

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 080 064

HE 004 417

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TITLE The Administrative Internship as an Out-of-Class  
Methodology in Leadership Development  
INSTITUTION Georgia Univ., Athens. Inst. of Higher Education.  
PUB DATE Mar 73  
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at panel session of Association  
of Professors of Higher Education, March 1973

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS \*Administrative Personnel; \*Administrator  
Characteristics; Decision Making; Doctoral Programs;  
\*Educational Administration; Educational Programs;  
\*Higher Education; \*Internship Programs

ABSTRACT

This document stresses the need for administrative internship as an empirical means for professional administrative growth without the obligations of final decision-making commensurate with permanent employment. It is suggested that an incorporation of administrative internship into doctoral programs may meliorate chance administrative success to more predictively fruitful outcomes.

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP  
AS AN OUT-OF-CLASS METHODOLOGY  
IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Panel Session on "Out-of-Class Experiences"  
Association of Professors of Higher Education

March 11, 1973

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP AS AN OUT-OF-CLASS  
METHODOLOGY IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

by Daniel J. Sorrells

From the beginning of recorded time, man has advanced personally, socially, and technically through situations which have involved joint participation. The learning process included situations in which one individual was recognized for his expertise in an endeavor as a result of his experience and proven ability. Other individuals involved were considered to be, because of their lack of developed potential, the beginner, the untrained but trainable, the journeyman on his way to becoming proficient. This relationship learned to learner, seasoned to unseasoned, master to neophyte has applied to individuals in all vocations from all walks of life, be they doctor, lawyer, or Indian chief. Perhaps learning as co-worker is the oldest of educational techniques, used long before the written page provided an opportunity to read about procedures and practices for mastering a skill.

The craftsman to learner concept is applicable to almost every area of business and industry, as well as education. Even with all the advanced technologies for developing human potential, there is no substitute so effective as a well-directed experience in an actual operational setting. Such experiences are varied in concept, form, and duration. We have become a nation geared to applying technological advances to existing situations to bring about improved change. Laboratory techniques have become an integral part of the training process. Wherever real life situations are not available for such experiences, simulated conditions are often established and "mock-ups"

are dealt with as though they were actualities. Even though these prove to be vicarious in nature, they do produce a simulation of reality. Model building has become the target of expanded research. Today personnel, time, and funds are being expended in no small degree and sometimes without proper limitations in the hope that new patterns of process may be designed to bring about improved practice in educational administration, business, and industrial management.

Elementary and secondary educationists have long considered the period of student teaching a requirement for certification. Personnel in medical training centers mandate internship and residency to be essential training components for acceptance into professional practice. Pharmacists must serve an apprenticeship type experience before being licensed. Psychiatrists and psychologists include periods of supervised practice as a prerequisite to full-time positions. Most industrial and business concerns also use some variation of on-the-job training for all levels of managerial personnel. With these professions and more requiring preparation of an internship nature, can the beginning college administrator afford to function without this type experience? The only honest answer is that they have in large numbers in the past and continue to do so with varying degrees of success. However, the complicated exigences of college administration today warrant a hard look at the desirability of a firsthand experience for each student aspiring to such an occupational goal. Why shouldn't the prospective college administrator be as much in need of this developmental growth process as medics or psychiatrists or master plumbers?

Within the past twenty-five years, formalized professionally-oriented courses in higher education have been included in curricular offerings of various colleges and universities throughout the country; and, for college

administrator aspirants over the past fifteen, a few fully implemented programs have evolved. But, even today, the administrative internship experience, if provided at all, remains an optional offering in most schools. Why?

