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21st Century Javelin Catchers: White House Organization and the Chief of Staff

Molly Schwall

Cedarville University, mschwall@cedarville.edu

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Abstract

This research discusses the impact that White House organization has on the roles of chief of staff. The paper begins with an overview of the major models of White House organization and the roles typically performed by chief of staff. By examining the impact of organizational difficulties faced by the chiefs of staff in the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama through case studies, this research seeks to situate the major roles of chief of staff within White House organization to examine the impact of organization on chief of staff performance. The findings of the case studies suggest that the formalistic model of White House organization best serves the roles of chief of staff by providing clear, delineated lines of organization with specific tasks for White House staffing. The paper concludes by examining the presidency of Donald Trump and the organizational difficulties faced during the first year of his administration.

Keywords

chief of staff, white house, organization, barack obama, george bush, donald trump, andrew card, joshua bolten, rahm emanuel, william daley, jack lew, denis mcdonough, reince priebus, john kelly, president

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Molly Schwall
History and Government

Introduction

Presidents need help. The cyclical nature of the presidency means every four years, a president starts with a completely blank slate by which he can impose a new culture on the White House.[1] However, he cannot accomplish this task by himself. When presidents enter the White House, there are certain discretionary services that are needed by every chief executive, regardless of the coloration they take. How they obtain this help is up to the president's individual strengths and weaknesses, but there are three main areas in which White House staff serve the president (Buchanan, 1990). First, staffers help in pushing the president's agenda. In efforts to direct the presidential policy agenda, the president will rely on others to construct policy proposals, draft legislation, devise political strategy, interact with the media, vet political appointees, and influence Congress, among other duties. Second, the president relies on others to cope with the unexpected. Crises are inherent to the presidency, and often, presidents must make decisions that have long-term significance under time constraints and with imperfect information. In these situations, presidents often rely heavily on personal advisors as well as technical experts to justify the decision he is making. Finally, the president relies on others to transition into his position. Presidential scholar Bruce Buchanan (1990) writes, "In this sense, each new president is a founder. The White House Office is surely the most flexible organization in the executive branch of government." The president must rely on his staffers to fill the gaps that he cannot as one person. These needs vary based on the individual strengths and weaknesses of the president as an individual, but generally include accommodating personal quirks and providing moral and emotional support. A president's organizational system must accommodate the diversity of talent required to supply the necessary help.

At the helm of White House organization is the office of chief of staff (COS). The office of

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[1] Presidential scholar Bruce Buchanan explains, "The traditions of the office mean that each new president literally starts over, tabula rasa, imposing new procedures, new assumptions, and a new atmosphere, or culture. In this sense, each new president is a founder. The White House Office is surely the most flexible organization in the executive branch of government. Because of his personal role in achieving his station, his considerable constitutional power, together with the ongoing importance of his personal presence to success in office, each incumbent continues to exert a dominant, and highly idiosyncratic impact on how the work of the White House is done" (1990).

White House COS, pioneered by Sherman Adams, has been a permanent fixture in White House organization since 1953. Since its inception, the position has undergone considerable growth and evolution into the relatively stable institution that it is today. At the same time, each COS has considerable flux about his role in relation to the president whom he serves. A COS is the overseer and coordinator of the president's staff and is often described as primarily responsible for the success or failure of an organization whose purpose is to extend the power and reach of the presidency (Cohen, 2005). Clearly, the power inherent in this position is obvious. As manager of the decision-making system that is the presidency, the COS is in the best position to know what is happening across the entire executive branch, if not the entire government as a whole, more than any other individual.

This paper examines the major models of White House organization and its impact on the ability of the COS to perform his major roles. I seek to explain the way that White House organization evolved to meet the needs of the institutional presidency and focus on the individuals who served at the head of the White House organizational structure as COS. The office of COS is clearly a linchpin of the institutional presidency, but the individuals who inhabit it differ considerably in their talents, interests, backgrounds, and limitations to their work. This delicate balance requires a "structured agency" approach, situating the office of COS within "existing structures of organizational combat, institutions, and policy" (Jacobs and King, 2012).

Literature Review

Every president since Richard Nixon has relied on a chief of staff. The office of COS is burdened with the job of managing "the whole institution of the White House" by serving as a "systems manager: boss of none but overseer of everything" (Patterson, 2001). There is widespread scholarly consensus on the need for a chief of staff to manage the massive organizational operation in the modern White House. Given the time demands placed on the president, as well as increasing responsibilities placed on the White House post-New Deal, World War II, and Cold War, a COS is indispensable to the functioning of the White House (Pfiffner, 1996; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001; Cohen, 2002).

