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ABSTRACT

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A STUDY OF DIVISIONAL  
DIFFERENCES IN A COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

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December 1972

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## A STUDY OF DIVISIONAL DIFFERENCES IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

### ABSTRACT

This study attempted to investigate the organizational differences which develop between various divisions of a community college as a result of specialization. The Lawrence and Lorach concepts of differentiation and integration were utilized in the analysis. The results obtained supported the conclusion that considerable differences existed between the administrative services divisions and the student personnel and instructional divisions on measures of formality of structure, interpersonal orientation, and goal orientation. The findings also confirmed that the divisions which have greater differences have more difficulty in working effectively with each other.

## A STUDY OF DIVISIONAL DIFFERENCES IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

Since all educational administration takes place within the confines of an educational organization, the study of educational organizations is a vitally important topic to educational administrators. Administrators need to understand the characteristics of the type of organization in which they are operating so that they can utilize this organization to achieve desirable goals and avoid the various dysfunctions which can occur through naive assumptions about organizations. Thompson<sup>1</sup> has pointed out the serious intraorganizational conflicts which can arise in an organization which utilizes a large proportion of highly trained specialists and continues to rely on a very rigid hierarchical authority structure. Merton and Gouldner have shown how the demand for control in an organization leads to unanticipated consequences which are serious dysfunctions in an organization.<sup>2</sup> Selznick has analyzed how the delegation of authority to persons who have specialized competencies in a given area leads not only to the desired consequences but also to the unintended results of bifurcation of interests.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the specialists will not only take on the responsibility of the delegated authority but will in turn modify the

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<sup>1</sup>Victor A. Thompson, Modern Organization: A General Theory, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961. pp. 25-27.

<sup>2</sup>James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, "Dysfunctions in Organizations", in Organizations and Human Behavior: Focus on Schools, Fred D. Carver and Thomas J. Sergiovanni, editors. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969. pp. 63-70.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

organizational goals to fit their own subgoals.

This study will be concerned with analyzing the degree of differentiation which exists between the general divisions within a community college organization. An attempt will be made to determine the sharp differences that exist between the personnel of the various divisions. Utilizing these findings, an appropriate integrating structure will be proposed which would serve not only the function of conflict resolution among the divisions but would also provide a mechanism for getting the various divisions to work together cooperatively as a team. This analysis is based on the Differentiation-Integration Contingency Theory of organizations proposed by Lawrence and Lorsch<sup>4</sup>. In very simplified terms, the theory places major emphasis on studying the states of differentiation and integration in organizational systems. Specialization, a need for division of labor, and a limited span of surveillance of each manager forces the organization to become segmented into subunits which deal with only a part of the institution's purpose. These subunits of the organization have to be linked together for the accomplishment of the institution's overall purpose. This division into specialized units and the need for unified effort lead to a state of differentiation and integration within any organization.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, Organization and Environment: Managing Differentiation and Integration, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1967. pp. 44-53.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 10.

By differentiation Lawrence and Lorsch mean differences in cognitive and emotional orientation among the specialists in different divisions. They measured the degree of differentiation between divisions by analyzing the formality of the structure within each division, goal orientation of the members, time orientation of the members, and interpersonal orientation of the individuals in each division. The quality of the integration is defined to be the quality of the state of collaboration that exists among departments that are required to achieve unity of effort by the demands of the environment.

Lawrence and Lorsch view integration achievement as conflict resolution between the various functional specialists. They feel that the different orientations between individuals in various divisions will quite naturally and frequently lead to conflicts. To achieve effective integration these conflicts must be resolved through the administrative hierarchy, coordinating committees, routine control, or individual managers outside official channels. Lawrence and Lorsch have not become so involved with the problem of integration that might cause them to overlook the equally important need for differentiation within organizations. As a result, they view recurrent conflict as inevitable if a need for specialized units exists within the organization. Their theory deals with the question of how conflicts can be resolved without expecting conflicts to disappear. In other words, how can integration among departments be achieved without sacrificing the need for differentiation?