A brief review of some of the efforts which have been made in educational leadership training would seem appropriate. Among the earlier thrusts to give impetus to administrative leadership in higher education was the program of the Harvard Institute for College and University Administrators (1955-1964). As early as 1957, the Carnegie Corporation, recognizing the potential of an internship-type experience for college level administrators, underwrote in conjunction with the University of Michigan, the establishment of the "Michigan Fellows and Scholars Program in Higher Education". In 1964, the American Council on Education under the joint sponsorship of A.C.E. and the Ford Foundation began the "Academic Administrators' Internship Program". The Phillips Foundation also fostered the "Phillips Interns" concept. In the '60's, the Junior College Leadership Program flourished, sponsored by A.A.J.C. and the Kellogg Foundation. During these same years, the University of California at Los Angeles established a vibrant Junior College Leadership Program. Another effort which has provided viability to college administrator development has been the work of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools under its Leadership Training Projects. Other cooperating agencies have made substantial contributions to the formalized, though without academic credit, training to the potentially nationwide college administrator pool, including the New England Board of Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and the Center for the Study of Higher Education of the University of California at Berkeley. All of these successful efforts have had an

impact on planning for professional internship experiences for budding as well as practicing administrators in education. However, many have been post-doctoral adjuncts to other programs, not integral parts of advanced degree efforts as such.

The stage has been set through these and similar programs sponsored by concerned professional organizations, foundations, and individual institutions in concert or individually. Their goal has been to provide varied types of on-the-job experiences to aspiring professionals who have desired to become more attuned to the many requirements and demands of major administrative positions in higher education. Yet, extensive cooperation among colleges and universities and among universities and other professional organizations concerned with the administrator development function remains marginal at best. As Ray Schultz indicated in the March 1968 issue of the Phi Delta Kappan, the role to be played by universities in the art and science of higher education administrator training can be great, but the "how" remains undefined and undeveloped. Even now, a consensus as to what constitutes adequate preparation for filling administrator leadership posts remains undefined.

According to a recent Association of Governing Boards bulletin, there were 2,629 established, accredited colleges and universities functioning in the United States as of July 1972. Of this total, some 59% remain classified as private. (A startling fact in light of all that is heard today about the decline in numbers and influence of private institutions.) Assuming that each of these twenty-six hundred plus schools has at least four administrative posts, and most have many more, there are some 10,516 potential top-level positions which will sooner or later need replacements. Assume again that only half that number will change personnel within the next

five to ten years, there are more than 5,200 opportunities to fill these with professionally educated administrators. The possibility exists, provided our departments of higher education become involved in recruiting, developing, and placing such needed professionals. Complicating this dilemma is the fact that many presidents and most boards of trustees fail to recognize the value of the professionally trained in higher education as a more desirable candidate to fill administrative vacancies. Professionally oriented candidates all too often stand less chance to be selected than someone who because of longevity of employment in the same or another institution, or because of prestige in an academic specialty, or because of a successful business career becomes the first consideration. Thus, added to the need for programs of administrator development is the very pertinent need for focusing on the re-education of personnel selection boards and search committees to the importance of filling major staff positions with professionals who have an administrator orientation and development background. How these tasks of no small proportion can be accomplished will require the combined thinking and planning of the best minds among us. Coming to grips with the real issues involved in improving college and university administrator development programs remains our priority among priorities. Waxing biblically, the harvest is white and the reapers are few.

Perhaps many of us remember Collins Burnett's excellent presentation on the role, scope, and status of higher education as a field of study at last year's A.P.H.E. conference. An elaboration of this review is included in the Winter 1973 issue of the Journal of Research and Development in Education, along with a host of other pertinent articles which should help us as practitioners to gain a more holistic view of our field. I commend this particular issue to your careful reading. Our mission today is not to

argue the importance of advanced programs for developing leaders to assume major roles in college administration, but rather is to accept this mission as necessary and desirable, if improvement in theory, program, and practice of administration in institutions of higher learning is to eventuate.

I perceive our mission to be one of exploring ways in which programs of advanced degree work may best be formulated to serve as a catalyst for understanding college and university mission, history, development, growth, and progress. Many ingredients go into the building of such a curriculum and each training institution must decide for itself how interdisciplinary, how broad, how deep, how specific, how sequential its offerings can become. It is in the vein of structured on-the-job experience that we desire to concentrate our thinking herein, without discounting the many, many other kinds of in and out-of-class experiences which must make for a well-rounded course of study to be pursued by the neophyte administrator or by the experienced practitioner who desires updated approaches to more effective performance.