Role of COS

Cohen and Hult (2012) argue that the COS is critical to the overall success of the administration. The apparent need for a COS has led many scholars to study the roles of the position in an attempt to better understand the type of COS best suited to a presidency (Neustadt, 1987; Hess 1988; Buchanan, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Hart, 1995; Pfiffner, 1996; Burke, 2000; Sullivan, 2004). Cohen (2002) defines four main roles of COS: administrator, advisor, guardian, and proxy. These four roles are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive but tend to encompass the main responsibilities of the position (Cohen, Hult, and Walcott, 2016).

Administrator. The most basic responsibility of the COS is to act as an administrator or coordinator of the White House (Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Buchanan, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993; Cohen 1997; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001; Cohen, 2002). They are responsible for coordinating the entire White House and are often blamed if things go awry (Cohen and Hult, 2012). Coordination is defined by Kernell and Popkin (1986) as: "providing the

president with information, relaying messages to those in the line agencies, maintaining the president's calendar, giving him technical advice when he solicits it, and generally performing whatever duties a manager could reasonably ask of a factotum." The size of the White House demands that someone must oversee the organizational process—failure to do so will be disastrous. Chiefs of staff must ensure that the policy process is functioning well, ensure that the president is not overwhelmed with paper flow, regulate access to the Oval Office, and manage the president's time (Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Buchanan, 1990; Pfiffner, 1993; Cohen 1997; Cohen and Krause, 2000; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001; Cohen, 2002). A COS who fails as an administrator will often lead to avoidable mistakes that reflect poorly on the president himself. However, a COS who is an expert administrator produces a well-running White House that "holds people accountable and speaks with one voice" for which the president can take public credit (Sullivan, 2004).

Advisor. The COS also serves as a policy and political advisor to the president (Buchanan, 1990; Cohen, 1997; Kemell and Popkin, 1986; Pfiffner, 1993; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001). While most chiefs of staff insist that they are neutral policy brokers (Kernell and Popkin, 1986), the COS has strong influence as an intimate advisor to the president in a tightly knit inner circle of senior staff. Even when chiefs of staff are intentionally not advocating for a position, their judgements about policy and politics will be influential (Cohen, Hult, and Walcott, 2016). The exact importance of the COS as an advisor is highly dependent on the relationship that he has with the president; all chiefs of staff are not created equal. Further, a COS who has experience and policy acumin will almost certainly be a trusted advisor by the nature of his knowledge (Cohen and Hult, 2012). However, a COS who abuses his advisor position by shutting out opposing viewpoints will find himself without many friends in Washington.

Guardian. The next role of COS (and the role that makes the COS unique to the modern presidency) is that of guardian. While a variety of White House staffers can provide management of processes and political advising to the president, the COS alone must act as guardian or protector of the president. This role often includes distasteful tasks, such as disciplining and firing administration personnel, saying no to political elites seeking favors, acting as a lightning rod for criticism of the administration, and mediating disputes within the White House and among Cabinet members (Buchanan, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Kernell and Popkin, 1986; Patterson, 2000; Pfiffner, 1993; Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2001; Cohen, 2002). The COS must protect the president, even at their own expense.

Proxy. The final role for the COS is that of proxy. COS often acts as a stand-in for the president in a range of activities, including meeting with members of Congress, speaking before constituency groups, or pushing the president's agenda on the media circuit (i.e., Sunday news shows). Since the Reagan administration, most chiefs of staff spend considerable time working alongside Congress on major legislative and policy matters, particularly budget negotiations (Walcott, Warshaw, and Wayne, 2003). While many members of Congress often prefer communicating directly with the president, they usually accept the COS as a messenger to convey official administration policy preferences. The extent of any chief's proxy involvement may reflect a president's lack of interest in engaging in these actions, strategic presidential time delegation, or a growing demand for

presidential presence (Cohen, Hult, and Walcott, 2012). This involvement also takes into consideration the individual chief's skill, time, and relationship to the president. A COS is more likely to be viewed as a proxy if they are perceived to be close in relationship to the president and can accurately speak for the administration's policies.

White House Organization

There are three major models of White House organization (Johnson, 1974; Campbell, 1986; Hess, 1976; Buchanan 1990).[2] Research suggests that chiefs of staff, in addition to presidents, help to shape the organizational structure of the White House (Cohen 2000; Kernell and Popkin 1986). Both individuals sit at the top of the White House hierarchy and both steward the influence and power needed to change the organizational structure. Each management style is associated with costs and benefits that inevitably surface when a particular organizational structure is used. In practice, it is rare to find strict adherence to one management model. Many presidents use different models in different policy areas. These models closely coincide with Porter's (1980) classification of presidential advisement patterns, which are less concerned with the establishment of a certain organizational model and more interested in patterns of policymaking within the larger executive branch.

