in waiting for areas to be directed his way for reorganization. These opportunities he seldom turns down.

Ron's understanding of how Paradox functions is not of areas working in partnership with each other, but of individual departments, each with an agenda to press forward, that, at times may have overlapping interests, but for the most part, can be viewed as separate entities. The comments of the Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs seem to do little to dissuade him from this view. With the exception of the attempt to develop consensus around divisional priorities, the Vice-President for Student Affairs has adopted a hands-off management philosophy where her deans and directors are viewed as the technical experts of their areas and expected to do their jobs and do them well--a view consistent with a bureaucratic model.

Barbara's roles, on the other hand, reveal her view of higher education organizations as collegial and her view of her management role as colleague and partner, rather than authoritative manager. However, while her expectations of higher education management are consistent with the collegial model, the organization she manages is more in line with the political model where people are constantly competing with each other for the scarce resources of the organization. Barbara has difficulty achieving her collegial ideals and one gets the sense that Barbara is constantly in cognitive turmoil, trying desperately to hold onto her collegial notions and shape an organization in that image, yet meeting with little success.

Barbara's initial beliefs about higher education organizations and management seem to be traced to the personal factors that influence roles. Her struggles with her roles reflect their incompatibility with her own beliefs, assumptions, and expectations about higher education organizations and management in higher education.

The roles Barbara constructed for herself as a manager are those that attempt to preserve her collegial notions of higher education management and shape the views of those who report to her. However, the expectations of those who report to her are that she be a strong leader, garner the resource support that all areas require, and simultaneously stay out of department heads' ways, except when they need her. While her view of higher education is collegial, her department heads see themselves as

independent administrative entities, which leaves Barbara outside of her own organization.

Barbara's early experiences in higher education were with the academic side. She was a faculty member and was faced with the frightening expectations of publish or perish. She was constantly pitted against another faculty member in a "who stays and who goes" battle. When presented with an opportunity to escape this intense competition for a single position, she accepted and thus became involved in administration. There her experiences were positive and she was able to maintain the part of the relationship with the academic side that she loved, that is, teaching. In her first administrative position, Barbara learned the notion of team. Her area was difficult, yet all members pulled together to accomplish the goals of the organization. They were partners and colleagues. Barbara's source of power in this organization was referent power. All members cared for Barbara and she clearly cared for them. They identified with her and the feeling was truly that together they would succeed or together they would fail. During Barbara's next position, her use of referent power was reinforced. Again she was able to pull together a group of people and move an area forward. It was in this position that she began to develop a sense of expert power, that she was a technical expert in her field and that others viewed her as such. It appears that it was at this point that she decided to expand her professional goals and aim toward a vice-presidency. Paradox

provided her with the interim step she needed to achieve this goal.

When Barbara arrived at Paradox, she employed the skills she had acquired in other managerial positions, that is, she relied on the referent power that had served her so well. However, she was faced with an organization that was more complex than her previous ones, with department heads functioning independently of each other, rather than as a team. She also found she could not rely on the expert power she had acquired because, as the head of a multi-area organization, she was not an expert--the heads of her departments were the experts. What they wanted from Barbara was leadership and resources. What she wanted from them was collegiality and friendship. The roles she developed were roles that attempted to demonstrate that she cared about them in hopes they would care about her and the organization. At times she was successful, but only when she responded positively to their requests. The departments remained autonomous and competed with each other for the scarce resources of the division. While Barbara entered Paradox with expectations of creating yet another collegial partnership where she was viewed as doing a good job, she found herself immersed in a diverse organization in which she was constantly faced with conflicts regarding resources and questions about her expertise. While department heads respected her for some of the accomplishments she made, the sources of power that had served her well were no longer available to her.

The roles Barbara constructed for herself also reflected, I think, her comfort in academic affairs. As the Vice-President for Academic Affairs noted, Barbara, more than any other member of student affairs, was most like the faculty because she had come from their ranks. Her view of higher education was shaped in part by her administrative experiences, but it appears Barbara never shed her early perceptions and expectations of collegiality that is associated with the faculty role. She was fortunate in her first two administrative positions to have been able to help shape a collegial atmosphere; she was less fortunate at Paradox, where student affairs is viewed as bureaucratic, extremely large, and complex. Further, Academic Services is so diverse and complex that finding common themes through which to define a team was virtually impossible.

Interestingly enough, Barbara was viewed by her vice-president as a high-control bureaucrat. Barbara's need for control, if it exists at all, would seem to be less a result of any bureaucratic tendencies, than as a result of a need to be perceived as doing a good job. Barbara stresses her need to be known as good at what she does and clearly wants to continue to grow in administration and, specifically student affairs. When she left her faculty role, she commented that she wanted a job where she was the only one and where, if she wasn't a good one, she would either be helped to improve or let go. Her control issues seem to relate to her need to know where she stands and can be traced to her negative experiences as a faculty member where



she was never sure from one day to the next whether she would have a job or not; whether she was good or bad. Further, the disdain that Barbara expresses for a personnel system that she thinks is unresponsive, suggests that she herself has difficulty with overly cumbersome, bureaucratic systems.

Both Ron and Barbara have constructed roles that reflect their views of higher education, their views of management and, specifically, their views of higher education management at Paradox. These roles are different and appear to reflect different views of higher education and of Paradox. What forces might have influenced the shaping of these roles and how do these forces work together or separately to influence role construction and enactment? These are the topics for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### UNDERSTANDING FORCES THAT INFLUENCE ROLE CONSTRUCTION AND ENACTMENT

The construction of Ron's and Barbara's roles as collegiate mid-level managers reveals the complexity of the process and highlights the multiplicity of factors that influence role shaping and enactment. When they began their positions at Paradox, they each held tentative understandings about the behavior that would be expected of them in their jobs. These understandings were shaped in part by their previous experiences, by their job descriptions, and by what they understood Student Affairs and Paradox had in mind for them. As they performed their jobs, their tentative expectations were modified through interaction with others and more permanent roles emerged for them to enact.

The roles that Barbara and Ron constructed were different even though their administrative units were both part of the same division, that is, Student Affairs at Paradox. What might account for these differences in roles? What factors influence role construction and enactment and how can these roles be understood within their organizational contexts? These are the questions to be better understood from these data.

The roles Ron and Barbara created and performed reveal the internal and external forces that, from an interactionist perspective (Turner, 1962), influence role construction and enactment. Their experiences also reveal the obdurate nature of roles, that is, how resistant they are to change even when these role influences suggest conflicting behavior. From these data

emerge an understanding of the role sensemaking process as Ron and Barbara reconcile their own role behavior with the expectations of others.

This chapter begins with understanding the internal and external forces that influence how Barbara and Ron construct their managerial roles. Highlighted is the evidence of these forces in action. Finally, these forces are understood in how Barbara and Ron make sense of their roles within their administrative areas and within the Division of Student Affairs at Paradox.

