The relationship of the state coordinating agency with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies and with higher education institutions is considered. In addition to the primary function of long-range planning for postsecondary education systems, coordinating boards also have the important function of providing the various elements of constituency with accurate and timely information. It is suggested that the coordinating agency exists in the center of an equilateral triangle, equidistant from the three corners represented by the executive, legislative, and institutional interests. To deviate toward one corner would result in losing the respect, support, or influence of the other two elements. Various state agencies with which the coordinating agency interacts are listed, including the state board of education, the attorney general's office, and the licensing and accrediting board. Interactions also occur with: quasi-public agencies at the state level (postsecondary education consortia); individual or private groups at the state level (state affiliate of the National Education Association and organized labor); quasi-public regional agencies (Southern Regional Education Board); private or individual groups at the regional level (regional accrediting agency); public agencies at the national level (Office of Education); quasi-public agencies at the national level (Education Commission of the States); and private agencies at the national level (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association). (SW)
STATE AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS:
INCESTUOUS, INTERNECINE AND OTHERWISE

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STATE AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS: INCESTUOUS, INTERNECINE AND OTHERWISE

by John Porter

In order to determine the range and variety of relationships that state agencies should have, one must first make some important assumptions about the goals of the agency and other aspects of its operations.

It is commonly accepted that the primary goal of coordinating agencies, such as those we are considering, is long-range planning for a system of postsecondary education within a state. Planning, of course, becomes an exercise in futility if there are no means for implementing these plans and appraising progress towards acceptance of plans and achievement of the goals.

There exists among the states a wide variety of means for implementing plans. These range from total control by a state agency to a position of limited power—essentially that of persuasion in some states. I would argue that no matter how much absolute power a given agency possesses, it can best carry out its operations through persuasive logic, relying on exercise of power only when logic fails and emotion and political maneuvering begin to prevail.

I have given these remarks a descriptive phrase "State Agency Relationships—Incestuous, Internecine and Otherwise." I did this to emphasize the positive aspects of the "otherwise" and to dramatize the dangers of the "incestuous" and "internecine" relationships.

In discussing the various relationships, it must be recognized that although planning is the primary objective, there are other functions that agencies must perform. One of the most important is to provide the various elements of constituency with accurate, objective information in a timely fashion. The satisfaction of this goal will enormously enhance the credibility of the agency and hence, strengthen its position in the process of logical persuasion.

One can analyze in several ways the type of agencies with which relations must be established. Obviously, they can be characterized by the specific nature of the other agency or by the benefit that one wishes to achieve from a relationship with them. I have chosen to pursue the former approach. Agencies can be characterized in the most general
sense as public (government related), quasi-public (public or partially public supported but, selfgoverning), and private or independent (sometimes reflecting special interest groups). These three types can be further grouped accordingly as their domain is over the state, the region, or the nation. The following table describes the relationships as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Quasi-Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>Nation</td>
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A third dimension could be added to the table indicating the primary or secondary nature of the relationship as it relates to (1) the process of planning and implementation thereof or (2) a source of information for a recipient of information. Essentially A, state public relationships, are primary for our discussion and all others secondary, therefore, I will not further complicate the diagram by adding a third dimension.

A. State - Public Agencies

It is in this category that the most important relations -- the agencies' relationship with the postsecondary institutions and with the legislature--fall. It has often been said that state coordinating boards live in a no man's land between the legislature and the institutions--that, in so doing, they are playing a "no win" game, for to "win" with one side is to "lose" with the other. The agency must develop a position that is respected by both the institutions and the legislature to insure that no matter how unpopular a position the agency takes, it is received with respect for its objectivity and honesty as it relates to the state's needs.

Although this "no man's land" existence very accurately describes the situation in most instances, it implies an adversarial relationship between the agencies and the institutions and the agencies and the legislature. I would suggest that the better position should not be one implying an adversarial nature, but more like a "menage a trois" or a three-side love affair. Although it is very difficult to maintain, such a delicate balance is possible, respecting
the individuality of the relationship and working toward a common good.

