1-1-1995

The Clinical Sociologist as a Boundary Manager: The Case of University Administration

John G. Bruhn
Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg

Alan P. Chesney
The University of Texas at El Paso

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr

The Clinical Sociologist as a Boundary Manager: The Case of University Administration

John G. Bruhn, Ph.D.
Provost, Dean and Professor of Sociology
Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg
Harrisburg, PA

Alan P. Chesney, Ph.D.
Director, Human Resource Services,
Lecturer, Marketing and Management
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, TX 79968-0501

ABSTRACT

Managing conflicts at the interfaces or boundaries at the individual, group and organizational levels is an essential part of the job of a university administrator. As universities become subject to increasing external pressures, especially financial, administrators are called upon to reorganize, restructure and reallocate resources. These interventions substantially challenge academic administrators and the clinical sociologists who occupy these roles to utilize their skills as conflict and risk managers. This paper describes and discusses the experiences and observations of the authors as boundary managers in university settings.

Introduction

A few years ago, a symposium explored the careers of sociologists who had become university administrators (Dunlap, 1990). Sociologists who had become administrators were asked: why they had become administrators, what are the positive and negative aspects of administrative careers, what relevance sociology has to administration, and what relevance administration has to sociology.

The reasons the sociologists gave for becoming administrators varied widely, as did their experiences and degrees of success. Nevertheless, the sociologists who are or had been university administrators appeared to agree that they practiced sociology to bring about positive social change, and that their knowledge and skills as sociologists proved valuable when they were called upon to manage people; provide leadership and motivation; communicate goals, values and norms; achieve balance among competing interest groups; and facilitate understanding among members of diverse cultures and subcultures. (DeFleur, 1990; Garrity, 1990; Hill, 1990; Spanier, 1990; Zuiches, 1990). As Glass (1985) pointed out, whereas sociologists in the past have been more interested in studying organizations and organizational change than in facilitating them, clinical sociologists today increasingly are becoming organizational change agents.

The premise underlying the present paper is that university administration is sociological practice. The university is regarded as a social system, a natural laboratory in which the clinical sociologist is both a participant and an observer. Any social system has numerous boundaries or interfaces that must be managed for the system to maintain balance, vitality, and integrity. University administrators serve, to a great extent, as boundary managers. Sociologists in administrative positions in universities, particularly those who serve as division or department heads, deans, vice presidents, or presidents, spend the majority of their time managing boundaries. The purposes of this paper are to: examine the nature and role of the clinical sociologist as a boundary manager in a university; explore the types of boundaries to be managed; and suggest guidelines for managing boundary change and conflict.

The data for this paper come from the experiences, observations and reflections of the authors, the published literature regarding academic leadership and organizations, reports and symposia, and conversations with colleagues who are university administrators.

Boundaries Defined

Wilber (1981) points out that our lives are largely spent in drawing boundaries. Every decision, every action, every word is based on the construction, conscious or unconscious, of boundaries. Boundaries manufacture opposites, and the world of opposites is a world of conflict. Every boundary line is a battle line; the more entrenched the boundaries, the more entrenched the battles. Boundaries are perceptions; in actuality, the only boundaries are those we create.

Boundaries in organizations are difficult to define and locate because they are not visible. Often we know a boundary exists, only after we have inadvertently crossed it. Boundaries are important in an organization because they help separate its region of control and activities from that of the larger social environment as well as to circumscribe the roles and functions of people in the organization. Boundaries are a necessary part of life. It is not our intention to dispute their need or importance; rather, it is our intention to focus on the effective management of boundaries to minimize and prevent conflict that is unproductive.

Lawrence (1979:16) argued the case for "reasonable" boundaries effectively when he said, "both the wish for no boundaries and the desire to remain totally imprisoned within a boundary are expressions of 'madness' in that there is no desire to distinguish between fantasy and reality, to take authority for what one perceives, how one sees, and why one understands".