### The Complexity of Role Construction

It is generally agreed in role theory that people enact numerous roles to respond to the interactional demands of social situations; that is, that people have repertoires of roles that they may call forward as needed and as they see appropriate (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). These repertoires of roles are developed over time and reflect the variety of ways in which people attempt to successfully adapt their own behavior to the expectations of others. As patterns of expected and potential behaviors, roles reflect the expectations of behavior that individuals have of themselves in social situations as well as the expectations that they believe others hold for them. It is through social interaction that old roles are preserved or modified and new roles are added to the repertoire. However, the enactment or modification of existing roles and the addition of new roles to a repertoire is not a simple process because human beings are not simple creatures. Roles are modified and

developed through a process of trial and error learning whereby multiple influences are evaluated. These influences are internal (e.g., previous experiences) and external (e.g., experiences of other social actors and job description) to the person.

### Forces that Influence Role Construction and Enactment

The internal and external influences on role construction required definition in this study to capture the strength of these influences and the complexity of the social situations within which Ron's and Barbara's roles were created and enacted. I refer to these internal and external influences as forces to suggest the active and direct nature of their power in shaping role expectations and enactment. These forces significantly influence role learning and whether or not a particular role is added to a person's role repertoire and potentially brought forth to be enacted in social situations.

I refer to internal influences as personal forces in this study. These represent the significant experiences of the self that shape role expectations and, as such, are internal to the person. Personal forces are part of the individual's personal biography, that is, they are past experiences which significantly influence role learning and, hence, one's role repertoire. The personal forces that emerged from these data were: family and educational experiences, previous managerial experiences, and professional ambition.

External influences are not part of the individual's personal biography, they are embedded within the current social situation and, in the

study of roles, are associated with the "generalized other" (Hewitt, 1989; Blumer, 1986; Mead, 1934). The generalized other usually refers to those people with whom the person interacts and whom he or she uses to evaluate the appropriateness of role behavior. The generalized other makes a social situation a social situation and may be a single person, a group of people, or a social structure such as an organization.

To the individual, the generalized other represents the social situation within which he or she interacts, whom he or she believes has an established set of role expectations for social participants, and whom he or she uses to create a sort of cognitive map for appropriate role behavior through an interpretation of the role expectations. Thought of in a different way, the generalized other represents the social situational stakeholders whose role expectations the new participant interprets and uses to evaluate and adapt the appropriateness of his or her own role behavior.

The role expectations of the generalized other are shaped by each participant's understanding of the situation which, when shared and modified through interaction, collectively form the group's notions of what constitute's appropriate role behavior. Collective meaning in a social situation is informed by purpose and challenged most notably through changes in membership. Thus, as new participants enter the situation, they are confronted with these collective notions, need to interpret and evaluate them in terms of the situation's purpose and their own role repertoires, and

modify their own behavior accordingly. External influences then, are those which influence the role expectations of the social situation. I refer to these influences as external forces to capture their significance in shaping the role expectations of others in a social situation.

Since Paradox is a complex institution, Ron and Barbara are confronted with many social situations and hence, many generalized others as they perform their jobs. Further, some of these situations have a more direct and permanent impact on role construction than others. For example, a temporary committee, such as a search committee, is a generalized other but would have a less lasting influence on managerial role construction than would a manager's own department. In this study, I focused upon two social situations that were managerial in nature and with which the manager had a more permanent relationship. These were the social situations defined for Ron as Residence Life, for Barbara as Academic Services and, for both of them, the situation defined as the Division of Student Affairs. Yet, even within these situations, there are differences in the nature of the manager's relationship. Ron and Barbara have a very direct relationship with their own departments of Residence Life and Academic Services. It is an authority relationship and they are charged with managing these areas. Their relationship with the Division of Student Affairs however, is a bit different. As managers of their areas, they are a part of student affairs and members of the student affairs management

team. The relationship is not one of authority, but of colleagues. Whereas their participation in their own areas is more direct and active, their relationship to the Division of Student Affairs is less direct and more passive. In order to account for these relationship differences, yet also understand how each situation influences role construction, I suggest that the forces that emerge from these social situations are of different types. In this study, the emerging external forces that apply to Residence Life and Academic Services are considered proximate forces, reflecting the more direct and active relationship the manager has with the situation, while the external forces that apply to the Division of Student Affairs are considered distant forces, reflecting the less direct and more passive, or at least less active relationship the manager has with that situation. For Residence Life and Academic Services, the data in this study suggest that the role expectations are influenced by two proximate forces: 1) clarity or singularity of organizational mission and, 2) experience with predecessors. For the Division of Student Affairs, one distant force emerged from these data, that being managerial expectations.

The next section of this chapter attempts to trace the evidence that suggests the presence of these forces in influencing the roles that Ron and Barbara create and enact. The internal forces described are those in the personal biographies of Ron and Barbara and the external forces are those

proximate and distant ones that influence the role expectations of their respective departments and of the student affairs division.

### Internal Influences on Role Construction and Enactment: Personal Forces

The personal forces that emerged from this study are those that reflect the experiences Ron and Barbara had with family, education, and work. These experiences provide clues to understanding how they view themselves as managers and their approach to higher education management. The three personal forces are: 1) family and educational experiences, 2) experience with management positions, and 3) career commitment. Evidence for these forces is found in Ron's and Barbara's experiences.

#### Family and Educational Experiences

Family and educational experiences refer to those experiences that helped to shape Ron's and Barbara's understandings of what being a manager means and the nature of higher education organizations. While I think it is seldom that people think about how their families are managed, families do exhibit some type of organization and an inherent power structure. For example, in some families, parents make more frequent use of reward and punishment in family management. In others, parents define their mother and father roles as less authoritarian, relying instead upon referent power to establish a family unit that resembles more of a



partnership. Suggested here is a strong relationship between how one's family was managed and one's view of being a manager. The same is suggested regarding one's experiences in higher education, that is, that one's early experiences, perhaps as a student, help to shape one's view of higher education organizations. The data in this study suggest that both of these notions warrant further study.

Both Ron's and Barbara's family and educational experiences influenced their views of management and higher education organizations. Ron's family was fairly large, religious, structured, and probably patriarchal. Ron describes it as a large, extended one steeped in very "traditional Catholic perspectives." The notion of family as a group of people who shared experiences, values, and were guided by rules probably would describe Ron's family structure. His family was a community, where people were encouraged to be active participants.

Barbara's family, on the other hand, was small, less structured, and there was less of a sense of a strong family leader who literally administered the experiences of the family unit. Instead, Barbara's family reflected a partnership between parents and child. Her parents, particularly her father, served as a career role model for her and influenced her choice of work. As she says,

I've always had a public sector orientation. And that probably has to do with my father.... He had a distinguished public service career. He gave me some sense that you give back. I never really considered going into business...

In my view, Ron's experiences in higher education reinforced a hierarchical model, while Barbara's lent itself more to the development of a collegial model, particularly as she was guided toward a faculty career. As they both moved into managerial positions, it is no surprise that they each approached their roles differently, with Ron's roles being more in line with a bureaucratic organization and Barbara's more in line with a collegial organization.