While on this theme, it is here that the dangers of incestuous relationships are related by a degree of the individuality of the legislative needs, but should not be legislatively, or collectively. The legislature as being the lackeys for the converse relationship it would affect the esteem with the eyes of the institution and support that the institutions would provide.

The often overlooked relationship in the state level analysis of the agencies probably most obvious coordinating agency to the executive office and clearly the agency must be the source to which the agency is subsequently, the consequences would provide.

Thus, if we reanalyze, it must be in the center of an equilateral triangle---equidistant from the executive, legislative and institutional legs. There is not much room to wiggle. To deviate from the others and influence as the can.

The three previous analogies are obviously in essence, of a similar nature. For your consideration, I will simply list those which will be.

(1) State board of public schools), (2) city manager's office, (3) licensing office, (4) state development office (state and accrediting board planning board), (5) state planning offices, (6) regional planning offices, (7) health department, (8) consumer protection office.
B. State Level - Quasi-Public Agencies

At the state level there exist few quasi-public agencies other than postsecondary education consortia. A close relationship with these consortia can be very helpful for planning purposes, particularly since they provide one of the best means for promoting cooperative ventures between the private and public sectors.

C. State Level - Individual Private Groups

There are a number of such agencies with whom a cooperative relationship will be beneficial. Again, I will list some of these for your consideration: (1) state NEA affiliate; (2) bar association; (3) medical association; (4) citizens special interest group; (5) chamber of commerce; (6) organized labor; and (7) media.

D. Regional - Public

In the regional area, there are obviously no public agencies.

E. Regional - Quasi-Public

Of the quasi-public agencies for regional compacts, of course, I mean SREB, WICHE, etc. I could devote much time to the benefits of the SREB relationship, but great does not permit and many of you are members of a similar agency in your region. For planning purposes, regional agencies can provide comparative data on all the national or federal agencies. They also provide a valuable means for the sharing of programs and facilities among the member states. This has potential benefits that are just now being felt in reducing the pressures for the creation of expensive duplications in every state.

F. Regional - Private Individual

The most important relationship here is with the regional agency. Since Dr. Millard has already spoken on this, I will not pursue it other than to emphasize that it is extremely important, and sometimes delicate, one.
G. National - Public

At the national level, the Office of Education is the obvious primary agency with which relations are established. The breadth and depth of the relationships will depend, on a large measure, on those federal functions that the individual state agency has been assigned. There are many other agencies that can aid a state coordinating agency in its planning and research including NSF, NIH, Department of Labor, Department of Commerce, and others. The congressional delegation is of extreme importance, as are the various committees and their professional staffs.

H. National - Quasi-Public

On the quasi-public organizations at the national level, ECS, the co-sponsor of this project, is the preeminent organization. The value of this organization and the importance of individual relations is self-evident and cannot be too strongly emphasized. I would encourage all of you who have not benefited from the resources of ECS to do so to the fullest extent.

I. National - Private

Although SHEEO is basically private in nature, with its close relationship to ECS, it is almost in the quasi-public category. Most of what I have said about ECS applies equally to SHEEO. Because of its private or individual aspects, it has certain advantages and opportunities not available to ECS and I would likewise encourage you to strengthen your relationship with SHEEO.

There are a whole host of national organizations that are strictly private in the same context that I have been using it up to now. Most of these are located at One Dupont Circle and the list is headed up by ACE, but includes all organizations representing the various types and categories of institutions, disciplines, and professions. Relationships with these agencies will be occasional rather than frequent and the most important aspect of relationships with these agencies is the detailed knowledge of who they are and what services and information they can provide.

Now, another note of warning--beware of internecine relationships--those that can be mutually destructive--this, of course, is almost the opposite of the incestuous note mentioned above. The temptation may arise--perhaps all too frequently--to become involved in a dispute or conflict with an agency, particularly at the state level, whose relationship
is basically secondary in nature; the consequences of this, however, can seriously jeopardize your primary state relationships. These differences can frequently be un avoided, but if entered into, it should be with the conviction that such is necessary for the accomplishment of the primary goals—planning for the best system of postsecondary education possible in the state and the implementation of those plans.