INNOVATIVE POLITICS IN DEFENSE OF INNOVATIVE EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A FACULTY'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

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BEGINNINGS

Opportunity and Entrepreneurship

Southwest Minnesota State College was authorized by the Minnesota legislature in 1963. It opened in the fall of 1967 as a "Liberal Arts/ Technical College." The Charter President of the institution, in an interview conducted in early 1973, described conditions in the mid-1960's as follows:

> ...and the legislature was very receptive at that period of time to providing funds for this college. I would say it related to a lot of other things, or a lot of other factors that came into play that allowed us to put the facilities together...the biggest problem we had, and also the biggest advantage we had in putting the institution together, came as a result of the instability that existed because of the turnover of people within the State College System, the department of administration, and the executive offices of the state. We went through a process in which we've had a complete change in the leadership of the president's offices of each of the other colleges during this period of time, which provided a vacuum in which we could operate. There would have been four chancellors of the Minnesota State College Board during this period of time. There had been four commissioners of administration of the state.

> There has been a turnover of almost two or three times on the board itself. There had been three governors of the state in a short period of time. And, as that is taking place, it does open up an opportunity for an aggressive institution to propose what it has in mind and to solicit support that way....[1]

The Charter President has been described as an academic entrepreneur and he himself recognized that he played an entrepreneural role in the development of the institution. He was very successful in securing funds from the legislature; during the earliest years of the institution, the legislature made direct appropriations for the college. In the setting that he described, the Charter President maneuvered to provide the maximum fiscal support for development of the new college. But he, and others in his administration considered quantative growth--in enrollment, buildings, faculty and staff--as proof of success.

"Empire Builders" and Internal Entrepreneurship

It is useful to distinguish two forms in which the entrepreneural ethos may be found in higher education. First, there is the old style entrepreneur whose spirit and style is represented by the Charter President. Opportunities to display and use this style are nowadays rare in an over-bureaucratized, over-rationalized higher education. Secondly, there is the exercise of the enterprising spirit within institutions in what is colloquially called "empire building."

The pattern of behavior denoted by the folk term "empire builder" is one way in which individuals may make a career in higher education. In the process of borrowing the term I have used it to denote a social type which, in the Southwest case at least, has two sub-categories. I shall

refer to these subtypes as the Benefactor and the Departmental Aggrandizer. Both types of empire builders, as part of their careers, usually become department chairpeople or heads of divisions, and therefore careers of these types are dependent upon a divisional and/or a departmental system of academic organization.

The Benefactor

One way to pursue an academic career is by participation in a patron-client system. Such systems are propagated to new institutions of higher learning by persons who arrive on the scene early and seek to reproduce a structure with which they are familiar and in which they have prospered. Developing a career within such a system is itself a form of enterprise.

I use the term patron-client system to designate that situation in which a Patron or Benefactor plays a significant role in the internal politics of an organization, especially in decisions about the allocation of resources and opportunities, and his clients (a softer word would be protegés) render loyalty and support in anticipation of continued or future rewards.

Loyalty in such situations is not solely a matter of coldly calculated self-interest. Personal ties are frequently developed. Clearly, however, all parties to the relationship are in the process of more or less self-consciously promoting each other's careers. Melville Dalton has referred to similar systems of influence and loyalty as "vertical cliques."[2]

The reader will recognize that this system is very common in higher education. In a small college, if the Benefactor has a number of clients, such a system is also a political bloc within the institution.

The Departmental Aggrandizer

A significant distinction between this pattern and the patron-client system is that support for the enterprising leader is based more upon the

perceived convergence (often temporary) of individual interests than upon the loyalty and continuing relationships which characterize patron-client systems. Seemingly, Aggrandizers feel less obligation to advance the careers of those whom they lead in the interest of perpetuating a system of succession. At Southwest, aggrandizement as a form of leadership was most pronounced in the business area from about 1970-71 onward; and in the teacher education area from about 1970 on. In a growing institution devoted primarily to undergraduate education, this form of the enterprising spirit will find its primary outlet in recruiting as many students as possible for the department and in seeking to obtain additional teaching positions and additional space and funds to build programs. Career success seems to be defined in terms of growth of the department, or perhaps of a division composed of related departments. General studies curriculum, contributions, if any, to interdisciplinary programs, student advisement, ancillary requirements for majors; all are considered in the light of the goals of growth and departmental aggrandizement. Career advancement for this type of leader consists either in going to larger or more prestigious institutions and repeating the process there or in moving into the ranks of higher administration.

In many colleges and universities, coalitions, often temporary, between two or more such leaders, and their supporters, provide either the basis for working majorities on curricular and other decisions, or the basis for veto groups whose capacity to block action must be taken into account. The interest groups thus formed must be appeased before anything can be done. In the beginning, this system of politics was not fully in place. However, like the patron-client system, it too was in the process of being propagated to the new institution.

Idealism and Assertions of Uniqueness

The administrator most strongly committed to establishing a program of open, innovative education at Southwest was the first Dean of Faculties. He has been described by a charter faculty member as an "educational philosopher."[3] His educational philosophy was, as he saw it, derived from American pragmatism.

The Charter Dean, a number of charter faculty members, many members of the charter class, and many additional faculty members who came in the first few years after the opening of the college did attempt to make Southwest a distinctive institution. I have selected quotations from a document entitled "Recommended Emphases for the Academic Program" written in early winter of 1967, to illustrate the idealism of that period. This document was prepared by the Dean.

> Southwest Minnesota State College will:
>
> 2. Narrow the gap between research and the classroom....*
> 4. Build college programs upon the academic and physical profile of the entering student....**
> 6. Consider education as primarily a process within the student....

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*No. 1 was "Develop international exchange program for students and faculty." (The Dean had previously been at the American University at Cairo, Egypt.)

**From the beginning, the college was planned to be accessible to the physically handicapped. This too was considered innovative and recruiting brochures emphasized this fact. There is no special course of study for handicapped students, however. There are academic and physical support services. Such students are, and should be expected to pursue regular courses of study.

8. Search for a new definition of "contact hours"....

10. Help students achieve an overview of their education.

    Develop interdisciplinary courses, utilize team teaching, provide instructional resource materials, permit flexible class assignments, give a senior seminar in each major area to help lead students to an overview that will relate their education to larger knowledge....

13. Emphasize flexibility in curriculum.

    Allow majors in a single subject, a division, or in an area of concentration that might cross divisional lines....

14. Establish and work to preserve a college organization that is circular rather than hierarchical....

16. Encourage faculty dialogues across [sic] interdisciplinary lines.

    Handle intra-disciplinary conversations electronically and mix disciplines when assigning offices, so that one's immediate neighbor comes from another academic area....[4]

Material sent to newly appointed faculty members included the statement that there should not be "artificial status distinctions between students and faculty." This egalitarianism was also supposed to apply to the relations with support staff such as secretaries. Promotional materials and statements in the early catalogues emphasized the "openness" of the curriculum and the flexibility of the institution in general. The desirability of interdisciplinary orientations was emphasized and re-emphasized.

The following quotations from early catalogues are presented in order to give the reader some sense of the way in which the college presented

itself to students and prospective students. The following quotation is from the statement of Philosophy of the Humanities Division in the 1968-69 catalogue:

> History shows that man has been and is capable of horrendously ignoble acts, but he is also capable of magnificent nobility; it is this nobility in the student that the Division wishes to underline. The eighteen-year-old is 'bursting at the seams with vitality and life'; teachers here will not deflate the student.[5]

This is from an introductory description of the aims of academic affairs which appeared in early catalogues:

> The college of today can best serve its mission by 1) presenting clearly the central concepts of the liberal arts, and 2) relating these concepts to the values, experiences, feelings, and concerns of its students and to the way in which students learn. In this context, the key values of the past must establish their worth with today's students. This point of view in no way interferes with the college's commitment to establish a challenging program based upon rigorous demands.
>
> A meaningful relationship between traditional concepts and students' values will emerge when strong affective, intellectual, and psychic commitments relate the traditional and the new for both professors and students alike. This approach to the liberal arts is not a plea for an anarchy of values; rather, it is a recognition of the need to involve the student in a

> consideration of his intellectual and cultural heritage in order to help him discover for himself its values for the problems that he faces.[6]

The two areas of the college which supposedly embodied the emphasis on new forms of education were the Instructional Resources Center (and particularly the Random Access Dial System); and the interdisciplinary courses. The former was the President's special interest; the latter, the Dean's.

The Division of Instructional Resources, which included the library, provided a Random Access Dial System in conjunction with the standard telephone network. This system, which could be dialed from any campus phone, and from private off-campus phones, had available 90 thirty-minute programs on tape, twenty-four hours a day. There was no limit to the number of individuals who could listen to any single program at one time.[7] Professors and students prepared programs for the system, and students frequently dialed these programs when blizzard conditions resulted in the cancellation of classes. Many faculty never used this system, some misused it, and it was eventually dismantled because of its expensiveness and because of reduced usage.