Thompson also recognized the differences existing among groups of specialists as bases for conflict within an organization.<sup>6</sup> He sited the following three sources of intraorganizational conflict which are concerned with this area:

1. Lack of agreement about the reality of interdependence of various specialists.
2. Status violation involved in interaction.
3. Function of the lack of shared values and reality of perception.

Since the degree of differentiation which exist among the sub-units of specialist has been identified to be a very primary source of conflict within organizations it seems essential to analyze the degree of differentiation that exists among the subdivisions within a community college organization to be able to deal with the resulting conflicts in an appropriate manner. It seems to me that the basic functional divisions that exist among the various specialists in a community college organization are the instructional division which consists of all teaching faculty, the department chairmen, and the dean of instruction; the student personnel division which consists of the counselors, financial aids officers, student activity coordinators, admission counselors, and the dean of students; and the administrative services division which consists of the dean of business affairs and his professional staff, the director of computer services and his professional staff, the registrar, bookstore manager, and etc. This

<sup>6</sup>Victor Thompson, op. cit. pp. 25-57.

is clearly a division based on the type of functions that each specialist performs.

In an attempt to determine the degree of differentiation among the personnel of the basic divisions survey instrument was constructed which obtained measures on the formality of structure within each division, time orientation of the members, goal orientation, and interpersonal orientation. The instrument which appears in appendix A used items 3, 4 and 5 to determine the formality of structure within each division. These three items measured the average span of control of supervisors, the importance of formal rules, and specificity of job descriptions. The instrument was completed by administrative and supervisory personnel in each of the three divisions at Lake Land College. Since there was some question whether or not there might be a difference between the responses of department chairmen and faculty members in the instructional division a group of faculty members were also asked to complete the instrument and their results were analyzed separately. The measures obtained by each of these groups on the formality of structure criteria and using a four point scale with "4" being high formality structure and "1" being low. The results are shown in table 1. Since the sample sizes of each of the groups were rather small no statistical analysis will be made and no significance will be claimed. The analysis was performed to obtain indications only. The administrative services division was high on formality of structure which is as expected. Student personnel division was somewhat higher than expected. The faculty group perceived lower



Measures of Formality of Structure

TABLE 1

	Average Span of Control	Importance of Formal Rules	Specificity of Job Descriptions	Total Average
Administrative Services Division	4-6	3.4	2.6	3.0
Student Personnel Division	7-10	2.3	2.7	2.5
Instructional Division (Supervisors)	7-10	2.6	2.0	2.3
Instructional Division (Faculty)	—	1.8	1.8	1.8

formality of structure than did the department chairmen in the same division. Not much difference showed up in the measure of span of control of supervisors in the various divisions.

Item 5 of the instrument attempted to measure the time orientation of the personnel in each of the divisions. The question asked each person how much percent of their time was spent on projects that would result in outputs in various time intervals. Although the attempt was to find out if the personnel concentrate on short term tasks or long term tasks, the question was almost completely omitted by the respondents because it was unclear to them as to what was expected. Hence, no measure of time orientation will be used in this analysis. The few responses that were obtained seem to indicate that the administrative services division spent more time on short term tasks than the other divisions.

Item 7 attempted to get a measure of the differences in goal orientations of the individuals in the various divisions by asking individuals to choose from a list of criteria for evaluating innovative ideas the ones they considered to be the most important. The list included four basic types of concerns; students, instruction, faculty, and administrative. Grouping the instructional concerns with the faculty concerns under the heading of teaching goals we show the results of this analysis in table 2. The results showed that all divisions considered the student centered criteria to be important, however, there was considerable disagreement about the importance

**TABLE 2**  
**Percentage of Each Type of Criteria Selected**  
**As Most Important for Evaluating Innovative**  
**Ideas by Different Divisions Within A Community College**

Divisions	Student Criteria	Teaching Criteria	Administrative Criteria
Administrative Services	40	5	55
Student Personnel	70	10	20
Instructional (Supervisors)	40	30	30
Instructional (Faculty)	50	45	5

teaching criteria and administrative criteria. This difference can best be illustrated by noting that the administrative services division's selection of most important criteria included only 5 per cent teaching criteria and 55 per cent administrative criteria while the faculties' selection included 45 per cent teaching criteria and only 5 per cent administrative criteria. The great emphasis put on being student centered at Lake Land College might have affected the discriminating ability of the student criteria items. Never-the-less, the indication seems to be that there is considerable differences in what goals the personnel in the various divisions consider to be the most important. These differences are probably much sharper in real life situations than they appear on this instrument.