Formalistic Model. The formalistic model features a clear-cut division of labor and hierarchy of power, with particular duties ascribed to specialists (Buchanan, 1990; Walcott and Hult, 2005). The formalistic model can be found in presidential administrations such as Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, and G.W. Bush and feature a significant delegation of presidential authority to specialized staffers, including the chief of staff.[3] The formalistic model has several advantages. First, the model's emphasis on division of labor to specialized staffs tend to yield more thorough and a higher quality policy analysis than other models. The formalistic model is closely associated with the centralized management advisory style that requires White House staff to filter ideas and impose the imprint of presidential goals on all actions undertaken in the president's name (Porter, 1980). Second, the formalistic model allows the president greater flexibility in how he allocates his time and energy. Other models, which provide much freer access to the president, gain those benefits at a significant cost: the loss of presidential control over time and schedule. Potential disadvantages of the formalistic model include a tendency toward slow and cumbersome operations. Further, many scholars point to a lack of presidential accountability in the formalistic model because its tendency toward greater presidential isolation and delegation increases the amount of actions taken by others in the president's name, increasing the likelihood that some of those actions will be beyond the scope of the president's constitutional powers.

Competitive Model. The competitive model is marked by a deliberately open and informal

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[2] See Figure 1: Performance consequences of management styles. Source: Pika, 1988.

[3] The prevalence of Republican presidents using the formalistic model highlights the phenomenon of "partisan learning," defined as the "tendency to transmit organizational philosophy along party lines" (Hult and Walcott, 2004). Until the appointment of Hamilton Jordan as COS in the Carter administration, no Democratic president had a formal COS, opting instead for the collegial method of White House organization (discussed below).

division of labor that leads to competition among staff members through overlapping jurisdictions and organizational ambiguity. Also referred to as adhocracy, this model relies on the unsystematic use of individuals and non-routine channels to advise the president (Porter, 1980). The competitive model is highly diverse and thrives on outside input, both politically and technically. While only one president—Franklin D. Roosevelt—has ever used this model in the White House, there appears to be a resurgence of this style of management at the beginning of Donald Trump's administration in a White House marked by multiple factions of the Republican party (Pfiffner, 2017). This model benefits the presidency by fostering a creative tension that helps to produce new and innovative ideas. While the ideas are creative, the policies they produce are often less developed due to the emphasis on political feasibility over the best answer (Pika, 1988). Another benefit stems from the ambiguity of the organizational structure of the competitive method, in which the only source of resolution for the conflict that the competitive method naturally instigates is the president himself. This keeps the president involved and in control of the entire operation of his White House. The fatal flaw of the competitive method, however, is the fact that it places unattainable demands on a single individual (Pika, 1988). Few presidents have the accessibility and emotional stability required to be the broker of conflict that this model encourages.

Collegial Model. The collegial model, in which multiple advisors are directly accessible to the president in "spokes of a wheel" fashion, was used by John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter. Those who employ the collegial model aim to obtain the benefits of the formalistic and competitive model while avoiding the worst drawbacks. Using this model, presidents avoid a strong COS while maintaining an open-door policy to a number of advisors who specialize in different areas. The multiple advocacy advisement pattern is most closely correlated with the collegial model, an open system of decision-making based on the inclusion of competing views presented by advocates whose positions are coordinated by an honest broker—normally the COS (Porter, 1980). The collegial model allows for greater team-based problem-solving, and when functioning at its peak potential, it may represent the optimal response to the unpredictable nature of the American presidency (Buchanan, 1990). However, when the collegial model is not operating at peak functionality, the model runs risk of groupthink, when pressures for conformity cloud the decision-making process (Pika, 1988).[4] Even with its many benefits, many scholars caution against the collegial system because it places a substantial demand on the president's time and attention (Pika, 1988). Additionally, maintaining an environment in which individuals are free to work as a team requires intense interpersonal skills that few truly possess.

Historical Development
The advent of the modern COS roughly coincides with the dawn of the modern presidency.[5] Prior to Franklin Roosevelt, each president operated with only one paid, formal staffer. This arrangement continued until Congress empowered Roosevelt to add multiple

[4] Irving Janis (1982) coined the term "groupthink" by analyzing the effects of small-group solidarity in situations where stakes are high, pressure is great, and secrecy is important. The danger in these instances is that the group will develop the illusion of invulnerability, underestimate the enemy and chances of failure, and fail to reexamine their initial assumptions.
[5] See Figure 2: Chiefs of Staff, Nixon-Trump, 1968-2018

"administrative assistants" in the late 1930s, increasing staff size to about 50 (Hult and Walcott, 1995). A staff of this size was informally managed by Roosevelt and preceding presidents. Beginning in World War II, the size of White House staff exploded with the incorporation of some bureaucratic agencies into the executive branch (most notably, the Office of War Mobilization and Reconstruction). Dwight Eisenhower appointed the first COS at the advent of his administration. Eisenhower was accustomed to a formal COS in his former military position, so he appointed Sherman Adams to fill the job in his presidential administration. However, the initial innovation of the role did not immediately stick. Democrats immediately branded the role of COS as too formal and militaristic (Johnson, 1974). Democratic presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson did not use a COS, opting instead for a collegial model of White House organization that encouraged staffers to report directly to the president (Walcott and Hult, 2004).