Ron's bureaucratic view is revealed in the parent role he has constructed. As the patriarch of residence life, he is residence life. Ron makes the big decisions and it is a requirement of all employees to keep him informed. As employees report, Ron doesn't like to be blindsided and if he is, he becomes upset. Another source of irritation for Ron are situations in which employees are not loyal. In his anger, Ron's first inclination is to make use of coercive power. Members of his executive staff are aware of this and try to avoid placing themselves in these situations. The role of parent Ron constructed reflects his desire to be in charge, and his managerial view of higher education organizations as being bureaucratic.

Barbara's more collegial view is revealed in her counselor role, where she spends time listening and involving herself in the professional lives of staff members. She believes that staff members want her to play this role, that they don't necessarily expect her to solve their issues; they want her to pay attention to them and to help when she can. The role of enabler she

constructed reflects her attempt to promote her collegial view of management, where people are partners and friends, even when the social influences mitigate against it. Both of these roles reveal Barbara's desire to be viewed as a trusted friend and colleague, as doing a good job, and her view that higher education organizations ought to be managed from a team approach. The roles she constructs, however, are ones that reflect an attempt to create collegiality in an atmosphere that does not seem to embrace that notion. Both the counselor and enabler roles are care-giver roles and, in the case of enabler, co-optational roles. They are not partnership roles. They are, however, Barbara's interpretation of how she needs to behave in order to create the collegial atmosphere she wants--an atmosphere that was shaped in part by her family experiences and the experiences she had with faculty as an undergraduate and perhaps as a graduate student.

### Experience in Management Positions

Experience in management positions takes into consideration successful and unsuccessful experiences, for both can influence the construction of roles in new situations. For Ron and Barbara I note differences. Ron's experiences with management have been somewhat positive. In each of his managerial positions, there seemed to have been an expectation that he "clean it up" and "make it more efficient and effective." Since in the eyes of his superiors he was able to do so, his approach to how

organizations ought to be managed was shaped by his successes.

Management behavior consistent with bureaucratic organizations was reinforced and he carried his conceptions into his position at Paradox.

Barbara's managerial experiences, on the other hand, were more collegial.

In her two previous positions prior to Paradox, the positive reinforcement she received was from creating an atmosphere of partnership and collegiality, where all were treated as equals. As with Ron, Barbara carried this collegial view into her position at Paradox. However, unlike Ron whose experiences continued to be positive ones, Barbara's were not.

Again, Ron's parent role reveals the successes he has had in previous management positions where he was rewarded for being in charge and taking control. His entrepreneurial role was also shaped in part by his previous managerial experiences. He learned that there were rewards to be had for trying new things and taking risks. Simultaneously he also learned that it was important to never reveal mistakes. To do so was a sign of leadership weakness which would, in turn, reduce the legitimate power at his disposal by reducing the organization's view of him as an expert.

Barbara's role as counselor reflects her previous managerial experiences. The positive experiences she has had with management have encouraged her to be a colleague and partner. The role model she had in her position just prior to Paradox, as she admits, served as a counselor to her and it would appear as if she did the same for her staff. Her role as

counselor continued to be reinforced at Paradox, except the focus here was more on working people through the anxieties associated with the budget crisis, than on developing an on-going mentoring relationship. However, Barbara continued to enact the counselor role and constructed a new role, that of enabler, to attempt to create the collegial atmosphere of her previous experiences. The enabler role reflected her view of herself as a helping, caring, manager. Not being able to create the team she had known in her two previous positions, Barbara seemed to use the enabler role to create individual partnerships with her department heads. But these partnerships were straw men and were contingent upon Barbara providing the resource support department heads viewed they needed. Unfortunately, the enactment of these roles did not result in creating the collegial, team partnership atmosphere Barbara desired, and did nothing to change the political atmosphere that existed.

### Professional Ambition

This factor is more difficult to explain than either of the other two personal factors or forces. Professional ambition refers to the motivations behind the enactment of roles that promote professional identity. Both Ron and Barbara would be considered career professionals in that each, in their own ways, are professionally ambitious. Evidence of this is found in Ron's role of "player" where periodically he attempts to gain more managerial responsibility at Paradox and as "entrepreneur" where he immerses himself

not in small, but large projects that have campus-wide impact. Evidence is also found in Barbara's role of career professional where she evaluates positions in relationship to her goal of becoming a student affairs vice-president, at some other institution.

At first blush, it might appear as if the role that Ron has constructed in residence life reflects an interest in identifying strongly with his organization. His background speaks to family and community values. He attaches himself to his neighborhood and to his children, and it seems as if affiliation, to be a part of something larger than he is, is most important to Ron. Except that Ron likes to be in charge. He likes to make the rules (and be the one able to break them) and doesn't like to be upstaged by any of the staff members who report to him. He likes to be involved in big projects and chooses at least one a year to which he devotes the majority of his energy. He is searching to be known for his accomplishments; he is searching to stand out among other administrators at Paradox. In this regard, the roles he constructs reflect his commitment to himself. In his professional life, residence life is secondary to his personal and career goals.

Barbara's story is a little different and reflects a different kind of career motivation. Barbara fell into her role as an administrator. At the time, she was having a difficult experience as a faculty member in an institution in economic crisis. As an administrator, she found people who cared about her and about whom she cared. When she came to Paradox she

found a different level of support. While she tried to conform to the expectations of her department heads to be supportive, to listen, she found support for her somewhat lacking. She had difficulty creating, or recreating the sense of community she experienced in her two previous positions. In her career ambitions, Barbara is most interested in finding a position that moves her forward and provides her with a foundation of support for ideas and an atmosphere of caring and affirmation. Her motivation is affiliation with others. The type of professional ambition, whether it be for personal or social reasons, appears to influence the kinds of roles that are brought to an organization.

#### External Influences on Role Construction and Enactment: Proximate Forces

##### Clarity of Organizational Mission

This force refers to the extent to which those who report to the mid-level manager understand and share the mission and goals of the administrative area. Clarity of organizational mission reflects the simplicity or complexity of an organization's span of responsibility and implies that the more simple and straight-forward the mission, the more likely that there will be agreement about mission among organization members. Conversely, the more complex or diffuse the mission, the less agreement there will be about an organization's mission. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that an organization will be fragmented, with

members focusing upon areas that have meaning to them personally rather than those of the whole.

At Paradox, evidence of this factor has some support in the areas of Residence Life and Academic Services. In Ron's area, with the exception of child care, there is a single mission toward which all department members direct their efforts, that is, to provide housing for students, primarily for single undergraduates, but also for single graduates, and married undergraduates and graduates. There exist many rules and policies which members follow so that a particular standard of housing is maintained for students, this standard of course, being defined by Ron. The mission for Academic Services is less clear.