To measure the differences in interpersonal orientation of the personnel in the various divisions item 8 of the instrument made use of Fiedler's Least Preferred CoWorker Inventory. This inventory provides a measure of whether individuals are primarily task oriented or relationship oriented. Table 3 shows the results of this analysis. Again a four point scale was utilized with "1" representing extreme relationship orientation and "4" representing extreme task orientation. The administrative services division had the greatest proportion of personnel who were task oriented while the faculty group had the greatest proportion of relationship oriented individuals. The average for the faculty group and the department chairmen and deans from the instructional division were clearly in the high relationship area....

TABLE 3

Interpersonal Orientation of Personnel in Various Division  
 Within a Community College

(Four point scale with "4" representing high task orientation and "1" representing high relationship orientation.)

Division	Scale Score
Administrative Services	2.7
Student Personnel	1.7
Instructional (Supervisors)	1.9
Instructional (Faculty)	1.3

The average for the administrative services division was in the middle area but closer to the high task area. The relationship between the scale scores and raw scores on the Fiedler instrument are illustrated in table 4.

TABLE 4

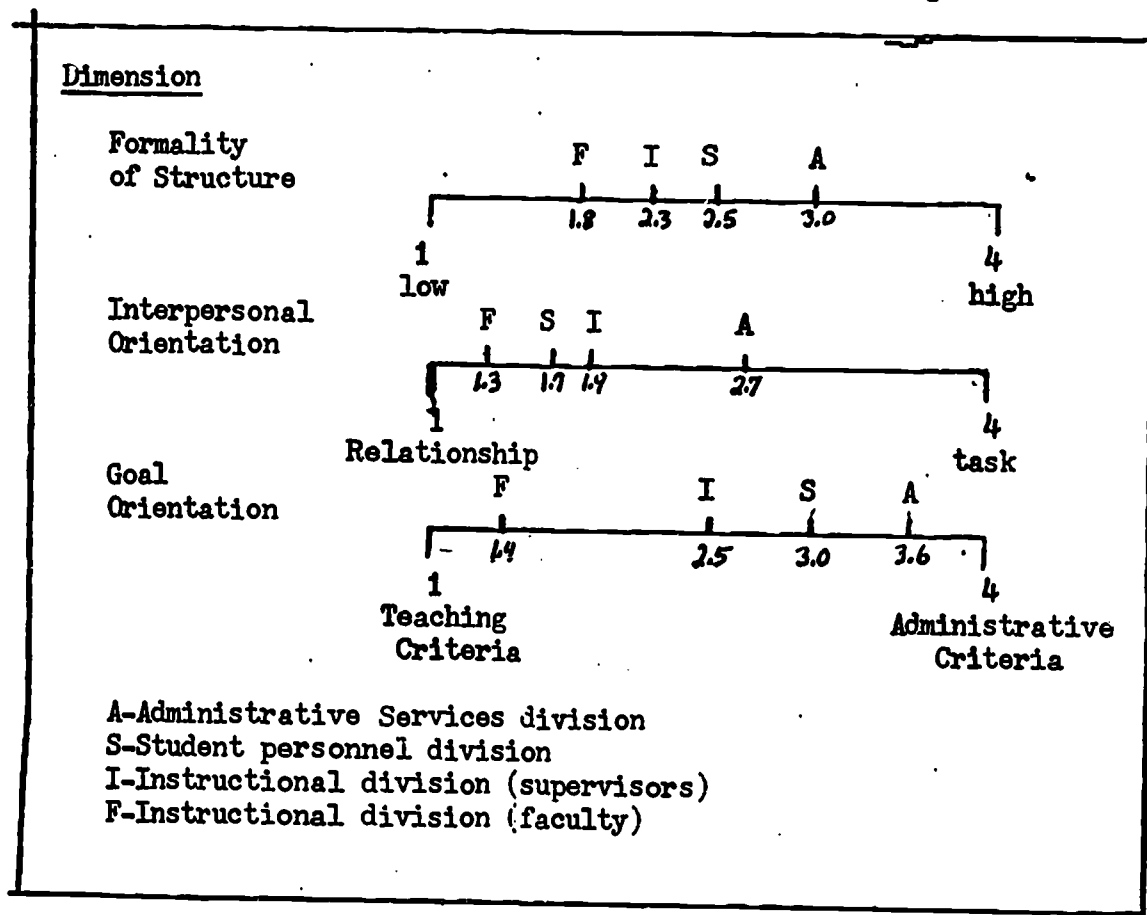
Relationships Between Scale Scores, Raw Scores on the  
 LPC Inventory, and Task Relationship Orientation

