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ABSTRACT

This report examines research into characteristics of individuals likely to be considered for placement in administrative positions at colleges and universities. The report describes a grid model of social style which illustrates the various areas where faculty and administrators differ, not only in how they communicate, but also in how they perceive the world around them. The grid classifies the social style of school administrators and faculty into four basic areas ranging from amiable and expressive to analytical and driving. On the basis of research involving this grid, the social style of administrators, deans, and department heads tend to be more assertive, i.e., analytical and driving. Faculty, however, tend to be amiable or expressive: amiable persons being more easygoing, trusting members of an organization; expressive persons tending to be both socially assertive and responsive. Research also indicates that the further one moves into administrative positions, the more likely he or she is to be highly organized, thorough, systematic, and task-oriented, with academic vice presidents having strong feelings of less control. One exception is that an interaction effect was found with gender. Females appear to experience significantly less fatalism than their male colleagues in that they feel greater personal control over their daily activities. Continuing efforts to determine differences between administrators and faculty will result in better understanding and allow administrators to better serve their institutions' various constituencies. (Contains 33 references.) (GLR)

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The primary focus of research into the characteristics of administrators and faculty has been from the separate analysis of each. Most studies describing characteristics of community, junior college, and/or university members simply define members of one group, without comparing positions across groups (Anderson and King 1987; Asmussen 1983; Clark 1989; Clark and Corcoran 1987; Daresh 1985). The few studies that have examined four-year and graduate institutions tend to look at other countries and/or specific disciplines (Boone 1988; Dickson 1983; Walker 1990) or at the effectiveness of instruction (Feldman 1986; Perry 1985; Pittman 1985).

Some believe that, because of their training, the best administrators are liberal arts scholars (Warburton 1989), others that presidents come from a variety of educational backgrounds (Fisher 1988). The assumption that because liberal arts scholars have traditionally become presidents and academic vice presidents and are therefore better qualified appears, however, to be fading. In recent years, more individuals with managerial and/or administrative training have been selected for the presidency (Carnegie Council 1980; Daresh 1985; Kauffman 1977).

Some studies attempt to find characteristics of positions; a few have attempted to understand the philosophical basis for differences between administrators and faculty. Thus, it seems that the ability to understand such differences in terms of positions held would help to bridge gaps in university decision making. It is commonly believed that day-to-day interaction between administrators and faculty is characterized by feelings of distrust, frustration, and, sometimes, envy. To provide the best possible service to students, the community, and society, each group should strive to work together toward the institution's common missions.

Administrators are more deterministic or fatalistic than faculty; that is, faculty believe they have more personal control over daily activities (Garmon 1984). Faculty members' world view is one of greater perceived freedom of choice over issues that affect their lives. Vice presidents seem to be the most fatalistic of administrators, feeling that they have less ability to control their futures than either their superiors (presidents) or subordinates (deans and department heads), supporting the notion that levels of fatalism differ significantly among academic administrators, according to position (Cardot 1990).

English faculty in one study, for example, were the least deterministic (Garmon 1984), while administrators and faculty in education or mathematics did not differ significantly. Conversely, in another study, business and mathematics educators held the least deterministic world

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This *Administrator's Update* is the final issue of this AAUA publication. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I want to thank AAUA's officers and members for their support and encouragement during the past 13 years.—**Ed.**

view (Cardot 1990); that is, they felt the least in control of how they spent or scheduled their time.

Empirical analyses are not available beyond these inquiries. Another researcher suggests that the major differences lie in the perceptions of organizational climate, concluding that administrators must use a more global view of the institution and be concerned with the formal structure, whereas faculty are not confronted with these general concerns as frequently as administrators (Warburton 1989). Faculty perceive the organizational climate more negatively than administrators (Moran and Volkwein 1988). A national survey of faculty seems to corroborate that finding, determining that faculty do not feel able to control their work environment (Blackburn, Lawrence, and Associates 1990). Part of the variance in perception, however, could be the result of the two groups' different needs and expectations.

Higher education institutions are frequently described as "organized anarchies" (Cohen and March 1974). Such organizations' goals are highly ambiguous. But effective colleges and universities are able to focus on goals despite the problems of ambiguity and conflict by identifying "adequate performance" (Cameron 1981). Such a focus must come from individual goals that are at least congruent with the organization's stated goals, if not specifically the same. If they are not, then ineffective communication, lowered productivity, and a nonsupportive or negative climate will result (Warburton 1989). Faculty and administrators differ on many variables; those differences are the result of differing perspectives and could be counterproductive (Peterson and White 1990).

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The size of the organization always affects the interaction, and therefore relationships, between members (Goldhaber 1990). The greater the perceptual distance between individuals, the more likely the interaction will be written and formal. The smaller the school, the more frequent the communication among administrators and the greater the tendency to follow the chain of command (Applegate and Book 1989). In larger schools, communication becomes more structured and the perceptual distance between administration and faculty seems to increase, resulting in an ever-widening gap between the two groups (Warburton 1989).