The University as a Social System

Organizational theory possesses many paradigms with which to provide conceptual frameworks, but these frameworks, when applied to universities, meet with mixed results. For example, universities have been compared with business corporations, government bureaucracies, and large foundations, and have been perceived as bureaucracies, normative organizations, organized anarchies, multiversities, loosely coupled systems, professional organizations, establishment organizations, and academic cultures (Harman, 1989). Getman (1992) suggested three special features of academic life: community, continuity, and polarization. Community is the bringing together of people in a common intellectual enterprise. Academic life is most rewarding when this capacity is realized. Students provide continuity in a university. The perpetual stream of consumers of knowledge provides the university with a purpose. So-

cial change helps to create polarization in a university. Diversity of opinion and open debate is encouraged and considered healthy for the organization. This facet of the university leads to polarization, conflict, and often, divisiveness and obstructionism. Yet, it is community, continuity, and polarization that make the university a protector of both change and the status quo.

The interplay between balancing change and stability provides the best rationale for viewing the university as a social system. Each of the interdependent parts of the system is sensitive to internal and external change, so that any perturbance affects the entire system. University administrators are both managers and instigators of change. Administrators are responsible for fairness and balance in the system. Most administrators encourage the management of change at the lowest level of the organization.

Problems common to the modern university involve disciplinary boundary crossings or violations of ethnicity, age, gender and disability. Straus (1984) states that boundary problems need a combination of interventions that cross different levels of the system. For example, a complaint of sex discrimination against a professor by a student or group of students requires a mixture of intervention strategies; counseling and legal advice for the students, an appeal process and legal advice for the professor, an investigation of the charges, a possible formal hearing, possible legal action, or other options, such as the option for the professor to retire. Sex discrimination is a university-wide issue although it ma involve only one professor in one department. University policies regarding student and faculty behavior, federal and state laws, and the rights of individuals affect all levels of the system. The university administrator in this example can act in many roles to both parties, i.e., advisor, counselor, arbitrator and guardian of due process. This example involves and has repercussions for all levels of administration: the EEO officer, department chair, dean, vice president, and president. A legal case, if it follows, can broaden administration's involvement to include the chancellor, board of regents, and attorney general's office.

Another type of boundary crossing is necessitated by the departmental form of organization in most universities. Students are clients of many departments; therefore, coordination is needed to manage cross-departmental linkages. This is achieved through standing faculty committees. Students must integrate the knowledge offered by each discipline, as well as manage the knowledge interfaces between related disciplines. Disciplinary boundaries often work against the interdependency

of faculty-student teaching-learning (Bell, 1982). The persistence of the academic department prevents faculty members from examining alternative ways of teaching that might jeopardize faculty specializations. Administrators often are the instigators and navigators of interdisciplinary degree programs and research efforts. In such cases, considerable debate often occurs regarding the primary home and department which will promote and tenure a faculty member.

Managing Boundaries

Unlike hierarchical organizations, universities are communities in which authority is widely shared. Shared authority means that shared boundaries are a continual source of debate and possible change. For example, in difficult financial times, administrators and faculty may debate the combining of departments or colleges to save money; in more affluent times, debates may arise regarding the elevation of programs to departments, or the creation of new degree programs. Interdisciplinary degree programs are classic examples of the sharing of authority. Cohen and March (1974) point out the tendency for one issue to become intertwined with a variety of other issues, and refer to this as "garbage can decision-making."

Figure 1 shows the range of types of boundaries encountered in a university. The scheme may differ to some degree in public and private

Figure 1
Examples of Boundaries and Their Regulation in a University
(adapted from Brown, L. David, Managing Conflict at Organizational Interfaces, Addison-Wesley, Menlo Park, CA, 1983, p. 26.)
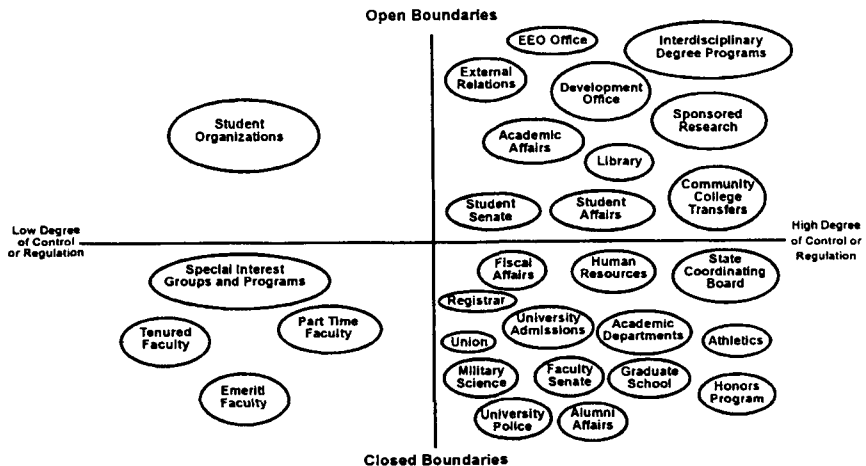
colleges and universities, but typically, most boundaries in universities are highly controlled, and many are closed. This is why managing boundaries in a university is so challenging. Cohen and March (1974) have referred to the university as an organized anarchy. Many separate and distinct entities protect their individual turf and advocate many different opinions. The challenge for the administrator is to keep "some people and units apart and get others together" to maintain a viable "whole".