Barbara and others who report to her often refer to the mission of Academic Services as being that of enrollment management. Depending upon who one talks to, the definition of enrollment management varies, primarily because people define this construct from the perspective of their own departments, that is, admissions, financial aid, career services, or from the multi-cultural programs and centers. From these perspectives, enrollment management can take on primarily a recruitment and/or retention thrust. The single purpose of Residence Life does not exist in Academic Services and, thus the expectations that organization members have of Barbara are not shaped from the standpoint of organizational mission, but from the standpoint of one's own administrative perspective.



The expectations take on a departmental rather than an organizational view, a situation exacerbated by the structure of the administrative area.

Residence Life is a single organizational structure. Administrative titles are associated with residence life (i.e., Assistant and Associate Directors, etc.) and everyone has a responsibility that meshes with the responsibilities of others. Academic Services, on the other hand, is an organization of several administrative areas, each with its own particular set of goals, supposedly tied together by enrollment management.

### Experiences with Predecessors

Experiences with predecessors refers to experiences others in the organization have had with previous mid-level managers. These images become "ghosts" for the current mid-level manager for the experiences of subordinates with previous manager's either make it easier for the current manager, or haunt them in light of differences. The ghosts for Ron and Barbara highlight the differences the predecessor can make in role expectations.

Ron was brought in to make difficult decisions. As he says,

When I first came here, this place was an awful mess and I had to be really dictatorial...I was brought in to make change. And it was so, so bad, and I realized I had to move so quickly if I was going to be successful.

During the course of this time, Ron was given the flexibility to make change, provided he accepted the responsibility for the decisions. He made

the goals of the organization clear and a number of people left because they didn't believe in those goals. His supervisor ultimately left and, by that time, Ron had begun to negotiate his role with others and build an organization in his own image. The ghost for Ron was an exorcised ghost. Through the process of change, a process Ron initiated and shaped, his predecessor became less and less a significant influence on role expectations.

Barbara, on the other hand, did not have the luxury of being brought in to "save a sinking ship." She replaced a person who had held the position for a number of years and was viewed as capable and, by some, as a "superstar." In her attempts to construct her role, she is constantly confronted with others' expectations that she will be like her predecessor and, when it becomes clear that she isn't and won't, her actions are met with resistance. This is evidenced in her attempts to create a team of colleagues and the resistance of staff members to her efforts.

#### External Influences on Role Construction and Enactment: Distant Forces

Whereas both personal and proximate forces pertain directly to the mid-level manager's administrative unit, Distant Forces reflect the expectations of those social actors with whom the mid-level manager has a less direct and more passive relationship. In this study, the force emerged

from discussions with members of the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

### Managerial Expectations

Managerial expectations are the role expectations that the mid-level manager's supervisor and organization hold for him or her. These expectations are, given the often less direct and more passive nature of the interaction are often imagined interpretations. The importance of these expectations is revealed only when the expectations are not in sync AND the imbalance is revealed to the collegiate mid-level manager. In this study, the managerial expectations of Ron and Barbara are revealed by the Vice-President for Student Affairs.

The Vice-President for Student Affairs views herself as being involved with the departments of the division at the conceptual and planning levels and not with day-to-day management. Her style, reflecting her expectations, is to leave her deans and directors alone and in control of their own areas. She is an advocate for Student Affairs as a whole and not merely for one department.

I view my role primarily as at the highest leadership level articulating and advocating for the overall needs of Student Affairs and ensuring that as the University makes decisions, that 1) we participate and contribute to it and 2) that the impact of any decision is favorable to our whole division.

That is not to say, however, that she doesn't find herself immersed at times in day-to-day operations. Yet, when faced with these

situations, she tries to remove herself and shift responsibility for action to the hands of the dean or director. It is there, she believes, that issues will receive the technical expertise they require and can be handled "with sensitivity and effectiveness."

This vice-president believes that the expectations that she has for herself and her deans and directors are in line with those they have for her. These expectations, she says, are indicative of the relationship they had with her predecessor as vice-president.

Let us put it this way, they (department heads) want me to know their areas very well, so that I can talk about it as well as they do. But they want me to stay out of it... For the most part, I think they want to have a relationship with me to be one to comment, talk about what they are doing, talk about their new ideas and brainstorm, if it is a research issue, where we can get the money, or if it is something that demands cooperation with another vice-president, then that is my role.

This vice-president is the legitimate authority for student affairs and the expectations of her deans and department heads reflect that view. This is also the source of power available to her. Attempts to use other ways to influence, such as the use of charismatic or referent power, are not met with success. Deans and directors clearly view her as the person in the authority position over student affairs and their relationship with her is not as colleague and friend, but as "boss." Deans and directors expect her to respect their expertise and their need for autonomy in running their administrative areas.

The expectation that departments be autonomous is reflected and reinforced in the limited communication and collaboration between and among them. Deans and directors know little about what goes on in other areas in their own Division and, quite frankly, are not that interested.

Barbara speaks to the autonomy of the departments in Student Affairs:

I think that for each of us the job of running our division is so large that I don't have time really to be that interested in housing or that interested in student activities. And there is some inevitable jealousy, I think. I don't think [the head of student activities] would take it too kindly if I walked over to her office and said "I have had some real interesting thoughts about what you might do about..."...we are meeting every other week in the Division Heads meeting and we spend a lot of time talking but we don't really collaborate very much on projects.

Student affairs at Paradox, in form and operation, is bureaucratic.

The departments of the division of student affairs are each responsible for enforcing a certain set of rules that are guided by the policies and procedures of Paradox.

Deans and directors must attempt to strike a difficult balance between providing programs and services that encourage students to learn and develop in creative ways, while simultaneously serving as the police for institutional, state, and sometimes federal rules. In Residence Life, Ron is charged with developing residential education programs that involve students in the university community and engages them in group decision-making. He is also charged with enforcing policies related to acceptable behavior as a student living in the residence hall. Achieving this balance

between educator and enforcer is a difficult one, particularly within a division as large as Student Affairs. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs agrees and describes student affairs at Paradox as "a colossally complicated and large vice-presidency," and labels it a bureaucracy. He thinks, given the nature and size of the enterprise,

it operates very successfully, I don't think it enjoys a warm spot in the middle of most students' hearts. Students don't much like bureaucracies and the bits that they see up close with student affairs...I think there is a very traditional sort of tension and that's there quite substantially.

Given the descriptions and organizational perceptions of student affairs as bureaucratic, it might make sense that the managers of the student affairs departments would construct roles that are closely aligned with those of a bureaucratic system. Yet, in this study this is not the case. The roles that Ron and Barbara construct are different from each other, with Ron's roles more in keeping with a bureaucratic structure, and Barbara's more closely aligned with a collegial model of higher education organization. How can that happen? There are clearly organizational and personal issues at play. First, while student affairs is bureaucratic, the delegation of responsibility to department heads for their own areas provides an opportunity to manage their areas in their own preferred ways and from their own views of higher education organizations. Second, and most important to this analysis, the culture and organizational context of Paradox and Student Affairs play but one part in the shaping of Barbara's

and Ron's roles and the more loosely coupled these relationships, the less influence they have on them.