Two required interdisciplinary courses were developed. One was a three quarter series called "Ideas in Flux"--the first quarter to be "taken simultaneously by all freshmen." The other was "Human Relations"--originally conceived as a means of helping students confront and work with the emotional dimensions of the learning process.[8]

The "Ideas in Flux" course consisted of an examination of the questions: "What is man?", "What is Reality?" and "Perennial Questions: Good and Evil", with one quarter to be devoted to each topic. The course was not to be the special property of any discipline. In the early years, each faculty member was expected to teach this course. Human Relations and the Flux course were supposed to be the core of a growing interdisciplinary program. Other courses were developed which had a somewhat interdisciplinary nature. Examples include

an introductory social science course and "Great Ideas in Mathematics."

Data from interviews, as well as my own recollection, suggest that many faculty members took the claims of innovation and interdisciplinary orientation almost at face value. A number of liberal arts faculty who came to Southwest, came in part, because of their excitement about these interdisciplinary courses. Those who were primarily interested in the supposed interdisciplinary orientation of the school came to Southwest in pursuit of careers quite unlike the more conventional careers pursued by those committed to a specific discipline.

The Generalists

One way in which an individual may pursue a personally chosen career within academe is to dedicate his/her efforts to the cause or ideal of reform in higher education. Such individuals may reject conventional career goals. Until recently, at any rate, there have been no commonly understood, socially designated, stages in such careers. At Southwest, some of these people referred to themselves as "Generalists."

Recognition as a generalist, appears to be quite rare in higher education; and in such cases, recognition is largely honorific. Some people came to Southwest in order to pursue careers as generalists or interdisciplinarians. They were attracted by the opportunity to teach "ideas" courses such as Ideas in Flux. They were encouraged by the preliminary statements or the statements in early bulletins.

At an early stage, however, the college became committed to a divisional-departmental structure. Significantly, this structure did not include a division or department of interdisciplinary studies. Interdisciplinary studies were coordinated through the Dean's office by an assistant who had a position, on paper, in the education division. This was the result of competition for resources in a situation where almost no one, except the Dean, was planning for interdisciplinary studies.[9]

The Failure to Build a Structure to Implement the Ideals

Despite the assertions of uniqueness, the college did not develop the kind of organization which could support the more ambitious aims of those committed to experimental or interdisciplinary programs. As noted above, there was no academic unit which was specifically responsible for either General Studies as a whole or the interdisciplinary courses.

The second significant failure was the apparent inability of charter faculty and administration to take seriously and to implement the idea that the college should have an organization "that is circular rather than hierarchical." "Circular" is not a very specific descriptive term. Presumably, the Dean hoped that the institution would have a cooperative and egalitarian organization rather than a hierarchical one. It is significant that this point was missing in all formal publications describing either the aims of the academic program or the goals and practices of Southwest generally, although most of the other recommendations were incorporated verbatim. In a way, the failure in the early days to work systematically at developing any governance system is understandable. Interview data indicate that personal relationships were relatively egalitarian, though decision-making was not. All parties, administration, faculty, staff, and students felt themselves to be pioneers.

The college opened in the Fall of 1967, amid a frantic surge of energy by carpenters and others to finish closing in the buildings and get the heating system in operation before winter came. Students who were to serve as Resident Assistants arrived early, the first of more than five hundred "pioneers." They swept construction debris out of their doorless rooms, and took showers at the homes of faculty members and in a nearby motel. There were forty-four faculty members. In two years, by the Fall of 1969, there were approximately one hundred ninety faculty members and twenty two hundred students.

The Dean noted, in 1972, that it had been a serious error not to have

an intensive introduction to the college for those faculty who had newly arrived.

> I think this was the greatest growing pain that the institution had--the third year--1969 to 1970. For what I consider now as very poor reasons, we did not structure a directive faculty planning session at that time to lay out what we know about the institution. Instead we took on an approach whereby we just had them discuss the situation where they really didn't have too much knowledge about the development. We wanted to get away from imposing ideas on them and we wanted them somehow to discover things for themselves. Well, I think that if there was ever a time for a directive approach for a period of about five days where we just layed out "cold turkey" what had occurred, and as much of an explanation as we could about why it had resulted in the situation in which they found themselves. Then turn them loose for exploration...but instead they had to find out by raising questions and not getting answers. That made them think 'people don't know what is happening here.' We could have told them that and we could have told them why we don't know what was happening.[10]

Academic Citizenship

Because there were few clear answers to questions raised by faculty members, and because there was a strongly felt need for some organized body which included the whole teaching faculty, but perhaps mostly because it was necessary to set up a grievance procedure for faculty members who were

being terminated by the administration, the Faculty Forum* was founded, by faculty members, in the Winter of 1969-70. Almost all "faculty," including many persons who did little if any teaching, participated in the Forum.

Divisions and differences were at once apparent. For example, the Social Science faculty who participated in the forum adopted a critical stance almost from the beginning. Since most of the Southwest faculty were relatively young, and since many had participated in various battles with administrators on other campuses, an adversary relationship was almost inevitable. Despite a vague egalitarian idealism, there was no mechanism to involve most faculty members in overall policy planning or policy decisions, and it was evident that a small group of "insiders" were involved in such decision-making.

Everett Hughes has pointed out that one may have a career in an avocation as well as, or instead of, in a vocation.**The common avocation of many professors in History, Social Science, and of some in Science or Humanities, is academic politics and faculty governance. Persons who have such avocational careers in addition to their regular work may be referred to as "academic citizens." Such careers are especially available in new institutions, and perhaps people from other disciplines are more apt to be attracted or perhaps "pulled" towards such activities simply as a result of the need to develop some governance system and put it in place.

If a "collegial model" of academic governance is to be produced or reproduced on a new campus or at a new institution, persons with the "academic citizen" orientation must be the ones most active in its development and maintenance. Benefactors and their clients will also play a

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*This body was later renamed the Faculty Assembly; still later it became the Faculty Association.

**My use of the concept "Career," throughout this paper, is generally based upon the work of Hughes and his students. More specific citations will be found in the conclusion.

significant role. Some "clients" will modify their career orientations and become "citizens."

Academic citizens willingly serve, at considerable personal and professional sacrifice, on committees directly concerned with the fundamental business of an institution, such as the curriculum committee. In the past, such types have frequently been recruited, or promoted by others, for administrative positions--in part because they are seen as "respected by the faculty" and not "just administrators."

These faculty members, more than some of their colleagues, are committed to the ideal of faculty autonomy, and to the concept of a self-governing community of scholars. In issues involving governance, they seek to build coalitions or constituencies around particular issues or principles. Such faculty members are frequently committed to traditional disciplinary orientations as well as to traditional conceptions of academic governance. They regard themselves as watchdogs against administrative high-handedness.

The Activists

The faculty assembled at Southwest was relatively young. They were of diverse geographic and graduate school backgrounds (although there were significant exceptions to this generalization in some divisions of the college). Most were attracted to Southwest because it was new, and for many, apart from newness, the fact that it was not a former teacher's college gave it superiority over the other colleges in the Minnesota system. One faculty member, whose attitude was not unusual, commented that it was exciting to come to a place that was trying to introduce something different, to provide an alternative to teacher's colleges in the state system.[11]

The faculty were committed to teaching, though a surprising number also did research. Faculty were definitely interested in better and more informal relationships with students, in marked contrast to the aloofness,

formality, and even indifference which were so bitterly complained of in American higher education in the 1960's. Some, particularly in the Social Sciences, had been campus activists or had in other ways been involved in the social movements of the 1960's. They hoped for an activist college and for the opportunity for politically relevant and engaged practice of their disciplines. These people, and some colleagues in other disciplines, did not necessarily expect that the development of Southwest would be free of conflict between administration and faculty. They did not seek such conflict, but they did not avoid it in a "naive" belief that a new college could be built on the basis of consensus.[12] These faculty members formed an important component of the group whose behavior pattern I have typified as "academic citizenship." They may be designated the Activists.

The Southwest Milieu

There was an atmosphere of intense excitement at Southwest from the early days on into the early 1970's. The Humanities and Arts area included a number of very gifted and creative individuals. Courses in Humanities, Social Science, and Teacher Education were offered which were "experimental" in the sense that everyone involved regarded them as a departure from conventional course offerings at other colleges and universities. In those days, it was considered important that the curriculum be kept open for such offerings. The following quotation, taken from the description of the "topical colloquia and open seminars" section of the course listings for Sociology and Anthropology, serves to illustrate the efforts made to keep the curriculum open:

> The colloquia and seminars are to serve the important function of keeping this curriculum open for the creation of special and experimental programs

> of study. Students and faculty will be encouraged to initiate special courses and topics of study so that together they may work experimentally and creatively to build upon the curriculum of this program.[13]

Other programs also had such "open" courses for experimentation.

Many disciplines offered credit for independent study. Some work was done by the tutorial method. Off-campus internships, in many fields, were an early development, although supervision and evaluation were sometimes a problem.