University administrators must "sort the garbage" and continually remind the various constituencies involved in issues that academic freedom is a virtue, which should not become an obstacle in solving problems. A key function of the university administrator is to serve as a traffic cop, directing constituencies in order to minimize collisions and keep the traffic moving.

Table 1 lists ten common types of boundaries that university administrators encounter and the types of conflicts that can arise from them. The increasing diversity of universities creates change as well as reaction to change. As a result, boundaries constantly change. Even a slight change in boundaries, such as a revision by a new dean of college criteria for faculty promotion and tenure, can cause significant faculty upheaval.

The role of the university administrator is to anticipate, moderate, and guide change as much as possible. However, because there are too many boundaries to monitor preventively, the management of boundaries usually is reactive.

Handy (1994) points out that administrators, increasingly are asked to manage paradoxes. Universities are experiencing severe budget constraints, yet strive to remain progressive and competitive by developing new programs. Infrastructure may be meager, but student enrollment is encouraged to obtain additional formula dollars from the state. Universities increasingly are seeking outside funding; faculty members are encouraged to solicit grants and engage in research in order to be promoted and tenured, yet administrators recognize that the faculty reward system does not match the full range of academic functions, and that professors are caught between the obligations to teach, carry out research, and actively engage in professional and community service. There is a call for universities to "return to teaching" (Boyer, 1990). This paradoxical balance between present demands and future hopes must result in compromise.

Managing Perceptions

University administrators spend a great deal of time managing faculty perceptions. It is important for administrators to conduct reality checks with faculty periodically by attending department, college and

Table 1
Common Types of Boundaries and Boundary Conflicts in Universities

Boundaries	Boundary Conflicts
Physical Space	a department obtains a grant and needs room for expansion—an area belonging to another department is vacant.
Personal	grievances alleging discrimination in promotion, tenure, salary, admission, etc. because of sex, age, ethnicity, or disability.
Professional preparation and experience	criteria for membership in graduate faculty; limitation of voting in aca demic departments to full-time tenure track faculty.
Ethics	cheating, plagiarism, theft, research fraud
Union/Administration	faculty salary increases and faculty productivity.
Faculty/Administration	need to teach larger classes due to financial constraints and concern for quality.
Student/Faculty	grades
Faculty/Faculty	"rights" of tenured faculty versus non-tenured faculty
Administration/Administration	where to cut budgets
Special Interest Groups	requests for space and resources by Women's, Afro-American, Chicano, Gay and other groups.

faculty senate meetings and engaging in informal chats with faculty. Faculty morale has been shown to be correlated with perceptions of university finances, governance and general change (Birnbaum, 1992). A lack of information or misinformation creates misperceptions and ru-

mors. Considerable time can be spent by administrators in checking the reality of faculty perceptions.

Faculty generally are suspicious of or distrust administrators, especially career administrators. Faculty often forget that administrators with doctorates have a discipline, and view them as having deserted their field for the increased salary, prestige and power of an administrative position. Administrators, in turn, often feel that faculty members do not appreciate the difficulties of administration, its frustrations and satisfactions. Administrators who serve specified terms, or retire and return to the faculty to teach, report differing receptions from colleagues, some are welcomed and others scorned. As the governance of academic institutions becomes more complex and legalistic, especially in institutions with unions and collective bargaining, "the administration" is considered an adversary (Getman, 1992). Mismanaged faculty efforts are channeled into increased collective bargaining, retreatism, self-protectionism, and regression (Bell, 1982). The authors' experiences have been entirely in non-union universities. We would suggest that an examination of boundary issues in union versus non-union institutions would warrant a study in itself.