Many scholars point to the Nixon administration as the first modern White House staff organization. Nixon built upon his experience as Eisenhower's vice-president to institute a system in which his COS (H.R. Haldeman) acted as a strong systems manager in the style of Sherman Adams, oversaw all White House operations, and reported directly to Nixon. Even still, the pattern of White House organization tended to reflect what scholars refer to as "partisan learning" (Hult and Walcott, 2004). The method that Republicans used to organize their White House was "wrong" to Democrats, and Democrats often took extremes to prevent the appearance of any form of staff hierarchy in their organization. President Jimmy Carter was the last president to attempt to govern without a formal COS, but toward the end of his first term, he caved to the mounting disorganization and appointed Hamilton Jordan as his COS. For the most part, this settled the scholarly debate about the need for a COS in the modern White House. It had simply grown too large and complex for the president to manage his staff on his own.

This does not mean that a formal staff hierarchy is not without its faults. Ronald Reagan's effective but factious "troika" and Bill Clinton's "spokes of a wheel" highlighted the complexities of having multiple staffers with direct access to the president. On the other end of the spectrum, Ronald Reagan's second COS, Donald Regan, and George H.W. Bush's first COS, John Sununu, were brought down by their strong gatekeeper tendencies. By strictly limiting access to the president, each COS failed to control the people or the processes in the White House, and ultimately, their overreaching tendencies led to their demise as COS. While the need for a COS was evident to all, the exact formula for success was elusive.

Case Study #1 - George W. Bush

Overview
George Walker Bush was elected as the 43rd president of the United States in 2000, after he defeated Democrat Al Gore in a contentious and controversial election that involved a recount in Florida. Eight months into Bush's first term, al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the United States, flying hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center in New York City. Bush's response was forceful, launching the War on Terror that included military action in Iraq and Afghanistan and created the cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security

(Freidel and Sidney, 2009). Domestically, Bush signed into law broad tax cuts, the Patriot Act, the No Child Left Behind Act, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, Medicare expansion for seniors, and began the presidential initiative PEPFAR, aimed at addressing the global health crisis of HIV\AIDS (Greenstein, 2009). During the 2004 presidential election, Bush won a second term by defeating John Kerry in another close election. After his re-election campaign, Bush faced significant criticism and low approval ratings during his second term for his role in beginning the war in Iraq. In December 2007 as his presidency was coming to a close, the United States entered a long recession, often referred to as the "Great Recession," that prompted the Bush administration to pass a number of economic programs intended to preserve the country's financial system.

Organizational Capacity - Bush

Many scholars predicted that Bush would organize his White House in the hierarchical model that he was exposed to during his father's administration (Walcott and Hult, 2003). However, the central inspiration for Bush's White House organization was not his father, or even Ford or Nixon. Instead, Bush harkened back to the "troika" model of the Reagan administration by installing two trusted advisors—Karen Hughes and Karl Rove—as equals to his COS, Andrew Card. It speaks well to Bush's organizational capacity that he launched his presidency with an impressively seasoned team of senior staffers. Bush's White House was, from the beginning, "well-disciplined, tightly organized, and extremely efficient" (Edwards and Wayne, 2003). As the first president with a M.B.A., Bush ran his White House like the CEO of an organization.

Andrew Card as COS

Choosing Card. Andrew Card Jr. was a close friend of the Bush family for nearly a quarter century and a former deputy COS in the G.H.W. Bush administration. Many scholars approved of the selection of Card as COS, particularly during the presidential transition, because of the significant White House and Washington experience that demanded the respect of many Beltway insiders (Ferguson, 2001; Cohen, 2002).

Office of COS under Card. Card was, arguably, the most prepared COS in modern history, having worked for seven previous White House chiefs of staff. He was organized and efficient, and he knew the interworkings of the White House. In a Bush White House, tempered by intimate political insiders such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, Card was even-keeled and steady-tempered in a way that balanced the egos of the staffers and provided balance for the president. Card was a constant presence in the Bush White House, in the room during nearly all significant policy discussion, including those relating to national security and foreign policy post 9-11 (McClellan, 2008). Card is widely viewed as providing much-needed experience, knowledge, and organizational skill to the G.W. Bush administration to produce a White House free of the organizational blunders so prevalent at the beginning of most early administrations (Cohen, 2002). The two main roles of COS that Card embodied were that of administrator and guardian. In an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*, Card explained, "There is only one power center—and it's in the Oval Office" (Kieferand and McLaughlin, 2001). Card was truly an extension of his boss. While his role of guardian was slightly complicated by the presence of other senior staffers who had access to the Oval Office (Karl Rove, Karen Hughes, Dick Cheney, etc.), Card

viewed his most important role as managing the president's time wisely. According to one journalist, Card fulfilled his role as administrator and guardian with a "unique mix of politeness and well-timed bluntness" that "lubricated the Bush operation with big doses of courtesy and candor, high expectations, and humility" (Kieferand and McLaughlin, 2001).

