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"A Focus on Professionalism"

FROM THE EDITOR

FEATURE ARTICLES

Volunteer programs are shifting towards the use of web sites to recruit volunteers. Using previously recommended practices for web site management, the authors analyzed 93 web sites of volunteer-based animal welfare organizations regarding 14 best practices in web design and management. On average, the organizations used nine of the 14 best practices. The most commonly used practices included (1) providing a link to the volunteer program web page and (2) providing an organizational mission statement. The least commonly used practices included (1) providing information for future orientation sessions and (2) providing a volunteer program mission statement. Analyses further indicated that the number of best practices used is related to the number of volunteers at each program even after controlling for the overall size of the organization or the availability of resources (i.e., total revenue). Implications for volunteer resource managers are discussed.
Key Words: web site, best practice, volunteer resource management, recruitment

Volunteers play an integral role within nonprofit organizations and have a unique place in the development and evolution of the nonprofit sector. Yet limited efforts have been made to study the impact on and import of their work to the overall capacity of organizations. This article summarizes current learning about volunteer resource management and organizational capacity; compares findings from two major studies of volunteer resource management and capacity building; and offers new insights about differing conceptualizations of volunteers in organizational capacity. The paper underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management, examines the role of volunteer coordinators and executive directors in determining volunteers' impacts on organizational capacity, and discusses challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. In particular, the authors highlight contrasting stakeholder perceptions between volunteers and volunteer resource managers regarding organizational capacity and discuss why these differences are important.
Key Words: capacity, volunteers, volunteer resource management

FROM THE JOVA ANNALS

In This Issue
"A Focus on Professionalism"

The Meaning of "Professionalism" in the 21st Century

For more than 40 years, various individuals who work directly with volunteers, or authors and consultants who train and support those who do, have argued and debated the question of whether that work constitutes an actual profession. While most readers of *The IJOVA* would not hesitate to respond with a resounding "Yes!", events and situations at the national and international levels during the past few years may have led some to perhaps be a little bit slower in sharing that response. Still, few if any can argue that contemporary volunteer resource managers (VRMs) are both individually and collectively actively working to improve and strengthen their knowledge, skills, and abilities so as to successfully engage volunteers in addressing critical issues and needs we face today as a society. But, how does the professionalism required of today's VRMs compare with expectations from years past?

By providing insights into the answer to this question, this first issue of Volume XXVII opens with three excellent original *Feature Articles*, each of which contributes new ideas and strategies regarding professionalism among contemporary volunteer resource managers. Joseph Allen, Adrian Goh, Steven Rogelberg, and Anna Currie open the issue by discussing the increasingly important role of volunteer VRMs as "cyber marketers" (NOTE: my term . . . not the authors') in attracting volunteers using the web. According to the authors, "web site improvement could not only benefit the volunteer program in terms of sheer numbers of volunteers, but research also indicates that nonprofit organizations that provided mission statements, organizational goals, and reports on a web site are able to raise more donations than those that used a sales approach." Next, Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Christine Sinatra, and Angela Bies share important findings about the capacity of nonprofit organizations to actually manage volunteers. The authors conclude, "Volunteer resource managers should band together to bring greater attention to their needs and the importance of their role, including those related to training and continuing education, executive leadership support, and organizational resources." Their article underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management and highlights challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. In the third and final *Feature*, Richard Waters and Denise Bortree address the role of cybervolunteerism in today's nonprofits, and outline a strategic approach that VRMs may use to introduce and/or expand the role of cyber volunteers in programs and services. The authors argue that "Given the increasing prevalence of technology in the lives of all Americans, volunteer resource managers should consider adopting the principles of the ROPES model to introduce cybervolunteerism into a nonprofit organization. By using currently available technology, nonprofit organizations could not only become more inclusive by reaching out to busy professionals who have valuable skills but cannot volunteer on site during normal operating hours, and to individuals with disabilities and others who may not have the abilities to volunteer on site."

Two thought-provoking *Commentaries* examine professionalism among volunteer resource managers from two different perspectives. Tracy Connors argues for "strategic professional development" among VRMs and describes how such strategic professional development is inherently connected to the overall sustained excellence in and success of nonprofit organizations engaging volunteers. Connors concludes, "Expanded, visionary, strategic professional

development for current and future leaders of volunteer programs (including focused research to support that development) is our best hope to meet the increasing demands for improved human services, and to realize the inherent potential within human resource management and volunteer resource management to contribute substantially to achieving and sustaining organizational excellence." Nancy Macduff and Ellen Netting discuss the role of "pracademics" and its implications for VRMs. According to the authors, "Whether it is through one person who can see both or in a collaboration that pulls from the strengths of engaged scholars and reflective practitioners, the "pracademic" way is to see both the forest and the trees as a integrated whole. We think the "pracademic" term is descriptive of what professionals who manage volunteer resources need to be in a highly complex world."

In *From the Annals*, we are also pleased to reprint five articles published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*: "Volunteer Services Coordinators in the Seventies" by T.O. Wedel (first published in 1971); "Higher Education programs for Administrators of Volunteers" by J. Malcom Walker and David Horton Smith (published originally in 1977); "Continuing Professional education for Volunteer Administrators" by Joe Agnello (published in 1984); "Practical Volunteer Administrator professional development Strategies" by Robert F. Long (first published in 1992); and "Moving beyond the Volunteer Management System" by Mary V. Merrill (published originally in 2003).

I join the entire Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* in sharing this issue so that VRMs may strengthen their professional status and development within the context of our overarching nonprofit sector.

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Volunteer Web Site Effectiveness: Attracting Volunteers via the Web

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Abstract

Volunteer programs are shifting towards the use of web sites to recruit volunteers. Using previously recommended practices for web site management, the authors analyzed 93 web sites of volunteer-based animal welfare organizations regarding 14 best practices in web design and management. On average, the organizations used nine of the 14 best practices. The most commonly used practices included (1) providing a link to the volunteer program web page and (2) providing an organizational mission statement. The least commonly used practices included (1) providing information for future orientation sessions and (2) providing a volunteer program mission statement. Analyses further indicated that the number of best practices used is related to the number of volunteers at each program even after controlling for the overall size of the organization or the availability of resources (i.e., total revenue). Implications for volunteer resource managers are discussed.

Key Words:
web site, best practice, volunteer resource management, recruitment

Introduction

Volunteers serve as an incredible resource to non-profit organizations (McFarland, 2005). Volunteer-based non-profit organizations are often faced with a paucity of resources in their operations, and volunteers serve to supplement the paid staff in supporting general operations and achieving organizational goals (Safrit & Schmiesing, 2005; Safrit, Schmiesing, Gliem, & Gliem,

2005). The ability of non-profit organizations to recruit and retain volunteers is an area for sustained competitive advantage in accomplishing the aims of the organization. In fact, some non-profit organizations (e.g., animal welfare organizations, social welfare organizations, religious institutions, etc.) operate completely on a volunteer basis with no paid staff to maintain operations (McFarland, 2005). Because of this general need to attract and retain volunteers, volunteer programs in non-profit organizations are shifting towards the use of web sites to recruit volunteers (Goh, Allen, Rogelberg, & Currie, 2009; Waters, 2007). By connecting with potential volunteers via the web, non-profit organizations can attract and sign-up the essential volunteer talent they need.

Non-profit organizations and volunteer programs may turn to trade and academic literature for best practices to bolster the effectiveness of their web sites in this crucial function. For example, McKee and McKee (2007) discussed practices for dealing with a new generation of volunteers, how to utilize virtual volunteers, and ways to avoid scaring away potential volunteers. However, as more practices are proposed in both trade and academic literatures, non-profit organizations may become inundated with unproven sets of practices. The purpose of this study was to empirically test one such set of best practices for managing volunteer program web sites (Goh, Allen, Rogelberg, & Currie, 2009). The practices analyzed here were designed to help improve such web sites, with an emphasis on attracting volunteers. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that volunteer programs may be able to attract more volunteers by effectively utilizing websites, which is an inexpensive and easily accessible resource for volunteer resource managers.

Suggested Web Site Best Practices and Number of Volunteers

Prior work by Goh, Allen, Rogelberg and Currie uncovered a set of 14 best practices proposed in the academic and trade literatures (Table 1). These practices focus on both ease of access and the importance of adequate information provided by the web site. According to Agarwal and Venkatesh (2007), the accessibility of a web site helps improve the extent to which the web site can be used effectively, efficiently, and to the user's satisfaction. Furthermore, Sargeant, West, and Jay (2007) found that accessibility of nonprofit web sites was related to online donations and number of new donors. In addition, research concerning for-profit organizations' use of web sites attests to the importance of information to web site visitors. For example, Allen, Mahto, and Otondo (2007) suggested that job and organization information lead to intentions to pursue employment. These same factors are likely to impact whether or not an individual will pursue volunteer activities with the organization.

Organization Size and Total Revenue

Even though the volunteer program web site may be an important tool for recruiting volunteers, other resources will likely impact the organization's ability to attract more volunteers. For example, previous research suggests that larger organizations tend to have more resources that allow them to attract more applicants for positions, volunteer or paid (Mabey & Ramirez, 2005). Larger organizations have more employees to handle everyday operations and typically have more money to purchase equipment, supplies, and other perks for employees and volunteers. Thus, larger organizations that have more monetary resources are likely to attract more volunteers.

However, web sites are a relatively low-cost resource that volunteer resource managers may use. Being a large organization or having additional monetary resources does not necessarily equate to effective web site use nor does having less resources mean that an organization cannot launch a web site. With all the many free or inexpensive online services (e.g., blogs, wikis, and inexpensive website domains), even volunteer managers in small organizations working with minimal budgets can still incorporate the proposed practices. Thus, we believe that use of these practices will relate to number of volunteers above and beyond traditional resources (i.e., organization size and total revenue).

Methods and Analysis

The current study focused on a specific type of volunteer-based non-profit organization: animal welfare organizations (e.g., shelters). While the authors recognize that this sector may not be representative of all volunteer-based non-profit organizations, it is still a meaningfully large type of non-profit organization that actively utilizes a volunteer workforce to supplement operations (McFarland, 2005). With help from leaders within the Humane Society of the United States, the authors developed a convenience sample of 94 animal shelters for use in this research. For the purposes of this study, the analysis investigated all available web sites for these animal shelters that resulted in a final sample of 93 shelters (i.e., one organization did not have a web site) all located in North America.

The authors analyzed the organizational web sites focusing on the volunteer program aspect of each site. Two research assistants were trained and assigned to analyze each web site for the practices previously listed. The use of each of these practices was scored on a dichotomous scale where 0 indicated "not in use" and 1 indicated "in use". As a check of the ratings, the authors calculated percent agreement statistics to verify adequate levels of rater agreement (Table 1).

Additional information about the shelters was ascertained through the use of CharityNavigator.com, a web site that tracks nonprofit organization demographics and financial data. From this web site, the authors collected values for organization size (i.e., number of employees) and monetary resources (i.e., total revenue). The web site reports on publicly available records for non-profit organizations (i.e., United States official tax records).

To estimate the extent of use of best practices in the sample, the authors utilized simple percentages for ease of interpretation. They then tested the relationship between web site management practices used and number of volunteers using correlational and hierarchical regression analyses. For both analyses (regression and correlation), they computed an additional variable that reflected the number of best practices that each organization used (i.e., total number of best practices used by each organization). In the first step, they entered the resource-based control variables believed to have some effect on the number of volunteers (i.e., organizational size, total revenue, and population of surrounding area). In the second step, they entered the variable reflecting the number of practices used. This allowed the authors to estimate the incremental variance accounted for by number of practices used, beyond the variance accounted for by the control variables.

Table 1
Agreement Indices for Each of the 14 Web Site Best Practices

Best Practice	% Agreement
1. Organization's web site includes the organization's mission statement	80
2. Front page of organization's web site includes a link to volunteer program web page	100
3. Web site provides a description of the volunteer program	100
4. Volunteer program web page includes the volunteer program mission statement	80
5. Requirements for volunteering listed on web site	100
6. Web site indicates minimum number of hours of volunteer service required	80
7. Web site lists different types of volunteer positions available	100
8. Web site provides "job descriptions" for volunteer positions	100
9. Web site outlines the specific steps required to volunteer	100
10. Web site states that volunteer orientation is available	100
11. Visitors to web site are able to apply for volunteer positions online or download volunteer application form to be printed and mailed in	100
12. Visitors to web site are able to register for more information	80
13. Contact information for the volunteer coordinator is provided on the web site	80
14. Web site indicates that volunteers will be trained beyond orientation	100
Mean	91.43

Results and Discussion

Table 2 contains descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the key variables. The organizations studied had an average of 226 volunteers ($\sigma = 219$). The average organization in the sample had 28 employees ($\sigma=31$), was located in an area with a population of roughly 700,000 people ($\sigma = 3{,}051{,}747$), and had annual revenues of about $1.7 million ($\sigma = \$2{,}647{,}074$). The mean number of web practices used was 8.7 (out of a possible 14). While this is more than half the practices, this suggests that a number of shelters still have room for improvement. Indeed, the high standard deviation of practices ($\sigma = 3.8$) suggests that even within the sample, there was much variation. To put this in more concrete terms, 21 (roughly 23%) of the web sites used six or fewer of the recommended practices.

Use of Best Practices

Table 3 provides a full list of recommended practices, as well as the percentages of web sites examined that utilized each practice. Ten of the 14 best practices were used by more than half the web sites in the sample. However, only three of the 14 practices were used by more than 75% of the sample.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Key Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Total Number of Practices Used	8.65	3.82				
2. Total Number of Volunteers	226.47	218.53	.501*			
3. Organizational Size	28.41	31.46	.414*	.632*		
4. Population of Surrounding Area	701,712.25	3,051,746.67	-.142	-.091	.381*	
5. Revenue ($)	1,664,233.10	2,647,074.27	.413*	.597*	.937*	-.036

Note. N = 93. * p<.05.

Table 3
Prevalence of Web Site Best Practices for 94 Animals Shelters Volunteer Programs

Best Practice	% of Web Sites Using Practice
1. Organization's web site includes the organization's mission statement	77
2. Front page of organization's web site includes a link to volunteer program web page	83
3. Web site provides a description of the volunteer program	65
4. Volunteer program web page includes the volunteer program mission statement	31
5. Requirements for volunteering listed on web site	66
6. Web site indicates minimum number of hours of volunteer service required	48
7. Web site lists different types of volunteer positions available	76
8. Web site provides "job descriptions" for volunteer positions	49
9. Web site outlines the specific steps required to volunteer	66
10. Web site states that volunteer orientation is available	66
a. If volunteer orientation is available, web site provides information for future volunteer orientation sessions (N =62)	30
11. Visitors to web site are able to apply for volunteer positions online or download volunteer application form to be printed and mailed in	53
12. Visitors to web site are able to register for more information	44
13. Contact information for the volunteer coordinator is provided on the web site	68
14. Web site indicates that volunteers will be trained beyond orientation	53

Note. N = 93 unless otherwise noted.

Web Site Access and Links

While 77% of the organizations' web sites included an *organizational* mission statement, a much smaller percentage (31%) provided a *volunteer program* mission statement. The fact that most of the volunteer program web pages did not have a mission statement posted may deter potential volunteers and/or donors, since mission statements can give visitors a good first impression of both the volunteer program and, more broadly, the organization. Mission statements convey information about an organization or a volunteer program that can help potential volunteers determine their potential individual-organization fit. The mission statement may actually attract volunteers and donors to the organization by providing a desirable vision for the future that these important stakeholders find intriguing and rewarding (Herman & Renz, 1998).

In terms of access, 83% of the web sites' front pages had a direct link to the volunteer program web pages, and 65% of the web sites provided at least a cursory description of the volunteer program itself. Visitors to an organizations web site may perceive a lack of importance of the volunteer program to the organization in the absence of an easily accessible volunteer program web page. Volunteer resource managers need to gauge the importance of the volunteer program for the organization's continued viability. If the organization cannot function without volunteers, then the managers need to reduce the number of client-oriented links and increase the accessibility of the website for potential volunteers.

Information on Volunteering

Slightly less than half the web sites provided the minimum required volunteer hours and volunteer "job descriptions" (48% and 49%, respectively). On the other hand, two thirds or more of the web sites provided lists of the volunteer positions available, the specific steps necessary to becoming a volunteer, and information on whether volunteer orientation was provided (76%, 66%, and 66%, respectively). These proportions are slightly disturbing. For most of the organizations' web sites in the sample, information is provided for visitors up to the point of acceptance into the volunteer program, but few provide information that allows visitors to make an informed decision on whether or not the position they are applying for is right for their particular situation. Volunteers come from all walks of life and types of backgrounds, and many different levels of availability. Some may treat volunteering as a full-time job while others view it as a nice distraction from other endeavors. Volunteer resource managers need to communicate the variability in the opportunities provided so that all individuals who could potentially volunteer have that option.

