A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATION
OF AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

A Project
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

A college, in its original meaning, is a body of colleagues, a corporation or society of persons, invested with certain rights and powers, performing certain duties or engaged in some common employment.¹ Colleges in America are included in this broad definition, but more specifically they are institutions of higher learning where students may study and learn under some master teacher or teachers. Colleges in America are commonly organized for a specific, educational purpose. A church, the state, or private individuals may organize a college to fulfill a definite purpose.

Since the founding of Harvard and William and Mary, the first two colleges in the country, colleges have grown rapidly in number. Today there are over seven hundred colleges and universities in the United States. The smallest college is Trinity College in Sioux, Iowa. It enrolls sixteen students. The largest university is New York University with thirty five thousand, seven hundred and eight students.²

The services that these colleges and universities

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have rendered and are rendering the country cannot be reckoned exactly. However, it is known that many national, state, and community leaders are college-trained men. Also, professional schools commonly require a certain number of years of college as a prerequisite for entrance. In addition, many of the better positions in every occupation seem to be open only to college-trained men.

The administrative organizations of state, church, and private institutions of learning are similar in many respects. The state-supported college receives funds from the state, and in turn carries out the mandates of the state by including in its curriculum certain courses and by following in its administrative policies the principles and tenets of the state. The church college upholds the principles of its founders. The privately endowed institution may, in respect to instructional and administrative policies, incorporate the wishes of those who endow it.

The control of colleges is usually vested in a board of trustees or a board of visitors. These boards represent the interests responsible for the college, and they control the school's administration. Although the boards do not appoint the faculty, they usually approve such appointments and may exercise a veto power controlling faculty selection. The chief executive officer is usually a president who is responsible to the board for the school's administration.
Atlantic University, founded in September, 1930, at Virginia Beach, Virginia, was unique in comparison with the average college or university. It had no buildings, no endowment, no permanent income, no traditions. It existed for only a year and three months. Yet, it was similar to other colleges in many ways. It had a board of trustees, a complete faculty, a full curriculum. It was authorized to confer the bachelor's and master's degrees, and to award honorary degrees. Because of the uniqueness of Atlantic University, it was decided to make it the subject of this study.

It was not feasible to investigate every phase of the organizational life of Atlantic University in this study. However the study does include a detailed investigation of the University's administration. It is believed that such a study will include the principal, relevant aspects of the University.

**Importance of the study.** A study that would give information as to effective methods of educational administration would be an important study. The administration of an enterprise usually is considered important in determining the outcome of a venture. This is indicated by the fact that in our capitalistic society executives are the highest paid individuals in business, while school administrators are the highest paid individuals in school
work.

The writer believes that the case history method is an important technique for discovering certain administrative principles. In the executed acts of the institution the validity of administrative practices can be assessed. By examining the administrative acts of a school's administration and by identifying for other administrators certain principles of administration that were fundamental to the success or failure of an enterprise, this report can make these individuals cognizant of certain principles that should be adhered to in order to be consistent with good administrative practice.

No history of Atlantic University has been written. The history of such an institution should be recorded.

Purpose of the study. It is the purpose of this study to examine and report the acts of the administration of Atlantic University in the light of acceptable criteria.

Procedure. In this study the writer proposes to develop acceptable criteria by which to appraise administrative practices in educational institutions. Six basic criteria for judging good administrative practice will be selected.

After establishing these criteria, it is proposed to develop an accurate case history of Atlantic University. In order that this case history may be as accurate as
possible, the writer will seek to avoid reliance upon hearsay and opinions. The University's administration will then be judged in relation to the criteria established. The judgment of the administrative acts in the light of the criteria will be done subjectively. There appear to be no objective means by which the acts may be compared with the criteria. This study treats the entire administration of Atlantic University in relation to each of the six criteria. The treatment is analytical, interpretative, philosophical, and comparative. It is the belief of the investigator that the emphasis that is thus placed upon the administration of Atlantic University will show to students of school administration effective and ineffective administrative practices.

Reasons for procedure. In attempting to study the administrative practices of Atlantic University, the writer considered several research methods. The first method considered was the questionnaire which could be sent to all the people who were present at Atlantic University and who had some knowledge of the administrative practices there. This method was not used because the school had been closed in bankruptcy for some sixteen years, and many persons connected with the school could not be located.

The interview technique was also a possible procedure. In this case, there was a reluctance on the part of
individuals located to disclose the full facts.

The case history method, with certain modifications, appeared to be the most practicable method for presenting the relevant facts. First, material for the writing of a case history of Atlantic University was available. Second, a case study, or history of a case, is a logical method of presenting pertinent facts concerning the subject studied. An attempt may be made to discover and interpret relevant facts. Third, the case study as a technique is well adapted for studying any subject that is so seriously maladjusted as to be considered a problem. The nature of Atlantic University, its conception, establishment and bankruptcy, indicate it to have been maladjusted. Fourth, the brief existence of the school would make it possible to present its entire administrative history. This is an important factor in studying the administrative practices through the case study method.