Perhaps, however, the formal innovations at the school were ultimately of less importance than the overall atmosphere of creativity and freedom. For example, in the Spring quarter of 1970, art students turned the top floor of an as yet unfilled dormitory into studio space. Drop cloths were put down over the carpeting and individual dorm rooms with south windows became studios. Many students worked at night. Eventually, students began sleeping in "their studios" and the whole floor became a kind of artist's quarters, with very little supervision by faculty and little or no interference by custodial or student affairs staff. A charter class graduate recalls this period as the most creative and happy time of her four years at Southwest.[14]

Classes, particularly late afternoon or night classes, frequently met in students' rooms or apartments, dorm lounges, or faculty members' homes. In general, there was easiness, informality and personal warmth between faculty and students. Many parties were both faculty and student parties. In some areas, particularly the Social Sciences and Humanities, friendship networks developed which included faculty, students, and sometimes staff workers. There was almost a sense of family among the students, faculty, administration, and staff in the charter group. This spirit survived, in smaller groups, for some years. The "underground newspaper,"

founded in the Spring of 1968, went through many incarnations under several names, but was renamed The Family in 1970 because, as one contributor put it, "we were a family by that time."[15]

Effects of Student Activism

Any re-examination of efforts to establish alternative education in the late sixties and early seventies must take account of the effects of the war in Vietnam. Anti-war activism is relevant to this analysis because of its effects in bringing together students from different segments of the college, and its tendency to produce a general atmosphere of crisis. Furthermore, in the Social Sciences at least, considerable energy was expended that otherwise would have been devoted to analyzing the potentialities and problems of the developing institution. On the other hand, part of the intellectual excitement of the times came from the fact that growing numbers of people were in a position of explicit opposition to the government and, on campuses, were engaged in a critique of the legitimacy of all forms of hierarchical control.*

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*It seemed, moreover, that the State College Board was actually responding to the spirit of the times, and to the movement for decentralization and more participation in governance. Faculty, students and administrators were engaged, in 1971-72, in setting up a governance system under the 1971 State College Board Rules and Regulations. These provided for participation in governance from all components of the college. It seemed, at the time, that such a system might have the effect of decentralizing authority on the campus. At Southwest, a major political issue was the presence of large numbers of administrators and student affairs staff in the faculty component of the governance structure.

Expressive actions and occasions for statements of value positions (marches and rallies) created a sense of solidarity among people from diverse segments of the Southwest community, and reinforced solidarity where it already existed. At the same time, this situation also sharpened tensions between activist and conservative faculty, and between students and activist faculty on the one hand, and the administration on the other.

The general spirit of distrust of authority did have negative effects in that it made it difficult for a number of students and faculty members to trust anyone who appeared to be associated with "the establishment." This included the Dean, who was attempting, at times ineffectively, to provide academic leadership at a time when most higher administrators were concerned with public image, building construction, or legislative relations.

Southwest was established as a new school in a town of not quite ten thousand. The town was, in some respects, quite conservative. In this context the anti-war activities, and other expressions of divergence from "mainstream" values, disturbed many townspeople. This, in turn, evoked a response in a number of faculty members that can best be described as anxiety.

Student affairs staff conducted simulation games and encounter group activities that involved students, resident hall directors, some faculty, the local police chief and the police captain. Relationships formed on these occasions later proved valuable as tensions between town and college increased--a result of growing anti-war protests. It must be said, however, that these advantages were not readily recognized by some administrators. These workshops were held after there had already been demonstrations, but before the biggest ones and the mass arrests which came in 1972.

Many have argued that so-called "campus unrest" led to a partial and temporary, but nevertheless real, hostility toward higher education by significant elements of the general public. This, in turn, stimulated

some persons in positions of responsibility to emphasize the establishment a managerial ethos on campus; and to seek ways of increasing the ability of administrators to more effectively "control" their campuses. Certainly, there was a desire on the part of legislators and others for greater "efficiency."

It the late 1960's and early 70's were a period of experiment, innovation, and search for alternatives, characterized by both activism and creativity; they were also, though less noticeably, the years in which the bureaucratized management of public higher education was consolidated and made operational. The new college on the plains of southwestern Minnesota did not escape this trend. The impact of the trend was apparent by 1971, although its implications for Southwest were not yet clear to the campus community.

"EXTERNAL FORCES"

An End to Autonomy

In late April of 1971, as part of the self-study process required for accreditation, a consultant visited Southwest to advise the administration on "external relations". The area of concern was relations with the State College Board and particularly with the Office of the Chancellor.[16] The consultant's report summarizes the reorganization of the State College Board and the new orientation and growing power of the Chancellor's Office. The consequence of these changes is apparent when they are contrasted with the situation described by the Charter President in the statement quoted at the beginning of this paper.

In the mid-1960's, the Minnesota State College Board office was directed by an executive secretary whose primary job was to collect data and serve the clerical and secretarial functions for the Board. The

executive secretary's staff was quite small. Because it is a succinct summary of changing patterns of control, the consultant's report is quoted at length:

> During the initial years of the formation of the college and for the first year or so after it admitted students, the operation and guidance of the college was almost entirely within the control of the president and his staff.
>
> About three years ago, _____was appointed Chancellor and immediately gave entirely new direction to that office. His staff has been enlarged perhaps six-fold and he has been given line responsibility by the State College Board for the operation of the state college system. This is well shown by an excerpt from a statement entitled "Operating Principles Governing the Administrative Relationship Between the Office of the Chancellor and the State Colleges." This statement was approved by the Chancellor's council, whose membership includes the presidents of the state colleges, on October 14, 1969. The excerpt is as follows:
>
> 1. The State College Board holds the Chancellor and his staff accountable for the successful functioning of the Minnesota State Colleges as a System of legally equal, unique, co-operating institutions of higher education.

> The Board holds the President of each College and his staff accountable, through the Chancellor, for the successful operation of his College, including the offering of all educational and related programs and activities approved for the College.

Many problems appear to have arisen in the implementation of this policy. The Chancellor has established Vice-Chancellors in five areas as well as a Director of Information Systems and a Director of Development Program Budget. The Vice-Chancellors have frequently operated in a somewhat autonomous manner, calling meetings of the college officers responsible in the respective areas of interest, and arriving at joint decisions concerning which the presidents often have not had prior knowledge. Concern has been felt by some of the administrative staff and faculty at Southwest Minnesota State College that the decisions arrived at by the Finance and Budget Committee, for example, which is under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor for Administrations,...require actions on the part of a state college which may be inconsistent with its mission and purpose. They feel that such decisions might prevent the college from implementing in a proper manner at least a portion of its mission.[17]

The consultant goes on to describe his own varied experiences as an Ohio legislator, as chairman of a State Board of Regents, and as a University vice-president. He says that this had led him to "certain conclusions regarding the overall direction of higher education." He says his experience as an accreditation consultant-examiner has reinforced his view.

> I believe it is inevitable, as higher education enrollments expand and the number of dollars appropriated for public higher education increases, that there will be increasingly greater centralized control of higher education....I believe it to be preferable that increased central control be given to a board with an appropriate educational officer as its staff head than to have the controls written into law by a legislature.[18]

The consultant is here describing the effects, in education, the long-term trend toward rationalization of all the institutions of modern society. The completion of the bureaucratization of higher education is contemplated with something close to equanimity, and in the closing sentences of the report the officers of a new institution are told to adjust to the new reality.

Bureaucratic Functionalism

One purpose of this paper is to show how this trend of ever increasing centralization of control in higher education has made it impossible to maintain experimental and innovative education, in the absence of a sizeable surplus of funds and an ever increasing number of students, at Southwest. More specifically, at Southwest the expansion of bureaucratic control and the imposition of bureaucratic procedures not only foreclosed options but caused a revolt that was far-reaching in its consequences.

All definitions and discussions of bureaucracy and modern administration

are indebted to the work of Max Weber (who is often mentioned but whose warnings are not taken sufficiently to heart); so too is the following definition by Peter Blau, who writes that bureaucracies are "institutionalized methods of organizing social conduct in the interest of administrative efficiency.[20]

It is ironic, but not coincidental, that the successful establishment of bureaucratic control took place during, the period of, a renewed debate in the United States over participation in academic governance and during an attempt by students and faculty to reconsider the goals and purposes of higher education. As this was going on, a system of administration was being prepared for higher education. That this system was not simply a reaction to developments of the late sixties is shown by the fact that plans for statewide coordination of higher education go back at least to the 1950's.

Otto Feinstein has documented and discussed the establishment of bureaucratic functionalism in higher education. Bureaucratic functionalism is now the mechanism for decision-making and allocation of resources within state systems of higher education. As Feinstein points out, this clearly includes determination of values and selection of goals.[21] Decisions on all allocations in such a system are ultimately based on cost per credit hour of instruction and cost of space per square foot.

Feinstein has described the series of steps through which this new structure has been developed:

> 1) a report on higher education for a given state; 2) the establishment, or where it already existed, the redefinition of a statewide

> higher education bureaucracy, which is then charged with the implementation of the report; 3) the conscious elaboration of defined roles for each institution. This structure was made functional by the manner in which the legislature was to appropriate funds...out of this process came the three-tiered higher education pyramid--community college, four-year college, and university. 4)...the evolution of a centralized accounting system based on the credit hour as the measure for educational cost and the square foot per student place cost for capital outlays. The credit hour achieved the status of a common language or code within the entire higher education system... The state higher education bureaucracy, the legislature, and the administration of the individual institutions wanted information in that language. Despite warnings from the originators of this language against its unqualified use in inter-institutional and interdisciplinary comparisons, it became the language of comparisons...<u>warnings that such a calculus meant a redefinition of education and that the accounting system would eventually be considered</u> as the education process went unheeded....Efficiency could now be measured, rationality was strengthened.[22]

Feinstein goes on to describe two additional steps. 5) The language was operationalized by introducing the notion of cost and allocation formulas.