### Observations About the Nature of Managerial Roles and the Forces that Influence Role Construction and Enactment

Collegiate mid-level managers construct and enact roles that reflect the complex interplay of internal and external forces. That is, they construct roles and, hence, base their actions upon their expectations of their own behavior (i.e., personal), the interpreted expectations of those with whom they have the most direct and active contact (proximate) and, to some extent, those with whom they have less direct and more passive interaction (distant). The purpose of all of this activity is to construct roles that seem appropriate--that, for the mid-level manager, make sense for him or her within the organization. Hardly a static process, sensemaking is constant as new experiences continuously alter expectations making it necessary for mid-level managers to reconcile those changed expectations and evaluate the appropriateness of roles. In exploring this role sensemaking process, what emerged from this study were a number of observations about the nature of managerial roles and the forces that influence their construction and enactment. These observations are considered tentative and, as such, indicate the need for future research.

The first observation has to do with the nature of managerial roles and the relationship between constructed roles and the manager's beliefs

about being a manager and how colleges and universities function. These data suggest a strong relationship may exist between the roles that are constructed and enacted and the manager's view of higher education organizations. For example, Ron views his management style as situational. Indeed, he says it is:

My management style is situational in that I think you have to have a different style for different people. There [are] some folks that like lots of direction, and there [are] some folks that don't want any direction....There are different needs that they have and so I have to be flexible with that, situational in understanding where an organization is. It goes back to my theory...that at different stages of development, different approaches are necessary.

While his style in dealing with individuals may be situational, his organizational view of management is similar to that of a bureaucracy, where people have specific responsibilities and are accountable for their actions. Evidence for this is found in the structure of Residence Life and the comments of his staff:

For the most part, each of [Ron's] division heads are independent. [He makes clear as] to what our expectations are and the rules are just going to do it...

[What is important to Ron] is that he has competent staff that he has confidence in, that he knows that we can in fact do the job and that he is not gonna get called for every little thing.

How does Ron's view of higher education organizations as bureaucracies relate to the roles he constructs and enacts? Ron's view of his organization as a bureaucracy closely coincides with the role of parent. He is in charge, he sets the rules, and his expectations are that the rules are followed. He



intervenes when the rules are not followed or when expectations need to be established or clarified.

The same relationship between one's view of higher education organizations and the construction of roles seems to hold true for Barbara. In light of her experiences, Barbara views higher education as a collegium, a place for developing meaningful partnerships and where people work together toward goals. In her positions prior to Paradox, she was a part of teams and was an active player in getting jobs done. People cared for her and thought she did a good job. However, it was much easier in her other administrative positions to work as part of a team. She was the primary director of the team and most often gave instructions to individuals, which were, in turn, followed. At Paradox, this particular model did not work well for her primarily, it seems, because decisions made in one area had implications for others and Barbara didn't always understand this. As one staff member described Barbara's style:

[Barbara] will talk to an individual when it might even have something to do with three or four individuals in departments, and it does make sense to get them all together--which might not even happen.

Barbara acknowledges that the Paradox environment might call for new approaches to management. As she says,

I was somewhat naive about the extent to which I would actively direct what people did. And I suppose I thought that I would come and I would replicate [my previous institution] after a year and just do it that way...then I would go on to figuring out what I wanted

them to do and I would tell them. And it really is not that straight forward.

As is evidenced in the roles she constructs, Barbara continues to attempt to develop a collegial environment by trying to establish effective, meaningful work relationships with individuals as opposed to using group strategies to achieve those relationships. Her roles of counselor and enabler seem to reflect her view of higher education as collegial.

The second observation is that mid-level managers attempt to achieve a sort of balance between their enacted roles and the expectations of others in the organization. When there is no balance, attempts to restructure current roles or create new roles will be made until equilibrium is again achieved.

The evidence for this observation comes from Barbara and her similar, yet different roles of counselor and enabler. In previous positions, Barbara served as a leader and mentor to her staff members. She listened to them and helped them. When she came to Paradox, she employed the same type of strategies she had previously used. As she enacted her counselor role in ways that she had previously performed it, she was not successful in creating the partnerships that she had created at other institutions. The counselor role took on new meaning in light of the economic stress Paradox was facing and became less one of mentoring than one of relieving anxieties. To attempt to create the mentoring relationships

with her staff that she desired, she created a new role, that of enabler. She learned, as did others, that individuals would respond to her with loyalty and trust, provided she took care of their resource needs. In some sense, the role of enabler is a response to the political environment of Academic Services and Barbara's way of garnering support from people who had remained loyal to her predecessor. This role seemed to become more effective than the counselor role in achieving her goals, but rather than replacing the counselor role, the enabler role emerged as a new response after older responses were rendered ineffective.

The third observation suggests that previously learned roles are resistant to change and will be replayed in new situations as long as equilibrium is maintained. However, when roles and norms are out of balance, previously learned roles will not be completely extinguished. Instead, parallel roles will be created to achieve equilibrium between roles and organizational norms. Previously learned roles become part of the role repertoire that managers bring to new situations and are part of his or her personal biography.

Using Barbara's roles as counselor and enabler as the example, this observation suggests that as Barbara moves on to new management positions, she will continue to construct and enact the roles she used in previous management positions. So, in her next position, she will continue to play the counselor and enabler roles. Although she may find that these

roles do not work to achieve the organizational balance she requires and she needs to construct different ones, they will not be totally extinguished from her repertoire--and they will again be brought forth in situations to test their appropriateness to the organizational culture.

These data also suggest that internal or personal forces, as biographical ones, are powerful shapers of roles, perhaps even much more powerful than external forces. As the roles of Barbara and Ron are examined, it becomes clear that their own expectations of themselves in management positions, influenced by their family, educational, and managerial experiences were powerful shapers of these roles. Ron's experiences in a large, more structured family contributed to his own views of how large groups of people ought to be managed. Barbara's experiences in a very small family that encouraged partnership likewise guided her views. Ron's experiences in higher education reinforced a more traditional bureaucratic view of management, as he was rewarded for appearing to be literally and figuratively in charge. For Barbara, her experiences as a faculty member initially led her down a different path which served to reinforce her partnership view of management--a view consistent with the collegial model. Finally, both Ron and Barbara had previous managerial experiences that reinforced their personal operational views of higher education as an organization.

The fourth observation is that these data suggest how incredibly resistant to change one's own perceptions can be. For example, Barbara brought to Paradox a notion of what it meant to be a mid-level manager, this notion being shaped by the personal forces of family, educational, and managerial experiences. At Paradox, she faced an organization that didn't seem to be much interested in establishing the partnerships that she had in mind. Instead, the expectations of others with whom she had the most frequent contact (proximate forces) were that she respond to them. Barbara, through her counselor and enabler roles, tried to hold tenaciously on to her own expectations and also meet the expectations of her department heads. Instead of achieving some type of equilibrium, she only made herself pretty miserable. If she had been able to release her own set of expectations, she might have been happier--but this would have been totally inconsistent with the process of role-making and role-taking whereby one's own expectations are modified, not extinguished, through interaction with others. That Barbara was unable to hold onto her own role expectations speaks to the powerful influence others have on role shaping, particularly as constraints to behavior.