Scale Scores	1	2	3	4
Orientation		Relationship	Middle Range	Task
Raw Scores	120	66	51	15

Considering all of the separate measures together for each of the divisions there seems to be a consistent pattern emerging. Table 5 shows how the divisions ranked on the dimensions of formality of structure, interpersonal orientation, and goal orientation. There is a clear distinction between the faculty and the administrative services personnel on the criteria used. Using the average scale scores on these various measure a differentiation score between each two divisions can be calculated. Table 6 shows a measure of the degree of

TABLE 5

Differentiation Rank of Divisions in a Community College



differentiation between each pair of divisions studied. The greatest degree of differentiation was between the faculty and the administrative services. Using a combination of faculty and supervisor scores for the instructional divisions the degree of differentiation between the three divisions is as follows:

<u>Division Pair</u>	<u>Differentiation Score</u>
Administrative services-Instructional	1.3
Administrative services-Student Personnel	.9
Student Personnel-Instructional	.6

TABLE 6  
Degree of Differentiation Between Divisions in a  
Community College Organization

<u>Division Pair</u>	<u>Degree of Differentiation Score</u>
Administrative Services-Faculty	1.6
Administrative Services-Instructional Supervisors	.9
Student Personnel-Faculty	.9
Administrative Services-Student Personnel	.7
Instructional Supervisors-Faculty	.7
Student Personnel-Instructional Supervisors	.2

Using the above data the Differentiation-Integration Theory would predict that the divisions with the highest degree of differentiation between them would have the lowest quality of integration (collaboration) between them. To test this out, item 9 of the survey instrument was designed to evaluate the quality of the integration between each pair of divisions. The personnel in each division were asked to rate the quality of the relationship that exists between each pair of divisions. Table 7 shows the result of this analysis. The scores can range from a high of 7 to a low of 1 with each number having the following interpretation:

Relations between these two divisions are:

7. Sound-full unity of effort is achieved.
6. Almost full unity.
5. Somewhat better than average relations.
4. Average-sound enough to get by even though there are many problems of achieving joint effort.
3. Somewhat of a breakdown in relations.
2. Almost a complete breakdown in relations.
1. Could not be worse-bad relations-serious problem exist which are not being solved.



**TABLE 7**  
**Quality of Integration Between Divisions**

Rated by	Student Personnel - Instruction	Administrative - Student Personnel	Administrative - Instruction
Student Personnel	5.7	3.0	3.0
Faculty	6.0	4.2	3.3
Administrative services	5.3	5.5	4.8
Instructional (Supervisors)	5.3	4.8	5.3
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>

The results show that the divisions with the greatest degree of differentiation between them had the lowest quality of integration and visa versa. The average score received for integration between the administrative services division and the instructional division was a 4.1 which would indicate average relations. However, the student personnel and faculty rated the relation with a 3.0 and 3.3 which means they felt there was a breakdown of relations between these two divisions. In fact, several of these individuals felt that the relations could not be worse and rated the relationship with a "1". On the other hand, several department heads rated the relationship between all divisions with a "7". Hence, quite a difference in the perception of the relationship between these two divisions existed. Since the degree of differentiation between the faculty and the administrative services was the greatest quite naturally the quality of the integration between these two divisions was very low. The degree of differentiation between the student personnel division and the instructional division was very small and the quality of integration came out to be quite high (5.7-almost full unity).