6) The introduction of program budgeting at all levels. Feinstein notes that now traditional concepts must, in many places, be defended in terms of credit hour production.[23]

> Unlike the previous steps, which were made possible by prosperity, step six is occurring at a time of scarcity in higher education and has the power of a rationing system with the implied right to squeeze out inconsistencies and inefficiency. The transition from traditional to rational has taken place.[24]

This is the system that was applied to Southwest, beginning in about 1972. The changed context in which Southwest existed in the Spring of 1972 may be summarized as follows: It had become increasingly clear, to administrators at least, since early 1971, that key legislators and the Chancellor and his staff were going to insist that Southwest conform to the formula budgeting which was used for the Minnesota State Colleges. It was also, by 1972, fairly apparent that total enrollments at Southwest were not going to continue to increase and, in fact, would likely be smaller than the 3,100 students enrolled in 1971-72.

Southwest had been built for an eventual enrollment of around 4,500 and the charter administration, seemingly, had not conceived of the possibility that the institution's mission and unique character could be threatened by the combination of declining enrollment and the imposition of formula-based allocations.

Application of a credit hour funding formula, in this case a full-time student/teacher ratio of 19 to 1, effectively killed any hope of maintaining an experimental liberal arts/technical college at Southwest. It turned the internal politics of the school into a war between factions competing for students and funds.

The consolidation of line authority in the Chancellor's Office gave the Chancellor the means to punish Southwest for its resistance to the application of these formulas. The plea that the institution was different, and new, was ultimately ineffective.

Few faculty in higher education believe that a process of education is reduceable to this kind of quantative language. The consequences of the application of purely quantative criteria to a new institution, whose faculty thought of it as different, and thought that it should be treated differently, was an internal civil war; then a rebellion by that faculty.

Perhaps the people in the Chancellor's office saw themselves at that time as engaged in gaining control over an institution which had been too independent. They probably felt it necessary to demonstrate to the legislature and to other state colleges that the emerging bureaucracy was in control of the system it was supposed to preside over.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUCCESSION

The Costs of Entrepreneurship

It was at about this time that the institution began to experience the negative aspects of the entrepreneural method of building a new college. Three aspects of this situation must be mentioned: 1) Southwest had been overbuilt. Projections of enrollments of 4,000 to 4,500 by the mid-1980's had been misleading, and such projections were undoubtedly done without sufficient consideration of the likelihood that population trends apparent in other rural areas of the United States would become increasingly apparent in southwest Minnesota also. 2) The "bigger is better" ideology characteristic of entrepreneural ambition. The President once said that if he had had one more year of dealing directly with the legislature, he would have gotten a Fieldhouse.* He didn't get the fieldhouse, but his freewheeling tactics resulted in criticism by some state legislators. 3) Accumulated resentment and pressure from other state colleges.[25] Faculty and administrators in other state colleges felt that the building of Southwest had deprived them of money and students. Some said this quite bluntly as they became acquainted with Southwest faculty members at meetings of the statewide Inter-Faculty Organization. The effects of this resentment contributed to the increasing pressure that was brought to bear on Southwest to conform to the formula budgeting process. At Southwest, the phrase "external forces" was used, by administrators, to describe these pressures.

Southwest was also going through the process of self-study in preparation for accreditation. Southwest was accredited in November, 1971. In retrospect, it appears that the resolution of some issues having to do with formula-based allocations were postponed by the Chancellor and the local administration until after accreditation. Indeed, it was only after accreditation that

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*This remark is now part of the Southwest folklore.

the larger problems of the institution received much attention from faculty. The faculty was preoccupied with other problems. One of these was the relationship between the Division of Engineering Technology and the rest of the school. A few faculty, mostly in areas other than technology, had viewed the Southwest experiment as an opportunity to confront the split between the two cultures: science and technology on the one hand and humanities, arts and social sciences on the other.

It must be noted, however, that the interest in interdisciplinary understandings and in a dialogue between technology and the humanistic disciplines and theoretical sciences was more one-sided than many had anticipated. Almost from the beginning there was a gulf between the technical component of the college and the rest of the school.*

Members of the faculty who were in technology were, with some few exceptions, a group apart. Some of these colleagues had not anticipated and, in practice, resented the extent to which liberal arts faculty set the tone of the place. The natural sciences faculty did not always find the technologists natural allies. Business, education, and to some extent physical education, were the other areas which were, in some respects, outside the developing "core group".** There were differences among humanities,

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*There was, for a time, one course, "Technology and Society," which was team taught as an interdisciplinary course and later offered as a technology course. In time, the course was enlarged to a three quarters sequence but it has ceased to be interdisciplinary; that is, it no longer offers much opportunity for liberal arts perspectives on technology.

**In early catalogues and organization descriptions, Education and Physical Education were considered part of liberal arts. The division was between liberal arts and "the technical unit." The head of the technology program had the title of "Associate Dean."

science, and social science as well.

Local and External Problems as Parallel Processes

At the same time as the problems between Southwest and the state system continued to grow, the reaction of the people in the area to reports of continuing racial conflict also damaged the school. In 1970-71, there were more than sixty Black students at Southwest. The people of the surrounding area had had very little, if any, contact with Black people before the opening of the college. They did not know, in fact, that they were prejudiced. Some leading business people did not even realize the inappropriateness of the phrases "colored boys" and "colored girls" for the very period when Blacks were proudly asserting their identity as black, and when even the youngest Black student, quite properly, read a traditionally racist meaning into terms like "boy" and "girl". On campus, there were numerous conflicts, mostly minor, but having a cumulative effect.

The administration's response to the problem was to try to soothe and reassure the people in the town and surrounding area, not to educate them. This approach continued even after a temporary building, which served as a student center, was burned down in the winter of 1971.

The reduction in federal funds for student financial aid--sometimes interpreted as the Nixon administration's punishment of higher education for opposing the war--probably also had its effect. Enrollment peaked in 1971-72 and thereafter began to decline. Enrollment decline and anticipated enrollment decline became, shortly after this period, the basis for the demand that Southwest reduce the size of its faculty.

In the spring of 1972, the Dean of Faculties--by that time the title had become Vice-President for Academic Affairs--left Southwest to accept the presidency of a private college in Pennsylvania. In the fall of 1972,

the Charter President announced his resignation, to become effective on May 1st of 1973. An influential division chairman, who was a leading Benefactor, became Acting Vice-President, and the search for a new president began.

The fear of racial conflict abated (mostly due to a sharp decline in Black enrollment). Anti-war demonstrations declined with the approaching end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But a new and more serious "negative factor" emerged as articles about Southwest and about educational planning began to appear in the Minneapolis Tribune. By 1974-75, there were reports questioning whether the school could or should continue to exist at all. There were continued declines in enrollment from 1973 until the Fall of 1977.

REVELATIONS AND NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE

Painful Reductions

In the spring of 1972, Southwest was far from compliance with the required 19 to 1 student-faculty ratio. Southwest was supposed to phase into this system after having been permitted a 14 to 1 staffing ratio as a new school. It was supposed to move to 17 to 1 and then to 19 to 1 by 1972-73. A "Bill of Particulars" was sent in the summer of 1971, by influential legislators, to the board and the chancellor. It demanded that Southwest be brought into compliance with the 19 to 1 ratio. Southwest was overstaffed according to the ratio. Many faculty members argued that the problem was that too many non-teachers were counted as Faculty. They said that an across-the-board application of a 19 to 1 ratio was quite inappropriate, and that if every division of the college had to have such a ratio, it would wipe out whole programs; including some in technology which had very low enrollments.

In the spring of 1972, Southwest was required to send notifications for the next year. Six faculty members received notification at the very end of the school year. The Charter President was still in office, although

his successor was about to take over.

Under the governance system, University Senate policy #5* required the approval of the Faculty Association when reductions were made in tenured positions, or when programs were discontinued. When the notices were sent, in violation of this rule, an uproar ensued. Appeals were filed with the State University Board. The appeals were of course denied. For activist faculty members who had been skeptical of the governance system, the fact that the President had violated a governance policy which he himself had signed, and the fact that he asserted that it was within a President's rights to do so, revealed that the governance system was in fact a sham.

The Acting Vice-President prepared a differential staffing plan, in order to prepare for further reductions. This was challenged because the plan was felt to discriminate against non-science, liberal arts areas. The faculty decided to consider developing their own staffing plan. Members of the faculty did research and compiled a report which showed that student-teacher ratios lower than 19 to 1, some much lower, existed at other state colleges and in private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest.

Reductions for the next year were achieved through attrition and the termination of faculty contracts of persons who were not teaching faculty, but not without much struggle. A major issue was the role played by persons from administrative components of the college who nevertheless had votes in the Faculty Association. The persons in charge of non-teaching areas had, in the view of the activists, also been empire building, at the

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*The institution had been renamed Southwest State University. When some faculty suggested that it was not really a university, i.e. it had no graduate programs, the reply was that since the other state colleges were now called universities, Southwest must be called a university also.

expense of the teaching areas.