Finally, these data indicate that distant forces are effective shapers of role to the extent that they are over and not imagined; to the extent these expectations are imagined, they are more likely to be interpreted as being consistent with the manager's own set of role expectations.

Ron probably serves as the best example of this observation. He was brought to Paradox to make change. This was made clear to him by his predecessor and the administration of Paradox. The overtness of these expectations placed Ron in an elevated position of authority in Residence Life. In light of this expectation to make change, the expectations of those within Residence Life became almost immaterial. In fact, the organizational expectation for the employees in residence life was to either restructure their own views to be consistent with Ron's, or leave. Because these organizational expectations were made clear, they became more powerful shapers of Ron's roles, second only to his own.

On the other hand, when these expectations are not made clear, but are covert, they are assumed, by the mid-level manager to be consistent with their own expectations and thus become less powerful in shaping the mid-level manager's roles. Barbara provides evidence of this in her roles as does Ron in his later management years at Paradox. In Barbara's case, the expectations of Paradox were never made clear to her and she interpreted or imagined them in accordance with her own views. In Ron's case, even though the management and culture of Paradox changed over the years, he continued to hold onto the initial expectations under which he assumed his position at Paradox. For Barbara, these became immaterial as she left the organization.

The stories of Ron and Barbara and the discovery of how they construct and enact their managerial roles highlight the complexity of the role-making and role-taking process. Their stories also provide a fuller understanding of the relationship between roles and the views a person holds regarding higher education organizations. Inextricably intertwined with role construction are views of management, of power, and of organization. These views emerge over time and are shaped by somewhat powerful internal and external forces. The observations made in this section are those that attempt to make sense of the complexity of the role sensemaking process as revealed by the data collected in this study. These observations about roles and the forces that shape their construction and enactment are intended to offer food for thought--and the potential for further research, the direction of which is discussed in the next, and final, chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHAT NOW?

The intent of this study has been to try to understand the forces that influence the shaping and enactment of managerial roles. From the beginning, in identifying both Ron and Barbara's roles as I saw them, and in describing some of the forces that influenced those roles, the approach has been one that considers the multiplicity of experiences that converge as a person defines who he or she is as a manager within a particular organizational context. The reality of this organizational context is the personal reality of the mid-level manager and how he or she constructs his or her role is based upon how he or she views the context. Sometimes that view is consistent with the perceptions of others and sometimes it is not; and when it is not, a negotiation occurs that potentially modifies his or her perceptions. Finally, the notion of being a manager carries with it connotations of power, of getting people to accomplish the goals of the organization. The roles that managers construct reflect their preferences regarding the concept of social power. What began as a study to identify the roles that mid-level managers construct in an organization has emerged to be a study that highlights how complex this process actually is--and how complex the notion of manager is--and how complex the notion of organizational context is. Without rehashing what has already been said, I'd like to attempt to make sense of what I have learned, posit future research directions that will continue to build upon what is already known



about mid-level managers and the management of higher education, and suggest avenues for practical applications of this research.

### Just Beneath the Surface Lurks a Complex Web of Meaning

This study suggests just how complex roles really are. In order to understand roles, it is not sufficient to understand the social context in which roles emerge, it is also important to understand how the collection of experiences we have had in our lifetimes converge on that social situation. In the case of managerial roles, this collection of experiences include conscious ones, such as previous managerial experiences, as well as more unconscious, or at least subconscious ones, such as perhaps, how one's family was managed. As each of us enters a new social situation, whether a management one or not, questions emerge to help us set behavioral boundaries. These conscious and unconscious questions, ones that are constantly asked and answered as interaction continues, include ones such as "Have I experienced this situation before?," "How is this similar to or different from other situations I have had in the past?," "What do people expect of me in this situation?," "How are these expectations similar to or different from the expectations of other people in other situations?," "What is the right thing to say to this person, or that person?" and, "What does it mean when he or she says or does that?" It is an exhausting process, yet an expected process for all social beings interested in being a participant in

particular social contexts and being a manager involves becoming a participant in a particular social context.

### No, They Don't All Look and Act Alike

Beyond beginning to understand just how complex the role construction and enactment process is, my understanding of the notion of the managerial role has changed. Ron and Barbara represented Student Affairs at the same organizational level, that is, the mid-level management level. The data in this study highlighted the different ways each of them formulated their management positions. Ron represented a more conventional, stereotypic model of manager, that is, the bureaucratic manager, while Barbara represented a very different type of manager. Each had used these role outlines in other situations with varying degrees of success--at least enough success that warranted a holding on to the outline rather than changing it. What this study highlights is the importance of previous experiences and the organizational context to managerial success; that is, there is no single approach to management that points to success. First, there is the difference in areas, in this study represented by Student Affairs. Residence Life, in purpose, organization, and function, is different than Academic Services. Do these differences call for different management approaches? Perhaps. Second, the people in Residence Life are different from those in Academic Services. Do their differences call for different management approaches? Again, perhaps.

Finally, the experiences that Ron had prior to coming and during his tenure as Director of Residence Life at Paradox are different from those Barbara had prior to her tenure as Dean of Academic Services. Do these differences suggest that each would subscribe to different management approaches? While the data suggests that the answer is clearly yes in the case of Ron and Barbara, if the question is applied generally, once again the answer would be perhaps.

While this discussion seems like a game of academic fence-sitting, an interpretive perspective such as symbolic interactionism, would indicate that no other answer is possible, for when reality is viewed through the lenses of the people experiencing it, each person's reaction to that reality is unique. What this says, I think, is that any attempt to stereotype what constitutes an appropriate management strategy or define "good management" is an attempt that will be laden with exceptions. At best what can be done in any management research is to outline areas that ought to be explored to determine whether or not the management strategy currently enacted is consistent with the organization's purpose, its people, and its context.

### The Two Faces of Organizational Influence

Finally, my curiosity about how an organizational context supports or constrains managerial behavior has been peaked from this study. The primarily covert and seemingly passive nature of this support or constraint

in some instances, and the overt and aggressive nature in others, is most intriguing and suggests that managers must constantly and actively assess the context and modify their managerial behavior accordingly to achieve success.

The two polar opposites of support (i.e., covert and passive and overt and aggressive) can be understood, I think, using Weick's (1979) notions of tight and loose coupling. What has been suggested by these data is that the larger organization, in this study represented by Student Affairs, for the most part, holds little direct influence over the roles mid-level managers create for themselves. This influence is thus somewhat passive, in that the influence is that which the mid-level manager interprets or imagines the organization to hold for him or her. The coupling between Student Affairs and each department is generally loose, at least when managerial behavior does not appear to be out of sync with the norms of the context. What makes this influence more overt and less passive is when the mid-level manager's behavior is significantly out of sync with the norms of the organizational context. That is, the coupling becomes tighter in times when behavior and context are out of balance and the organization is experiencing change, and looser when behavior and context are in more of a state of equilibrium. More than anything, these data suggest a further exploration of managerial behavior and organizational context.