Again I want to emphasize that the findings here might not meet the tests of statistical significance due to the very small sample sizes that I used. This was not the intent of this preliminary small scale project. The instrument that was used proved to have several limitations which need to be overcome. For example, personnel in education seem to have little conception of time orientation associated

with their tasks. This and other problems need to be solved. This preliminary project did indicate that this type of study might prove to be very fruitful if it were done with larger samples, involved several colleges, and carefully analyzed by statistical procedures.

The limitations of this study are so great that a serious analysis of the community college organization in question is unwarranted. However, for the purposes of this paper an assumption will be made that the results found were statistically significant. In that case we could conclude that the differentiation between the administrative services personnel and the personnel in each of the other two divisions was quite great and probably necessary due to the different orientations of the specialists required in this division. Hence, this great degree of differentiation should not be considered as a problem but instead a necessity. The problem comes in attempting to improve the quality of integration between the administrative services division and each of the other two divisions. An integrating structure which will provide for effective conflict resolution is essential. This structure could be provided through the hierarchy, through a committee, or through special personnel whose function it is to improve the relationship between these divisions. In this particular situation, the utilization of the first two structures would seem to be appropriate and adequate. The top administrators (president and deans) of the college need to understand the situation that exists. A genuine effort must be made by the top administrators to improve the quality

of integration. This can be done through the provision of better horizontal communications between divisions, through the inclusion of members from other divisions on various functional divisional committees, and through a concern by the various department chairmen for improving the relationship between divisions. A hierarchical structure with sincere concerns about the quality of integration among divisions can often eliminate serious problems of integration. The hierarchy must realize that conflicts will occur naturally and it must provide for effective methods of conflict resolution. In an organization where the hierarchy is well established the only ways that conflict resolution can occur is either through the authority system or through a method that has serious backing from the hierarchy. The possibility of initiating a committee structure which might serve as an integrating device between the administrative services division and the other divisions would depend on whether or not the hierarchy would be willing to give this committee enough responsibility to enable it to function properly. A committee of faculty, counselors, and administrative services personnel that would be allowed to study the problems that exist between these divisions freely and to implement meaningful changes could serve a very valuable integrating function.

Another possibly serious problem indicated by this analysis was the low degree of differentiation between the instructional division and the student personnel division. A close examination of the requirements of each division would need to be made. It seems that the

student personnel division may not have the type of specialists who are as concerned with student centered goals as the Dean of Student Services might imagine. For an example, we might expect that college counselors should be more relationship oriented than the faculty but this was just the opposite in the analysis. A more serious study of this problem might be in order.

It seems that differences between various divisions within a college organization do exist in various degrees and that these differences have direct relationship to the amount of conflict which is bound to result between various divisions. A study of the differences between divisions within college organizations seems like a very necessary part of devising effective structures for conflict resolution. In particular, Lawrence and Lorsch's Differentiation-Integration Theory seems to be very useful in this type of analysis.

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**APPENDIX A**

May 15, 1972

Dear Colleague:

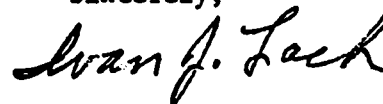
I am doing an independent research project about the various organizational divisions within a community college as a partial requirement of a course in which I am currently enrolled. I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing the attached survey instrument. Please return the completed form to me by Friday, May 19.

One of the purposes of this project is to improve the instrument. Hence, your comments and suggestions about the instrument itself are welcome.

You need not reveal your identity. I am interested in divisional differences only.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Ivan J. Lach

IJL/blm

Attachment



SURVEY OF CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIENTATIONS  
OF THE BASIC DIVISIONS WITHIN THE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

Please check the item which most nearly answers each question.

1. Within which of the three general divisions of a community college does your position fit?

- (a) Instructional division.
- (b) Administrative services division.
- (c) Student personnel division.

2. Describe the nature of your position.

- (a) Administrative or supervisory (deans, department heads, directors, coordinators, etc.)
- (b) Faculty or staff.

3. If your position is administrative or supervisory, over how many other persons do you have direct control? (Include only those who are your immediate subordinates.)

- (a) 1-3
- (b) 4-6
- (c) 7-10
- (d) 11 or more

4. Which one of the following statements best describes procedural and operational rules within your department or division.