The Fate of Interdisciplinary Studies

Although criticism had begun earlier, by 1972 generalists found that the interdisciplinary courses were under attack, and that there was constant criticism, usually indirect and muted but persistent, of those who enthusiastically undertook to teach courses that were interdisciplinary or in other ways unconventional. More traditional faculty members questioned whether anyone could have enough knowledge to legitimately teach such courses.

Even the Flux courses acquired a bad reputation. This was because athletic coaches, technology teachers with no background in the humanities, and, in some cases, faculty members who were bitterly opposed to the idea, were assigned to teach Ideas in Flux. Such teachers were never the majority, but these assignments hurt.

In 1970 and again in 1971, the administration had refused to make interdisciplinary appointments.* Instead, appointments had to be in a specific department. There was no department of interdisciplinary studies. It seemed that there was little recognition and no reward for trying unusual or unconventional ideas and approaches. Much of this work was done, on an overload basis, but faculty felt that the administration went no further than being mildly pleased that such approaches "fit the image." Whether or not this is entirely true, data from interviews show that faculty members with generalist orientations perceived developments that way. By 1973, there was, in the words of one survivor of this group, "a retreat into the departments."[26]

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*At least two faculty members, already on campus, had requested such appointments. On the other hand, the administration did grant tenure to faculty members who were recommended by their departments.

During this period, with the departure of the Charter Dean, there were continuing efforts to eliminate or at least reduce the 9-hour requirement in "Ideas in Flux." The occasion of the debate over "Ideas in Flux" and other interdisciplinary courses should have been to reassess the mission and aims of the institution. Instead, it was done in a context of selfish departmental politics based on a "numbers game."

It was not easy, and for most not possible, to pursue a career as a generalist at Southwest. A number of those faculty members who were most attuned to the interdisciplinary ideal were, by the mid-1970's, teaching numerous sections of standard introductory courses. This must have been an especially bitter experience for those people. Several of them resigned and left Southwest.

Threat to the Liberal Arts

The new President, who assumed office in early summer of 1973, immediately created a reorganization task force. Members of the task force were expected to produce or obtain statements on departmental goals. This was required by the state bureaucracy. The importance of this step and its implications were probably unrecognized by most faculty.* Such recording of goals was the first local linkage to the process of centralizing programmatic review and establishing program budgeting.

By this time, however, the internal competition for students ("bodies") had begun. The word "relevance" was much used. In a situation where it appeared that further reductions in faculty positions would be unavoidable, several programs (not yet termed "departments"), particularly those in business and technology, again and again justified their majors and even

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*The official purpose of the task force was to lay the groundwork for a minimum staffing plan.

argued for transferring positions to their areas because of the greater "relevance of these programs." Business, particularly, appealed in the strongest terms to the administration to go with the trend of the times. Later, the arguments over which programs should be retained at Southwest included frequent references to career education.*

Although Southwest may not ever have been as innovative or experimental as it wanted or was alleged to be, there was a solid core of faculty committed, in principle at least, to the liberal arts tradition. Although the liberal arts position may have been a "fall-back position" for some, for most it was the first position, and freedom, autonomy, and tenure were seen as integral parts of that tradition. They were prepared to resist the increasingly narrow emphasis on vocationalism from both within and without.

The increasing emphasis, nationally, on career education (at Southwest, often translated into the narrowest kind of vocationalism) has been nicely and critically summarized by Leon Botstein:

> In the sixties, when the young and colleges were perceived as centers of social if not radical criticism, parents, philanthropists, and federal agencies reacted.... The shift in student mood from 1970 to 1975 toward political inaction and quiescence has been especially

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*In the fall of 1971, the Chancellor of the State College System had delivered an address in Washington, D. C., entitled: "New Career Curricula for the 1970's." This became a widely mentioned document, and it was Minnesota's contribution to the stress on "career relevance" in American higher education.

The statement itself was probably less hostile to the liberal arts tradition than were those who cited it in their own attacks on liberal arts at Southwest.

> visible in liberal arts colleges. Spurred by the excesses and failures of the earlier political initiatives, the economic reversals of the early 1970's, and the end of the Vietnam war, this shift has been actively accelerated by a systematic effort, including the career education movement, to bring institutions of higher learning into a closer fit with society. The ideal of the university as a seat of free, wide-ranging inquiry, or a searching criticism of culture and society, and as a place where idealism and the longing for a better world might be nurtured, seems to have vanished.
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> In retrospect, the decade of the sixties was that ideal's finest hour, excesses notwithstanding. Ironically, the pursuit of that ideal remains at the heart of the presumed purpose of a liberal education: to inspire the young to ask the ultimate and basic questions about personal, intellectual and political life. The current suspicion, contempt, and rejection of liberal arts and the rush to career education and vocationalism in colleges and among the federal government and private philanthropy can easily be seen as a reaction to the sixties, an effort to move the young into established society without the experience of a serious reexamination.[27]

Certainly this rejection of liberal arts was evident among Southwest administrators. Certainly, too, in the atmosphere of those days, there were serious conflicts between liberal arts faculty and other segments of

the faculty.*

I think that, insofar as state level administrators had an overarching plan, it was to gain control of academic decision-making. I do not believe they had or have any academic visions or dreams for higher education. For them, such terms as relevance, participation and career education functioned mostly as ideological tools in the struggle to gain control.

Perhaps for some members of the Chancellor's staff, and certainly for some members of the board, the sole purpose of their activities was to develop efficient management of "public employees."** However, as Ida Hoos has suggested there is a "management syndrome" at all levels of educational planning.[28] In support of this assertion, and as an example of technocratic intention, I offer the following quotation, the complete abstract of a paper presented to the International Meeting of the Institute of Management Sciences, which took place in Cleveland, Ohio, September 11-13, 1968:

> Management Science is defined as the basic process or function of rational decision-making. The

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*These divisions were, in part, the result of the voracious appetite shown by Aggrandizers, whose activities have already been described. For example, the teacher education area, using such terms as "human resources", "innovation", and "self-directed study," sought to vastly increase the size, resources and enrollments of their area, mostly at the expense of liberal arts areas. Later, in 1975 this area attempted to use the rubric "Interdisciplinary Major" to set up several majors which either duplicated existing liberal arts majors or which, in effect, anticipated the probable lines of development in other areas.

**Planning for the development of a computerized Management Information System for all higher education in Minnesota began about 1970.[29]

> concept of educational research is expanded to include use of new management techniques developed by the private sector which are adaptable to decision-making in the total education context. Four trends in the field of educational research are briefly reviewed: (1) Increasing use of scientific problem-solving methods; (2) Increasing use of management information systems; (3) Increasing emphasis on long-range planning to correlate the educational system with political, economic, and social subsystems for more effective human resource development; and (4) Increasing use of systems concept.[30]

The identification of rationality with computerized bureaucratic decision-making is the epitomé of what Max Weber called formal (as opposed to substantive) rationality, and that it is not simply anti-intellectual, it threatens the limited independence that higher education still possesses.[31] Within this framework, there is little or no place for self-government. Traditional academicians cause almost as much trouble as radical students. The rationalization process, then, is one that adjusts the academy to the norms of the bureaucratic system.

At Southwest, faculty resistance to the emergence of managerial and technological control took many forms. Several activist faculty members decided that decentralized collective bargaining was the best means of resistance under the circumstances, and worked to achieve that goal. On January 25, 1973, forty faculty members applied for a local charter from the American Federation of Teachers. This group became the Minnesota Federation of Teachers Local 2399.

Counterforce to Bureaucracy

The Minnesota Public Employee's Labor Relations Act had been passed in 1971. The presumptive bargaining agent under this law was the statewide Inter-Faculty Organization, an organization which many thought of as a "company union."

The local MFT aggressively pursued the concept of local bargaining units for two years. The local bargaining unit concept was considered an important means of defense against the local administration, which was regarded as simply an arm of the Chancellor's Office. This slowed the imposition of statewide management procedures.

The MFT fought on several fronts at once. Its strategy may be summarized as follows:

1) to stop or delay, implementation of management procedures and to use the state labor relations system for this purpose.
2) to establish and maintain an independent system of legislative contact and influence through the state MFT, and to wage a political struggle in the legislature for a minimum staffing base at Southwest to prevent the gutting of whole programs and the loss of valuable faculty.
3) to fight for local bargaining units--which would preserve a great deal of campus autonomy as well as make difficult the operation of a systemwide bureaucracy devoted almost solely to "efficiency".
4) to unify the Southwest faculty, not just liberal arts faculty, in the process of waging this struggle.

There can be no question that the organizers of the MFT saw their union as a means of countering bureaucratic control in the system. One of those most active in founding the union commented on increasing bureaucratization in his resignation speech as Chairperson of the Faculty Assembly, and said explicitly that a major reason for the spread of collective bargaining in higher education was increasing centralization of control and the consolidation of bureaucratic systems.[31] The union's leadership had the aim of encouraging all faculty to define the situation as a power struggle against a Chancellor's office determined to follow formulas and to impose a managerial system.