Sources of information: The information used in writing the case history of Atlantic University was gathered from a variety of sources. The contemporary newspapers carried accounts of many of the events concerning the University. Catalogues of the University were located and studied. The original charter of the University was located in the files of the State Corporation Commission. In the office of the clerk of the federal court at Nor-
folk, Virginia, were discovered the records of all of the
bankruptcy proceedings. People who were available for
interviews were located, and where permission was granted,
the information given was used. The writer was a student
at the University during its brief existence and therefore
experienced much which is pertinent to the history.

Treatment of data. The data will be utilized in
analyzing the administrative practices of Atlantic Uni-
versity and in comparing these practices with the criteria
that are established. The writer will arrive at certain
conclusions regarding the administrative practices in
relation to the criteria. Finally, an attempt will be
made to derive from this study certain principles con-
cerning administrative practices in general.
CHAPTER II

SELECTION AND VALIDATION OF CRITERIA

Criterion I: A well-administered school is democratic.3

This criterion concerns the administration of a school in many of its aspects. One of the most important of these aspects is the democratic nature of faculty-administration relations. The administration works closely with the faculty, and such relations appear to be important factors affecting the success or failure of any educational institution.

There are many reasons which suggest that an administration which is democratic in its relations with the faculty will effectively accomplish its purposes. Teachers are responsible professional agents of society, and they should have a voice in determining the administrative policies of the school. Participation in the formulation of policies contributes much to the understanding and support of the policies. As Briggs has stated, "Teachers are responsible professional agents of society, not mechanical instruments to be used by their superiors."4 Since administration must have faculty support, it should provide for partici-

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pation in policy determination by the faculty.

This does not necessarily mean that there is less need for leadership by the administration. The democratic administrator is a leader, but he expresses the common will resulting from the cooperative thinking of the entire faculty. He recognizes the value of the opinion of each individual member.

Americans are citizens of a nation organized on the principles of democracy. The social ideals of the nation are expressed in terms of democracy which should apply in all aspects of the national life - political, economic, social and educational. It follows, therefore, that governmental agencies and social institutions should operate in terms of the ideals of the society which supports the agency or institution. In view of these principles, American administrators should provide for democratic relations with their faculties if schools are to be well administered.

Criterion II: A well-administered school operates according

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6 Briggs, op. cit., p. 146.

to administrative policies consistent with a sound philosophy of education; these policies should be understood by all who participate in the life of the school. 8

Educational philosophy need not be abstract. Rather, it may be a practical, complete, ordered set of ideas which guides educators' activities. It is the interrelation of principles that gives the separate acts of administration meaning. The activities of a school program may not be consistent or sound unless the considerations which inspire them are based on a sound philosophy of education understood by all who are responsible for the educational program.

One of the important studies on secondary school standards is the Cooperative Study of Secondary Schools. In this study the soundness and clarity of the school's philosophy is considered an important factor in rating the school. For example, the school's philosophy of education is included in the basic information upon which the whole evaluation of the school rests. 9

Each person connected with the school in some way contributes to the educational program. The school program cannot realize its full measure of success until each

9 Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards (Evaluative criteria), (Wisconsin: George Bond Publishing Company), Part C.
of these persons understands the objectives and the purpose of the school's program. Briggs states it clearly.

Teachers are more and better influenced by clearly formulated and ordered ideals, by convictions and by vision of what they may become as effective contributors to the social good than by anything else.

Criterion III: A well-administered school seeks to meet the needs of the community and the students it serves.

Schools are established because people in the community have a desire for their children to learn certain knowledge and skills. Society considers it important, also, that the cultural heritage of the past should be taught to children. In addition to these needs which society defines in terms of organized knowledge, there are other areas of need which are related to healthy growth and the development of well-adjusted personality on the part of students. A well-rounded program of education seeks to provide for growth and personality needs of youth as well as for those related to the acquisition of organized knowledge.

Educational practice in America suggests that all communities have formal educational needs. In America most states require children to attend school until they are sixteen years of age, and all children have the right to be


11 Caswell and Campbell, op. cit., pp. 194-95.
educated through high school at public expense. These regulations indicate that American society has recognized the need of children to be educated through secondary school.

Furthermore, some children can profit by being educated beyond the high school limit. The resulting benefits to society are recognized by systematic provision for college and university training with public financial aid. In order to serve as many as possible of those who could profit by the educational opportunities provided by a college, it would seem that a consideration of importance in choosing the location for the institution would be the density of population in immediate proximity. By making the college conveniently available to the larger numbers of prospective students than would reside in a sparsely populated area, the potential service of the institution to youth would be expanded. In judging the needs of a particular community, or in justifying the establishment of a new institution in that community, the number of potential students and the existing educational facilities would be matters of primary importance.

The criterion will be considered in the light of two questions: what educational facilities were available in the community at the time of the appearance of Atlantic University, and what other educational facilities were
needed by that community.