- (a) No rules.
- (b) Rules on minor routine procedures.

(c) Comprehensive rules on routine procedures and/or limited rules on operations.

(d) Comprehensive rules on all routine procedures and operations.

5. Which one of the statements below best describes the job descriptions within your department or division?

(a) Very specific - describes all aspects of a job in detail.

(b) Specific - describes most routine tasks.

(c) General - describes only the basic responsibilities.

(d) Very general - describes areas of responsibility only.

6. How much of your time is devoted to activities that contribute to results (out-puts) that are realized within?

(a) One month or less \_\_\_\_\_ % of time.

(b) One to three months \_\_\_\_\_ % of time.

(c) Three months to one year \_\_\_\_\_ % of time.

(d) One year or longer \_\_\_\_\_ % of time.  
(Total should equal 100%)

7. In evaluating and considering the potentialities of innovative ideas, there are many considerations about which persons from various college divisions must be concerned. We recognize that certain concerns will be most important to you.

In order to learn which you consider to be the most important, we would like you to rank the criteria below as follows:

Place a "1" by the two criteria which are of most concern to you personally.

Place a "2" by the two criteria which are of second most concern to you personally.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. The costs associated with implementing the proposed innovation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. The effect that the proposed innovation might have on the personal development of students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. The effects that the proposed innovation might have on faculty positions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. The administrative problems which might result from the proposed innovation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. The effects that the proposed innovation might have on the quality of instruction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. The effects that the proposed innovation might have on the psychological and social needs of the students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. The effects that the proposed innovation might have on teaching as a profession.
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. The capability of the staff in implementing the proposed innovation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. The response of the students to the results of the proposed innovation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. The response of the general public to the results of the proposed innovation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. The physical facilities that would be required for the proposed innovation.

(Others which you feel are very important, but were not listed.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ l. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Below are pairs of words which are opposite in meaning, such as "Very neat" and "Not neat." You are asked to describe someone with whom you have worked by placing an "X" in one of the eight spaces on the line between the two words.

Each space represents how well the adjective fits the person you are describing, as if it were written:

Very neat: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Not neat  
 Very neat    Quite neat    Some-what neat    Slightly neat    Slightly untidy    Some-what untidy    Quite untidy    Very untidy

Look at the words at both ends of the line before you put in your "X". Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Work rapidly; your first answer is likely to be the best. Please do not omit any items and mark each item only once.

Think of the person with whom you can work least well. He may be someone you work with now, or he may be someone you knew in the past.

He does not have to be the person you like least well, but should be the person with whom you had the most difficulty in getting a job done. Describe this person as he appears to you.

Pleasant	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Unpleasant
Friendly	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Unfriendly
Rejecting	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Accepting
Helpful	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Frustrating
Unenthusiastic	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Enthusiastic
Tense	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Relaxed
Distant	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Close
Cold	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Warm
Cooperative	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Uncooperative
Supportive	<u>8</u> : <u>7</u> : <u>6</u> : <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> : <u>3</u> : <u>2</u> : <u>1</u>	Hostile

Boring	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Interesting
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	
Quarrelsome	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Harmonious
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	
Self-assured	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Hesitant
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	
Efficient	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Inefficient
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	
Gloomy	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Cheerful
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	
Open	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	<u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u> : <u>    </u>	Guarded
	8    7    6    5	4    3    2    1	

9. Listed below are eight descriptive statements. Each of these might be thought of as describing the general state of the relationship between various departments.

Relations between these two divisions are:

- a. Sound - full unity of effort is achieved.
- b. Almost full unity.
- c. Somewhat better than average relations.
- d. Average - sound enough to get by even though there are many problems of achieving joint effort.
- e. Somewhat of a breakdown in relations.
- f. Almost complete breakdown in relations.
- g. Could not be worse - bad relations - serious problems exist which are not being solved.

Select the statement which you feel is most descriptive of each of the departmental relationships shown and enter the corresponding letter in the appropriate blank.

\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship between the Student Personnel Division and the Instructional Division.

\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship between the Administrative Services Division and the Student Personnel Division.

\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship between the Instructional Division and the Administrative Services Division.