Surprisingly, just over half the web sites (53%) provided means for visitors to apply for volunteer positions while only 30% provided information on the next volunteer orientation session. Some organizations have pre-orientation (and pre-applying) volunteer screening, making this finding less problematic in terms of general volunteer recruitment strategies. A little more than half of the web sites (53%) mentioned that volunteers would undergo training after orientation. Again, the usefulness of these options stems from the importance of providing volunteers with a realistic view of what volunteer work is like in the organization. Volunteer resource managers will spend less time informing individuals of the opportunities and more time training volunteers when volunteers come to the organization aware of the available positions.

Additional Information

In general, the volunteer program web sites did not provide options for potential volunteers to receive additional information on volunteering. Only 44% of web sites provided a method for visitors to register for additional information about volunteering. In some cases, visitors were able to e-mail volunteer resource managers for more information (68% of web sites listed volunteer resource manager contact information). Volunteer resource managers need to provide easy ways to contact the organization and the volunteer resource manager so that questions do not go unanswered. Individuals may have specific questions about volunteering or may want to donate to the organization in other ways. Every person who visits the web site is a potential donor or volunteer; answering their questions may actually provide direct benefit to the organization's continued viability and success.

Volunteer Web Sites and Total Number of Volunteers

To begin to test the relationship between volunteer web site management practices and total number of volunteers, the authors correlated each individual practice with the number of volunteers at the specific organization. The initial correlational analyses of individual web site practices and number of volunteers yielded non-significant results ($p > .05$) after controlling for organization size and revenue. This suggests that individual practices do not matter alone in this particular convenience sample, or may simply be a statistical artifact of the small sample size. Therefore, to more fully test the possibility of the hypothesized relationship, the authors tested the cumulative effect of incorporating web site practices and a different pattern of results emerged.

To further test the importance of incorporating these web site practices, the authors correlated the number of practices with the number of volunteers and subsequently illustrated that this relationship was not simply a proxy for other organizational resources using regression analysis. Number of practices was significantly positively related to number of volunteers ($r = .501$; $p < .05$). However, organization size and total revenue were also significantly positively related to number of volunteers ($r = .41, .41$; $p < .05$, respectively). These correlations suggest that animal welfare organizations that use more best practices also have more volunteers. However, they also suggest that larger and wealthier organizations tend to have more volunteers as well, suggesting that larger organizations may invest more time and resources in their web sites.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 4. While no control variable was significant at the .05 level, the variance accounted for in the first step was substantial ($R^2 = .379$). This suggests that 38% of the variation in number of volunteers was already captured by the control variables entered together. In the final step of the regression analysis, the authors entered the number of practices used by organizations. As is apparent in Table 4, this variable is a significant predictor ($\beta = 22.93$, $p<.05$) and accounted for an additional 10% of the variance in number of volunteers. This suggests that even after controlling for organizational size, revenue, and population of the surrounding area, the number of practices used still has a significant relationship to the number of volunteers in the organizations studied.

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Number of Volunteers

Model		B	S.E.	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1					.379*	.379*
	(Intercept)	130.116	56.311			
	Organizational Size	.000	.000	.103		
	Population	.000	.000	-.176		
	Revenue	4.814	3.645	.743*		
Step 2					.473*	.097*
	(Intercept)	-42.805	92.436			
	Organizational Size	.000	.000	.155		
	Population	.000	.000	-.098		
	Revenue	3.136	3.493	.484*		
	Total Practices Used	22.923*	10.063	.353*		

Note. N = 93. B = unstandardized coefficients; S.E. = standard error; β = standardized coefficients; R^2 = variance accounted for; ΔR^2 = change in variance accounted for. * $p<.05$.

In terms of implications for volunteer resource managers, several key issues are raised. This particular set of best practices seems to be related to the number of volunteers, even after controlling for other relevant organizational resource characteristics. The low average number of best practices used suggests that there are still many volunteer programs who can take advantage of these practices. In addition, most of the practices tested here have little additional cost tied to them, assuming the volunteer program is currently managing its own web site. Since web site construction and maintenance are relatively inexpensive, any non-profit organization that is struggling to attract volunteers may benefit from engaging in more of these practices.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Overall, the authors found substantial variability between recommended web site best practices in terms of their rates of use. Despite the low base rates of usage, the authors are encouraged by the fact that each of the best practices was used by at least 30% of the organizations studied. Through the course of this research, the authors noted that while there were some volunteer program web sites that did not use any of these best practices, the majority (roughly 53%) of the shelters used nine or more of the best practices. Thus, web site improvement could not only benefit the volunteer program in terms of sheer numbers of volunteers, but research also indicates that nonprofit organizations that provided mission statements, organizational goals, and reports on a web site are able to raise more donations than those that used a sales approach (Waters, 2007).

As with any scientific endeavor, this study was not without its limitations. These findings may only be inferred to those organizations studied as part of the convenience sample used. Due to the nascent field, the authors were unable to find a solid foundation of work on web-based recruitment within the volunteer resource management literature. Although research in for-profit organizations helped inform our

theoretical understanding, there are distinct differences between non-profit and for-profit management. In addition, the design for our study was descriptive-correlational, which constrains the authors from making causal claims. Future research can look to expand the variety of organizational outcomes that are affected by web-based recruitment (e.g., organizational financial data, volunteer retention, etc.). With the multiple opportunities for future research, this study provides the necessary first step in understanding how volunteer programs manage their web presence and gives early indications of areas for improvement.

The authors recommend further investigation into the use of all the best practices investigated in this study, with customization specific to volunteer programs. Understandably, organizations may feel that the time and expense of setting up and maintaining a web site are not cost effective. The diversity of literature reviewed here as well as the important finding of the relationship between the use of such practices and overall number of volunteers provides preliminary evidence that these best practices may be helpful to non-profit organizations. The next step in the scientific cycle is for independent replication of these results in a different sample. As we have mentioned previously, our sample was a rather small purposeful convenience sample. A larger random sample would provide a more rigorous test of these best practices and provide an indication as to whether individual practices have more predictive power than others on the variables tested and other important volunteer program outcome variables.

Additionally, future researchers could attempt to understand how to better design volunteer program web sites by linking the practices listed here in a quasi-experimental study of volunteer recruitment patterns. For example, using archival data of recruitment in non-profit organizations before and after implementing these practices could begin to explore possible causal relationships between these web site practices and overall success in recruiting and retaining volunteers. Also, future research could look at information about the number of visitors to the web site and the number of volunteers who learned about the program through the web site. This simple analysis could show a more direct link between web site design and attracting individuals to the volunteer program.

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What Do We Really Know about Nonprofits' Capacity to Manage Volunteers?

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Abstract

Volunteers play an integral role within nonprofit organizations and have a unique place in the development and evolution of the nonprofit sector. Yet limited efforts have been made to study the impact on and import of their work to the overall capacity of organizations. This article summarizes current learning about volunteer resource management and organizational capacity; compares findings from two major studies of volunteer resource management and capacity building; and offers new insights about differing conceptualizations of volunteers in organizational capacity. The paper underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management, examines the role of volunteer coordinators and executive directors in determining volunteers' impacts on organizational capacity, and discusses challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. In particular, the authors highlight contrasting stakeholder perceptions between volunteers and volunteer resource managers regarding organizational capacity and discuss why these differences are important.

Key Words:
capacity, volunteers, volunteer resource management

Introduction

Although volunteers make an important contribution within both public and private arenas, they play an integral role within nonprofit organizations, as evoked by frequent references to "the voluntary sector," and have a unique place in the development and evolution of the nonprofit sector. Volunteers, in fact, define the nonprofit landscape (Frumkin, 2002; Salamon, 1999) and without their involvement in leadership, programming, and operations, many nonprofits would cease to exist.

Despite the fundamental position of volunteers within nonprofits, limited efforts have been made to study the impact and importance of their work on the overall capacity of organizations. Most nonprofit capacity-building literature focuses on issues unrelated to the management and deployment of volunteers. Additionally,

documentation of organizations' abilities to engage volunteers is sparse, hailing mostly from literature by practitioners rather than empirical evaluation. Two recent exceptions to this trend in the United States include a national study by the Urban Institute (2004), and a regional study in Texas reported in this article.

This article summarizes current learning about volunteer resource management and organizational capacity, compares findings from the Urban Institute and Texas studies, and offers new insights about differing conceptualizations of volunteers in organizational capacity. The Texas study, a partial replication of the national 2004 Urban Institute study, underscores the importance of the value of investments in volunteer resource management, the role of volunteer resource managers and executive directors in determining volunteers' impact on organizational capacity, and the challenges unique to managing an unpaid workforce. Additionally, the Texas study provides new information about differing perceptions of volunteers within the nonprofit sector, what resources exist to support effective volunteer engagement, and to what extent organizations have the capacity to engage volunteers during times of emergency or crisis. Consequently, we ask new questions about the strategies nonprofits need to employ to build organizational capacity to maximize their full capitalization of volunteer resources.

Background

Volunteer resource management capacity can be defined as "resources to support volunteer involvement, including staff time and financial resources, and adoption of policies and practices that are effective in volunteer management" (Campbell, 2004, p. 4). A series of evaluations in the late 1990s and early 2000s provided key information about volunteer resource management's role in nonprofit capacity, including the key finding that training for staff and organizational directors in volunteer resource management is critical to nonprofits' capacities to recruit, retain, and effectively utilize volunteers (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Ellis, 1996; Rehnborg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002). Although training is critical, there is evidence that training and formal opportunities to become versed in volunteer resource management are limited (Brudney & Stringer, 1998). Few professional associations (and even fewer higher education institutions) offer adequate resources to develop the range of competencies nonprofit workers need to improve agencies' abilities to manage and engage volunteers (Dolan, 2002; Mirabella, 2007; Mirabella & Wish, 2002). Additionally, efforts to expand volunteer resource management capacity are hindered by an incomplete understanding within nonprofits of the importance of volunteer resource management, as well as by the fact that many organizations lack the financial resources or staff time to support professional development related to enhancing volunteer resource management capacity (Hager & Brudney, 2004; Hange, Seevers, & Van Leeuwen, 2001). As a result, volunteers themselves report feeling underutilized in their work with nonprofit organizations (UPS Foundation, 1998).

With these findings in mind and the need to develop a deeper understanding of issues related to volunteer resource management capacity, the UPS Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Serve, and the USA Freedom Corps partnered with the Urban Institute (UI; 2004) on a nationwide study (hereafter referred to as "the UI study") of nonprofits' volunteer resource management capacities. UI researchers used a rigorous sampling process that involved a "sample of 2,993

charities . . . drawn within expenditure and subsector strata from 214,995 charities that filed Form 990 with the IRS in 2000; sample of 1,003 congregations was drawn within denominational strata, including an oversample of non-Judeo-Christian congregations, from 382,231 entities provided by American Church Lists in August 2003" (p. 24). The final survey of some 1,750 representative charitable organizations and 500 congregations, representing "response rates of 69% for both the nonprofit and congregation samples" (p. 24) and subsector, strata and congregational weighting that resulted in samples that "reflect the characteristics of the working populations from which they were drawn" (p. 24). Further, the Urban Institute stated that because the participating organizations "reflect the characteristics of these populations of charities and congregations, the results can be used to describe current overall conditions in these organizations" (p. 6).

The UI study provided data about organizations' challenges, investments in, and perceptions of volunteer resource management. The study concluded that most nonprofits used volunteers and reaped benefits from investments in their volunteer programs; that nonprofits felt they had the capacity to absorb more volunteers but faced serious barriers to doing so; that the amount of staff time spent on volunteer resource management correlated positively with outcomes in volunteer engagement; and that few organizations had yet adopted best practices for volunteer resource management.

Regional Study Methods

In 2006, researchers from the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A & M University replicated the national study. The Texas regional study (hereafter referred to as "the Texas study") used a mixed method approach to investigate capacities of local nonprofits to effectively engage volunteers in mission-critical work and to explore incentives or barriers to volunteer service within nonprofits. While the Urban Institute's sample comprised "organizational representatives familiar with volunteer resource management" (Urban Institute, 2004, p. 24), the Texas study extended this stream of research by gathering data from both volunteer resource managers and executive directors to compare each group's views on volunteer resource management capacity; however, the Texas study did not include congregations in its sampling parameters. Using a similar sampling frame to that of the UI study, the Texas researchers sought to define the relative universe of local nonprofits and used the records of organizations that had filed Form 990 with the IRS in 2003 or 2004, in cross-reference with data from the United Way Capital Area on organizational, executive, and volunteer resource manager contact information in the region. The researchers limited selection to those organizations with annual budgets above $50,000, and also excluded agencies that appeared to be either primarily philanthropic or voluntary (e.g., PTAs, amateur sport leagues, etc.) in nature, those that had ceased to operate, or that had incorrect addresses. The resulting sample in the central Texas region included 1012 nonprofit organizations, with 217 nonprofit executives (a 21% response rate) and 50 volunteer resource managers completing the survey, which was modeled on the UI study survey instrument and extended to include questions relating to organizational and volunteer capacity for emergency relief.

Additionally, four focus groups with 26 nonprofit executives, three focus groups with 15 volunteer resource managers, and more than 30 interviews with funders and representatives of nonprofit support

organizations (i.e., nonprofit associations, management support organizations, private consultants, and other training organizations) were conducted. Participants in the nonprofit and volunteer resource manager groups represented a range of large and small health and human services and education organizations including food banks, elderly care facilities, literacy programs, child advocacy organizations, criminal justice programs, and faith-based agencies. The diversity of data gathered from these participants provided new insights into the complexity of perceptions, experiences, and conceptualizations of volunteer resource management within the sector.

The central Texas environment from which the sample was drawn offered unique characteristics for the study. This ten-county area is among the fastest-growing regions in the country, and home to 1.5 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006), a diversity of industries spanning high tech firms to agriculture, and the state capital. Recent research by the Texas Association of Nonprofits (2002) indicated that most nonprofits in the region have annual expenditures of less than $500,000, and more than 40% have annual expenditures below $100,000. Human service organizations represent the largest share of the total, making up more than a quarter of all nonprofits, followed closely by organizations with missions focused on education (Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations, 2002). Nationally, human services organizations accounted for the greatest number (nearly one-third) of reporting public charities, followed by education organizations with 189%, and health organizations comprising 13% of reporting public charities (Blackwood, Wing, & Pollak, 2008, p. 3). In terms of annual expenditures, "the majority of public charities report less than $500,000 in expenses, with 45 % of public charities reported less than $100,000 in expenses and another 29% reported [*sic*] between $100,000 and $499,999" (p. 3).

The Texas study sample mirrored both national and regional distributions of the nonprofit sector in terms of size and mission areas. On average, Texas nonprofits are younger, with the proportion founded after 1980 being larger than in most of the nation (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2009). In terms of mission area, the Texas sample comprised human service (28%), educational (20%), and health-focused organizations (12%). Annual expenditure patterns were also similar to the state nonprofit association's statistics on nonprofits in the region with 25% of the organizations reporting less than $129,000 in annual expenditures, 50% less than $348,000, and 75% less than $1 million. Dates of organizational establishment ranged from 1857 to 2004, with the majority of organizations having formed since 1980, similar to statewide trends but younger on average than is revealed in national averages.

The Texas sample participants, however, vary from national data on nonprofits in several significant ways. In addition, when asked about perceptions of philanthropic and volunteer resources in the region, Texas study participants described corporate and foundation giving as both inadequate and too narrowly focused on programmatic expenses, yet volunteerism was seen as an asset in the region. Some 82% of the respondents reported engaging volunteers in their work, either as board members or in other capacities. The perception by study participants regarding volunteerism in Central Texas mirrors recent research that shows volunteerism in Texas is above the national average (Musick, 2005) with 62% of adult Texans reporting having volunteered in the past year, compared to

44% of adults nationwide (Independent Sector, 2001). Several local organizations have missions focused on promoting volunteerism in the region, including a number of community- and university-based volunteer centers.

Comparative Findings: Convergence and Divergence

Data in the Texas study underscored many findings from the national study while also providing some contrasts, elaborations on previous capacity-building research, and numerous nuances about how stakeholders' perceptions vary. Areas of convergence across the two studies are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparison of Findings: areas of convergence on volunteer resource management capacity.