### Directions for Research

As descriptive and exploratory, one of this study's intentions is to open directions for further research. Several directions can be identified that would extend this study or develop new possibilities for research that would contribute to understanding collegiate mid-level management.

One possible direction for further research relates to how this study can contribute to what we know about identity. Further study of the personal forces are important to this direction. As conceptualized in this study, the personal forces that influence role expectations were viewed as avenues through which role behavior is learned and roles are integrated into a role repertoire. While it is impossible to glean a complete picture of identity through studies of situated identity, such as this one, it is true that studies of situated identity provide brief glimpses into an individual's personal and social identity. Thus, I think that further study of these personal forces, as powerful shapers of roles, can provide important data for the study of identity. Thinking of personal forces in this way suggests that more focused questions ought to be developed to gather richer data that would contribute to further understanding the significance of these forces in shaping roles and, longitudinally, shaping identity.

In this study, there are several ways in which data gathering could have been more focused and less interpretive and speculative. For example, questions that would probe family influences on subsequent managerial

behavior would more fully shape and give more meaning to this personal force. Questions that would glean from the mid-level manager an understanding of how he or she perceived his or her family as having been managed and how that may have influenced personal management perspectives and practices would be helpful here. The same criticism holds true for educational experiences. As they experienced it as students, how did Ron and Barbara view higher education as an organization and how did those views influence their subsequent managerial role definitions? The questions should try to identify the lessons about appropriate behavior that were learned from family and from educational experiences and carried into managerial positions. Were the lessons ones that reinforced personal identity, that is, that stressed the importance of developing an autonomy from others, or social identity, that is, that stressed the importance of community and being a member of a community?

The most obvious research direction that emerged from this study is the relationship of gender to the roles that mid-level managers construct and enact. Ron's roles could be considered as very traditional, male-oriented roles. His view of higher education organizations was rational, that is, hierarchical and bureaucratic, and he was in charge of organizational directions. Barbara's roles, on the other hand, were more closely associated with a collegial, non-bureaucratic view of organizations. To what extent were these differences in views and constructed managerial

roles, attributable to differences in gender? While not a particular focus of this study, the differences between Barbara's and Ron's views and approaches were so dramatic and so stereotypical in terms of scholarship that addresses gender issues (e.g., Gilligan, 1982), this became a clear direction for further research.

Other potential research areas include a further exploration of the nature of proximate and distant forces in role construction, the relationship of organizational type to role expectations, and the relationship of role expectations to organizational culture and managerial success. Of particular interest are proximate and distant forces in shaping role expectations.

Proximate and distant forces were distinguished in this study because the data suggested that there were differences between the nature and strength of the forces that emerged from the mid-level manager's direct supervisory area and that from the division of which each was a part, in this instance, student affairs. The picture here is of nested contexts in which Ron's and Barbara's areas are nested within student affairs, which is nested within Paradox University, which is nested within the public university system of the state, and so forth. The further away from the core area, in this instance, the supervisory area, the less direct and more passive the relationship and, in all likelihood, the less forceful the influence on role expectations. There may be parallels here between research that addresses

organizations as nested contexts and Weick's (1979) notion of tight and loose coupling within organizations that I think can be explored through these proximate and distant forces.

Another area for research is the relationship between organizational type and role expectations. This study explored student affairs. Are there differences between and among student affairs organizations, academic affairs organizations, and administrative affairs organizations with respect to managerial role expectations? Finally, what is the relationship between role expectations, organizational culture, and managerial success? In essence, in what ways can managerial role expectations be identified from the norms of the organization and be used to predict managerial success?

One final direction for research to be suggested here also has implications for practice. Barbara's experiences highlighted a sense of anomie for mid-level managers that ought to be explored. She felt alone at Paradox and also believed that this loneliness was part of being who she was and where she was within the organization. Is Barbara an isolated case, or is there a general feeling of anomie among mid-level managers? As there exists with student retention studies, is there a model that can be developed to trace a mid-level manager's connectedness with the institution and be used to understand leaving and staying behavior? Further, how can this understanding be translated into practice to reduce feelings of anomie?



One possible direction for institutional practice that emerges from these questions is suggested in the next section.

### Directions for Practice

The case for the significance of this study was based upon its implications for further research given the dearth of scholarship that exists about mid-level managers and the importance of this level of technical administrative expertise to the higher education organization. However, this study also has implications for practice. The experiences of Ron and Barbara present a sense of what it means to be a mid-level manager in a complex university. Their stories recount the difficulties of their jobs and, at times, the loneliness of their positions. Barbara's story in particular highlights the struggles that new managers face when they come into an organization, are faced for the first time with multiple, mostly unfamiliar, areas to manage, attempt to meet the expectations of their staff members for leadership, and simultaneously meet the performance expectations of an institution to do well yet work within established rules (which are oftentimes unclear and constantly changing). From this scenario, the implications for practice gleaned from this study relate to professional development opportunities for new mid-level managers that are geared toward organizational socialization. How can institutions assist new mid-level managers in understanding the cultures of their institutions (in addition to procedures to follow), such that they begin to more fully

understand their places within them? More importantly, how can institutions provide mentoring opportunities for mid-level managers to reduce the feelings of anomie that were evident in Barbara's experiences at Paradox?

The development of a mentoring program for mid-level managers that would link more seasoned mid-level managers with newcomers or, perhaps even more senior level administrators with mid-level managers would seem important in reducing the feelings of being alone that emerged from Barbara's experiences. More than a single-session program, mentoring promotes the notion of manager as educator. It also encourages the development of a sense of responsibility on the part of veteran managers to look beyond their own administrative areas and assist their newcomer colleagues in understanding the organization and avoiding political potholes which could lead to unsuccessful managerial experiences.

The development of a mentoring program for mid-level managers is but one alternative for professional development practice that might reduce the anomie that emerged from this study. Others include the development of sound orientation programs for newcomers where they are introduced to the complexity of the organization, that is, what it is about and the prevailing procedural rules that exist and the systematic offering of programs that are intended to introduce mid-level managers to other organizational areas and to the people who work within them. Efforts such

as these provide mid-level managers with opportunities to see beyond their own administrative areas and to develop the organizational frame of reference that Scott (1978) indicated that mid-level managers often lack.

The directions for further research and practice indicated in this section represent merely a few of those that are possible. They do, however, represent areas that I think will lead to greater understanding of collegiate mid-level managers and assist this group in becoming more integrated into the cultures of their organizations. Thus, these directions will help contribute to what we already know about higher education organizations, approaches to management, the complexity of role definition, and how mid-level managers experience mid-level management.