The mission of education is to discover and disseminate knowledge. Thus, scholars should seek to understand better the organization in which this mission is accomplished. Perhaps an analysis is necessary that includes the verbal interaction between members based on communicators' social styles (social styles being a pervasive and enduring set of interpersonal behaviors) (Darling 1985). Communicators' social style is the method of assigning meaning to the behaviors of individuals based on the consistency of their interaction (Bolton and Bolton 1984).

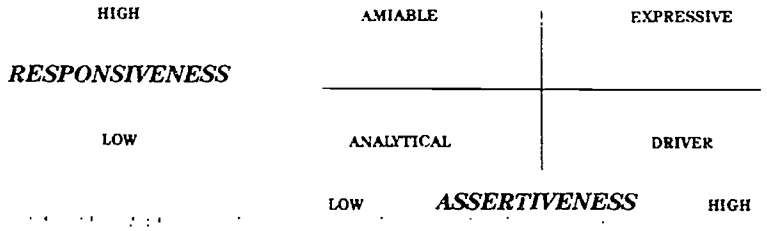
In an effort to find that social style, a study conducted among institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had respondents complete self-reports using the Personal Report of World View and a modified version of the Wilson Learning Corporation's Communicator Social Style Profile (Wilson Learning 1975). The research used two dimensions perceived to be critical in understanding behavioral style—assertiveness and responsiveness (Blake and Mouton 1978; Reddin 1970; Stogdill and Coons 1957). (Others use terms like dominant-submissive [controlling or compliant], task or relationship oriented, and initiating structure and consideration [Blake, Mouton, and Williams 1981; Knight and Holen 1985].) In this context, assertiveness is the degree to which others perceive an individual's behavior as forceful or directive

and responsiveness is the degree to which they perceive behaviors as emotionally expressive or emotionally controlled. A person's social style is therefore defined as the measured perceptions of assertiveness and responsiveness.

Measuring an individual's level in both dimensions, from low to high, places him or her into one of four categories: Analytical, Driver, Amiable, or Expressive. The population is assumed to be evenly distributed among the styles (Bolton and Bolton 1984). Any one style is neither more effective nor more important than another. Each has strengths and weaknesses. Figure 1 shows the relationship of each style with the degrees of responsiveness and assertiveness. The quadrants have been rearranged to conform to the traditional use of *X* and *Y* axes, allowing the reader to see more easily the style change when the degree of assertiveness (the *X* axis) or the degree of responsiveness (the *Y* axis) is increased or decreased.

FIGURE 1

GRID OF SOCIAL STYLE



A person's social style is therefore defined as the measured perceptions of assertiveness and responsiveness.

The styles of administrators and faculty are different (Cardot 1990). All presidents and academic vice presidents in one study were either Driver or Analytical styles (Cardot 1990); others have found that presidents tend to take risks and to have dominant styles of leadership (Fisher 1988; Wright 1988). Only deans and department heads fall into all four categories. Analyticals are usually organized, thorough, systematic, and precise, Drivers competitive, pragmatic, objective, and oriented toward results. Both have characteristics necessary to coordinate the multiple, varied activities of a university.

Faculty, on the other hand, tend to be either Expressives or Amiables. Expressives combine a high degree of both assertiveness and responsiveness. This combination, a willingness to take risks and use unusual or novel techniques to solve problems, results in effective teaching. Amiables are perceived as the easygoing and trusting members of the organization, highly empathetic and able to encourage colleagues and students to high levels of performance.

The position held appears to be a predictor of the communicator social style; further, individuals who are Analyticals or Drivers tend to be the most likely candidates for advancement into the higher levels of administration (Cardot 1990). Accordingly, the higher one moves into administrative positions, the more likely he or she is to be highly organized, thorough, systematic, and task oriented, with academic vice presidents having strong feelings of less control. One exception is that an interaction effect was found with gender. Females appear to experience significantly less fatalism than their male colleagues. While they are either Analyticals or Drivers, they feel greater personal control over their daily activities.

These research findings indicate that one can predict those individuals who are likely to be considered for placement in administrative positions and those most likely not to be considered. It also supports the notion that differences exist in the fundamental way administrators and faculty view their role, power, and influence in the organization, appearing to have different methods of interacting and communicating with those around them. Most important to note is the preference for higher-level administrators to avoid small talk with others. The distaste for such conversations, coupled with their feelings of minimal control, results in frustrating encounters with faculty, who tend to have a different style of interaction with others. *Faculty* then experience the frustration, perceiving presidents and academic vice presidents as not wanting to know them as individuals and viewing them simply as a resource.

This research suggests that faculty and administrators are indeed different, not only in their style of communicating with others, but also in their basic perception of the world (Cardot 1990; Peterson and White 1990). Efforts to continue to determine differences between administrators and faculty will result in a better understanding and allow us to better serve our institutions' various constituencies.

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