The history of the administrative internship as a leadership development device within a formalized educational effort is not well established nor do we have copious examples of such programs. Perhaps the first and foremost reason for the glaring paucity of this kind of methodology is that meaningful, supervised internship experience possibilities are not recognized necessarily as worthy required components of the developmental process by the staffs of many degree-granting institutions. When recognized, exemplary internship center possibilities are not easily identified. If located, the staffs in such institutions are often unable or unwilling to engage in a cooperative leadership development venture. Most schools welcome a visit, a look-see experience for one or two days; but they feel somehow

reluctant to expose their inner workings to outsiders on a continuous basis. Another objection bearing much validity is that an internship, effectively carried out, requires a heavy involvement of personnel, time, and funds on the part of both institutions. Since all institutions are engrossed in day-by-day operations, in meeting the exigences at hand, many feel that neither staff time nor funds can be made available for this "extra" effort. Last, many administrative personnel in two and four-year colleges fail to perceive their potential as serving a staff development function. They prefer to hold the degree-granting institution totally responsible and accountable for whatever administrator training they alone can provide.

In May 1971, now almost two years ago, a survey was completed of 60 institutions offering work at + ~ doctoral level in the field of higher education. The purpose of this research was to learn about the status and extent of administrative internship offerings. Of the 60 institutions selected to participate in the study, 68% (41 institutions) responded. Of those who replied, 85% (35) furnished usable data, i.e., they offered some type of planned internship program for majors in higher education. A brief analysis of these findings would seem to afford us some tangible indication of the frequency, calibre, and complexity of internships as they now exist as a viable component for the development of administrative personnel for leadership roles in colleges and universities. This analysis may be considered current, since to the researcher's knowledge, a more recent study has not been completed.

Tabulation of results from 41 schools indicated 15% (6) offered only the doctoral program in Higher Education at that time. Twenty-two

percent (9) offered only masters level work, while 63% (26) provided two levels of degrees in their curricula. Only 22% (8) of the 35 total group required a full-time internship, with an average duration of one quarter or one semester. Sixty-nine percent (24) considered the experience to be an optional aspect of their program, with 6% (2) schools indicating the optional or required aspect would depend on the circumstances and previous work pattern of the student. (One school failed to reply to this question.)

Internships were located in all types of accredited institutions, depending on availability, proximity to the degree-granting institution, recognized worth of a school's administrative efforts, the school's willingness to cooperate in the venture, and the desires of the individual student involved. Types of internship experiences ran the gamut of college and university administration, but the more typical served as assistants to presidents, to academic deans, directors, and department heads. In some junior colleges, the intern also held part-time instructorship responsibilities. In 74% (26) schools, the higher education departments indicated that initial establishment of internship centers was a joint venture between them and other institutions, including colleges and other educational agencies. Twenty-two percent (8) institutions assumed total responsibility for initiating requests for establishing an intern center. One school reported its staff responded only to outside requests of schools which desired to cooperate in the internship effort, thus making all internships fall into a kind of "request for service" category. The internship was served under the student's major adviser in (57%) 20 institutions. In 37% (13) schools, one individual was made responsible for

program coordination and was usually designated as Internship Coordinator or carried a similar title. Six percent (2) schools used dual coordinators.

Relative to monetary compensation to the student involved, 83% (29) departments indicated interns received stipends for their efforts. In 17% (6) schools where remuneration was not a consideration, internships were part-time only. Compensation ranged from \$5 per hour to \$10,000 for a full year. An average estimate was \$2,000 for a semester or quarter's affiliation. Remuneration varied from monetary only to services only, i.e., food, board, transportation costs, to a combination of both. Sources of funds varied from a cooperative effort by both schools, to the total cost being borne by the internship center, to total expenses underwritten by the degree-granting institution. No consistent pattern existed. As for academic credit, all institutions indicated the experience was the important objective and 94% (33) schools offered varying academic credit. The two schools allowing no credit programmed only part-time internships.