Findings	**Study Locations**	
	Urban Institute Study (National)	**Texas Study**
Use of Volunteers	80% use volunteers beyond board members in day to day organizational work	90% use volunteers beyond board members in day to day organizational work
	Summary*: Volunteers play a critical role in nonprofit operations.* These volunteers were seen as bringing a host of organizational benefits (e.g. cost savings, improved community relations, and greater client responsiveness).	
Staff Time Investment	A majority of volunteer coordinators reported devoting only 30% of their time or less to supervising volunteers.	Similar levels of staff investments reported.
	Summary: *Investments of staff time in volunteer management improve volunteer engagement and outcomes—yet most organizations devote little time to this task.* Organizations that dedicated greater amounts of staff time to managing volunteers tended to place a higher value on the contributions of their volunteers and to have a greater capacity to absorb new volunteers than organizations with fewer resources allotted to managing unpaid workers.	
Use of Recommended or "Best" Practices	One in three nonprofits offer no training for their staff in how to work with volunteers.	Over 50% nonprofits offer no training for their staff in how to work with volunteers.
	Summary: *Recommended practices for volunteer engagement are underutilized in the field.* Many also fail to have professional development opportunities for volunteers, assessments of the impact of volunteers' work, or even reliable data tracking volunteer service hours.	
Recruitment & Retention	Somewhat of a challenge in comparison to other volunteer resource management challenges.	Similar experiences and perceptions reported.
	Summary*: Retention and recruitment of volunteers was perceived as somewhat of a challenge, especially finding enough volunteers to meet the need during working hours*. In both studies, most respondents reported encountering few problems with their volunteer workforce (such as conflicts between volunteers and staff or poor work habits on the part of volunteers).	

Figure 2. Comparison of Findings: areas of divergence on volunteer resource management capacity.

Findings	**Study Locations**	
	Urban Institute Study (National)	**Texas Study**
Use of Volunteers: Perceptions of Benefits to Organization	More likely to use volunteers for enhancing quality and building capacity within their agencies	More likely to use volunteers for "basic" or day-to-day needs (vs. longer term needs or linked to other areas of organizational capacity)
	Summary: In general, *Texas respondents more likely than their nationwide counterparts to utilize volunteers, but less likely to integrate them into longer term functions or link them to organizational capacity strategies.* Texas respondents identified the top benefits of working with volunteers as "providing attention to the people served" (i.e., direct service functions) and "cost savings". Nationally, by contrast, the top benefit of volunteers was "increasing in the quality of services or programs". Organizational size (measured by annual expenditures), a potential indicator of organizational formalization, is linked to the broader and strategic orientation, suggesting that it may be important to consider organizational and contextual dimensions when considering issues of volunteer resource management capacity.	
Investments - Existence of Dedicated Volunteer Coordinator	One in eight nonprofits identified having fulltime staff dedicated to volunteer coordination and management	Less likely to have dedicated volunteer coordinator; only one in eight had even one staff member who devoted more 70% of his/her time to the task
	Summary: *Texas respondents less likely to have staff time allocated to volunteer resource management.*	
Value/ Valuation of Volunteers	Median value of volunteer work per hour = $20	Median value of volunteer work per hour = $15
	Summary: *Texas nonprofits undervalued the contributions of volunteers compared to their counterparts in the national study.* The economic milieu within which nonprofits operate may a role in agencies' allocation of staff time to volunteer resource management tasks, as well as organizations' conceptions of volunteers work and their ability to utilize effectively.	
Foundation and Government Support	More likely to have solid foundation and government funding	Foundation and government funding fell below national average
	Summary: *Texas funding below national average.* As a result, more organizations may be running resource-strapped volunteer resource management operations.	
Training and Capacity Development for Volunteer Managers	Volunteer coordinators likely to have *minimal* volunteer resource management training	Volunteer coordinators likely to have *no* volunteer resource management training
	Summary: Nationally, two-thirds of nonprofits with paid volunteer coordinators had received at least minimal formal training in volunteer resource management, such as through college classes or professional development workshops, while the majority of the volunteer managers surveyed in Texas reported *no* formal training in volunteer resource management, only prior work as volunteers or nonprofit staff members.	

Comparative analysis also revealed several important areas of divergence relating to perceptions about the benefits and value of volunteers, the existence of dedicated volunteer resource managers, funding base stability for organizations and training for volunteer resource managers. In particular, Texas respondents identified the top benefits of working with volunteers as "providing attention to the people served" (i.e., direct service functions) and "cost savings". Nationally, by contrast, the top benefit of working with volunteers was "increasing the quality of services or programs". These divergences are summarized in Figure 2.

Comparative analysis also suggested that while volunteers play a critical role in nonprofit operations, most organizations, especially in Central Texas, devote little time to volunteer resource management and underutilize recommended practices for volunteer engagement. These findings are of concern since they reinforce previous research on the relationship between capacity building and volunteer resource management in the areas of best practice and barriers, including:

- Success in maximizing volunteer engagement results from training staff in best management practices and volunteer protocols (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Ellis, 1996; Rehnborg, Fallon, & Hinerfeld, 2002).
- Internal and external barriers frequently hamper the attempts of nonprofits to offer volunteer resource management training and staff development to improve strategic work with volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2004; Hange, Seevers, & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

The Texas study findings also suggest that the economic and institutional milieu within which nonprofits operate may play a role in agencies' allocations of staff time to volunteer resource management tasks, as well as organizations' conceptions of volunteers' work and their abilities to utilize volunteers effectively. The qualitative data bore these observations out, as highlighted in the following section.

Volunteer Resource Management Capacity Building

Focus group data from the Texas study revealed only slight appreciation for the volunteer resource management function and related training, as illustrated in one volunteer resource manager's comment: "I didn't even really know about volunteer management. . . I call it 'my accidental profession.' I just kind of fell into it, and it's really been on-the-job training." While it is conceivable that this lack of formal volunteer resource management training may be unique to the Central Texas environment, prior research (Brudney & Stringer, 1998; Dolan, 2002) found that it is actually far more widespread than is indicated by the UI study. It is possible that nonprofit leaders responding to the UI survey may have overestimated or misunderstood the actual level of training their staff received prior to beginning volunteer resource management work. Findings from the Texas study suggest that with few options for formal professional development or coursework in volunteer resource management, many volunteer resource managers enter the job with only informal preparation, such as personal volunteering experience.

A key and distinctive finding in the Texas study concerned organizations' abilities to respond to unexpected crises, particularly in terms of volunteer resource management capacity. The timing and location of the replication study (following the near aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita) allowed us to ask new questions about volunteer resource management issues in times of emergency and revealed that volunteers play an essential role in

responding to emergencies. Of 109 organizations involved with the disaster relief effort, 44% reported utilizing existing volunteers as part of their response while 23% reported bringing in new volunteers. Two out of three agencies engaged volunteers on only a short-term basis (i.e., 12 weeks or less). Despite reporting some challenges in managing a large influx of volunteers in a short time span, several funders, support service providers, and nonprofit executives indicated that meeting the hurricane evacuees' short-term needs proved easier for most organizations than addressing the long-term demand for services created by the disasters. Though an estimated 12,000 evacuees remained in Central Texas at the time of the study (six months after Hurricane Katrina), more than half of nonprofit service providers had ceased to offer assistance to this population within 20 days of initial intervention. Also, while survey data primarily identified characteristics of and challenges experienced by those nonprofit organizations involved in the post-hurricane response, in individual and focus group interviews, several nonprofit executives revealed learning a great deal about volunteer resource management from the demands of the disaster relief effort and about how critical managing volunteers effectively could be for mission-critical work. This finding has implications for potentially important pre-disaster planning and also warrants further research.

Differing Views on Volunteer Resource Management

Qualitative data from the Texas study also provide insights about how nonprofit executives, funders, and volunteer resource managers differ in their views toward volunteer resource management capacity. In general, the three groups' conceptualizations of volunteers and volunteer resource management can be characterized as cautious, idealistic, and pragmatic.

The Cautious: Nonprofit Executives. Analysis of executive director responses highlighted their thoughts on the benefits and positive outcomes associated with working with volunteers, as well as some of their reservations. For example, although executives saw volunteers as an overall boon to their organizations, they were also the group to frame the issue in somewhat contradictory and cautious financial terms. For example, nonprofit executives most commonly framed the value of volunteers in terms of their cost savings to the organization; they were also, however, the most inclined to hesitate increasing organizational investments in volunteer resource management, particularly those relating to building organizational capacity generally as well as specific investments in volunteer resource management capacity. With few nonprofits devoting resources to staff training in volunteer resource management or professional development for volunteers, most nonprofit leaders reported that their only capacity-building investments related to volunteer work were in the single area of board development.

Looking to the bottom line, executive directors expressed worry that volunteer programs prove too demanding on staff time and resources; they desired to have volunteers' assistance but limited their organizations' resource commitment when it came to getting volunteers up to speed. One nonprofit executive director captured the sentiment by saying, "We're not really there to teach them (the volunteers)," but rather the volunteers should be able "to hit the ground running." Many executives had concerns that those resources dedicated to volunteer training may be wasted should the volunteers fail to engage in long-term commitments to the organization. Perhaps

most indicative of executive directors' comparative cautions toward volunteers was the following survey finding: while volunteer resource managers felt their agencies could absorb a median of up to 50 more volunteers, executive directors felt organizations had the capacity to involve only 12 additional volunteers effectively. These disparate perceptions existed across all organizations, whether small, medium, or large.

The Idealists: Funders. Funders tended to exalt the virtues of volunteers, noting their bread-and-butter role in the sector. Many perceived a lack of volunteer resource management capacity in the sector, however, and said they wanted to see nonprofits do a better job of engaging volunteers across the board—from better recruitment and retention strategies to more comprehensive volunteer training and effective matching of volunteer skills with given tasks. Additional concerns revolved around accountability, liability, limited risk management planning, and the need for organizations to be able to quantify volunteers' contributions in terms of performance measurement. Despite these observations, none of the funders interviewed offered or expressed potential future interest in funding capacity-building grants to assist organizations specifically with improving their management of volunteers. As one funder put it, "We don't really see it as our role to be telling nonprofits how to run their volunteer programs."

The Pragmatists: Volunteer Resource Managers. The most nuanced views on volunteers and volunteer resource management came from the people working the frontlines of volunteer engagement. Volunteer resource managers in the surveys and focus groups expressed conceptions of volunteer work that best echoed the literature's findings on best practices for volunteer resource management. Compared to executive directors, volunteer resource managers were more likely to place a high value on regular, consistent communication with volunteers, to recommend investments in volunteer training and recognition, and to report making strategic efforts to match volunteers' skills and interests to the work available. Additionally, volunteer resource managers offered a more fully developed conceptualization of individuals' motivations for volunteering compared to executive directors or funders. Executive directors tended to see volunteers' motives paradoxically as either self-serving or driven by a compulsion to work, whilst funders mostly saw volunteers as altruistic. Volunteer resource managers instead acknowledged that volunteers commit their time for a complex range of reasons, from a desire for social relationships with other volunteers to interests in applying their talents for a good cause.

Volunteer resource managers perceived a distinct role for fellow staff in fostering healthy volunteer programs. Many expressed dismay that staff in their organizations—including the executive director—did not understand the importance of building positive relationships with volunteers. Most volunteer resource managers conveyed that funders and executive directors alike left volunteer programs under-resourced, with little or no dedicated budget, training plan, or strategic vision to ensure volunteers are able to help build organizational capacity. Several volunteer resource managers felt that because their executive directors didn't "get" volunteer resource management, volunteer recruitment and retention in their organizations suffered.

Conclusions

Both studies similarly identified the benefits volunteers can offer to

organizations, the importance of investments in best practices in volunteer resource management, and the need for more strategic thinking around the use of volunteers to build capacity. The more recent Texas study raises additional questions about how the financial environment around organizations affects the ways in which volunteers are utilized and perceived, the need for more formal volunteer resource management training, and the importance of effective volunteer resource management strategies during, and in anticipation of, times of crisis. Perhaps most critical is the issue of differing stakeholder perceptions of volunteers and volunteer resource management in organizational capacity. While some stakeholders perceive volunteers as core to an agency's capacity—helping nonprofits meet basic obligations and carry out day-to-day work—others, by contrast, see volunteers in a capacity-building role, capable of enhancing and advancing organizations' ability to fulfill their missions over time and linked to a broader range of functional areas.

These contrasting perceptions of volunteer resource management matter. Ellis (1996) and Stallings (2005) identified the same key component to effective volunteer resource management programs: visionary leadership by executive directors in volunteer programs. The Texas study, however, suggests most executive directors take a hands-off approach to volunteer resource management. The contrast between their perceptions of volunteer resource management compared with those of volunteer resource managers presents a major barrier to improving volunteer resource management capacity in organizations. Additionally, funder reluctance to fund initiatives to promote better outcomes in volunteer programs suggests neither they, nor nonprofit executives, consider volunteer resource management a sufficiently important priority in which to stake significant resources. The effect is that those with the most responsibility to implement and improve volunteer programs, the volunteer resource managers, paradoxically possess the least power to effect change in their own organizational contexts, or influence the sector's capacity to engage and manage volunteers. The following recommendations emerge from the challenges that arise from these varying perceptions of volunteer resource management within the sector:

1. Executive directors should be open to reevaluating volunteers' role within their organizations. Service by any volunteers should be regarded with the same seriousness as board service and considered part of a continuum of valued volunteer inputs. As such, volunteers, like board members, must be seen as more than immediate warm bodies to fill a need, but rather as a community resource for networking, public relations, skilled service, and fund development. Executive directors should be encouraged to seek out and observe peer organizations with strong, thriving volunteer programs and, having identified such exemplars, explore ways to replicate these successes within their own organizations. Allocation of resources, structures for supporting volunteer programs, and staff-wide delineation of responsibilities are among the tasks that will fall to executive directors working to build stronger volunteer programs. As a result, nonprofit support service providers can play a role in offering training and tools to assist busy executive directors in adopting the necessary changes that will allow their volunteer programs to improve over time.
2. Funders must recognize the critical gap in support for building volunteer resource management capacity. While support for building management capacity is

increasingly available, few resources exist that target assistance to the needs of volunteer programs. The fact that these programs are overly idealized by funders and too often conceptualized in a way that disregards their complexity poses a challenge. Funders should acknowledge the multidimensional factors in successful volunteer programs and work to foster an environment where nonprofits can tackle the complicated work of effective volunteer resource management. By funding special training for executive directors, investing in research to ascertain the value of strong volunteer resource management, developing well-functioning systems and process for volunteer resource management, and exploring opportunities for integrating new populations into the voluntary workforce, funders can help facilitate lasting improvements in nonprofits' work with volunteers.

3. Volunteer resource managers should band together to bring greater attention to their needs and the importance of their role, including those related to training and continuing education, executive leadership support, and organizational resources. Collaborations among volunteer resource managers should be targeted to facilitate greater networking and information exchange, as well as opportunities to share strategies on key issues including, for example, how to streamline programs and involve a cross-section of organizational staff in volunteer programs. Volunteer resource managers must continue to be a voice for volunteers, highlighting their exceptional contributions, airing their common concerns, and addressing ongoing obstacles to recruitment and retention.

Finally, more research is needed to determine how widespread the perceptions identified in central Texas are in the larger, national nonprofit and voluntary sector. Questions remain about conceptualizations of volunteer resource management by a number of key stakeholders, including non-managerial nonprofit staff, board members, and the volunteers themselves. Future research efforts should explore the range of factors that influence the effectiveness of volunteer programs and investigate the role training and education programs play in bottom-line and social outcomes.

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Preparing for the Expanding Role of Cybervolunteerism in the New Millennium: An Application of the ROPES Model of Public Relations

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Abstract

Given the continued expansion of technology into everyday life for large segments of the American public, nonprofit organizations have to consider implementing cybervolunteer programs if they seek to retain volunteers in the new millennium. The ROPES model of public relations provides an outline for an organization to introduce new concepts and foster relationship growth with targeted audiences. This article outlines how the ROPES model (i.e., Research, Objectives, Programming, Evaluation, Stewardship) may be used to introduce cybervolunteerism successfully into nonprofit organizations.

Key Words:

cybervolunteerism, virtual, volunteers, cyber, public relations, strategic planning, technology

Introduction

In 2008, 61.8 million people volunteered with nonprofit organizations to work more than 8 billion hours (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Using The Independent Sector's (2009) estimated value for each hour volunteered in 2008 of $20.25, the value of this 2008 volunteer time is an estimated $162 billion dollars. During the current economic downturn in the United States that began in 2006, nonprofits have seen an increase in the number of adults volunteering their time to help deliver charitable programs and services. The Corporation for National and Community Service reports that 37% of nonprofits increased the number of volunteers engaged between September 2008 and March 2009 and that nearly half foresee the number of volunteers increasing in the coming year (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2009).