Summary and Departure. In March 2006, Bush was beginning to hear complaints about White House dysfunction. Over lunch in early 2006, a close confidant pulled out a pen and a napkin and sketched the organizational system of the White House. Bush writes in his memoir (2010), "It was a tangled mess, with lines of authority crossing and blurred...He told me that several people had spontaneously used the same unflattering term: It started with 'cluster' and ended with four more letters." After this conversation, Bush believed it was time for a change in COS. On April 14, 2006, Andrew Card stepped down as White House COS, having served in the position for almost five years and three months, the longest any COS has served to date.

Joshua Bolten as COS

Choosing Bolten. As a replacement to Andrew Card, Bush chose his Office of Management and Budget director, Joshua Bolten. Previously, Bolten served as the deputy COS for policy under departing COS Andy Card from 2001 to 2003.

Office of COS under Bolten. Immediately after Bolten's appointment as COS, he began to construct a stronger staff hierarchy. Card's organizational structure drew criticism after Karl Rove was reported to be playing a large advisor role in the president's foreign policy decisions, including forming and chairing the internal White House working group, the White House Iraq Group (WHIG). WHIG's main responsibility was to develop a strategy "for publicizing the White House's assertion that Saddam Hussein posed a threat to the United States." This working group was little known until early 2004, and when made public, drew intense criticism for Rove's handling of potentially classified information about the Iraq War (Arena, 2004). He solidified Karl Rove's position and provided boundaries by appointing him as deputy COS for policy, placing Rove directly under Bolten's command in staff hierarchy. Similar to Card, Bolten placed the most focus on his role of administrator, but unlike Card, he placed slightly more emphasis on his role as advisor, particularly as it related to national security and the burgeoning Iraq War. As administrator, Bolten restructured White House staff and advised President Bush on cabinet departures. In the midst of the Iraq War, Bolten believed that Bush was not being provided with enough diversity in opinion and undertook his role as advisor to share his viewpoint with President Bush himself. He explains: "I took it as one of my roles as chief of staff to say, 'I am the new guy here—but this looks very bad to me. I told the president I thought his apparatus was not serving him as well as it should, because he wasn't being given alternatives... I viewed it as my job as chief of staff to be the one to say, "Why aren't you giving the president better options?"

Summary and Departure. Bolten served until the end of the Bush administration in 2009. His tenure in the White House brought much-needed organization that had begun to wane under Andy Card. Further, Bolten was effective in countering some of Bush's personal weaknesses by providing a structured open-door policy that helped to counter the weakness inherent to Bush's closed-door, CEO-style organization that tended to alienate

members of Congress and White House staffers.

Case Study #2 - Barack Obama

Overview

Barack Obama served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 until 2017. During his first two years in office, Obama signed a number of landmark legislations into law, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform, and the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Obama inherited nationwide economic woes from his predecessor and passed a number of laws specifically related to economic stimulus, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and the Job Creation Act of 2010. In foreign policy, Obama worked to end military involvement in the Iraq War and ordered the military operation that ended in the death of terrorist Osama bin Laden, which brokered a nuclear deal with Iran and normalized relations with Cuba.

Organizational Capacity - Obama

At the outset of the Obama administration in 2008, some scholars were concerned about the organizational capacity of the White House, particularly President Obama's lack of experience in presiding over large organizations (Greenstein, 2011). Initial decisions about White House staffing, most notably the inclusion of a number of personal confidants as senior advisors in the White House, seem to reflect President Obama's desire to maintain a hierarchy while also ensuring that he was the final decision maker and his decisions were influenced by a wide range of opinions (Cohen, Hult, and Walcott, 2012). In a model self-described as a "collaborative hierarchy," President Obama maintained his final decision-making power while operating multiple specialized policy lines that allowed a variety of opinions to reach the Oval Office (Rudalevige, 2012).

Rahm Emanuel as COS

Choosing Emanuel. Emanuel was reportedly not Obama's first choice for COS. In October 2008, Obama reportedly asked former Clinton chiefs of staff Leon Panetta and Erskine Bowles, as well as his Senate COS Pete Rouse, if they would consider the position, and each declined. Eventually, the conversation turned to Rahm Emanuel. Obama and Emanuel were not close friends, but he did have Washington experience (particularly on the Hill) and a willingness to tell the president what he did not want to hear.