The leadership of the union included people who had experience in direct action protest, and some experience in union organizing. These people were good at devising strategies to influence public officials. Close relationships were established with some legislators. Among these was the state representative from the local area, a graduate of Southwest, whose strongest support came from social science faculty and activist students on the one hand, and the less prosperous farmers on the other.

Among its other activities, the union local distributed reprints of articles and speeches which warned of increasing bureaucratization in higher education. These materials were well received by faculty, including those who supported an AAUP chapter and hoped to avoid affiliation with a trade union.

INTERNAL REORGANIZATION AND INTERNAL WAR

The Problem with Democracy

There had been a two year de-facto moratorium on retrenchments but, in 1974-75, the issue was again how to conduct a faculty retrenchment.

In the spring of 1975, on the last day of the school year, notices

of termination were sent to five faculty members. These notices (in effect, one-year contracts) were sent to 2 tenured and 3 untenured faculty members. These were the first reductions in tenured teaching faculty. All of the positions eliminated were in the liberal arts. The notices were in violation of procedures required under the college constitution. Many faculty were especially angry, because it was clearly unnecessary to violate tenure in order to achieve the required reductions. Faculty members, mostly from MFT Local 2399, picketed graduation. Other faculty members, many not MFT members, walked out of Commencement when the President rose to preside over the ceremonies.

The administration's problem was that the governance system, with liberal arts faculty in key positions, was a center of resistance to efforts to obtain "programmatic flexibility". The administration had decided to promote career education and wished to de-emphasize liberal arts. Some members of the administration promoted the belief that the liberal arts and activist orientations of the faculty caused declining enrollments. The administration's strategy was to circumvent the university governance system and obtain greater administrative control over faculty units.

Although he had conducted a reorganization the previous year; the President and his new Vice-President for Academic Affairs carried out another reorganization. This reorganization was a blatant attack on the liberal arts faculty and seemed, to many, to be in violation of State College Board Rules and Regulations. Some thought it was in retaliation for the faculty's actions in the spring.

All but two, or perhaps three, of the division chairmen, then called "School Directors", were aware of the planned reorganization. The knowledge was concealed from the Directors of the school of Humanities and Social

Sciences--who were known for their pro-faculty attitudes. These men were dismissed as administrators. The reorganization was undertaken without consulting faculty, and indeed was done during the summer, a period when almost all faculty were off campus. The chairperson of the All-University Senate had not even received written notice when a news conference was held and the reorganization was announced publicly.[32] When faculty returned, and as the nature of the reorganization became clear, there was--to use a phrase from the Watergate affair--"a firestorm of protest."

The reorganization was clearly an attack on the liberal arts. The reorganization combined the previous five schools into two, and allocated departments among these two new divisions, which were called "Colleges" and named Alpha and Omega.

Alpha College was composed of "the various Business, Science, and [sic] Engineering and Technology departments; Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management; Political Science; Economics; Speech; Literature and American Language; and Mathematics. Omega College...of the various departments in Education, Physical Education, Psychology, Sociology, History, Philosophy, Foreign Languages, Art, Music and Theatre.[33]

The most noticeable feature of this reorganization was that it split up the various departments in Humanities and those in Social Science, while attempting to co-opt the science faculty by leaving it intact. This led many faculty members to characterize the reorganization as "cynical."

The announcement of the two persons selected to head the two colleges evoked a very bitter response from both faculty and concerned liberal arts students. The head of "Omega College" had been Director of the School of Education. He was a former elementary school principal. His reputation among faculty in the arts and sciences did not lead them to think of him as a suitable administrator for academically respectable programs. The

Chairman of the Science and Mathematics School, a successful operator of the Benefactor system, was made head of "Alpha College." Perhaps he had not anticipated the intensity of the faculty's fury over the secret reorganization and the shabby treatment of the Directors of Humanities and Social Sciences. He soon had a heart attack and took a year's leave of absence. The Director of the School of Business, a person who was perceived as combative, then became the head of "Alpha College." He was widely regarded as an empire builder, in the terms of this study an Aggrandizer, and a devoted enemy of liberal arts education.

The academic rationale for reorganization presented by the President and Academic Vice-President was not persuasive. Neither was the administrative rationale. Among other things, they contended that the reorganization would reduce the number of persons reporting to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and would also reduce the overall number of administrators. It did, presumably, accomplish the former, but not the latter. In fact, it seemed, for a time, that the overall number of administrators would increase by one, since separate divisions were re-established within the two colleges.

The long struggle to separate teaching faculty positions from administrative positions, and to reduce what was felt to be an overly large administrative compliment, had led to a more aggressive stance by the faculty in the arts and sciences. The faculty felt that faculty reductions would be fewer if the institution got down to a smaller-sized administration. The reorganization increased the anger over this issue.

Defending the Liberal Arts

In the previous spring, in an emergency meeting after the terminations, the Faculty Assembly had charged the President with violation of local governance procedures and State University Board rules. The main motions

connected with these charges passed. It was clear from the vote on these motions that the faculty was divided between those with a liberal arts orientation on the one hand, and the business faculty, some faculty from other divisions, and some student affairs staff (faculty thought of them as administrators or administrative tools) on the other. The liberal arts faculty and some allies from other areas could usually produce a slender majority.

In September, 1975, faculty members met at the home of a Mathematics professor, and later in the month met again. At the second meeting they formed a Council on the Liberal Arts. Positions papers from faculty groups began to appear, as did satirical leaflets and broadsides. It was a total political struggle that somehow had the flavor of campus anti-war protests.

Formal and informal protests were made by individual faculty members on behalf of various governance and union organizations. The State University bureaucracy responded that the reorganization was an administrative matter and a "management right."

The people of Marshall and the larger area of southwest Minnesota were, by this time, quite concerned about the situation at Southwest. The local paper printed many letters to the editor. Most were written by faculty members. Some of these letters emphasized the importance, to faculty, of the principles of collegiality and academic freedom. Other letters emphasized the importance of the university to the region.

The Faculty Association decided to hold a series of hearings in the Marshall Municipal Building. The hearings covered the reorganization, the faculty and student reaction to it, and the strengths of Southwest as an institution. The hearings were held in late October and were covered by the local public radio station. Very little about them appeared in the local newspaper, although the editor attended most sessions. Presumably, this was because the administration declined invitations to send

representatives to the hearings.

The hearings were, of course, intended for political as well as for informative purposes. Liberal arts and other faculty considered themselves at war with the college administration and the state bureaucracy, and they made no pretense among themselves that the situation was otherwise.

The war within the faculty is difficult to describe in a succinct fashion. Perhaps one incident can serve to represent the general situation--one where faculty members were divided against each other and "cannibalism" was encouraged. The following quotation is from a memo sent to all faculty in middle or late September of 1975.

> At a meeting between Drs.——(a department chairman) and——(the head of one of the two "colleges"), the latter said that it was important for ("——college") to develop a curriculum committee and work on staffing.
>
> Dr.——indicated to Dr.——that one suggestion being considered would be to have each faculty member list five other faculty members he thought should be dismissed.
>
> When Dr.——objected strenuously to this Dr.—— then said that perhaps each department should list those of its own members who could be dismissed, and add others from other departments if it wished....[34]

Incidents such as this had the effect of unifying three major segments of the faculty: Science, Social Science, and Humanities and Arts. Some faculty from other segments of the university were also opposed to reorganization, and students formed a group in support of the liberal arts.

Resignation and Interregnum

In November of 1975, the President resigned. He said his resignation was based on principle, and said that a "small minority" of the faculty had

made the situation impossible for him and had "degraded the scholarly tradition and academic values...."[35]

The Chancellor's remarks on this occasion included the following statement:

> Any who see Dr.——'s resignation as an indication that a small faculty minority will run this university to their own benefit and to the exclusion of legislative and board policy, and regardless of the interests of the region, the majority of the faculty and the students will find they are mistaken.[36]

In fact, a majority, though perhaps a slender majority, of the faculty had opposed the reorganization, or the manner in which it was done, or both.

The Chancellor called for a study by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to review the future of Southwest, and the future of "post secondary" education generally, in southwest Minnesota. One of the possibilities the commission eventually considered was closing Southwest and replacing it with a junior college.

The final report favored the continued existence of Southwest, as a four year institution. Throughout this process, considerable political influence was exercised by various groups and individuals in southwestern Minnesota. The Southwest Faculty, working through the newly established stateside union (the IFO-MEA*) played a significant role in coordinating

*The MFT lost the battle for local bargaining units when the State Supreme Court overruled a favorable ruling by a state arbitrator. The Minnesota Education Association then won the statewide election for exclusive representation. Southwest Faculty joined the victorious side and rapidly became influential in the IFO-MEA union. The Activists had already had some people in that group. One leading Activist was president of the MEA local.

this effort.