Nonprofit organizations must think strategically about expanding volunteer programs given these and other changes in contemporary society, and especially technological advances. Americans from every generation are increasing their Internet usage at astounding rates. The average U.S. adult nearly doubled her/his daily use of the Internet between 2006 and 2008, spending an average of 2.1 hours per day online in 2006 compared to 3.8 hours in 2008, an 81% increase over three years (Media Audit, 2008). To capitalize on this technological shift, nonprofit organizations must consider

recruiting cybervolunteers to help manage organizational activities, including administration as well as program delivery and services. Norris (2003) recommended that nonprofit organizations reach out to those interested in remote volunteering via the Internet because they aid in increasing the organizations' abilities to increase awareness of and participation in their programs as well as helping manage administrative tasks, such as web site and database maintenance.

Cybervolunteering allows individuals to "conduct their activities for agencies or clients over the Internet, in whole or in part" (Cravens, 2000, p. 121). The concept is very similar to telecommuting, except that instead of online employees, these are online volunteers. Many individuals actively search for volunteer opportunities they can complete from home because of time constraints, personal preference, disabilities, or home-based obligations that prevent them from volunteering onsite. Cybervolunteering allows anyone with access to the Internet to contribute time and energy to nonprofit organizations in a meaningful way.

There are many ways that cybervolunteerism could be implemented into nonprofit organizations' activities. For example, volunteers that like to write could edit and produce an organization's newsletter or manage its presence on social networking sites, like Facebook or Twitter. Volunteers interested in public policy could conduct legislative research online to see how the nonprofit could maximize its lobbying efforts. Accountants could reconcile an organization's financial accounts via the Internet, and bilingual individuals could help an organization with translation of print materials. All of these tasks and many others could be accomplished by a volunteer without her/him working at the organization's actual physical site if the volunteer resource manager properly screens, orients, and supervises the volunteer.

In the early years of the new millennium, several authors identified cybervolunteerism as a major trend in volunteerism for which volunteer resource managers must be prepared (Culp & Nolan, 2000; Merrill & Safrit, 2003; Safrit & Merrill, 2002). However, despite the growing research on cybervolunteerism (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002; Cravens, 2000; Harrison & Murray, 2004), searches for cybervolunteer opportunities on VolunteerMatch.org and NetworkforGood.org produced few results. Many nonprofit organizations appear to have questions about how to implement a cybervolunteer program in a thorough, effective manner. The purpose of this article is to explore how the discipline of public relations could provide volunteer resource managers a framework that could be used to implement cybervolunteerism into their existing volunteer programs.

An Overview of the ROPES Model of Public Relations

The public relations discipline offers a number of models that guide the communication process between organizations and their key publics or audiences. One of the most common process models in public relations is ROPES, an acronym representing the model's components of research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship (Kelly, 2001; Wilcox, 2005). The ROPES model could act as a strategic guide for organizations seeking to build and maintain a relationship with cybervolunteers through an ongoing cybervolunteerism program.

The first step of the process, research, prepares organizations to communicate effectively with their key audiences (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007) through

thorough information gathering on the audience, on the organization's preparedness, and on the situation to be addressed in communication. This first step in the process lays the foundation for the campaign or program that will develop.

After research has been conducted, an organization that wishes to effectively engage with an audience must set objectives that will guide behavior to a successful end. Objectives address not only the outcomes that the organization hopes to reach with the intended audience, but also the specific behaviors that the organization itself hopes to enact to reach those goals. Objectives are reached through thorough planning and implementation, which occurs in the next step, programming (Wilcox, 2005), during which organizations engage in planned actions (such as events or sponsorship), planned use of media, and effective communication strategies. The key to an effective programming plan is creating a theme that guides the overall program (Hendrix & Hayes). An organization could learn a great deal from both the successful aspects and unsuccessful aspects of its campaigns or programs through evaluation, which should occur both during a campaign or program and after its completion (Wilcox). By measuring the degree to which the organization reached its objectives as well as the effectiveness with which it delivered key messages, an organization could gather useful information that will allow it to build on past mistakes and produce higher quality programs in the future (Hendrix & Hayes).

The final step of a campaign or program is stewardship. As Kelly (2001) suggested, "It is easier to keep a friend than to make a new friend" (p. 279), i.e., cultivating relationships that already exist between an organization and a public is a much more efficient strategy than trying to create new relationships. New programs and campaigns often lead to new relationships, and cultivating those relationships by continuing to maintain the relationship is an important part of the communication and program planning process (Kelly).

Applying the ROPES Model to Cybervolunteerism

Prior to beginning any cybervolunteerism efforts, a nonprofit, volunteer based organization must conduct basic research to assess its readiness to implement the program. Following the ROPES model, research must be conducted on the organization, the potential cybervolunteers, and the overarching concept of cybervolunteerism and its role in the organization (Hendrix & Hayes). In academics, research takes a structured, formal appearance adhering to the guidelines of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Smith (2009) pointed out that these are sound guidelines for practitioners as well; however, organizations often face time and resources challenges that scholarly researchers may not face. For these reasons, research in the ROPES model includes both formal and informal approaches ranging from surveys of randomly sampled populations and focus groups of recruited individuals, to casual conversations with key stakeholders and reviews of media coverage and policy documents.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing nonprofits is actually introducing cybervolunteerism into the organization (Ellis & Cravens, 2000). It is important to begin this task by asking questions about how paid staff view volunteers and the potential of the Internet. Many nonprofit staff members feel that volunteer resource management is already time-consuming and that adding a cybervolunteer program would only confound the problem. Others may feel that the introduction of cybervolunteers may

be an attempt to replace the existing onsite volunteering program. Paid staff may also pose questions of the nonprofit organization's ability to manage someone whose progress cannot be easily monitored. Given an organization's existing resources, questions often arise about the practicalities of cybervolunteering when the concept is introduced.

To answer paid staff members' questions about cybervolunteerism, volunteer resource managers must fully research the situation, according to the ROPES model. In this scenario, volunteer resource managers must fully understand the dynamics of online culture. Learning to communicate primarily through the written word (either in the form of e-mail or instant messages) may be a challenge for those accustomed to face-to-face conversations (Zigurs, 2003). E-mail conversations introduce many problems that do not exist in onsite volunteering efforts, including the misinterpretation of tone or intent of the message and sending messages too frequently or not often enough in addition, to simpler problems such as grammar, spelling, and the overuse of Internet abbreviations and emoticons (i.e., visual representations of emotion using punctuation symbols). Fortunately, some of these problems could be eliminated through the use of Web cam technologies and programs such as Skype or Yahoo! Messenger that facilitate face-to-face conversations (Amichai-Hamburger, 2008).

Another element of virtual communication that should be investigated is the paid staff's interest in virtual communication through various channels. Volunteer resource managers should encourage nonprofit paid staff to interact with cybervolunteers even though they are not onsite through online forums or discussion groups in addition to e-mail (Ellis & Cravens, 2000). Group discussions, even when done virtually, could result in team building and instill feelings of pride in the work that is being done for the organization. Public relations research suggests that relationship building leads to high quality volunteer experiences (Bortree & Waters, 2008). Feelings of encouragement are vital in situations where interpersonal interaction are lacking as they prevent the volunteers from feeling as if they are doing the work alone. Additionally, communication could be facilitated through social networking sites by sending messages to volunteer individuals or groups and sharing photographs and videos. For employees still hesitant about cybervolunteerism, volunteer resource managers could encourage them to be more receptive to the idea by increasing e-mail communication with onsite volunteers before becoming fully involved with cybervolunteers.

One final element of the online culture that volunteer resource managers must investigate and ultimately explain to their paid staff colleagues involves the management of virtual work. Many are resistant to incorporate cybervolunteerism into their programs and services because it involves the sacrifice of immediate supervision of volunteers (Ellis & Cravens). However, through proper screening procedures, including an in-depth interview and reference checking, volunteer resource managers may ensure that potential cybervolunteers are as trustworthy, professional, and dedicated to the organization's mission as an onsite volunteer. Because the cybervolunteer may work remotely outside of the organization's operating hours, cybervolunteer supervisors will have to define parameters of how often updates are needed on the work being done virtually (Amichi-Hamburger, 2008).

The ROPES model also stipulates that research must be done on the organization's publics (Hendrix & Hayes,

2007). In this case, publics refer to those who would be cybervolunteers. It is important for organizations to identify not only potential areas for virtual volunteer work but also potential cybervolunteers. Research suggests that volunteers be assessed for their preparedness for cybervolunteerism activities (Cravens, 2000). Turnover among cybervolunteers tends to be high; however, volunteers who bring expertise and those who are highly committed to the organization's values and mission experience the highest degree of longevity (Cravens, 2006). The volunteer's experience and comfort with technology contributes to success as well (Ellis & Cravens, 2000). Assessing preparation can prevent the nonprofit organization from wasting valuable resources on unprepared and inappropriate volunteers. Further, nonprofit organizations should identify the skills needed and then seek volunteers with those talents. This could be done through using established volunteer recruitment channels such as online volunteer matching services or through organizations like the Taproot Foundation, which recruits business professionals to volunteer their skills with charitable organizations.

Once the prospects have been identified, it is important for nonprofit organizations to develop safety guidelines to protect all of the individuals involved in the cybervolunteer program. Virtual work involves potential hazards, such as exposure to computer viruses that could cripple an organization's entire network, the theft of confidential personal information, and the potential for exposure to adult-oriented or inappropriate material online. The Virtual Volunteering Project (2007) recommended that organizations develop safety guidelines for all individuals involved that have four goals: (1) protection of privacy and personal information; (2) screening out people who would abuse or exploit the organization's computer systems; (3) preventing opportunities for the exploitation of participants; and (4) protection of youth and teenage volunteers from exposure to inappropriate online materials.

The second element of the ROPES model involves developing goals and objectives for the program (Hendrix & Hayes). Kim (2001) recommended that organizational efforts not be started without thoroughly assessing what the final outcomes of a program should be. With a clear goal in mind, it is much easier for the organization's paid staff and volunteer resource manager to incorporate behaviors and policies that will ensure programmatic success.

It is important for nonprofit organizations considering cybervolunteerism to have an overall goal for the program and not to launch the program blindly. Whether the goal involves expanding the number of cybervolunteers or increasing specific types of virtual work, organizations should carefully think about what they can actually manage while balancing management of the onsite volunteer program and other day-to-day activities. A study of the most successful cybervolunteer programs found that they included an extensive recruitment and screening process, resources to maintain timely communication with volunteers, and personnel resources dedicated specifically to cybervolunteers (Cravens, 2006). Building these elements into the strategic plan will help facilitate a successful program.

While having an overall goal for the cybervolunteer program is a good start, organizations must also do some careful strategic planning to benefit from these efforts. Such strategic planning will allow organizations to develop measureable objectives with deadlines. An example of an appropriate objective might be, "To produce and distribute a monthly e-newsletter to the organization's donor database by the 20th of

every month." By crafting objectives in this manner, the volunteer and the volunteer resource manager both know exactly what has to be done and when with each volunteering project. Quantifiable objectives also provide boundaries for accountability (Hon, 1998), including how to determine whether a volunteer upheld her/his end of the volunteer contract.

The ROPES model is designed to ensure that practitioners do not rush into situations without thoroughly being prepared. The research in the first step followed by a strategic assessment of the program's purpose leads to the third element, programming (Hendrix & Hayes, 2007). This step involves the deliberate planning, creation, and implementation of the program itself. Smith (2009) encouraged organizations to conduct brainstorming activities to identify an array of strategies for program implementation, but cautioned that this activity needs to be balanced with an assessment of practicality and necessity to ensure that the goals and objectives are reached.

In regards to cybervolunteerism, it is important to establish support and commitment within the nonprofit organization, and specifically within the organization's management structure (Cnaan & Cascio, 1999). It is necessary to get the organization's leaders on board with the cybervolunteer program to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated within the organization (Markham, Johnson, & Bonjean, 1999). Once leaders are committed to the program, it may be helpful to conduct an in-house training on cybervolunteers for all of the organization's paid employees. By conducting such a workshop, everyone could openly discuss their fears and their hopes for the new endeavor. The volunteer resource manager could take this time to demonstrate that managing cybervolunteers is not all that different from managing onsite volunteers. Additionally, this training could provide any technical training (e.g., how to use instant messaging or Web cam technology) for paid staff who may be involved with cybervolunteers (Peña-López, 2007).

Strategic planning in the programming phase of the ROPES process includes developing written guidelines for implementation of the program (Hendix & Hayes). This plan should include the goals and objectives that were created during the second step, but it should also include everything used to carry out the new cybervolunteer program. The written plan should include a listing of resources needed for the program, including finances needed for technology and potential upgrades as well as the amount of paid staff time needed to monitor the cybervolunteers; a timeline detailing when individual program components should be carried out and by whom; and the individual tactics and communication messages that will be used during the program. Research suggests that the key elements of a succesful cybervolunteer program includes a training program, clear channels of communication, and clearly defined assignments for cybervolunteers (Cravens, 2006). Other strategies could include both offline (e.g., newsletters, fliers, face-to-face conversations) and online (e.g., web site sections, social networking sites, e-mail) strategies to communicate about the new cybervolunteer program.

Implementation of a cybervolunteer program would involve the promotion of the new program, recruitment and interviewing potential cybervolunteers, and ultimately implementing and supervising individual cybervolunteer efforts. During the implementation phase, it is important for those in charge of the program to monitor its progress (Fairchild, 2002). If a message is not resonating with audiences or if a

particular communication tactic is not reaching the audience, the plan should be adjusted. Even though research is the first step of the ROPES model, it ultimately is present in all of the steps. Volunteer resource managers have to be proactive with the cybervolunteer program's implementation to ensure resources being devoted to the program are used effectively and efficiently.

Once the cybervolunteer program has been launched and is underway, the evaluation step of the ROPES model can be implemented. Evaluation is simply an assessment of the cybervolunteer program's goals and objectives (Smith, 2009). Fortunately, this step is relatively simple if the objectives have been written in a measurable fashion. By creating deadlines for each effort, volunteer resource managers know when specific volunteer activities should be completed. Areas of evaluation in a cybervolunteer program would include evaluating the effectiveness of the volunteer work completed, the engagement of cybervolunteers with paid staff, and the retention of cybervolunteers (Ellis & Cravens, 2000). The objectives provide direction in determining whether the volunteer activity was achieved. Using the example presented in the objectives step, the volunteer resource manager simply needs to determine first if the e-newsletter was distributed to everyone in the donor database and second if the e-newsletter was received by the 20th of every month.

The evaluation of the program involving cybervolunteering provides benchmarking numbers that could be used to evaluate the overall success of the program. In addition to being able to determine whether individual cybervolunteer projects were successful, benchmarking allows organizations to demonstrate the entire scope of the cybervolunteer program. Growth of the program and repeated successes by cybervolunteers give nonprofit organizations anecdotal stories that they may share with individual, corporate, and foundation donors that help reinforce the good deeds being carried out by the nonprofit organization and its cybervolunteers.

The final step of the ROPES model involves stewardship, i.e., the cultivation of relationships with cybervolunteers and the volunteer resource manager in this scenario. Given the continued need for cybervolunteers, it is important to understand the components of relationship building, or stewardship, as defined in public relations literature. Kelly (2001) identified four aspects of stewardship that must be incorporated into the cybervolunteerism program to ensure its longevity. The first element of stewardship is reciprocity, which insists that cybervolunteers be recognized and thanked in a gracious manner. Nonprofit organizations must let their cybervolunteers know that their work is appreciated. Next, organizations have to behave responsibly in the interactions with cybervolunteers. As mentioned earlier, the Virtual Volunteering Project recommends that nonprofit organizations ensure cybervolunteers' personal information is protected. Responsible behavior also involves assigning cybervolunteers to the specific tasks that they were recruited to accomplish and giving them work that is appropriate for the identified skills they bring to the nonprofit organization.

Reporting is the third element of stewardship. Because cybervolunteers are not onsite, they may not learn about organizational news and updates. It is important that those supervising cybervolunteers keep them informed about everything that impacts the organization and their work. The communication flow helps engage cybervolunteers and makes them feel

as if they are a vital part of the organization even though they are not onsite. Ultimately, this involvement is the key to the final element of stewardship, relationship nurturing. The entire nonprofit organization, and not just the volunteer resource manager, has to keep everyone in mind when making organizational decisions. Even though cybervolunteers are not onsite, they provide an important component to the overall management of the organization and the delivery of the nonprofit organization's programs and services. These relationships have to be nurtured for them to grow and prosper.

Conclusions

The ROPES model provides a strategic framework for launching new endeavors. The five individual steps of conducting research, establishing objectives, program development and implementation, evaluation, and stewardship were developed by public relations scholars who used organizational communication and management principles to create this strategic model. Given the increasing prevalence of technology in the lives of all Americans, volunteer resource managers should consider adopting the principles of the ROPES model to introduce cybervolunteerism into a nonprofit organization. By using currently available technology, nonprofit organizations could not only become more inclusive by reaching out to busy professionals who have valuable skills but cannot volunteer onsite during normal operating hours, and to individuals with disabilities and others who may not have the abilities to volunteer onsite.