## APPENDIX

### WRITING AND RESEARCH ABOUT COLLEGIATE MID-LEVEL MANAGERS

There is a paucity of research about collegiate mid-level managers and, in particular, their relationship to their organization. What work does exist seems to focus upon career mobility and organizational commitment. This is noted in Sagaria's (1986) review of research on Mid-Level Managers.

#### Sagaria's Review of Research on Mid-Level Manager Careers

Sagaria's (1986) review of research on mid-level managers begins by noting the importance and growth of this group of higher education employees. She indicated that

During the past two decades, mid-level administrators became essential for governing and managing higher education...

Concomitantly, their numbers increased exponentially. Between 1968 and 1976 the number of administrators in U.S. higher education grew nearly 150 percent. (p. 1)

Sagaria's review of research focuses upon the careers of mid-level managers and the implications for future research in this area. Her review posited three categories of research on mid-level managers. These were studies that focused upon describing profiles of mid-level managers, studies that described career patterns and mobility, and studies that had "a major emphasis on conceptualizing and testing theories about careers and mobility, career influences, and the consequences of career experiences" (p. 5).

Sagaria noted that forty percent of the studies were of the first type, forty percent were of the second type, and the remainder in the third category. However, Sagaria claims that the careers of mid-level administrators still remain largely unexplored and the major contribution of her review lay in the directions she poses for further research. She identifies five areas for further research. These include research that explores: 1) organizational structures and processes and their relationship to career outcomes for collegiate mid-level managers, 2) intra-organizational career patterns and mobility and takes into consideration current evidence that most job changes occur within institutions, 3) career development issues with a specific focus upon attitudes toward career and work, 4) intracareer analyses and comparisons using specific mid-level manager positions rather than generalizes across positions, and 5) new methodological approaches to incorporates qualitative methods (Sagaria, 1986).

In addition to Sagaria's work, there exist a few empirical studies of collegiate mid-level managers that are important. Scott's (1978) work set the stage for additional research on mid-level manager, but only a few have furthered his work. The work examined here are studies of mid-level managers identification and commitment with and to their organizations and careers.

Major Empirical Works on Collegiate Mid-Level Managers: Thomas and Austin

Thomas (1978) surveyed 245 mid-level managers at a major university. Of the 245 surveys disseminated, 148 were usable, representing a 60 percent return rate. Thomas studied the phenomenon of organizational commitment, which reflects the extent to which an individual works diligently and hard to help the organization achieve its goals. Mid-level managers who are committed to the organization are loyal and are often, according to Thomas, long-term rather than short-term employees. Thomas speaks more succinctly to organizational commitment and describes it as an attitude rather than anything more tangible. Organizational commitment, he says is:

an attitude which is commonly expressed through such behavior as long service to one employer and is typified by loyalty. Another behavioral characteristic of the attitude of organizational commitment is the willingness to expend effort in the achievement of the attainment of organizational objectives.(p. 36)

The significance of the study lay in its practical value for the design of staff development activities and programs. Thomas suggests that understanding organizational commitment will assist organizations in recruiting mid-level managers, understanding and developing management style, and in organizational planning and development.

In conducting his study, Thomas says he adopted a model of commitment originally developed by Steers in 1977. This model focused upon the antecedents to organizational commitment, such as personal

characteristics, job characteristics, and work experiences. Variations in these antecedents, it was hypothesized, influence outcomes.

Thomas' adaptation of the Steers (1977) model expands the unique variables in the antecedent categories, which included personal characteristics, job characteristics, and work experience; the organizational commitment category, and the outcomes category. According to Thomas, whereas Steers loosely identified personal characteristics as need for achievement, age, and education, job characteristics as task identity, optimal interaction, and feedback, and work experiences as group attitudes, organizational dependability, and personal importance, Thomas added dimensions to retrieve more specific data. His personal characteristics included whether or not the individual had experience within higher education, job characteristics were expanded to include categories such as position prestige as well as success and job satisfaction, and his work experience category expanded to examine goals and work issues related to the unit level as well as the parent organizational level. Organizational commitment examined intrinsic and extrinsic sources and, again, unit and parent organizational issues. The outcomes dimension for Thomas included items regarding desire and intent to remain as well as job performance.

The survey Thomas used consisted of four sections including a 63-item multiple choice scale to measure the sixteen variables in the antecedent conditions, the Job Description Index that measured job satisfaction, an

adaptation of the Ritzer-Trice scales that examined an individual's potential for remaining with or leaving an organization, and a measure of demographic information. The major findings of Thomas suggest that organizational commitment is stronger from intrinsic sources rather than extrinsic, salary level is a potential "weak link" in organizational commitment, prestige of both the unit and parent levels correlate positively with organizational commitment, as do position prestige, career alternatives, increased responsibility, and job satisfaction.

While Thomas' (1978) work focused upon the antecedents to organizational commitment with a view toward practical professional development programs, Austin's (1984b) work examined organizational commitment as a part of a much broader construct, that of work orientation. Her work built upon Thomas' in that she further refined the adaptation of the Steers model used to research organizational commitment.

Work orientation, as adopted by Austin (1984b), reflects the notion that mid-level managers believe, accept, and work hard to achieve organizational goals, and that there is strong a desire to maintain a relationship with the organization. Taken together, these characteristics reflect "the relative strength of an individual's identification in a particular organization" (p. 27).

Austin (1984b) expanded the categories of the antecedent and outcome variables in the Thomas model to replace the construct of



organizational commitment with that of work experience. The outcome measure used by Austin was that of general job satisfaction.

Austin's research design contained three stages: 1) interviews, 2) survey development, and 3) selected personal interviews. The sample included all administrators meeting the definition of collegiate mid-level managers at a major public research university in the mid-west. The total identified sample was 429 which, was in turn, adjusted to 417. The response rate of 60.9% reflected the return of 254 usable surveys.

Austin's major findings were that a large majority of the sample members felt strong commitment to both the university where they were employed and the particular position, although commitment to position ranked somewhat higher. As with Thomas, she found that intrinsic reasons seemed to be more important than extrinsic reasons for commitment, and that the majority of administrators in the sample were committed to either the University where they worked or the position they held.

Thomas and Austin have as primary concerns work commitment and satisfaction. Both studies point to the power of intrinsic reasons over extrinsic ones (e.g., educational background and professional interest versus salary) in the shaping of mid-level managers' commitment to work and the organization. Both studies also reinforce commitment to position over commitment to the organization.

These findings lend support to Scott's (1978) notion that collegiate mid-level managers are technical experts located within an organization they play little role in shaping, but are, in fact shaped. Austin's (1984b) and Thomas' (1978) research also suggests that mid-level managers, with their commitment to position over organization may hold little interest in shaping that organization. Thomas' (1978) work adds to the complexity by suggesting that such notions as the prestige of one's department or division positively correlates with one's commitment to the organization as opposed to merely position.

What these findings suggest is that the nature of work commitment, of the strength of one's identification to position, to the organization, or to one's career is a complex phenomenon.

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