Concerning outcomes, the objective of most schools could be summated as that of providing an opportunity for on-the-job experience whereby the student through a continuously planned effort would become a more functionally able administrator, once permanently employed. Objectives as perceived by the cooperating institutions included obtaining economical manpower and bringing newer insights and improved technology to them.

One may surmise, on the basis of this study, that the administrative internship as a vehicle for developing staff leadership personnel is yet in its infancy and has little consistency of operation except for purpose and outcome. It remains an optional venture in most schools and wherever it does exist as a requirement, the duration and degree of effort vary greatly. One could argue that existing conditions are as

they should be, for an internship by design complements other aspects of a student's total experience. However, the lack of frequency with which internships are operative makes one wonder if sufficient consideration has been given to this particular technique as a viable developmental medium. Furthermore, with approximately one school per state offering a graduate program in higher education (based on total number, not location) perhaps there is need to expand the concept of college instructor development by strengthening already established programs through offering the internship opportunity on a more wide-spread basis.

In the hope that more serious consideration may be given by higher education departmental staffs in support of the learning-by-supervised-doing technique, enumerating some of the features of a planned internship concept would seem appropriate. If the venture is to be successful, it must be accepted in principle by a majority, hopefully all members of a given department. Some staff person should assume the responsibility of coordinator. This need not be a full-time position, although programs having larger enrollments would require a proportionately greater expenditure of staff time. The coordinator would serve both in initial and follow-up contact roles for the program. Only institutions which would seem to offer an opportunity for administrative role participation in a vital, dynamic way should be considered. Herein lies an ever-present problem: where do examples exist of on-going programs of administrator effectiveness within easy access distance to the degree-granting institution. Hopefully, a sufficient roster of intern centers could be made available to offer each doctoral student the choice of an environment similar to that in which he hopes to seek employment upon completing his degree program. Internship arrangements with any given institution may be established on a one-time or

a continuing basis, depending on the willingness of that institution to initiate and continue such a program. Every effort should be made by the coordinator to place interns where new environments are possible and where "innovative" practices in administrative policy and procedure are operative. Having a required internship is open to much debate; but, based on our own experience at the University of Georgia, if an objective of the doctoral program is to provide opportunity for administrative learning experience, without full job responsibility, this device has great merit.

Working out the details involved in an actual internship experience must be based on variables among the staff of the intern center, the degree-granting institution's departmental personnel, and the capabilities of the student. Variations and adaptations of policy and practice become the basis for a viable program. The philosophy of all concerned must be in concert with the idea that the internship as a culminating experience provides opportunity to actualize theory, experiment, explore, and compare a variety of principles in day-by-day practice. The degree of openness with which the staff of an intern center is willing to include the intern as an integral part is crucial. The degree of understanding by the intern center school of the philosophy and goals and program of the degree-granting institution will largely determine the "how" of the internship, as it is experienced. None of these conditions is subject to exact prediction of outcomes. The more nearly staffs and the students recognize the internship process as an opportunity for positive interaction and growth, the more nearly a successful experience can be assured. Insofar as negative performance can become a learning experience, the student's observation of the not-so-workable aspects of an institution's administration are also important.

In conclusion, we all recognize there is no single avenue by which college administrator or other professional potential is developed. Multiple influences, in and out of the classroom and on and off the campus are operating constantly and neither student nor staff quite fully recognize what combinations of experiences afford the greatest opportunity for learning. The magic formula is yet to be derived and serendipity remains a potent factor. However, within a variety of administrator developmental techniques which are available and which may be adopted, adapted, and used, some commonalities and threads for continuity can exist. One such medium is the internship. It remains an empirical means for professional administrative growth without the obligations of final decision making commensurate with permanent employment. If we who have accepted the responsibility for leadership development in higher education are willing to incorporate the merits of the internship, with all its inconveniences and imperfections, into our own doctoral programs, as one viable means to administrator development, perhaps we may meliorate chance administrative success to more predictively fruitful outcomes. Better prepared college and university administrators can yet be the results of our concerted efforts.

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