The events of the next year and a half may be summarized briefly. A minimum staffing base for Southwest was achieved--in effect, a guarantee that there would not be a continued downward spiral of reduction of programs, declining enrollments, more reductions, and more decline due to the reductions. This achievement was due in no small part to efforts of Southwest faculty in legislative lobbying and in pressuring the State University Board. As part of the process, however, the new Chancellor (the previous one had retired) prepared a staffing plan for Southwest. Pursuing recently asserted "management rights", the Chancellor eliminated some majors in liberal arts fields and eliminated more faculty positions. This resulted in notices of termination to still more tenured faculty. Most faculty members who were notified were in liberal arts, and had been anti-administration activists.*

Analysis of the Crisis

The elements of the situation which had produced the crisis may be summarized as follows:

1. Insistance upon applying bureaucratic funding formulas to Southwest in circumstances where such application seemed to endanger its continued existence in any form resembling its original one. This is not to say that some reductions in size of faculty and staff were not appropriate.

2. The existence of faculty rights in the governance system, which had to be abrogated in order to conform to directives from the legislature and the bureaucracy, thus angering faculty.

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*Several of these terminations were rescinded by a new President at Southwest in 1977.

3. The fact that, under what was really a system of management control, at first disguised by the facade of governance, faculty were very reluctant to participate in any process that led to the termination of faculty members who were actually teachers.

4. A liberal arts faculty which had a high opinion of its abilities, high expectations for the future of Southwest, and a high proportion of members who had, in effect, committed their careers to the school.

5. A worsening job market for academicians nationally. This reinforced people's propensity to "fight it out" where they were.

6. Absence of wise leadership in the local administration. The administration was, in fact, foolish in that it underestimated both the abilities of faculty and their willingness to fight. The faculty felt that it was "their school." They also felt that it was a regional institution. They did not think that it belonged to any administration or bureaucracy.

7. A growing hostility towards liberal arts.

8. An uncertain situation in the impending, but not yet accomplished, situation of collective bargaining; a situation in which some persons in the state educational bureaucracy saw the opportunity to bring Southwest to heel.

SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE SUCCESSION

Return to Entrepreneurship

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs served as Interim President during the HECC Study. In this interim period, attention again turned to relationships with the local area. Southwest needed to maintain and enlarge its constituency in rural southwestern Minnesota. The struggle for survival had taken energies that might otherwise have been devoted to establishing

the institution's credibility in the region. During this period, some persons, including outside consultants hired by the administration, attempted to portray faculty members who were activists as "urban types"; out of place in a rural area. In fact, some members of the faculty were from southwestern Minnesota and many others had grown up in rural areas. Some activists who were "urban" in background formed good relationships with people in local ethnic communities, and with the unionized or unionizing segments of the area's sizable non-farm labor force. Nevertheless, Southwest needed to turn its attention to elaborating and improving its relationship with the surrounding area. Rumors that the school would be closed had been harmful and news reports about the school's struggle for survival were regarded, in some quarters, as "negative publicity."

When the search began for a new President for the institution, many faculty members were encouraged when Minnesota's Commissioner of Agriculture applied for the job. The Commissioner had a Ph.D. in history, had taught for several years, and had a strong interest in farmer's movements. He had a neo-populist style when speaking to or about farmers. He also had well-known political connections. It seemed plausible that an individual with these characteristics would be less dependent upon the Chancellor and the bureaucracy.

The Activists, leaders of the opposition to reorganization and leaders in faculty union activities, helped inspire and organize a "grass-roots" movement in the area in support of the Commissioner's candidacy. In general, those who had been party to the reorganization quietly supported other candidates. It seems fair to say that the new Chancellor was not happy about having a strong President at Southwest, but the Commissioner of Agriculture became the third President of Southwest because, politically, it was too costly to reject him.

The new President promised a rural studies program at Southwest; one which was related to the school's creative liberal arts tradition and not simply a scaled-down version of land grant university programs. He said that such a program would be the first of its kind in the nation. He promoted Southwest with great vigor and enthusiasm. Southwest again came to resemble a joint enterprise rather than a battle ground. The President emphasized the superior quality of the faculty. Perhaps the faculty is not so superior as it would like to think, but it is certainly better, much better, than it had been portrayed by the previous administration. No more was heard of Alpha and Omega. Under the present structure, broad areas such as social science and humanities are not split between two schools in an attempt to fragment their power and set close colleagues against each other. Of course, there has been no reduction in the number of administrators, but the most hostile ones are gone. Although the university's enrollment is still about one thousand students fewer than it was in 1972, enrollment has increased substantially since the new administration took office in 1977. Enrollment is now approximately 2100.

The faculty was able, through a series of negotiated understandings, to formulate a new set of requirements for general studies/rural studies representing about one third of the total hours required for graduation. The total requirement is now larger than most students would like. The requirements, however, have the familiar effect of distributing students (and FTE) so as to support existing departments and their upper division courses with large lower division enrollments.

The Continuing Problem of Bureaucracy

It must be noted that neither benign administration nor populist entrepreneurship solves the problem of centralized bureaucratic control within the State University System. The management system has intruded

more and more into the day-to-day workings of university life. Such autonomy as Southwest has is quite fragile. It has not even been possible to secure approval from the State University Board and the HECC for an interdisciplinary major in Rural Studies. There is, however, a minor in Rural Studies. Centralization has now gone so far that even changes in requirements for concentrations within departments are supposed to be approved by the State University Board. In one case, a department has waited two years to have a minor approved. Feinstein's observation that the function of coordinating agencies is not really coordination but control certainly applies to Minnesota.

One of my colleagues has offered a sobering observation: If there is ever a return to the McCarthyism of the early 1950s, it will be much easier to conduct purges in the universities and colleges. The bureaucratic linkage between the legislature and local campuses provides an effective means to exert political control by wiping out whole departments and areas of study. This may be disguised as "purely functional" reorganization. There will be no need to be as direct about it as the government of Chile has been in its recent destruction of social and political studies in the universities in that country. It is possible that state bureaucrats would resist pressures to conduct such purges. If they were to acquiesce, the process would be all too easy.

In Minnesota, union officers and negotiators seek ways to counter or reverse the growing centralization. The president of the IFO-MEA has called for the elimination of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission; in the name of cost cutting and decentralization. Apparently this proposal received some consideration, though nothing was done, at a recent session of the legislature.

CONCLUSION

A Case Study of Southwest

The history of Southwest is, no doubt, an unique one. The overall purpose of this paper has been to discuss the Southwest experience and to analyze the interaction of the forces which shaped that experience in order to better understand those forces.

Southwest was built by means of entrepreneurship. The Charter President sometimes referred to Southwest as a "joint enterprise." The pathological features of internal entrepreneurship made it quite difficult to build the institution as a joint or a collective enterprise. While the early growth of Southwest was due, in large part, to the enterprising zeal of the Charter President; the external pressures which seriously damaged the institution were partly the result of unrestrained entrepreneurship.

Many people were attracted to Southwest because they perceived an opportunity to pursue innovation and experiment in higher education* These goals were not clearly defined in the early period. The terms had different meanings to different segments of the Southwest faculty and administration. There was no firm alliance between the Dean, the Generalists, and

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*Perhaps the most useful definition of these terms is that offered by Martin in 1969: "Innovation is defined as a new means to established ends, implying that conventional or traditional goals are essentially sound but capable of improvement. Experimentation is defined as a new means to new or open ends, implying process and a situation where conventional assumptions and goals are challenged."[37] Both innovation and experimentation occurred at Southwest, but on a smaller scale than expected. The most interesting examples were frequently unrecognized when they did occur.

other faculty members who had interdisciplinary or disciplinary interests that supported such goals. No organizational structure was established to further the realization of such goals.

In the absence of an academic structure which discouraged such developments there was a development of systems of internal politics which are antithetical to genuine experimentation and innovation. Most of those who favored "something different and better" lacked a systematic plan for how to create it and watched the opportunity for alternative education dissipate in the heat of controversy and conflict.

The positive aspects of entrepreneurship resulted in early institutional growth, excitement, and the sense of possibility; but the deficiencies of entrepreneurship and the growth of bureaucratic centralism, erected to restrain and ultimately replace entrepreneurship, made it impossible to devise some means of taking appropriate advantage of the opportunities which seemed to exist.

One way to build a structure which implements goals is to define the goals in such a way that they can be achieved almost mechanically. Few educational goals worth reaching can be achieved in this way. This study shows that bureaucratic centralism, applied to the educational enterprise at Southwest, tended to evoke and encourage the worst features of careerism.

The Nature of Patron-Client Systems

A Patron-Client system is, on the one hand, a system of patronage which serves to maintain a department or an area as a political bloc unlikely to oppose any system which leaves it somewhat alone and continues to provide it with resources. On the other hand, a Patron-Client system is also a means of providing sponsored upward mobility within an academic area and often

into administration. Benefactors and their clients perpetuate the system as a means of pursuing disciplinary and administrative careers. For all these reasons, the system is adaptable to bureaucratized higher education. The members of such a system will oppose bureaucratization only when it becomes a threat to their system or when fundamental academic values are threatened. Such systems can usually co-exist with systems built on pure aggrandizement. In some settings, as at Southwest, members of the Patron-Client system will ultimately join with others in opposing the aggrandizers.