Office of COS under Emanuel. The challenges at the beginning of the Obama administration were profound, but so were the opportunities. In spite of the Iraq War and the financial crisis of 2008, Obama had big majorities in the House and the Senate that made many staffers optimistic about legislative success. Emanuel recognized this potential and set a laser-like focus on success. Emanuel was brash and profane with his subordinates in pursuit of his true passion—progressive public policy. In many ways, Emanuel was the ying to Obama's yang. He was the temperamental to Obama's calm, and the crude to Obama's professional. Emanuel maintained a high level of control over substantive policy processes that flowed through the Oval Office, but at the same time, multiple senior level advisors had independent access to President Obama (Cohen, Hult, and Walcott, 2012). The tension

between Emanuel and Obama's other closest advisors was palpable. In an interview, Emanuel described his relationship with Obama advisor Valerie Jarrett: "It's tough to have her around when you're trying to tell the president, 'Well no, I think this is wrong.' Because she's always there saying, 'Oh, yes, it's fine'" (Whipple, 2017). Arguably, the role that Emanuel devoted most of his time to was the role of proxy. In virtually all the major legislative battles that took place under Emanuel's tenure, he took the lead on negotiating and moving the legislature through Congress. As COS, he uniquely had a single-minded focus on the Hill. He began every day in the congressional gym, had lunches each day in his office with Congressmen, and even operated on a congressional calendar (Whipple, 2017). A 2009 Washington Post article noted: "The White House legislative strategy blends Obama's vision and salesmanship with Emanuel's granular political expertise and deal making skills" (Murray, 2009). Emanuel was highly accessible to the news media and willing to speak on the record on almost every issue of importance (Milbank, 2009). During his tenure, he was a regular on the Sunday news circuit and was generally viewed as speaking for the administration.

Summary and Departure. On September 7, 2010, Richard M. Daley, the mayor of Chicago, announced he would not run for re-election. It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Emanuel, and he leapt at the opportunity. On October 1, 2010, Rahm Emanuel resigned to enter the mayoral race in Chicago, Illinois. In two years as COS, Emanuel had achieved major success: passing a major economic stimulus, saving the auto industry, and beginning to put healthcare reform on track to become law. His success as a presidential proxy, particularly in the halls of Congress, is unrivaled by any other COS in modern history. However, during his tenure, Emanuel drew sharp criticism for his failure to be an honest broker with the president, acting instead as an advocate for his own personal policy preferences. Ultimately, despite Emanuel's successes, his brash personality was not a good fit in the Obama White House. When Emanuel made clear to President Obama that he was serious about leaving, Obama did not offer much resistance.

William Daley as COS

Choosing Daley. To replace Emanuel, President Obama turned to another Chicagoan, William (Bill) Daley. Daley had been President Clinton's Secretary of Commerce, Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign manager, and a JPMorgan Chase executive. Daley's hiring had a twofold purpose: first, build a bridge between the White House and the business world; second, install more discipline in the White House organizational process.

Office of COS under Daley. Daley's tenure was marked by a string of crises—the Gabby Giffords tragedy, a Japanese tsunami, and the Arab Spring. It was not long before it was clear to many that Daley was a bad fit for the Obama administration. While Daley attempted to maintain the rough organizational structure of his predecessor, he also installed more hierarchical processes in the White House and attempted to control access to the president more tightly. He canceled the traditional 8:30 a.m. staff meeting, leaving many staffers out of the loop, and barred key aides from other important meetings. Scholar David Cohen (2012) writes, "Daley's brisk, officious, corporate closed-door style has soured some White House staffers who think he's pinching Obama's access to his own people, depriving him of a wider variety of opinions at a time when coming up with creative

solutions to the country's economic malaise—and the president's political slump—are at a premium." Further, the president and Daley never truly clicked. Obama preferred advisors who could talk nitty-gritty details of policy, while Daley much preferred to talk politics or Chicago sports. After just a few months as COS, it was clear that Daley's authority was ebbing. Clinton COS Erskine Bowles said about Daley: "The key to success as chief of staff is being empowered by the president. When people saw that Bill Daley wasn't empowered, he was dead. You have zero power then, and you might as well just pick yourself up and go home" (Whipple, 2017).

Summary and Departure. On October 28, 2011, Politico published an exclusive interview with Daley, in which he described his role in the White House as "ungodly" and "brutal" and repeatedly berated key figures in the Obama administration, including his predecessor, Rahm Emanuel and Democratic majority leader Senator Harry Reid. Eleven days after the interview, Daley was demoted within White House organization, effectively serving as COS in name only. Managerial responsibilities were taken over by Pete Rouse, senior advisor to the president. In January 2012, Daley went to the president with his resignation, and the president accepted. Daley's tenure as COS brought much-needed organization to the White House, but he was never able to fully grasp the complexities of his role, which provided many challenges to the Obama administration overall.

Jack Lew as COS

Choosing Lew. After Daley's departure, Jack Lew was tapped to run the White House. Lew, the then-director of the Office of Management and Budget, was also a former senior policy advisor to Speaker of the House, Tipp O'Neill. AS OMB director, Lew and Obama had a close working relationship through their work on the stimulus package, the grand bargain, and the debt ceiling. At the time of his appointment, there were few people as compatible with the president as Lew.