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Strategic Professional Development Ahead for Volunteer Resource Managers: Improving Quality of Life Through Contributions to Sustained Organizational Excellence

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Abstract

Since publication of the first handbook for nonprofit organization management in 1980 to the present, the number of nonprofit organizations in the United States has doubled, while the importance of volunteers to the nation's quality of life has exponentially increased and is still growing. Professionalism in volunteer resource management has made significant progress in the 30 years since publication of the initial NPO handbook. Much remains to be done however, to realize the potential of volunteer resource management as a contributor to organizational excellence, and to meet society's needs for volunteer services, including broadening higher education offerings in volunteer resource management, and expanding training opportunities for volunteer resource managers in grassroots organizations. Even as volunteer resource management professionalism advances, the growing demands for services provided by volunteers seem to negate the perception of gaining ground relative to society's needs, much like Tantalus' fruit, "catching up" seems to remain out of reach. Meeting society's needs will not only depend on expanded education and training, but might well include establishing a new role for volunteer managers who aspire to the stratosphere of professional development in this field: strategic volunteer resource management.

Key Words:

human resource development, nonprofit organizations, volunteer management education, volunteer management professionalism, volunteer resource administrator, volunteers

Introduction

In 1980, few would have agreed there was such a professional area as "nonprofit management" or a "nonprofit executive." Since then the number of nonprofit organizations in the United States has doubled, even as the field of nonprofit management has emerged and evolved, from about 815,000 nonprofits in 1980, to over 1.5 million today.

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) provide the majority of human services in the United States, collectively called "quality of life." Better management and leadership within these organizations directly contribute to an improved quality of life for millions of Americans. This has been the overarching goal of the many books, articles, and training courses that have been developed in recent years focused on NPOs and volunteer resource management.

It was just one score and ten years ago that the first Nonprofit Organization Handbook was published. The Handbook's organization, fulfilled by 28 contributors, established for the first time in 1980 that regardless of the specific public service provided, not-for-profit organizations shared seven areas of management, from fund raising to volunteer administration.

"Volunteers: An Indispensable Human Resource in a Democratic Society," was the title of the section in the NPO Handbook that covered all major areas of volunteer management and administration. All five chapters in that section were written by Dr. Eva Schindler-Rainman, a gifted visionary in several fields. "An organizational consultant, social worker with a Ph.D., and behavioral scientist," Ellis recalls, "she was known for her advocacy of effective human resource development - paid and volunteer - and for non-traditional organization design and development" (Ellis, 2001, ¶ 1). Here are some of the remarkably accurate predictions Dr. Schindler-Rainman made in 1980 about the world of volunteer management:

- Volunteers will be in every sector of the community, all over the country, and they will be affecting policy making, changes, and growth.
- New courses will be offered in community colleges and universities for administrators of volunteer programs as well as for volunteers themselves.
- Credit will be given for volunteer work (agencies will keep track of what volunteers do so that volunteers can include this experience in their resumes.
- Research on values and the effect of volunteers on the delivery of human services will increase.
- New collaborative bodies will emerge to utilize better the human and material resources that are available.
- New, portable, interesting, participative training programs for paraprofessionals, professionals, and volunteers will be developed.
- New ways to recognize volunteers will be developed. (Schindler-Rainman, 1980, pp. 3-7)

"This is probably the most exciting time in the history of the United States to be active in the volunteer world," Dr. Schindler-Rainman concluded. "These times offer a tremendous opportunity for volunteers to make important contributions to the quality of life and to human services in their communities. It is clear that the volunteer administrator is a key person in translating the motivation, interest, resources, and skills of volunteers into human services to the clients of our people-helping agencies and organizations." (Schindler-Rainman, 1980, p. 3-44)

The National Answer: More Volunteers

Most would agree that the last 30 years have seen significant advances in the overall professionalism of nonprofits and the volunteer programs so many of them use to provide a huge continuum of public services. Sadly, most would also agree that our progress towards professionalism, while significant, has not kept pace with the ever-expanding need for human and social services. Certainly, Schindler-Rainman's prediction of volunteers being engaged throughout all sectors across the country, and involved in every aspect of service delivery, growth, policy making and change, has been resoundingly proven.

Four out of five nonprofits (those with incomes above $25,000 annually in gross receipts) rely on volunteers to provide an enormous range of services that enable these organizations to fulfill their public service missions. A 2004 joint study by the UPS Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the USA Freedom Corps also found that most of these organizations did not have the resources or knowledge to effectively manage these vital human resources (AFP eWire, 2004).

Volunteers brought benefits to 90% of these major nonprofits, with two-thirds reporting substantial cost savings and increased quality of services and programs. About 60% of these nonprofits had a paid

staff person for volunteer coordination, but one-third of those had no prior training in volunteer resource management, and only half of the "volunteer coordinators" devoted more than 30% of their time to coordinating volunteers. As woeful a picture as these data suggest, 90% of these organizations also reported they were ready to take on even more volunteers (nearly 3.5 million more volunteers) without enhancing their capacity to do so. Clearly, "taking on" and "managing effectively" are two very different concepts for these organizations.

It will come as no surprise to any of IJOVA's readers to learn that the study found a strong correlation between the amount of time the paid staff volunteer coordinator devoted to volunteer management and the effectiveness of the organization's volunteer programs, which, as we have already noted, play a vital role in the organization's ability to fulfill its public service mission and roles. By that same measure, we can safely assume that those organizations "taking on" volunteers, but having little or no professional volunteer management infrastructure to support that new human capital, will have ineffective or dysfunctional volunteer programs, thus missing the inherent potential the new volunteers represent--for the organization and the publics it serves.

New Courses, Inadequate Higher Echelon Support

The new courses predicted by Schindler-Rainman are being offered in fewer than half of our state universities and colleges, not nearly as many as there should be to meet the growing need for volunteer resource management professionals. In addition, the courses listed (with links) by ENERG!ZE reflect little standardization and range, from those purporting to offer certifications in volunteer management (with no course listings) to others that might have something or other to do with managing volunteers. In short, there are fewer courses than we need and most reflect little depth of subject matter penetration, mastery, or research. Improving and expanding volunteer resource management course listings (substantive) and volunteer focused research within higher education is what the military might call a "target rich" environment.

Recent personal experience suggests that this paucity of quantity and quality has more to do with short-sighted prioritization by university leaders (above the department level), than the advocacy or qualifications of the faculty. At most universities and colleges it is a challenge (that is worsening) to get the needed support or funding for programs or research relating to volunteer resource management.

Quo Vadis, Volunteer Resource Management

In the early 1990's, circumstances led me to meet and study with Dr. W. Edwards Deming, one of our most noted statisticians, authors and teachers who is often credited with helping both the Japanese and American economies through his insistence on process improvement and product quality. "Man's job," he said, "is to govern the future, not simply be a victim of the wind blowing this way and that way. I know, the best plans are upset. But, without a plan there is no chance. Best efforts will not do it!" (Connors, 2001, p. 3).

Whether or not we plan on it or for it, there will be a future for volunteer resource management and professional development. We have an essential choice: we can attempt to influence the future through vision and planning, or we can let the winds of change blow us "this way and that." Without a vision and a plan we have little chance of affecting whatever outcome lies ahead.

Clearly, the need for the services provided by nonprofits will continue to increase. This increase will surely be accompanied by an expanding job market in positions relating to nonprofit human resource management and, in particular, volunteer resource management. The extent to which those applicants are truly qualified to effectively manage those programs depends on the robustness of our education and credentialing programs. Who might logically be expected to best fulfill the responsibilities of those positions, applicants who had completed a 24-hour course of instruction provided through a national agency, or by university graduates having completed a challenging (150-hour) volunteer management course taught at the graduate level (e.g. University of Florida or University of Texas at Austin), or those having earned a graduate degree in nonprofit management or volunteer resource management? What is our plan to make these courses and levels of instruction more widely known and available?

More than three million Floridians volunteer each year and provide in excess of 430 million hours of service to nonprofit organizations in such areas as teaching, tutoring, fund raising, and providing human services. Volunteer Florida, the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, recently awarded Certificates of Achievement to University of Florida students completing the first college-level course covering volunteer resource management at the university. These conferrals signaled strong support at the state level for expanded offerings in higher education that deliver advanced training for volunteer resource managers. "Volunteering and developing professional volunteer managers is especially important now when community needs are great and resources are dwindling," explained Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. "Giving volunteer managers the tools they need to recruit and retain volunteers is a key to increasing civic participation in Florida," Spencer said. "College-level training for future professionals aspiring to manage and lead volunteer programs is a giant step in the right direction" (¶ 3).

Professionalism in volunteer resource management will continue to advance, not only because of the commendable leadership of national organizations such as the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA), but also because of the pragmatic linkage between expanded knowledge and skills in volunteer management and career success; better training (as acquired and validated through a credentialing or graduate degree process) provides significant career advantages, as well it should.

A recent book by Dr. Edward Lawler, co-creator with Dr. Lyman Porter of the Porter-Lawler Theory of Motivation, offers a vision of the virtually untapped potential represented by human resource (HR) managers as major "players" at the strategic level on any organization's management team. For the "promise to become a reality, human resource executives need to develop new skills and knowledge to be able to execute human resource management administration activities effectively" (Lawler, 2009, p. 142). It is true, at present, that relatively few nonprofits share Lawler's vision of HR professionals operating at the strategic level, much less for managers of volunteer resource programs. However, Lawler is correct; like water behind a dam, the potential for such roles and contributions to organizational excellence exists. When the value of that untapped potential is recognized (perhaps by nonprofits hard pressed by expanding service needs, increasing budget constraints, and rapidly

changing environments), the roles and contributions of nonprofit human resource and volunteer program managers will change for those who are qualified and capable of successfully filling those roles.

The challenges for those involved in improving the professionalism of volunteer resource managers include improved "packaging" and expanding opportunities for more comprehensive training (current positions) and education (professional expansion and development) for current and future professionals in this vital area. These new offerings will advance strategic professional development for volunteer resource managers to the extent they provide better understandings of the theoretical foundations on which effective management practices are based, and recognition of the practical-to-strategic range existing within each of the typical components of a volunteer management program, including demographics; organizational environment, planning and analysis to establish and maintain professional volunteer programs; policy making and implementation; new and evolving options for volunteer service; financial planning and accountability; marketing, recruiting, screening, assimilating and motivating volunteers (including rewards/recognition); legal and risk management; effective synergy and relations between all HR functions (staff/volunteer/board); effective communications via ever expanding media options; evaluation of volunteers and volunteer programs; and, overall effective management (program administration/resource efficiency) and leadership (innovation/change management for effectiveness).

Schindler-Rainman's assessment in 1980 of it being an exciting time to be active in the volunteer world remains true for us today. But the excitement is both caused by and tempered by our realization of the challenges ahead for us to meet the increasing needs for human services through voluntary action, and to do so while maintaining ever more demanding levels of professionalism in volunteer resources management.

Schindler-Rainman and Lawler represent two points on a 30-year time line that we can now begin (with caution) to extrapolate into the future of volunteer resource management professionalism. Volunteers continue to make important contributions to our quality of life. Managers of volunteer programs remain the key to translating the enormous potential of those volunteers into human services so badly needed to maintain our society's quality of life. Development of management science and practice now provide the tools (and potential) for human resource and volunteer resource managers to operate at both strategic and operational levels, and thus make substantial contributions to operational effectiveness and efficiency, the two foundations of sustained excellence. Strategic human resources management integrates human resources management "with the strategic mission of the organization" . . . Human resource departments (including volunteer resource managers) "must take a proactive role in guiding and supporting agency efforts to meet the changing demands of their external and internal environments" (Pynes, 2009, p. xv).

Expanded, visionary, strategic professional development for current and future leaders of volunteer programs (including focused research to support that development) is our best hope to meet the increasing demands for improved human services, and to realize the inherent potential within human resource management and volunteer resource management to contribute substantially to achieving and sustaining organizational excellence. While

doing so, we can take some measure of pride in our collective efforts and commitment, however halting or disorganized at times, to improving the quality of life for others.

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About the Author

Since publication of the first *Nonprofit Handbook* (McGraw-Hill) in 1980, Tracy D. Connors has edited and/or authored eight major management handbooks for nonprofit organizations, including the *Nonprofit Handbook: Management* (2001, John Wiley & Sons) and the *Volunteer Management Handbook* (1995, John Wiley & Sons), a second edition of which is currently in development. Captain (USN Ret.) Connors has also published two major military history works: *Baited Trap, the Ambush of Mission 1890* (2008) and *Truckbusters from Dogpatch, the Combat Diary of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing in the Korean War* (2006). Connors is adjunct faculty at the University of Florida where he recently developed and teaches Volunteer Management for Nonprofit Organizations.

The Importance of Being Pracademic

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Abstract

The authors (an academic and a practitioner, both who define themselves as "pracademics") comment on their experiences over many years of conducting workshops and doing presentations at national and international volunteerism conferences in which they have repeatedly posed the question, "What is a 'pracademic' and how is it related to professionalism?". A typical response is, "that's what I am, but I've never quite known what to call myself" since such an individual identifies with the concept of having one foot in the academy and one foot in the practice environment. This commentary defines the essential nature of being a "pracademic" and its implications for volunteer resource managers.

Key Words:
academic, collaboration, practice, practitioner, professional

The Association for Research on Nonprofits Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) hosts an annual conference of scholars and practitioners in the field of volunteerism. There are social workers interested in volunteer engagement in social service organizations and who lead social agencies; there are economists who study philanthropic behavior, and development directors of large organizations who are responsible for raising money; there are sociologists who study trends in how people are choosing to give service, and professional managers of volunteer programs seeking insight into why so many people want short term volunteer assignments. Gathered are professionals who have both vested interests in the academy as well as the real world of practice, and professional practitioners who are engaged in research.

For decades the term "pracademic" has surfaced in paper presentation sessions, panels, and colloquies at ARNOVA conferences. Conferees would meet in the halls and assert that they were a hybrid species called "pracademics." The outcome of these conversations at the ARNOVA conference resulted in the formation in 2006 of a special and distinct conference section for "pracademics," establishing a home within the ARNOVA organization for those who identified with both nonprofit/voluntary action study and practice.

Defining a "Pracademic"

Several years ago we began a search for the origins of the word "pracademic." Volpe and Chandler (2001) take responsibility for coining the term over 25 years ago "to describe academics who are scholars and teachers in the field of dispute resolution and actually practice what they preach in their university" (p. 1). They placed the origins of pracademicians within the academy from which academics ventured out into the real world of practice to resolve conflicts, and credit the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in the mid 1980s with having funded 20 universities to "develop practice-relevant theory in conflict analysis and resolution" (p. 1).

Subsequently, in the late 1980s the Clarion Conference convened a group of academics interested in developing nonprofit management as a discipline. A parenthetical remark in one of the published papers indicated that a substantial number of attendees "adopted the moniker 'pracademician' to reflect their hybrid status as academicians with significant experience as nonprofit professional practitioners" (Rubin, Adamski, & Block, 1989, p. 280).

Today the terms "pracademic" and "pracademician" are proliferating as scholars and practitioners alike search for words to describe and define their unique skills, emphasize the importance of the practitioner-researcher relationships, or develop new partnerships between communities and universities (Hanbury, 2004; Hess & Mullen, 1995; Morrow-Howell & Noelker, 2006; Nalbandian, 1994; Ospina & Dodge, 2004; Price, 2001; Wenger, 1998; Wildman, 2002.) In 2008, we published an article in which we examined the concept of "pracademic", and identified three approaches to professional "pracademic" work: 1) the engaged scholar, 2) the reflective professional practitioner, and 3) the collaborative team (Macduff & Netting, 2008). The engaged scholar resides primarily in the academy, but truly believes in university-community partnerships at both the institutional and personal level, attempting to remain connected to both cultures. The reflective professional practitioner works primarily in the practice arena, but is intentionally respectful of scholarship and what it has to offer. The collaborative team is exemplified when the engaged scholar and reflective professional practitioner work together to draw from their joint strengths in building better capacity to collaborate.

Wisdom From Our Colleagues

Over the years, the authors have collected notes and comments from participant interaction during conference sessions that have led to a number of themes regarding "pracademics" from both the university and the world of practice. From the academic perspective, there are numerous advantages identified if one partners with professional practitioners. These include the potential for mutuality in terms of learning and in understanding expertise and constraints, and having the political will to implement a project requires maintaining relationships over time and ongoing communication. Knowing what the political agenda is and reducing the possibility of mixed messages seems to be enhanced by identifying the responsibilities of each party and knowing who's responsible to do what within an agreed upon timeframe. Conference participants have pointed out that this front-end investment in a collaborative agenda is critically important particularly for academics since the practice world works much faster than the academic world, often due to issues such as gaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals related to human subjects concerns. This means nothing to volunteer resource managers.