Hirschhorn (1988) states that people set up boundaries to contain anxiety. Real boundaries separate administrators from faculty; imaginary boundaries are formed on the basis of perceptions. Boundaries help make the world more predictable and organized. Administrators who do not maintain and manage boundaries clearly and decisively can create considerable stress and anxiety. Boundaries are defined, in part, objectively, by job descriptions, yet, it is the subjective aspect of boundaries which feed people's perceptions, that they act on, rightly or wrongly. Therefore, an administrator must continually check faculty perceptions and help to adjust or correct them to reality. For example, administrators may indicate dissatisfaction with an academic unit by withholding resources. However, that is not the only way, or the only reason, for changing resource support. A departmental chair who does not obtain approval to fill vacant faculty lines may perceive this as an indication of a negative attitude or decreased support of the department by the administration. However, vacancies may not have been approved because of a substantial decline in enrollment in the courses in that department and the need to allocate additional faculty lines to a department with increasing enrollment.

One challenge for administrators is to "unfreeze" erroneous perceptions of faculty in order to create positive change. Change must be per-

ceived by those it affects as an opportunity, not as a threat. The administrator is the likely target of anger and criticism when the status quo is disrupted and boundaries are threatened. Organizational change that involves a large number of people appears to be the least disruptive and most accepted. An administrator must be able to perceive difficulties, to have insight into himself or herself, and the culture, and to manage disruptive elements. As Schein (1992) notes, administrators must be able to manage the unmanageable and explain the unexplainable. They must shift from a win-lose defensiveness to a willingness to collaborate and cooperate in matters of common interest. Administrators as boundary managers help to find and facilitate such interest. For example, many universities are confronted with the problem of differential pay between disciplines, e.g. engineering and business versus humanities and social sciences. It is important for the university administrator to broaden the perspective of humanities and social science faculty who feel they should receive salaries comparable to those of engineering and business. The way to change perceptions is to help faculty understand the market aspects of establishing salaries. Merely pointing this fact out, however, will not in itself change perceptions. Presenting data from a national perspective and from professional societies will assist in acquainting faculty about the issues related to establishing salaries.

Managing Ambiguity

Ambiguity is present in all organizations. Kets de Vries (1980) points out the need for administrators and managers to find a satisfying balance between management *of* ambiguity and management *by* ambiguity. The latter, which is often a power-keeping strategy, can create a great deal of stress, anger and hostility in organizations. Most universities tend to occupy a middle ground between a high degree of structure and a high degree of ambiguity. Yet, the threshold level of ambiguity for individuals differs, and it is individual ambiguity that administrators commonly are required to manage.

Management becomes the skill of balancing trade-offs. The administrator must continually attempt to modify or reduce ambiguity and stress for individual faculty members and administrative units. Ambiguity in an organization is related to the adequacy of information to do a job properly. This can be applied both to role definition and to accuracy of feedback. Ambiguity and helplessness often result when information is missing (Kets de Vries, 1980). The administrator must have

his or her "ear to the ground" and be aware of unspoken as well as spoken expressions of frustration, anger, and apathy and of other indicators of dissatisfaction. Rules and regulations are used to reduce ambiguity; however, it often is the "gray" areas of behavior, which are not covered by rules and regulations, that require clarification by an administrator.

Managing Socialization

University administrators not only manage boundary problems or issues, they also manage the process of socialization of faculty members. Universities have life cycles and experience issues of growth, development, transitions, and decline similar to those of individuals, families and other groups. New faculty members give the university vitality and, like infants, need to be nurtured and socialized into the family. Simultaneously, the university is at some point in its life cycle. The socialization of new faculty is an attempt to assist them in fitting into the organization's life cycle. Orientation sessions and peer mentors are formal ways in which new faculty become acquainted with departmental and college boundaries. In many cases informal socialization is handled within departments and is usually the most important in the process of socialization of new faculty.