Office of COS under Lew. Lew restored calm to a White House marked by the tumultuous reign of William Daley. Lew's main duties as COS revolved around the 2012 federal budget deal. In this capacity, Lew served mainly as an advisor and proxy. Lew was well-known inside the Beltway as a level-headed, data-driven bargainer, which was a valuable asset to the Obama administration during the contentious budget process. As proxy to the Hill, Lew always ensured that he was speaking for the president, not for himself.

Summary and Departure. Lew was brought on as COS in light of the impending budget deal, and he delivered on the result. While Obama hoped that Lew would stay on as COS, Lew was determined to become Secretary of the Treasury. If he could not get that job, he told Obama, he would return to New York and enter the business world (Whipple, 2017). On January 20, 2013, nearly a year to the day that he accepted the position, Lew resigned as COS. Shortly after, he was appointed by President Obama as Secretary of the Treasury, a role in which he served until the end of the Obama administration.

Denis McDonough as COS

Choosing McDonough. For his fourth COS of his administration, President Obama selected Denis McDonough, his deputy national security advisor and close personal friend. This selection reflects Obama's desire to work with people he knows and trusts, as well as a

stronger emphasis on foreign policy during his second term. Tom Daschle, friend of both Obama and McDonough, believed the two were a perfect fit: "I think Denis's style and approach is exactly what the president needed and wanted. Denis's style is really the president's style. They give each other strength. President Obama really benefited from Denis's common sense and judgement and ability to manage all the egos that exist in any administration" (Whipple, 2017).

Office of COS under McDonough. McDonough's tenure was marked with a number of scandals, including Benghazi and the IRS' targeting of conservative groups. McDonough balanced all four of the major roles of COS during his tenure but placed particular emphasis on his role of administrator and guardian. McDonough and Obama's relationship meant that McDonough was fiercely protective of Obama, which influenced his administrative capacity. Described by one journalist as a "guard dog with people skills," McDonough placed strong emphasis on protecting the president, but did so in a manner that did not make people feel excluded from the administration as a whole. McDonough's oft-repeated slogan, "One team, one fight" highlighted his administrative capacity as COS—all staff were working toward one "fight", namely, advancing the Obama administration's policies. There was no room for personal agendas under McDonough's command.

Summary and Departure. McDonough served until the end of the Obama administration on January 20, 2017. McDonough's tenure highlighted the importance of a close relationship between a COS and his president.

Discussion and Conclusion

The formalistic model of White House organization has proven itself to be robust over the course of the modern presidency, including at least two (Bush and Obama) in which they initially sought to modify the formal staff hierarchy. Both presidents took office and attempted to surround themselves with multiple advisors who had access to the Oval Office. In the Bush administration, Karl Rove and Karen Hughes accessed the president outside of the formal staff hierarchy that Andrew Card toiled to implement. When organizational lines began to wane, Joshua Bolten, Bush's second and final COS, placed Rove within the formal staff hierarchy and oversaw White House staff during a second term marked by the Iraq War and the financial crisis of 2008. As a whole, Bush's chiefs of staff placed the most emphasis on their roles of administrator and guardian during their tenures. In contrast, the Obama chiefs of staff, in varying degrees, placed a strong emphasis on their roles of advisor and proxy. Chiefs Emanuel and Lew garnered significant legislative successes during their tenures, including the auto industry bailout, healthcare legislation, and multiple budget negotiations. COS McDonough was also a valued advisor to President Obama during his tenure, particularly in the area of foreign affairs, an area of renewed emphasis toward the end of his administration. The Obama COS who placed the most emphasis on his role as administrator, Bill Daley, was largely ineffective in his role. As an administrator, he alienated staffers with his corporate closed-door style and was never fully integrated to the Obama administration's goals. While President Obama actively attempted to maintain a more open organizational system, by the end of his administration,

his last COS, Denis McDonough, maintained a much more formalistic model of organization by placing himself as the leader of Obama's "team."

Chiefs of staff who are effective in their major duties have a positive impact on the administration. This is not to say that each COS places an identical emphasis on each of their major roles. Different chiefs adapt their behavior to fit the needs of the president they serve and the major organizational needs of their White House. White House staff and organization should strive to complement the president's strengths and minimize his weaknesses. Regardless of personal style or preference, the White House needs a COS to impose order, advise on policy development, serve as a gatekeeper to the president, and settle staffing disputes that are not of particular presidential importance. Organizational styles that are too open in access to the president prevent the chief of staff from performing these roles effectively, forcing the president to be a mediator in issues that are not of presidential importance. Someone short of the president must be in charge, or the president will be overwhelmed. Therefore, the formalistic model of White House organization serves both the COS and the president by providing clear, delineated lines of organization that clarify the specific roles that each individual fills.