Professional practitioners in our sessions agreed that mutual learning is a goal

for all parties and that nothing can replace honest, transparent dialogue. In a collaborative partnership, practitioners often look to persons based in the academy for skills in research design and implementation, whereas practitioners have clues to the real-world context in which data are to be interpreted. The professional practitioner is critical to the process of putting the procedures and protocols in place once the plan is in place, for without their cooperation and buy-in there will be limited implementation. This requires a respect on the part of all parties for one another and the recognition that these are equal partnerships and that both are professionals with converging skills sets.

In a more recent session we posed three questions: l) how do you define "pracademic"? 2) what is the value of the "pracademic" to the academy?, and 3) what is the value of the academic to the field of practice? We received some provocative responses that may hold clues to the meaning of the concept of the professional practitioner, as well as the academic.

In defining "pracademic", participants used active verbs such as "applying practice to research" and "doing research to inform practice". Connectional terms such as intersecting, linking, involving, engaging, bridging, combining, synthesizing, spanning, melding, integrating, and collaborating also peppered the dialogue. One academic referred to the definition as "where concerned and empirical links are converted to practical solutions to issues," and a "pracademic" referred to "practitioners who want to do something about the problems they see enough to totally uproot their lives, transform their thinking, and seek answers through research to take back to the world of practice."

Asked what the value of the "pracademic" is to the academy, responses were that they bridge research to field experience and are a great source of grounding and relevance, rooting a project in reality. Another participant talked about how the "pracademic" brings real life experience to the testing and correcting of theory (i.e., a reality check). One person described the "pracademic" as being engaged in interdisciplinary work and bringing contextualization to theory. Whereas participants acknowledged the value, one was quick to say that it could become problematic when practitioners with whom one is partnering are too busy to fully carry through as needed. Positives, however, were far more evident in terms such as crossing-over, offering different perspectives, informing the project, being synergistic, and giving "hope for answering the 'so what' question and providing a view of the trees."

The value of the academic to the field of practice was seen as providing a theoretical base, having empirical knowledge on which to build, and understanding the systemic picture. Thus, if practitioners had a view of the trees, academics were seen as having a view of the forest. Caution was expressed over academics not getting "in the way of good practice" or exploiting practitioners because they are unable to make research applicable. Academics were viewed as only as good as their ability to communicate with practitioners. "The academic world helps us to step outside the immediacy of the world of practice, gain perspective, understand constructs and learn rigorous research methods, so that we can effectively address real-life problems." Another participant added that the academic may take the "time 'to breath,' reflect, define blank spots and generate knowledge."

Implications for Volunteer Resource Managers

The use of the term "pracademic" is spreading across professional fields, including that of the volunteer resource

manager as a practitioner. The term reflects what professionals have known for years; being professional by definition is having a foot in both worlds of practice and academe. Academic settings were designed with disciplines in mind, and disciples have long focused on basic research and theory from the top down. Professions and professional schools within the academy have often drawn from multiple disciplines and called their work "interdisciplinary" because they have drawn from various areas. Yet, "pracademics" take things one step farther in that they seek to apply what is learned from the disciplines and translate it into the world of practice. Without practice, a profession does not exist. Thus, professionals who warm to the bridging nature of the term "pracademic" are likely relieved to have a concept that gives a name to what they do – connecting practice to a mutually beneficial knowledge base.

"Pracademics" are also professionals (whether in the academy or the field, or both) who recognize the necessity of engagement throughout a process. It may be easier to put blinders on or use tunnel vision to navigate the practice world, but no one said that being a professional was easy. As one of our wise colleagues once noted, the practitioner is one who sees the trees and the academic is one who sees the forest. Whether it is through one person who can see both or in a collaboration that pulls from the strengths of engaged scholars and reflective practitioners, the "pracademic" way is to see both the forest and the trees as a integrated whole. We think the "pracademic" term is descriptive of what professionals who manage volunteer resources need to be in a highly complex world.

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About the Authors

Nancy Macduff spent more than ten years managing volunteers in the nonprofit and governmental sector. She currently teaches and consults regarding volunteer administration and nonprofit board development. She also is the primary teacher for the Volunteer Engagement and Leadership Program at Portland State University, Portland, OR, and is the author of numerous books, manuals, and articles on volunteer administration.

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Volunteer Services Coordinators in the Seventies

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(Editor-generated) Abstract

The author describes the status of the emerging "Coordinator of Volunteers" (volunteer resource management) vocation (profession) in the United States in the decade of the 1970's as related to five job skills areas she perceives as critical to the profession: 1. human relations skills, 2. management skills, 3. professional development skills, 4. volunteer training skills, and 5. consultant skills.

(Editor-generated) Key Words:
profession, volunteer resource management, volunteer manager

Not only the Volunteer Services Coordinators, but every person is going to have to learn new attitudes, skills and knowledge to live successfully in the rapidly changing world of the 70's.

Most of us who are over thirty grew up in a fairly homogeneous society. We lived and associated through our early years with people much like ourselves. Communities and neighborhoods were fairly stable. Our neighbors and friends were usually of our own racial, social, economic and religious background. If we were black, we probably knew few, if any, white people. If we were white, we probably did not have black friends. Even protestants and catholics mingled chiefly with their own religious groups. There wasn't much overt hostility, because there was so little contact.

Today we are seeing great hostility between racial, economic and ethnic groups. (I like to think that the ecumenical movement of recent decades has lessened religious antagonisms—although they still appear in unexpected places.) The tensions arise because we are in the period of transition to a pluralistic society. We will gradually begin to discover that differences between people are enriching. They make life far more interesting. Groups of men and women are more stimulating than women's groups or men's groups. A few young people in a traditionally adult activity can add great excitement to any activity.

As we learn to appreciate diversity, hopefully we will stop putting people in pigeon-holes or stereotypes. We may begin to realize that every individual is unique and important. This will have an effect on our attitudes toward—and our handling of—both volunteers and those they serve—in your case the mentally handicapped. With the volunteers—we will not limit ourselves to one group of people. If we have had mainly middle-aged, middle-class housewives as volunteers, we may find the supply drying up. But volunteers cannot be stereotyped as "middle-aged, middle-class housewives." Increasingly, retired people, businessmen and women, young people, poor people are volunteering. Are you finding your share of such people?

Very often these "non-typical" volunteers can make better contact with

patients—many of whom relate to them more readily than to the "typical" volunteer (if there is any such animal!)

It is largely your attitude toward and about volunteers which will determine whether or not you recruit and welcome those who are different. How *do* you feel about differences? Do you see them as enriching, or as potential sources of conflict and trouble? How comfortable are you in working with people very different from yourself?

Another difference in the volunteers of the 70's may well be their motivations. We used to assume that people volunteered for purely altruistic reasons—simply to help the less fortunate. This is, of course, a part of the motivation of most volunteers. But today, where such things as mental handicaps are openly acknowledged, you may get volunteers who have a mentally handicapped family member, and who volunteer in order to learn more about the mentally disabled. Or you may get volunteers who are testing a possible career. Or you may rind students looking for data or research possibilities. We are increasingly realistic about motivations today, and need to admit that most volunteers expect and receive some satisfaction from their volunteer work. You and I need to be careful about possible "judgmental" attitudes toward motivation.

And our attitudes toward the patients or clients can have a great influence on the volunteers. Do we lump all the mentally handicapped together and treat them as "things"? Or do we recognize the fact that they differ as much as so-called "normal" people—and so treat each one as an individual? Especially in a hospital or institutional setting, this individual concern can be a powerful therapy.

If attitudes are so important, what can we do about them? We must not assume that attitudes cannot be changed, because they can! Human relations training has developed effective change. It cannot be accomplished by telling people what their attitudes should be. But involvement techniques—role playing, case studies, well designed audio-visual aids- can do it. Have you had such training? Do you include it in your training of volunteers? There are skilled human relations trainers in every area of the country. Use them.

As we all acquire new attitudes which are appropriate to the 1970's, we will begin to want new skills. This great new vocation of "Coordinator of Volunteers" which you are pioneering can make use of a wide range of skills. Don't feel that one course, or even one series of courses, will teach you all you need to know. One of the best features of our modern society is the growing emphasis on continuing education. Just as teachers, doctors, lawyers and other professionals go back to school every few years, you and I need to plan this into our careers. I'll list a few skills that you need now. By 1975, the list may be very different.

1. As I have already suggested, you need human relations skills above all else, because your job is human relations. The NTL Institute, for which I work, is the pioneer in modern human relations training and runs a nationwide program of basic human relations laboratories every year. But many colleges and universities and a wide range of other organizations and institutes also offer such training. I only urge you to be careful in checking the training and credentials of those who offer it, because—like any field-this one has its "quacks."
2. You need some good management skills—ability to plan, to delegate responsibility, to make decisions, to evaluate your own and others' performance. Management training is offered in many settings. Check with some of your local business firms, as well as colleges and universities. Our Center for a Voluntary

Society is planning management training for executives of voluntary organizations and for coordinators of volunteers and will be glad to keep you informed of such opportunities.

3. Your own association, through the American Psychiatric Association, should be planning seminars and workshops to keep you up to date on the latest developments in the field of mental illness and its treatment. New discoveries are being made every day, and you can do your job far better if you have a current knowledge of the field.

4. You need skill in designing and conducting training courses. Here again, the NTL Institute, our Center, many universities offer "Training of Trainers" programs which will teach you how to design and conduct effective training. Too many of us tend to repeat the patterns of training which we received, when there are endless innovations which could help us enormously.

5. You need skills as a consultant, because this is a role which you probably play more often than you realize. You often act as a consultant to a volunteer who comes for a first interview, or an experienced volunteer with a problem. If you improve your consulting skills, you may be helpful to staff members who have problems with volunteers, or to organizations who supply volunteers.

The new knowledge which you are going to need as we move through the decade of the 1970's is implied in many of the things I have already suggested. Among the changes of our day, the knowledge explosion is one of the greatest. None of us dare be satisfied with what we knew five years ago, or even last year. How to keep up with all the new discoveries and ideas in the field of mental health and the exploding world of volunteering is a real problem. But if we are to do our jobs, we must find a way. Within a hospital or institution, or in a community where there are several Volunteer Service Coordinators, you could very well establish an informal seminar, meeting perhaps once a month. At each meeting one participant could do some special reading, or interview a psychiatrist or researcher, and report on new developments. If you are like me, this is the only way I can make myself keep up with the fields in which I need to be informed.

Back of all this—which may seem formidable—lies the simple question—"What do you think of yourself and of the job you are doing?" If you feel inadequate, frightened and defensive—or if you wish you were doing something else—maybe you should! But if you recognize that you are pioneering a new vocation—as a Volunteer Service Coordinator—which by the end of the 1970's may well be recognized as on a par with Social work, medicine and other established fields; and if you recognize that in working in the field of mental health you are in what is probably the most important area of human life today—your pride and joy in what you are doing will impel you to keep learning and growing and changing. More power to you!

About the Author

(no information available)

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Higher Education Programs For Administrators Of Volunteers

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(Editor-generated) Abstract

The authors report the results of a very modest unfunded pilot research project designed to assess recent experiences with programs (not single courses) in volunteer administration in American institutions of higher education. Study findings suggest that the field is obviously quite new in higher education; most programs had been implemented or initiated (and sometimes rejected) in the past three years. Such programs tend to be concentrated in higher education institutions in or near major population centers (metropolitan areas), where concentrations of volunteer programs and volunteer administrators can likewise be found. The most significant factor in program success seems to be the active, persistent, and continuing committed involvement of one individual or a small group of individuals, involved themselves in or deeply concerned with the practice of volunteer administration.

(Editor-generated) Key Words:
volunteer administrators, higher education, academic course, certificate

Since 1971 a number of groups have made recommendations as to the appropriate content of educational programs for voluntary action leaders, particularly volunteer program administrators. A few surveys have been conducted to identify the educational needs as perceived by such leaders.[1] However, we have had little systematic information about actual higher education programs themselves in this area, and too little sharing of such information. A sufficient number of colleges and universities now offer educational courses, workshops, or even programs (two or more different courses) in volunteer administration to provide at least some empirical basis for educational program recommendations in regard to existing programs or the implementation of new ones.

We report here the results of a very modest unfunded pilot research project designed to assess recent experiences with programs (not single courses) in volunteer administration in American institutions of higher education. More specifically, our study is designed to assess: (1) progress in the development of such programs; (2) strategies and processes of program initiation; (3) the content of such programs; and (4) factors that influence the success or failure of these programs.

Methodology

The institutions surveyed constitute a very special kind of purposive sample, divided into two parts. In essence, we studied what might be termed a "reputational sample" of institutions, in the sense that we chose each institution for our study on the basis of recommendations by a panel of knowledgeable experts in the field. One part of the sample consists (for practical reasons as well as historical ones) of 10

institutions in California drawn in this manner, while the other part of the sample was drawn from the rest of the nation.

In consulting with our panel of experts, we drew also on three national surveys of higher education opportunities for volunteer administrators: (1) a 1974 survey by the National Information Center on Volunteerism[2]; (2) a 1976 follow-up to the NICOV survey by S. Jane Rehnborg (unpublished); and, (3) a 1976 survey of about 300 faculty members and voluntary action leaders conducted by the Research Task Force of the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars (which included information on course offerings in the field of voluntary action). The Rehnborg survey data were particularly important in our selection of the non-California portion of the sample.

The unpublished survey by Rehnborg deserves special comment here because it sheds some interesting light on the degree of turnover of higher education courses for volunteer administrators. Based on the list of institutions offering some kind of course (possibly only a workshop or Institute) in the field, as indicated by the NICOV national survey in 1974, Rehnborg sent out 95 letters in August-September 1976 to the places listed asking about certification programs, workshops, etc. Replies were received eventually from about 60% of the institutions. Of these responding institutions, many had no courses or programs. It was clear that a large proportion of the institutions that had offered courses in 1974 were no longer doing so in 1976. However, some institutions still had their original courses or even additional ones, and new institutions had begun to offer such courses in the interim.

The appropriate conclusion from the Rehnborg study is that turnover is very high in higher education courses for volunteer administrators. They are frequently present one year and gone the next. This is the background in terms of which the present study of programs (defined as two or more higher education courses) of higher education for volunteer administrators must be understood. It also explains why we used the particular sampling method we did. We wanted to be sure that we were able to get information on at least 20 programs so that modest generalization might be attempted. So far as we can tell, we have studied a substantial portion of all programs existing in the United States or that have existed, though only a much small fraction of all courses.

Data were gathered for our study, then, in April and May of 1977 with one or more respondents at each of 20 institutions of higher education: 10 from California and another 10 from eight other states around the country (Washington, New York, Massachusetts, Colorado, Maryland, Illinois, Delaware, and Ohio). For the full sample, there were as many community (two-year) colleges as there were four-year colleges and universities. However the California sample had 8 community colleges out of 10 institutions, while the national sample had just the reverse proportion. This probably reflects the "historical" factor alluded to earlier; the chancellor's office of the California Community College System helped support and sponsor a study group that designed a community college curriculum in volunteer administration a few years ago.[3] That curriculum and its design process has served as a major stimulus to the formation of programs in California institutions at the level studied.

The interviews conducted were, with only a couple of exceptions, made by telephone, using a semi-structured (focused) interview schedule created by the authors. Some screening had to be done with potential respondent institutions in order to verify the existence, prior existence, or

proposed existence of two or more different college level courses in volunteer administration. At some institutions, there were, are, or will be programs in related areas (e.g., in non-profit organization management, in voluntary association administration, in fund-raising management, in community services technology, etc.), but these were screened out of our sample.

Also, at many institutions there are various courses offering college credit for off-campus internships or volunteer work in community organizations, usually in conjunction with a periodic discussion of the off-campus experience at a seminar on-campus, and often with the requirement of a term paper or report on the off-campus experience. These programs were also screened out of our sample. Finally, there were educational activities called or thought to be programs by our panel of experts but which turned out to be single courses, occasional usages of independent study programs for volunteer administration degrees, or brief workshops. These too were generally left out of our sample (with the exception of two systematic workshop series that led to Certificates, with each brief one-day workshop called a "course").[4]

As a result of our survey, our final sample of 20 institutions was divided into four categories: I) institutions which are conducting an on-going program in volunteer administration, with program being defined as a set of two or more different courses, completion of which results in a degree or in a certificate of completion or proficiency (which may itself partially satisfy requirements for a degree); II) institutions which offer at least one course in volunteer administration and either (a) are in the process of developing or of implementing (but not yet offering) a program; or (b) will definitely be offering a least two courses in the immediate future; III) institutions which have considered implementing a program, but have decided not to do so; and, IV) institutions which have offered a program but no longer do so.