Individual (intra and interpersonal) level

Faculty members have to establish themselves as members of the university community, members of a disciplinary group or department, and as somewhat autonomous competent teachers and scholars in particular areas of expertise within their disciplines. In other words, individual faculty members have to establish their identity and establish the boundaries that will differentiate them from other faculty members. The first one or two years of a faculty member's employment at a university are key in establishing the unique culture of colleagueship. A common difficulty in the early phases of the socialization of new faculty members often revolves around their not "getting" all of the resources promised to them at the time of their job offer. For example, they may not have received computers, research assistants, or start-up funds. Often, the resolution of these problems involves the college dean and/or vice president for academic affairs. The new faculty in essence have not received the tools or resources to fully establish their boundary of expertise.

Managing boundaries between faculty members in the university system is a major job. New faculty members recruited into a department at higher salaries than older faculty members and given resources, often are the target of criticism by faculty members who have been at an institution for many years, whose salaries are below market level and who have outdated computers. A new faculty member with expertise closely related to that of other faculty members in a department might be viewed as a threat. Boundaries related to discipline specialization are carefully guarded in universities. Successful interdisciplinary efforts in research and teaching are found among individual faculty members and units who are usually senior, tenured and therefore, feel more "secure." It is often difficult to involve young untenured faculty in interdisciplinary activities because the path to achieving promotion, tenure and merit raises is less clear than it is when working within disciplinary boundaries.

Group level

Group membership in a department or in a university-wide group, e.g., Women's Studies, Black Studies, requires negotiating boundaries within which individual faculty members assert autonomy by testing group rules and norms. Leadership is often challenged, and power struggles are frequent until a new balance of power is established. Group boundaries are established and continually negotiated when new members join and old members leave (Schneider, 1991). At the group level, another boundary exists between fantasy and reality. Groups often operate according to fantasies regarding the groups' tasks. Sometimes the fantasies of individual group members interfere with a group's task and the leader's abilities are questioned, leading to an internal power struggle.

Organizational level

The university administrator must manage the "niches" of numerous organizations and units within "the academic side" and between the academic side and the other aspects of the university organization such as student affairs. Innovations or changes in academic or student programs, for example, may impact a range of factors from parking to library hours. Perhaps the area of the university that creates the most widespread and continual source of boundary readjustment is that of computer technology and services. A university computer center director not only has the challenging job of keeping university computer technology current with a limited budget, but must be able to anticipate and

plan for long-term university computer needs, as well as respond to the immediate and growing service needs of the academic, financial and other administrative components of the university. Often, when boundary problems arise and persist, computer center directors are blamed either for causing, or for failing to resolve problems to the satisfaction of all parties. Often, a change in computer center directors results, and the cycle repeats itself. Reorganizations in universities are frequent: departments are renamed, administrators come and go, each with a different organizational plan, and state budgets require reorganization due to downsizing. The role of the university administrator is to manage changing boundaries to preserve the integrity and coherence of the system while the system is responding to change.

Managing Conflict

Conflict often is seen as the opposite or extreme of competition. Conflict is not always destructive, but it often is, and usually involves crossing boundaries. Conflict within organizations can be seen from several perspectives of level and form. From an organizational level, there is an interpersonal form; two or more individuals disagree on some matter or issue. Conflict also can occur within or between groups, e.g., within a department, or between departments within a college. A third level of conflict exists within an organization, e.g., the Faculty Senate may conflict with the administration on an issue, or the university may conflict with the community or the alumni on an issue (Bostock & Haig, 1992).

A potent source of conflict in universities is the threat of territorial invasion or loss. The perception of personal and disciplinary boundaries is shaped by personal experience and the expectations of colleagues in other disciplines or the university administration. The office and research space occupied by a faculty member in a department are deeply ingrained indicators of status, prestige and power. The usual goal is to gain more space through the acquisition of grants and contracts and new positions. To relinquish space for any reason often is perceived as a threat to a faculty member's or discipline's importance or changing value. This often is the case when enrollment in courses or a discipline's majors decreases.

The invasion of the "emotional territory" of an individual or group also may be a source of conflict. The most obvious example in a university is the hiring of a new faculty member with the same expertise as a

current faculty member, especially in the same department. If the current faculty member does not have tenure, tension, anger and the possibility for open conflict is real (Bostock & Haig, 1992).