Departmental Aggrandizement in a Small College Setting

When aggrandizement is pursued in a small college, faced with declining enrollments, it is destructive of any possibility for community. Many people wanted to participate in some form of alternative higher education, in part, because they wanted to escape this kind of competition.

If the ideals and goals of an institution are not clearly defined, Aggrandizers can, as they did at Southwest, use and pervert such terms as "relevance" and "experimental" to serve the purpose of empire building. Aggrandizers may be recruited for administration at a time when a centralized system is being imposed. They are not restrained by traditional values, as Benefactors may be, from imposing such a centralized system on others. They are not deterred by considerations of collegiality, or of traditional reciprocity. Their acquisition of administrative positions is the outcome of power seeking through ruthless competition and the recognition by others that these drives can be harnessed to serve the ends of larger systems. Aggrandizers, ultimately, care less about their disciplines and more about their careers.

The Achievements of Activism

Activists at Southwest made a career of fighting centralization of power. In the process they adopted some of the anti-system values that characterized the student movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. As was the case in that movement; activism tended to create, among the activists, a community of resistance. A community of resistance may be quite creative in developing strategies and may have wide influence.

In Minnesota, the innovative and militant politics pursued by the Southwest Activists has turned a former company union into a moderately aggressive representative for State University teachers. The present Statewide President of this organization is a Southwest Activist who has promoted the idea of decentralization when possible; and who seems to have had real influence in the selection of new members of the State University Board.

If, in spite of all that has happened, Southwest retains some limited freedom for innovation; this freedom is due to incessant and creative activism. In this context, the attempt of Southwest's current President to create a distinctive institutional character through a liberal arts approach to rural studies may well be a creative form of entrepreneuralism.

Alternative Higher Education As a Collective Enterprise

Everett Hughes has suggested that all institutions are, in effect, enterprises [38] and hence need entrepreneurs. Ralph Blankenship has written that all organizations are ultimately constructed by their members as they are in the process of mutually negotiating their careers.[39] For any organization to be a joint or collective enterprise the members must be able to engage in this process of negotiating and renegotiating the conditions necessary for the pursuit of their interdependent careers. Perhaps, at

Southwest, the combination of rural studies, liberal arts, and technical and business studies, provides a framework for such negotiations.

How can alternative higher education as a movement fulfill its ideals and find a means of serving the diverse aims and careers of its institutions and people? I suggest as a possibility the themes which, I hope, serve to unify this paper. Innovative politics for debureaucratization may be joined to the continuing desire on the part of many people to be free to pursue as individual enterprises, creative careers.

There appears to be a strong anti-bureaucratic sentiment in this country. For people to pursue personal careers as individual enterprises requires a considerable dismantling of bureaucratic structures. If alternative higher education can somehow serve these needs it should survive and prosper. Perhaps those devoted to alternatives in higher education should devote a significant part of their attention to reexamining models from alternative education for the purpose of devising cheaper and more humane alternatives to bureaucratic centralism.

Perhaps alternative institutions, more fortunate in their history than Southwest, can serve higher education and society in general by seeking to propagate such models, and by seeking to train people in how to implement such decentralized systems.

There is a possible connection between these ideas and the increasing importance of so-called "non-traditional students" to higher education. "Non-traditional students" are usually students who are at mid-career, or who are seeking to change careers, or perhaps to begin careers later in life. At the least, they are seeking additional education to further their present careers.

The challenge to higher education is how to serve these students without defaulting on its obligation to pass on and help people utilize the traditions

of the liberal arts. Providing assistance in the effort to overcome obstacles to creative reflection and the building of human community is a legitimate aspect of liberal arts education and is certainly associated with the history of alternative education. The pathologies of some forms of careerism and entrepreneurship are certainly examples of such obstacles. Traditional and non-traditional students may welcome as part of their education a searching examination of the concept of career and its meaning to the person.

If our students enter, or reenter the overbureaucratized world of work in this society with some effective strategies for promoting decentralization and with a more reflective and informed stance towards their careers; we may have some hope of realizing two of the aims, found in somewhat incoherent form, in the visions of the late 1960s. Those aims are: to reduce hierarchical authority, and assist people in the pursuit of their lives as creative and adventurous enterprises.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND A NOTE ON SOURCES

This paper is part of a much larger work on which I have been engaged for some time. Some generalizations presented in this paper may require modification as additional data are accumulated and analyzed.

I have used interviews with charter faculty and administrators in the Southwest Minnesota History Center. In addition, I have had a number of personal interviews with faculty members; interviews with former students; and interviews with present and former members of the support staff, some of whom were present from the beginning. Interviews conducted by me were, for the most part, informal in nature. I have made use of internal documents of the university and the State University Board; from my files and the files of others who were kind enough to make them available to me. I have also used materials distributed by the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and newspaper accounts. I have relied, also, on my own observations at Southwest since I joined the faculty in the Fall of 1970, and upon notes I made at various times since I have been at Southwest.

I have cited documentary and interview sources when direct quotation is used and otherwise have not always cited specific sources for statements of fact or summary statements of chronology.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with H. A. B. April 24, 1973, pp. 17-18. Southwest Minnesota Historical Center, Marshall, Mn.

2. Melville Dalton, Men Who Manage: Fusions of Feelings and Theory in Administration, New York, John Wiley, 1959, pp. 57-65.

3. Interview with R. F. May 18, 1978, p. 29, Southwest Minnesota Historical Center, Marshall, MN.

4. "Recommended Emphases for the Academic Program" S.M.S.C. document (Xerox) December, 1967, pp. 1-2.

5. Southwest Minnesota State College Information Bulletin 1968-1969 Marshall, Mn., 1968, pp. 90-91.

6. Ibid. p. 32.

7. Ibid. p. 50

8. Interview with M. S., May 31, 1972, pp. 8-10, Southwest Minnesota Historical Center, Marshall, Mn.

9. This represents my summation of the situation. See: Interview with M. S., pp. 11-12.

10. Ibid. p. 23

11. Authors Interview with R. W., May 19, 1981, Marshall, MN. p. 1

12. Ibid. p. 3.

13. Southwest Minnesota State College Information Bulletin 72/73, Marshall, MN. p. 152.

14. Author's notes on a Conversation with G. J., March 28, 1981, Lacrosse, Wisconsin, p. 2.

15. Author's Interview with R. R.

16. Harold W. Oyster,"Report of a Visit to Southwest Minnesota State College, Marshall, Minnesota, April 19-20, 1971." In: Southwest Minnesota State College: Self-Study for Educational Environment, Vol. II., Marshall, MN., June, 1971. Appendix F, Section 5, p. 2.

17. Ibid. pp. 3-4

18. Ibid. pp. 5-6

19. T. C. R., chairperson, Faculty Assembly, Memorandum: "Resignation From Office", Undated, but December,1975; p. 2.

20. Peter M. Blau, Bureaucracy In Modern Society, New York, Random House, 1956, p. 60.

21. Otto Feinstein, Higher Education In The United States, Lexington, Mass., D. C. Heath and Co., 1971, p. 1.

22. Otto Feinstein, "From Education for People to People for Education: The Rise of the Bureaucratic Planning System In Higher Education" Journal of University Studies, Spring, 1974, pp. 1-3.

23. Ibid. p. 3

24. Ibid.

25. Author's Interview with H. J. May 18, 1981, p. 3. Also, Interview with H. A. B. April 24, 1973, Southwest Minnesota Historical Center, Marshall, MN., p. 20. Here, as elsewhere, the Charter President showed considerable insight into the problems associated with his particular role. After his resignation, in effect a retirement,from Southwest the Charter President was engaged with others in various Business enterprises in Southwestern Minnesota.

26. Author's Interview with K. O. May 27, 1981, p. 5.

27. Leon Botstein, "College Could Be Worth It," Change, December, 1976, p. 28.

28. Ida Hoos, "The Costs of Efficiency: Implications of Educational Technology" Journal of Higher Education, March/April, 1975, pp. 141-159.

29. Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Responding to Change: Report to the 1973 Minnesota Legislature, St. Paul, 1973, p. 48.

30. Abstract of a paper presented by Desmond L. Cook, "An Overview of Management Science In Educational Research", A paper presented at the International Meeting of the Institute of Management Sciences, Cleveland, Ohio, September 11-13, 1968. Abstract taken from: A.A.S.A., ERIC Abstracts: A Collection of Document Resumes on Program Budgeting and Cost Analyses Eugene, Oregon, 1969, p. 4. (emphasis added).

31. T. C. R. Chairperson, Faculty Assembly, "Resignation from Office", December, 1975, p. 2.

32. J. T. R. Presentation to the Minnesota State University Board, August 20, 1975, p. 2.

33. President J. J., Letter to the Chairman of the Educational Policies Committee, Minnesota State University Board, August 8, 1975, p. 5.

34. C. G., Memo to All Faculty, September, 1975.

35. Independent, Marshall, MN., November 5, 1975.

36. Ibid.

37. Warren Bryan Martin, Conformity; standards and change in higher education, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1969, p. 48.

38. See: Everett C. Hughes "The Ecological Aspect of Institutions", pp. 5-13 in The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers, Chicago, Aldine-Atherton, 1971. See also: "Going Concerns: The Study of American Institutions," pp. 52-64.

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