White House organization faces its next challenge under President Donald Trump. When the former real estate mogul announced his candidacy for president, many believed that he would run the White House like his own business. However, there are many ways in which a business is very different than the White House, and a near-constant revolving door of senior-level staffers suggests that the White House organization of the Trump administration is not nearly as effective as it could be. The particular style of organization that Trump is mimicking harkens back to the competitive model, used during the Roosevelt administration. President Trump has surrounded himself with individuals from a variety of Republican factions as senior level staffers. During the 2016 presidential elections, Trump often decried mainstream Republicans in favor of other factions of the Republican Party, including the business world and populist or nationalist groups. When staffing his White House, Trump seemed to intentionally select individuals from varying groups within the Republican Party and the right-wing populist movement. For example, the first months of his administration saw Reince Priebus, former Republican National Committee chairman, appointed as COS and Steve Bannon, executive chair of Breitbart News, a publication with strong economic nationalist leanings, appointed as chief strategist. Priebus and Bannon were bonded, politically or otherwise, by little except their boss. They had fundamentally different ideas about what the Trump administration should look like. The chaos inherent in this design is what the competitive model thrives on. It deliberately seeks to provoke conflict among different factions to provide the best possible answer to problems. However, the main weakness of the competitive model is that it requires the president to broker the diversity of opinions personally. Thus far in the administration, there seems to be a lack of interest in personally brokering the conflicts inherent in this type of organizational system. Without an honest broker, the system dissolves into chaos.

To make a change that is desperately needed in the current administration, however, organizational lines must be clarified. Throughout recent presidencies, we see that the longer a staff serves, the more organization moves toward a formalistic model of White

House organization. Current COS John Kelly seems to be desperately attempting to steer the Trump administration in this direction, but he cannot make this change by himself. The delegation of power to the hands of the COS inherently requires the tacit approval of the president himself, something that seems unlikely, given current reports about a strained relationship between President Trump and Chief Kelly. Another complication to White House organization is the family members that serve in the Trump administration, notably Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump. White House organization will be inherently collegial with the presence of family members who always have access to the president, regardless of formal organizational models.

Ultimately, no White House organization or COS will be a savior for a presidency that is inclined to chaos and destruction. Presidential scholar Bert Rockman explains: ""No system or organization ultimately can save a President from himself when he is inclined to self-destruct. And no system that a President is uncomfortable with will last" (Rockman, 1988). If presidents are not intentional in the means with which they organize their White House, their presidencies will be vulnerable to turmoil and their own agendas may be compromised.

FIGURE 1: Models of White House Organization

	Demands on President	**Quality of Policies and Decisions**	**Political Responsiveness**	**Response Time**
Formalistic	Low	Seeks "best" decision but may distort information; Gap between formulation and implementation	Poor; Runs risk of isolation and insensitive to views of bureaucracy	Slow
Competitive	High	Creative but policies are less developed; Emphasis on political feasibility rather than best answer	Good	Slow
Collegial	High	Comprehensive review, attention to both formulation	Good; Process mirrors reality	Rapid

		and implementation; Runs risk of "groupthink"		

FIGURE 2: Chiefs of Staff: Nixon-Trump, 1969-2018

Chief of Staff	Tenure	President	Party
H.R. Haldeman	1969 - 73	Nixon	Republican
Alexander M. Haig Jr.	1973 - 74	Nixon	Republican
Donald M. Rumsfeld	1974 - 75	Ford	Republican
Richard M. Cheney	1975 - 77	Ford	Republican
Hamilton H.M. Jordan	1979 - 80	Carter	Democrat
Jack H. Watson	1980 - 81	Carter	Democrat
James A. Baker III	1981 - 85	Reagan	Republican
Donald T. Regan	1985 - 87	Reagan	Republican
Howard H. Baker Jr.	1987 - 88	Reagan	Republican
Kenneth M. Duberstein	1988 - 89	Reagan	Republican
John H. Sununu	1989 - 91	Bush	Republican
Samuel K. Skinner	1991 - 92	Bush	Republican
James A. Baker III	1992 - 93	Bush	Republican
Thomas F. McLarty III	1993 - 94	Clinton	Democrat
Leon Panetta	1994 - 96	Clinton	Democrat

Erskine B. Bowles	1997 - 98	Clinton	Democrat
John D. Podesta	1998 - 2000	Clinton	Democrat
Andrew H. Card Jr.	2001 - 06	Bush	Republican
Joshua B. Bolton	2006 - 09	Bush	Republican
Rahm I. Emanuel	2009 - 10	Obama	Democrat
William M. Daley	2011 - 12	Obama	Democrat
Jack Lew	2012 - 13	Obama	Democrat
Denis McDonough	2013 - 17	Obama	Democrat
Reince Priebus	2017	Trump	Republican
John Kelly	2017 - Present	Trump	Republican

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