The authors have noticed a recent trend in universities to employ social science approaches to manage conflict. The development of Dispute Resolution Centers and ombudspersons on university campuses are two examples of how universities are profiting from conflict management research. It is not our intent to conduct an exhaustive review of the literature on conflict resolution; however, some key concepts developed in the 1970's and 1980's are important for university administrators to keep in mind.

First, conflict has both positive and negative aspects, it is neither bad nor good, it just is. Brown (1983) has pointed out that organizations may suffer from too little conflict as well as too much. The old assumption that conflict should be avoided is no longer useful. University administrators must be skilled both in promoting and reducing conflict as the situation demands. For example, the Director of Human Resources in a university may propose to collect data which will demonstrate inequities within the staff pay plan. Upper level administration may choose to ignore this potential problem and thus avoid conflict, or administration may encourage the data collection and establish a review process which will generate conflict and thereby result in needed changes in salary. The point is, if you don't go through the conflict, you don't get to the solution.

Second, Thomas and Kilmann (1974) have developed a typology of conflict resolution strategies to assist administrators in deciding which resolution method to use in which situation. Thomas and Klimann have found that there are two dimensions of conflict management: assertiveness and cooperation, which produce five methods of managing conflict. Identification of the five conflict handling modes and a list of situations in which each is useful follows:

Competing (high assertiveness and low cooperation)
      1. to be used when quick, decisive action is vital.
      2. to be used on important issues where unpopular courses of action must be implemented.

Avoiding (low assertiveness and low cooperation)
      1. to be used when the issue is trivial.
      2. to be used when others can resolve the conflict more effectively.

Accommodating (low assertiveness and high cooperation)
1. to be used when you are wrong
2. to be used when continued confrontation would only damage your cause.

Compromising (moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperation)
1. to be used when goals are moderately important
2. to be used when two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals.

Collaboration (high assertiveness and high cooperation)
1. to be used to find an integrative solution when concerns are too important to be compromised.
2. to be used to gain commitment by reaching a consensus.

Instructions regarding the appropriate use of these models have been developed by Fisher and Ury (1981) and Covey (1989). Fisher and Ury list four propositions for principled negotiation. 1) Separate the people from the problem. This proposition separates ventilation from problem solving and changes the focus of the conflict from people to issues. 2) Focus on interests, not positions. Positions usually state solutions to a problem. However, interests or needs are defined as the driving force behind positions. The most powerful interests are basic human needs: security, economic well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition, and control over one's life. 3) Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do. Using a brain storming session to invent options may generate resolutions that are effective in reconciling differences. 4) Insist that the result be based on some objective standard. If the parties agree on standards and procedures, it is possible for either or both parties to change position without losing face.

Keeping these four principles in mind will help an administrator approach conflict from a perspective which is likely to resolve the conflict to the benefit of the parties and the institution as a whole.

Covey (1989) has also developed techniques for conflict resolution which are incorporated into his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* The habits which Covey identifies as involving interdependence are: think win-win; seek first to understand, then to be understood; and synergy. Think win-win encourages us to start from the premise that there is a solution to conflict which neither party has thought

of and which will satisfy all parties. This premise grows out of an abundance mentality that encourages expanding solutions instead of limiting them. "Seek first to understand" involves a behavior change for many administrators. Start an interaction by listening to the other person. Just listen; after the person has stated his position, summarize accurately and then describe your position. The advantage of this process is it demonstrates concern and empathy for the other party. Synergy is the result. Synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In conflict management, synergy happens when the solution, which neither party started with, satisfies all parties. In many situations, synergy can be accomplished with less time and effort than other forms of conflict resolution.