We define as successful, for present purposes, institutions in Category I (providing the programs are not about to be phased out), and in Category II. There are 13 institutions of this sort in our sample. The remaining 7 are unsuccessful by the above definition, about evenly divided between Categories III and IV. The 13 successful institutions are also about evenly divided between the two Categories involved (7 in I; 6 in II).

Overall Progress

Out data point up a number of aspects of the general progress made to date in higher education for volunteer administrators. To begin with, the field is obviously quite new in higher education. Most programs have been implemented or initiated (and sometimes rejected) in the past three years. Only 3 of the 20 programs were begun before 1970, all in the late 1960s. We are in a period of considerable activity both in terms of new programs and expansion (in content and number of students) of existing programs.

But progress seems to be very uneven. Programs in some institutions are in a no-growth state or have been (or are about to be) withdrawn. Some other institutions have decided not to implement programs after quite intensive investigation involving interaction with the volunteer community and needs identification surveys, with careful consideration by the institution's administration. However, most respondents at such institutions indicate that the decision not to go ahead is not a permanent one, but is subject to future review. Institutions are reluctant to take any risks on new programs in these times of general retrenchment in higher education, and programs for volunteer administrator education are often

met with a hard-nosed fiscal scrutiny by higher education administrators.

There is general reluctance by higher education institutions to go ahead with such programs unless (a) a very substantial need can be demonstrated locally thus guaranteeing the fiscal solvency of the new endeavor, or (b) the program can be begun at virtually no financial risk to the institution (or with that appearance, at least).

As suggested earlier, there is considerable variation with respect to the type of institution offering programs, including two-year community colleges, four-year colleges with a few Masters degree programs, and full universities offering Doctoral degrees in various departments and professional schools. In California, perhaps for the special historical reasons described earlier, most programs and especially the successful ones are in community colleges. Elsewhere in the nation, this pattern does not hold, with successful programs being found as frequently in four-year colleges or universities as in two-year colleges. Not surprisingly, volunteer administration programs tend to be concentrated in higher education institutions in or near major population centers (metropolitan areas), where concentrations of volunteer programs and volunteer administrators can likewise be found.

Programs vary moderately in their breadth of content, though there is some core of common skills and knowledge found in most. There is considerably more variation in how the programs are organized and structured (hours of attendance required, pattern of course sessions, etc.). Outcomes also differ substantially among the programs studied. Some programs offer a certificate for attendance at six one-day workshops (called "courses"), and one offered a certificate for attendance at 12 two-hour workshops (it is now defunct). Other programs give their certificate of satisfactory completion of one or two regular college level courses, while some require satisfactory completion of many more courses. One community college requires 50 quarter hours of credit in courses related to volunteer administration before awarding the certficate. And a few institutions have volunteer administration as a specialization or major as part of a Masters degree program in an allied field (e.g., Rehabilitation Administration, Planning and Administration).

Yet, when one considers both the current state of existing programs and trends in the development of these programs, the norm in the short run at least appears to be granting a certificate for a rather modest amount of college work. Masters degree programs that have any specialization in volunteer administration are quite rare (only two in our sample).

Perhaps the most appropriate perspective from which to view the field of higher education in volunteer administration is as a field in process. On the basis of earlier analyses of developments in the field and our present findings, we would predict a general though probably gradual expansion of the field in the next five years or so. After that, the pace may quicken.

A surprisingly significant number of institutions seem to have implemented or at least have considered implementing programs. And the awareness of volunteerism, voluntarism, and the voluntary sector even among the latter institutions has grown markedly in the past five years. We can expect these trends to be reinforced by the growing societal significance of voluntarism, combined with the increasing pressure from certain voluntary organizations for more and better education for volunteer administrators (e.g., from the Association for the Administration of Volunteer Services, and from the Alliance

for Volunteerism).

It would be an error, then, to assess the state of the field simply by examining educational programs as they currently exist. Rather, one must assess as well what is being developed in the field, seek to learn what works and what does not, and try to understand why. Such an approach can be expected to provide some guidelines for the development of specific programs and for the general development of the field as well. Our findings throw some light on these issues.

Program Initiation, Development and Implementation

Our findings indicate rather clearly that program success, as defined earlier, requires generally that the initiation, development and implementation states of a program be integrated. The most significant factor in program success seems to be the active, persistent, and continuing committed involvement of one individual or a small group of individuals, involved themselves in or deeply concerned with the practice of volunteer administration. Most of the successful programs have been initiated, developed, and implemented by such persons. In some cases, such persons have only been active in the initiation and development phases with implementation begun, and then subsequently carried out by someone else, but this is not common among successful programs. Most decisions not to implement programs after serious consideration have been made in institutions where such persons have not been involved. Our interviews indicate that the number of such persons is increasing, which augurs well for the future of the type of educational programs we are studying.

Several additional factors in turn explain the critical importance of active, committed, persistent practitioner involvement. First, from the perspective of the volunteerism field, there must be linkages from educational ideas and proposals developed by national organizations or national leaders to implementation at the local levels. Programs at specific institutions are often legitimated by local practitioner activists by referring to national developments—plans, books, articles, curricula, conferences, etc. This suggests the importance of the role of such national organizations and leaders in the continuing growth of voluntarism, and particularly in the growth of higher education programs in the field.

At the local level, volunteer administration professional groups (formal or informal) may often fall to act for a variety of reasons even having discussed their needs for higher educational programs in volunteer administration: lack of time, uncertainty as to how to act, insecurity in the fact of "the higher education establishment," discouragement at the failure of initial contacts, doubts as to the viability of such a program at a local college or university, inability to find someone on the "inside" of a local institution who really seems to care. For a practitioner to teach in a program himself or herself, an advanced degree or teaching credential may be required.

Considerable persistence and no little sophistication is needed in dealing with the bureaucratic procedures and internal politics in most colleges and universities. As most of our respondents stress, the many complexities of program development and implementation in higher education institutions are not readily apparent to "outsiders" (or even to many insiders), and are difficult to deal with. Much trial and error learning is usually required, and this takes the persistence we referred to earlier. Most college administrators and faculty members have only a rudimentary understanding of the field of volunteerism, if any, and lack of an awareness of its general

role in our society.

Higher education in volunteer administration has no immediately obvious "natural home" or power base in the institutional structure. (One of our respondents commented that it took her six months "to figure out who to deal with"). Few institutions, indeed virtually none, provide much in the way of "start up" program development expenses beyond in-kind contributions of administrator of faculty time and available space, classrooms or other facilities. In those rare instances where there have been development funds, they have come from outside grants, usually from a private foundation.

Beyond the crucial role of the key, persistent, practitioner-activist in bringing about most successful programs, our findings also suggest that successful programs are characterized by careful attention to the following factors:

(1) Become involved with an institution that is innovative, flexible (at least in some of its internal divisions) and willing to take some modest risks if they seem likely to have positive results in new and needed higher education programs.

(2) Develop very early an understanding of the institution's financial system, especially budgetary implications and accountability requirements. Virtually without exception, new programs are required to "pay for themselves" from tuition and fees from the very beginning (except when outside grant funds are available, and then the exception is only temporary—as long as the grant lasts.)

(3) Develop very early an understanding of the institution's policies and procedures governing program implementation and development. Learn the internal "ropes" and barriers, and how things have to be done if they are to be ultimately approved.

(4) Identify and work directly and continuously with whomever has the authority to approve programs of the sort you want, or, more usually, with someone in the institution who has the authority and personal interest to move them through the often complex internal approval structure. This is sometimes an administrator, sometimes a faculty member, sometimes someone who is both. Approval is facilitated if one works with an administrator who has the existing authority given his/her particular role and the nature of his/her unit in the larger institution, to approve and set up the program in the given unit with little or no clearance from other members of the higher administration. This situation is, however, rather rare. The best examples are perhaps Divisions of Continuing Education or the equivalent, which have a very broad existing mandate.

(5) Pay careful attention to the appropriate structural location of the program within the institution. There are variations among successful programs in this respect, though most tend to locate in the most innovative unit they can find on a particular campus. The most frequent locations of successful programs are in Continuing Education, Human/Public/Social/Community Services, or in Business/Management Schools or Divisions of the institution. However successful programs are found occasionally in other units (e.g., Rehabilitation).

(6) Deal with the program's implications for related departments, schools, and divisions of the institution, especially trying to counteract fears as to possible resource reallocation away from those bases/units to the new program, and corresponding fears of intrusion on their curriculum "domain." Timing is also important in this area. A volunteer administration program is more likely to be rejected when it is initiated at a time when related programs are being phased out (as

happened in one of our unsuccessful cases). It may be prudent to wait a year or two at such times in order to achieve ultimate success. Informal relations in maintaining continual interest and pressure are especially important here, as are efforts to integrate curricula and to include other units or faculty in the program where they push for it.

(7) Share experiences on a statewide or regional basis with others seeking to initiate, develop, or maintain higher education programs for volunteer administrators. The California Community Colleges example mentioned earlier indicates that some substantial leverage can be obtained through statewide higher education coordinating units, especially when they contain representatives of institutions as well as practitioners. Given the nationwide trend toward developing statewide and regional coordinating boards or agencies, this source of leverage should become increasingly significant in the future. These entities help to build a power base for volunteerism in their areas, and can develop coordinated action plans to deal with educational bureaucracies that are more effective than plans coming from a single source to a single institution.

(8) It is advantageous if the key practitioner-activist has his/her principal employment in the college or university, or can at least obtain "Adjunct" or similar faculty status (which usually is dependent on the academic degrees held by such a person, a Masters degree in something being almost mandatory). Such a person can, through long and intensive involvement within the Institution, more effectively understand internal processes (formal and informal, unwritten ones) and learn how to deal with them. Otherwise, the key person must be able to develop, or have already, a close relationship to a willing faculty member or administrator currently on the staff of the institution. One cannot change or fight the system regarding a new program without effective internal leverage.

(9) However, if the faculty member or administrator in the institution is not active and experienced in voluntary action leadership himself/herself, the chances of success are diminished when such persons are the initiators or internal collaborators. They are much less likely to have the emotional commitments and cognitive insights of voluntary sector activists, and much more likely to be conscious of more immediate priorities associated with clearer and faster payoffs (e.g., pay increments, tenure, promotion). We have a few cases in our sample where programs have been implemented by such "internal" people in response to outside requests from volunteer agency leaders. But more often than not, this approach leads to a rejection decision, to lack of persistent development follow-through in the first place, or to a program that, once started, fails for lack of sufficient relevance to practitioner needs.

(10) If a college is responding to outside requests and pressure mainly, then such pressure is likely to be most successful when backed by a powerful and prominent local voluntary action coordinating group (e.g., a local Voluntary Action Center, or a local council of leaders of volunteer programs or human service agencies). The availability of a convincing "market survey" or "needs identification survey" can help, as we shall note in a moment, but the key is the degree to which the institution can be convinced that there are a sufficient number of people who will definitely take the program if offered. The latter point was effectively dealt with by one group of practitioner-initiators by collecting firm commitments to pre-register in the program and then approaching the target institution for help in setting up the program they had in mind. In any case, where the real

"market" or "need" for the program is misjudged seriously by the practitioners, the program is likely to fall fairly quickly for lack of sufficient enrollment. Real and continuing demand for the program is absolutely necessary in the catchment area (territory served) by the program over time if the program is to be successful and endure.

(11) Do not assume that a needs identification survey or market survey will speak for itself to institution administrators. Such surveys, whether informal or formal (and our study showed both kinds are frequent), are typically made using mailing lists provided by local Voluntary Action Centers or other coordinating bodies for local volunteer program and agencies. They usually attempt to assess the content and skills needed by potential program participants, the degree of student demand, relations to career opportunities, desirable program format, and appropriate timing, location, fees and outcomes. But the key factor appears to be not the findings themselves, rather it is how these findings are interpreted and by whom. College and university administrators not involved in voluntary action leadership tend to interpret findings in terms of what they show about full-time, paid career opportunities for volunteer administrators. Needless to say, findings interpreted in such terms do not provide much of a basis for enthusiastic support of college credit programs for volunteer administrators. This leads us directly to our next point.

(12) Base your program, and interpret your "market survey," on a very broad definition of potential student clientele which includes not only paid staff, career-oriented coordinators or directors of volunteers, but also volunteer staff in similar roles, students wishing to enter the field as a career or as volunteers, current volunteers who would like to become leaders (coordinators, directors, etc.), human service professionals who work in agencies with volunteer programs, human service professionals who work with volunteers in community contexts, students in professional schools or divisions, grassroots activists, voluntary association leaders, and citizens interested in voluntarism generally. Few programs can be developed and sustained in the long run with a clientele defined solely as paid, career volunteer administrators. Other narrow definitions also lead to failure (e.g., members of boards of trustees/directors of voluntary organizations).

(13) The formation and use of an advisory board is not crucial to success, although a continuing involvement on some level with the local volunteer leadership community does seem to be quite important. Such advisory boards are used about half the time, but sometimes the education/training committee of the local Voluntary Action Center or some other existing body is used by the program as its advisory board informally. These advisory boards, of whatever kind, tend to be effective when: (a) the key educational program person(s) is/are heavily involved in the local volunteer community and active on and with the board; and (b) when the board is a genuine working board involved meaningfully In program development, publicizing the program to bring in participants, and working with the college personnel in an on-go1ng manner to evaluate and reshape the program from year to year in light of the feedback.

(14) Finally, our data indicate that one should get something small going well, if possible, and then expand that course or set of workshops into a full-fledged program. The "foot in the door" technique works as well in academia as anywhere else. Our survey shows that successful programs have developed from such varied bases as

convention "institutes," workshops, student internship (off-campus service) programs, single course offerings, and courses with volunteer administration components in various related departments. Such initial efforts have provided both curriculum foundations, interested faculty, and concrete evidence of the existence of a varied student clientele for expanded programs in volunteer administration. It is rare for whole programs to begin starting from "scratch," so to speak, without some prior base.

Program Content and Evaluation

Programs vary considerably in terms of the number of credit hours required, as mentioned earlier. They also vary moderately in the breadth of the subject matter content involved. The objectives of all programs center round improving the practical effectiveness of volunteerism, broadly defined Most emphasize both effective management of volunteer programs and either social services administration or social change through volunteerism, although programs differ with respect to the mix of these two thrusts. The critical determinant seems to be the personal philosophies of the Individuals running the programs.

Most programs are grounded in the notion that knowledge and skills are transferable among the various program areas of volunteer administration. Most respondents view management and human services as the core disciplines in their body of knowledge and skills. Most programs aim to raise students' awareness of the importance of volunteerism, and the self-images of volunteers and of volunteer administrators. The development of specific practical skills is viewed as fundamental in all programs. Our respondents report that experienced volunteer administrators show a consistently strong preference for skills-oriented content, especially when management-oriented (budgeting, use of time, fund-raising, mobilizing boards, recruiting volunteers, etc.). They wish to get "tools" with which to solve their day-to-day problems.

Several of our respondents insist, despite resistance from experienced students, that participants be exposed to conceptual material (e.g., management models and styles, community organization theory, group dynamics theory, political organization theory). Such respondents view the broadening of students' basic knowledge and understanding as a distinctive component of higher education programs. In pro-programs with a broad student clientele, more emphasis is placed on the nature of volunteerism its societal significance, and the nature of one's community. Respondents emphasize that for all students the subject matter content must be grounded in the realities of the particular local community.

With respect to learning methods, credit for work experience or for independent study is rare, except where the latter is the central learning mode of the program in a few instances. Some programs included a practicum, in most cases through a student volunteer program or internship placement. However, in almost all programs the emphasis is placed primarily on in-class work and learning. There, cognitive-rational content and its associated lecture approach is used in conjunction with experiential-skill practice content and its student participation approach. Most of our respondents indicate that they use, and that the students favor, such activities as problem solving, developing check-lists and manuals of practice, sharing practical problems and experiences, outside projects, agency visits, and other forms of skill-practice or experiential learning. The lecture approach seems to be used more with students new to volunteerism and who are in the early stages of their program.

Teaching is done almost entirely by full-time voluntary action practitioners or by college personnel who are very active in the volunteer community, except in the two rare instances of Master's Degree programs. In all the successful programs these teachers have a high degree of control over program content and learning methods. Most of the successful programs use a modular approach, with the larger programs containing modules covering a wide variety of topics. Many of our respondents indicate that participants tend to resist weekly two-to-three hour courses. We have some evidence that suggests such a format inhibits program growth. Almost all of our respondents indicate that subject matter content and learning methods must be geared to the types of students who enroll.

Most of our respondents feel that the material generally available in the volunteerism field is not adequate for course content development and for use in teaching their programs. The most widely used of existing source materials seem to be those developed by the University of Colorado at Boulder program, by NCVA, and by NICOV, along with books by Naylor, Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt, and Wilson.[5] Our teacher respondents rely quite heavily on material that they have developed in their own volunteer administration work and educational experience. There is a need for short, basic texts related to skill-practice for most of the content areas of teaching in this field.