In the past, student needs have been largely determined by people other than the students themselves. The traditionalist's practice has emphasized programs of instruction and standards of behavior which have aimed at giving students a core of information and socially approved conduct. According to these educators, the pupils, themselves, have little idea of what they should study or how they should behave, and pupil needs were, to a large extent, determined either by custom or by the older people in the community. Other educators believe that the learner, himself, is aware of his own needs, in terms of the level of maturity which he has reached, and that his growth is accelerated when he sees that the needs of which he is aware are recognized by those who guide his education and that efforts are being made to meet them. The progressive educator believes that education is total growth and that needs other than the need for knowledge and the imposition of a standard of conduct must receive consideration.

The needs and demands of the environment as well as the interests and capacities of the pupils must, ... be taken into consideration. Education ... becomes the process of inducting pupils intelligently into the environment in which they are to live and to whose welfare they should be trained to contribute.

The whole child is the important consideration, and his needs should be characterized as including all those experiences which would contribute to his total growth. Since the number of categories into which the needs which contribute to the total growth of the whole child could be organized would be exceedingly large, it seems wise to limit the application of this criterion to certain selected categories, rather than attempt to cover the whole range of needs.

Criterion IV: In a well-administered school administration is recognized as a means to the end of improved student instruction.  

In all schools the needs of communities and students are met largely by means of programs of instruction. The important part of the educational process takes place at the point where the program and the teacher come in contact with the student.

The administration of an educational institution must be, therefore, the means to an end, and the end is better instruction of the pupil. The administrative aims in making instruction available for the child would be the same whether the school's philosophy was traditional.

13 Arthur B. Moehlman, School Administration (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1940), pp. 139-140.
or progressive. The results to be achieved by instruction might vary from the traditional church school, which might prepare students for more effective service in church and state, to the modern public school program, which seeks to teach pupils to do better the desirable thing that they are going to do anyway. Administration must serve instruction by serving children in either case.

Although instruction is the more important consideration in administering the school, the correct management of the mechanical details of the school’s organization is an important aid to the instructional process. The over-loading of some teachers at the expense of others; too many classes per teacher; constant and unexcused pupil absences; lack of textbooks; and many other similar conditions would make it difficult for the instructional process to be carried on in the orderly atmosphere that is necessary to learning. It is the responsibility of administration to manage these details in such a way as to contribute to effective instruction.

The responsibility of employing the faculty usually devolves upon the administration. The way in which this responsibility is discharged is an important determinant.


15 Earl Hudelson, Class Size at the College Level (University of Minnesota Press, 1926), pp. 100-110.
of the nature of instruction and cogently affects the educational experiences students will have.

The administrator must also make provisions for the curricular program in terms of the objectives of the school. He must keep available the material and supplies necessary for instruction, and he should not allow outside activity to destroy the appropriate classroom environment.

In the final analysis the growth of the student should be the measure of all administration. That administration which makes the student a well-adjusted personality is good administration. Schools are made for the pupils who attend; and the curriculum, faculty, and the entire school community is important only as it serves the student.

Criterion V: A well-administered school makes provisions for adequate financial support from endowment, taxation, or operational revenue.

Operating a school involves the spending of money. The services that the school renders cost money. The cost of instruction, administration, and maintenance of plant might quickly place a school in debt if the school were not properly financed. If a school is in debt, no pro-

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vision having been made for retirement of the debt, it is in serious difficulty. Such debts are damaging to a school's reputation, for people will interpret the situation of indebtedness as being indicative of improper management. Should the indebtedness continue, and be increased, the public will conclude that the management is so inefficient that the school should not be allowed to exist. If a school lacks public support and lacks the confidence of its creditors, bankruptcy will ensue.

The income of an educational institution usually can be accurately estimated. A budget is necessary in order that the estimated income can be fairly spent, and the expenditures of all departments limited to the budget. The National Committee on Standards in 1935 published a financial report for colleges and universities stating:

The income of educational institutions is practically fixed in advance. Budgetary control over all departments and activities is necessary in order to limit expenses to available income.

One of the most important considerations in the making and the execution of the budget is the prudential principle. Mort and Russer in their book on public school finance give a good statement of what it is:

In brief, the prudential principle demands that the school system should be so organized, financed and managed that it will do the things agreed upon in such a way as to make sure that people are treated equitably, that discretion in action is not exercised by persons or agencies incapable of making good judgments, that funds are not lost or wasted and that the school is financially sound.

If this principle cannot be followed, the school will cease to function.

Criterion VI: A well-administered school makes provision for good public relations.

The opinion of the public concerning the activities of any social enterprise may be considered an important force affecting the success or failure of the enterprise. This applies pertinently to schools. People who support colleges or private schools must believe in them if they are to continue their support. Furthermore, it is evident that taxpayers will not give continuing support to public schools unless they believe the schools' programs worth while. Poor public relations in either case might cause a school to lose the backing of its supporters or the taxpayers and to close. Community understanding and appre-

18 Mort and Russer, op. cit., p. 104.


20 James A. Gerow, The Principals' Public Relations Program (The Nation's Schools, December, 1946), Volume 38, pp. 31-32.
ciation of the purposes of the school depend upon good public relations while a good public relations program will attract to the school a student body of the desired type. It is imperative, therefore, that well-administered schools have good public relations.