Managing Change

One of the essential tasks of a boundary manager is to manage change. To manage change, the manager must anticipate and plan for risk—risk of conflict versus the risk of progress. Risk management is concerned with the identification, evaluation, resolution and prevention of problems that may cause loss, liability, or impairment to an organization and its members. As Stacey (1992) points out, not everything is knowable. Most administrative jobs are dominated by what we know. We know what outcomes we want to achieve, but we do not always know how to achieve them. In Stacey's words, we know the destination, but not the route. He calls for new mind-sets for managing the future ("frame-breaking" management). The long-term future of an innovative organization is unknowable, so Stacey suggests that administrators and managers intervene to draw boundaries around change, so that change can be directed, managed and used creatively to benefit the organization. Rather than help boundaries rebound from change and return to their former state, future administrators need to anticipate the opportunity of instability that change creates, to reshape boundaries to meet changing needs. Future change managers will need to be expert in the process of change, not the content of change. Therefore, it would be important for a change manager to have experience managing change at different levels of an organization.

There are many ways to manage risk, before or after a problem occurs. Common administrative interventions to manage risk include: reallocating resources, reorganizing formal structures, reframing perceptions, or redirecting the goals of units or jobs of individuals (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Some Risk Management Alternatives to Boundary Conflict
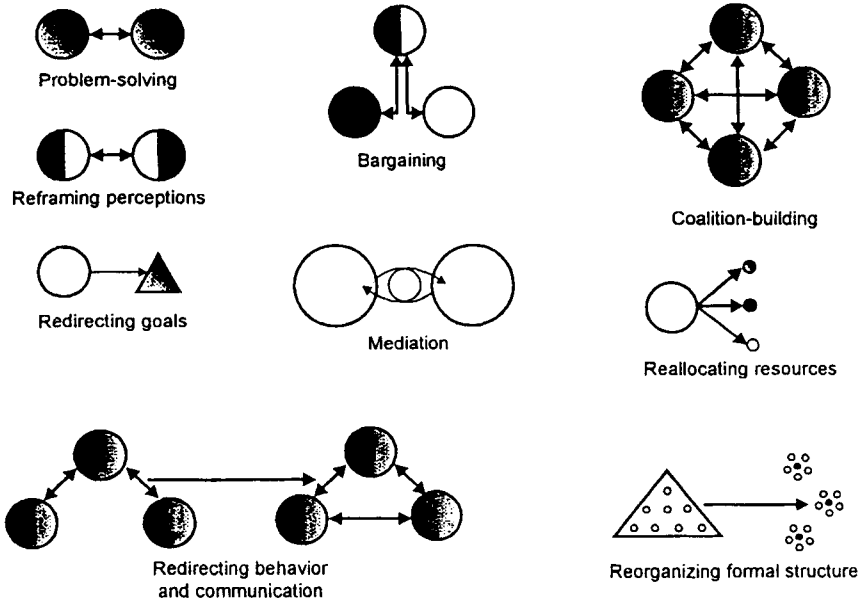
Interventions are interactions and usually more than one type of intervention is needed to correct or prevent a problem (Brown, 1983). Risk management may be targeted to specific issues, but it must be broader than the resolution of specific issues. Risk management involves articulating a definition of acceptable behavior or practice in an organization. Risk management is the management of boundaries, but the boundaries are explicit, agreed upon, and monitored by everyone in the organization, not only administrators.

Costs/Benefits of a Boundary Manager's Role

Why would anyone choose a career as a boundary manager? Boundary management is a part of everyday life. We are all boundary managers. Some are better at it than others. Some careers involve more boundaries than others. Institutions of higher education are comprised of islands of knowledge protected by disciplinary boundaries. While students can pick and choose, cafeteria style, what they wish to learn, the requirements for graduation or core curriculum seemingly ensures that

students will learn the basics and graduate with a well-rounded educa-
tion. The job of administrators is to manage the interfaces between these
islands of knowledge and encourage and facilitate inter-island collabo-
ration in teaching and research. This can be a very challenging and re-
warding role for a sociologist who possesses expertise in group behav-
ior. A sociologist who is a university administrator functions as a man-
ager, or broker of risk. The challenge is to minimize the risk of conflict
and maximize the risk of innovation, creativity, and progress.

Every role of choice possesses costs and benefits. Table 2 lists those
for a boundary manager. Much of the gratification and success of a bound-
ary manager will depend upon the social and psychological climate of
the organization, as set by the style and tone of its leadership. Boundary
managers can police boundaries or manage them. If an organization
chooses to be progressive and innovative, boundary management can be
an exciting challenge. Conflict will be a part of even the most ideal
work setting, but in a healthy organization, conflict is minimal because
everyone works to prevent it (Bruhn & Chesney, 1994).

Table 2
Costs/Benefits of a Boundary Manager's Role

Costs	Boundary managers may become the victim in boundary conflicts, e.g. power struggle
	Boundary manager must try to be "neutral"; loyalty is to the organization and not to the constituents, hence a lonely role
	Behavior difficult to change; Problem people difficult to displace
Benefits	Can resolve or limit some boundary conflicts and prevent others
	Can have broad perspective of an organization and hence innovative ideas for change
	Can influence events at interface
	Can create coalitions, networks and influence the direction of groups and organizations

Implications of Sociological Practice for University Administration

University administrators are confronted with reduced resources, conflicting priorities, and increasing ambiguity. Given this situation administrators need to approach these problems with a perspective which includes a range of knowledge about individuals, small groups, and complex organizations. The ability to integrate levels, as one approaches a problem is necessary in arriving at successful solutions. The sociologist combines this broad perspective with specific skills of data synthesis, clinical intervention, conflict resolution, and change management which will be the hallmark of success in the future. Skills of the practicing sociologist will be more valuable in the management process of doing more with fewer resources. For example, expansion of university activities will require co-operative degree programs, reallocation of resources, and reorganization of both internal and external boundaries. These challenges fit the expertise of the clinical sociologist.

REFERENCES

Bell, J.L. (1982). *University organization: A matrix analysis of the academic professions.* New York: Human Sciences Press.

Bostock, W.W. & Haig, R.A. (1992). "The management of conflict: Psychological, organizational and cultural factors." *Philippine Journal of Public Administration,* 36 (2), 159-169.

Birnbaum, R. (1992). *How academic leadership works.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate.* Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Brown, L.D. (1983). *Managing conflict at organizational interfaces.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bruhn, J.G. & Chesney, A.P. (1994). "Diagnosing the health of organizations." *Health Care Supervisor,* 13 (2), 21-33.

Cohen, M.D. & March, J.G. (1974). *Leadership and ambiguity.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people: restoring the character ethic.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

DeFleur, L.B. (1990). "Sociologists as administrators." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2), 265-274.

Dunlap, R.E. (1990). "Introduction to the symposium." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2) 255-263.

Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Garrity, D.L. (1990). "Reflections on administration." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2), 275-288.

Getman, J. (1992). *In the company of scholars: The struggle for the soul of higher education.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Glass, J.F. (1985). "Understanding organizations and the workplace." In R.A. Straus (Ed.), *Using sociology.* (pp 81-99). Bayside, NY: General Hall.

Handy, C. (1994). *The age of paradox.* Boston MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Harman, K.M. (1989). "Culture and conflict in academic organization: Symbolic aspects of university worlds." *Journal of Educational Administration,* 27 (3), 30-54.

Hill, R.J. (1990). "On being a sociologist within a university's administration." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2), 289-294.

Hirschhorn, L. (1988). *The workplace within: Psychodynamics of organizational life.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Kets de Vries, M.F.R. (1980). *Organizational paradoxes: Clinical approaches to management.* London: Tavistock.

Lawrence, W.G. (Ed.) (1979). *Exploring individual and organizational boundaries.* New York: Wiley.

Schein, E.H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership,* 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schneider, S.C. (1991). "Managing boundaries in organizations." In Kets de Vries, M.F.R. and Associates, *Organizations on the couch: Clinical perspectives on organizational behavior and change* (pp 169-190). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Spanier, G.B. (1990). "Higher education administration: One sociologist's view." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2), 295-300.

Stacey, R.D. (1992). *Managing the unknowable: Strategic boundaries between order and chaos in organizations.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Straus, R.A. (1984). "Changing the definition of the situation: Toward a theory of sociological intervention." *Clinical Sociology Review 2,* 51-63.

Thomas, K. & Kilmann, R. (1974). *Thomas - Kilmann conflict mode instrument.* New York: Xicom.

Wilber, K. (1981). *No boundary.* New York: New Science Library.

Zuiches, J.J. (1990). "Sociology in agricultural administration." *Sociological Perspectives,* 33 (2), 301-311.