Perhaps because most programs are quite new, rigorous and long-term program evaluation is very rare. Most programs are evaluated only crudely in the light of drop-out rates, enrollment trends, student evaluation feedback immediately after course completion, and general feedback from the local volunteer leadership community. Several programs have been substantially revised in the light of such information, especially more successful ones, but other programs change little as a result of such evaluation. Few data have been accumulated with respect to impact on subsequent job performance and employment opportunities. Only impressions and anecdotes are offered as evidence here.

Drop-out rates are low in successful programs but often hard to determine where the program is new and uses a modular approach not requiring completion of the program within any fixed time period. Respondents indicate that teacher performance is the most critical factor in explaining student satisfaction or drop-outs. Other important factors include failure of participants to be offered the specific skills they want, moving from the locality, leaving the volunteerism field, inability to adjust to a higher education learning context many years after leaving it, or personal tensions that develop in social change components of some programs.

Some Further Implications

While education in volunteer administration at the college level is quite new, much is happening. The field is expanding and is characterized by much change. It has not yet had a major impact in higher education, but the foundations are being laid. Much can be learned from this on-going series of developments, as we have tried to show in this article. No one approach can be characterized as optimal, and the diversity within the voluntary sector is reflected in program diversity within higher education institutions. Individual program success depends upon a careful meshing of clientele, program content, instructors, program administration, approaches to learning, and the presence of one or more key practitioner-activist able to integrate this package with the mission of a specific institution of higher education.

As a field in process, we expect great diversity to characterize higher education for volunteer administrators for a considerable time into the future. Overall development of the field needs to be monitored, and information shared at the national level. There is a need for more leadership (based on objective study and analysis of on-going experience) at the national level in generating guidelines and encouraging action at the community level. Ideas and activity need to be coordinated at state and regional levels as well, especially in helping to get programs developed and implemented, to facilitate collaboration among institutions (we have found examples of destructive competition among institutions in a locality), and to encourage movement of programs Into some universities once a solid base has been established in community or four-year colleges.

The higher education experience has general implications for the professionalization of the field of volunteer administration. It is clear form the history of professionalization in other field that this process is ultimately grounded in advances in higher education. Hence, the expansion of higher education programs for volunteer administrators augurs well for professionalization (in the sense of high competence and specialized knowledge and skills) in this field. Practitioners and activists have substantial control over setting up programs and teaching in them.

Yet there are some important complications. We are unable to justify a knowledge base currently adequate for a re relatively independent profession. Many educational programs are not oriented exclusively or even primarily to career-oriented volunteer administrators. To be successful, most programs must cater to a much broader clientele. However, this implies that such programs will be unable to satisfy the perceived needs of professionally oriented career volunteer administrators.

The experience of other occupational groups Indicates that professionalization is facilitated by locating educational programs in universities rather than in two-year institutions, and that the outcome should be a degree, preferably a higher degree. Our data indicate that such programs are unlikely to be widespread in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the best strategy for groups committed to a professionalization of volunteer administration as a career would appear to be to: (a) encourage regional institutions offering degrees through innovative delivery systems, including external degree programs, for experienced persons; and, (b) encourage universities in or near very large population centers to offer degree programs, especially at the Master's Degree level.

We are troubled by the weakness of the knowledge base underlying educational programs in volunteer administration. In particular, while management and human service administration are widely viewed as the core disciplines involved in program content, there exists very little scientific knowledge about volunteer program management either in terms of theory or empirical research. The great bulk of what is taught in the programs we have considered is either based on accumulated practical experience whose transferability to other contexts by other persons is untested, or else on the adaptation of accumulated knowledge and principles from other areas of management and administration without validation in the volunteer administration context.

Universities with advanced educational research programs should assume a much greater role in conducting and stimulating research into volunteer administration. At present, this is a sadly missing component in the total American

educational enterprise.
Thirty years ago, in the face of the inadequacy of the knowledge base underlying university education in business administration and management, two national studies were conducted. These led to the transformation of that knowledge base and of higher education in business management itself. It may well be time for a similar move to advance higher education for volunteer administration.

Finally, we need substantial research into the nature of training and education for volunteer administration itself. There is too little systematic sharing of on-going experience, and a dearth of careful empirical and comparative studies, Also recommendations and proposals for educational programs in this field are generated usually without adequate understanding of actual program experience elsewhere. It would be useful to have carefully developed, widely disseminated case studies of present and past higher-educational programs in volunteer administration. Our own pilot study is not substitute for the latter. And given that the higher education situation is changing in America so rapidly, an extensively, well-funded, comparative research study of higher education for volunteer administration would be very valuable if conducted over a several year period beginning in a year or two.

Notes

[1] These are reviewed in David Horton Smith's, "Research, " Voluntary Action Leadership, Spring-Summer, 1976, pp. 12-15.

[2] National Information Center on Volunteerism, "Educational Opportunities for Volunteer Leaders, " Voluntary Action Leadership. Spring-Summer, 1976, pp. 23-25.

[3] California Community Colleges, Volunteer Program Management: A Suggested Community College Curriculum, Sacramento, Chancellor's Office, 1974.

[4] This study does not cover, either, those institutions which offer various courses in one or more departments or professional schools that include material on some aspects of voluntary action. Such courses in community organization, voluntary associations, interest groups, etc. are quite numerous but do not constitute volunteer administration programs in the sense we have defined them.

[5] Harriet Naylor, Volunteers Today: Ending, Training and Working With Them, New York, Dryden, 1973; Eva Schindler-Rainman and Ronald Lippitt, The Volunteer Community: Creative Use of Human Resources, Washington, D.C., Center for a Voluntary Society, 1971; Marlene Wilson, The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs, Boulder, Volunteer Management Associates, 1976.

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Continuing Professional Education for Volunteer Administrators

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(Editor-generated) Abstract

The author proposes that alternatives for the preparation and education of volunteer administrators is critically important to meet the demands for competent volunteer administrators. He identifies three reasons why the demand for trained volunteer administrators outpaces the supply of such individuals: 1) preservice programs that are either decreasing, not readily accessible, or non-existent; 2) the lack of educational resources within volunteer-based programs; and 3) the complex and broad-reaching nature of the work itself. He discusses six attributes of any profession, argues that volunteer administration has evolved into a "professionalizing vocation", and as such, discusses the need for consistent continuing professional education for volunteer administrators.

(Editor-generated) Key Words:
volunteer administration, volunteer administrators, professional development, professionalism, profession

Introduction

The need for competent, professional volunteer administrators is increasing; however, the supply of trained volunteer administrators is critically less than the demand.

Basically, there are three reasons for this shortage.

The first reason is that preservice educational programs are either decreasing, not readily accessible, or non-existent. For example, many local Voluntary Action Centers, which traditionally provided learning experiences, are not being refunded. Professional courses for volunteer administrators are not locally accessible. Relevant college courses and local workshops are available in many communities, but they are not organized as an intensive learning program to meet the specific needs of volunteer administrators on a continuing basis. Thus, it is difficult for organizations to hire volunteer administrators who are already professionally educated.

A second reason for the shortage of trained volunteer administrators is due to the lack of educational resources within organizations. The responsibility for volunteer administration is either added to an existing staff member's job or someone with or without prior experience is either hired or promoted. However, there usually is not another volunteer administrator within the organization to serve as a mentor or peer consultant. Also, because of the complexity of the job, the volunteer administrator's supervisor is limited in his or her ability to provide guidance and development. Therefore, "on-the-job" training is often reduced to "sink or swim" training.

A third reason for the shortage of competent volunteer administrators is related to the nature of the work itself. The volunteer administrator is responsible for making the volunteers' experiences

rewarding as well as enhancing their productivity. In addition to all the human relation skills that this implies, additional responsibilities include the work of personnel director, trainer, public relations specialist, supervisor, etc. In addition to encompassing a wide variety of administrative responsibilities, literally hundreds of volunteers may be reporting to one volunteer administrator. As a result of this complexity, the job cannot easily be fragmented and assigned to several people. Since many organizations are attempting to economize, they often do not assign a person specifically to volunteer administration. Thus, a complex job is assigned as second duty to someone who already has a job to perform.

For these three reasons, the supply of competent volunteer administrators has not kept up with the increasing demand. Assuming that volunteer administrators are an essential factor contributing to successful volunteer programs, their preparation and education becomes critically important. In this paper, the nature of continuing professional education for volunteer administrators will be examined. Based upon this analysis, a model will be presented for continuing professional education.

The Professionalization of Volunteer Administrators

As it has already been stated, most volunteer administrators learn their job after being assigned to the job. This is not unlike some other professions, such as adult education. Michael Cook (1980) connects the idea that since the average adult spends more time in development on the job than anything else, a major part of self-development is actually job-development or professional development. Since jobs are rapidly changing, it is essential to engage in lifelong professional development.

At first, it may appear contradictory that the word "professional" would be associated with "volunteerism." The volunteer field is characterized by its dynamic and innovative qualities. John McKnight (1979) critically examines the nature of professionalism and concludes that it is inherently disabling. Douglas Groseclose (1981) critiques certification, which is a close corollary of professionalism. He concludes that professionals are capable of demonstrating self-development without peer review. Consistent with his view, certification is not only unimportant but restrictive and counterproductive. Yet these critics are referring more to the abuse of power than to the value of professionalism. If professionalism is viewed as developmental or, more specifically, as continuing learning, then the concept of professionalism can be associated with volunteerism.

The static concept of a "professional" can easily be criticized. First, it is difficult to define. Second, few people agree on current definitions. The contemporary view of what we think of as "the professions" is that they are professionalizing vocations. Of course, some vocations are much more advanced than others. But the key to this concept is that vocations are professionalizing.

Several leaders in the field argue that volunteer administration is professionalizing. Mildred Katz (1976) defines it as "the process which gives us (the practitioners), competence, creativity, commitment, and credibility." From this perspective, professionalization is a developmental rather than a static model to which members must rigidly adhere. It becomes apparent that continuing learning is a central theme of credentialing.

To determine if volunteer administration is professionalizing, we can compare it to the criteria for professionalizing vocations and discover how close it fits. June Gallessich (1982)

presents six factors in the identification of a "profession";

1. Full Time. Of course, some volunteer administrators are volunteers themselves. But the key to this concept is that people do work full time at volunteer administration whether paid or not. The practice is not dependent on any other profession. It does have its own uniqueness.

2. A Calling. Certainly, many people who practice volunteer administration use it as a stepping stone to other careers. However, there are a significant number of practitioners who view it as a career. It does have subcultural characteristics of its own including language, practices, theories and associations.

3. Organizations. Volunteer administrators are organized at local, state and national levels. There are perhaps a dozen national organizations that are devoted to the professionalization of volunteer administration.

4. Education. Volunteer administration does have its own courses and texts. However, it relies on the adaptation of coursework in other fields such as marketing, adult education, public administration, etc. In addition, specialized education is also
guided by the professional associations.

5. Service Orientation. Volunteer administrators serve two major groups of people. First, they serve a primary client group who are generally people with survival or transitional problems (at least, in human service agency volunteer programs). Secondly, they serve the volunteers. The unique way in which these two groups are matched to meet each others needs is the major technological process of volunteer administration. The field has developed a code of ethics and standards of good practice to safeguard the rights of both of these groups.

6. Autonomy. Ultimately, the goal of all professions is to develop uniqueness, independence and the prestige that goes with it. On this factor, volunteer administration is not well developed. However, a tremendous amount of activity is invested in this area, but volunteer administrators have not received the status, recognition and social rewards they so deserve. On the basis of these six factors, it can be concluded that volunteer administration is a professionalizing vocation. It is developing in all of these areas. The major problem is that most of the people who are practitioners in this field are not yet promoting these ideas on a large scale. This is one reason why "CPE"—continuing professional education—is receiving attention today.

The Goals of CPE for Volunteer Administrators

If the vocation itself is developing, so must each member of the profession be developing. A very useful concept of career development is provided by Dalton, Thompson and Price (1977). There are four stages of professional careers according to this theory. The value of this theory is that it enables each member of a profession to determine professional development goals that are appropriate to his or her level of development. With this information, volunteer administrators can better understand their relationship to other members of the profession, and profit from that relationship.

Stage I is Apprentice. At this stage, the volunteer administrator is primarily engaged in helping, learning and following directions. The major psychological issue is dependence. The implication is that at this stage, the volunteer administrator should strive to overcome dependence by mastering the rudiments of the field.

Stage II is Colleague. At this stage, the volunteer administrator is primarily engaged in being an independent contributor. The

psychological state is independence. The implication of this stage is that members need to share their competencies through networking.

Stage III is Mentor. At this stage, the volunteer administrator is primarily engaged in training and interfacing. The psychological state is assuming responsibility for others.
The implication is that mentors need to teach others what they have learned through experiential training.

Stage IV is Sponsor. At this stage, the volunteer administrator is primarily engaged in shaping the direction of the organization. The psychological state is exercising power. The implication is that a volunteer administrator at this stage is creating opportunities for other volunteer administrators. This model of career development is compatible with the notion that the role of volunteer administrator is changing. Sarah Jane Rehnborg (1979), a past president of the Association for Volunteer administration (AVA), views the role of volunteer administrator as a continually expanding role. In addition, preparation and entry into the field is very diversified. From her perspective, a central issue for leadership in the field is how to prepare people with diverse backgrounds and skills for a position with a wide range of responsibilities, while maintaining flexibility and the innovative spirit. Based on her assessment of the problem, competency-based education appears to be the preferred methodology, leading to the next question of what competencies are required.

Harriet Naylor (1975), a leader in the field of volunteer administration, agrees with this view. In her analysis of the educational needs of volunteer administrators, she concludes that it is essential to develop continuing education in which "learning opportunities must be created by the learner and the training resources most conveniently available."

George Krebs (1981), an educator, observes from his own continuing education program for volunteer administrators that the participants' motivation to learn and their resourcefulness to each other were two very important strengths of his training programs. The implication is that active participation and experiences as a resource for learning are two important ingredients of CPE for volunteer administrators.

There is no clearly defined set of professional development goals for volunteer administrators. However, there are common standards that apply to most volunteer administrators. The Association of Volunteer Bureaus published a book titled "Standards and Guidelines for the Field of Volunteerism." These standards for volunteer programs can easily be converted into personal professional development goals, or competencies, and would be most important at the Apprentice stage of development (Table 1).

Table 1. A Model for the Goals of Continuing Professional Education for Volunteer Administrators
The following phases can be converted into learning goals by preceding them with "to learn". Competency statements can be created by preceding them with "I can ---," and using the model as a checklist. The ethical statements can be sued as learning objectives by inquiring what each volunteer administrator personally is doing to maintain each principle.

I. Apprentice Stage (Mastering Fundamentals)	**II. Colleague Stage (Organizing Networks)**
Resource information Record keeping Job descriptions Recruitment Interviewing Selection & placement Follow-up Preparation: orientation & training Supervision Evaluation Motivation Career development	Defining the function Mastering the rudiments Using theory Knowing the knowledge base Studying other topics Teaching others Testing & credentialing competencies Creating a subculture Gaining legal support Educating the public Creating a code of ethics Censuring incompetence Networking with related fields Defining relations with volunteers and clients
III. Mentor Stage (Experiential Training)	**IV. Sponsor Stage (Creating Opportunities)**
Philosophy of Volunteerism Human dignity Self determination Privacy Staff relations Social responsibility Professional responsibility	Organization framework Staff (paid & unpaid) Facilities Financial management

In an excellent summary of the literature on continuing professional education, Cyril O. Houle (1980) identifies fourteen goals. Assuming that volunteer administration is a professionalizing vocation, most of these goals are very appropriate for the Colleague stage. This is not to imply that an Apprentice should not strive toward these goals. It is meant that an Apprentice is more likely to engage in learning the rudiments while a Colleague is more likely to engage in activity with other volunteer administrators to promote the field of volunteer administration.

This stage of development is critically important for the development of networks and professional associations. By definition, a network is a group of people with a common interest or identity who share resources. Since a volunteer administrator must go outside of her organization to learn the job, networks are important. This idea of continuing professional education through networks fits with Leonard Nadler's scheme of human resource development (1979). Although the learners are grouped in a professional association which is outside the boundary of their organizations (non-employee development), it can have a significant impact on their job. The AVA Affiliate group is an example of such a learning network, which helps assess the learning needs of its members, increases awareness of learning resources available to members, fosters skill and career development, and provides a format for shaping the field.

An example of a less formal group is a DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in Agencies). The flourishing DOVIA movement is based on local networks in which volunteer administrators occasionally meet together to share achievements and problems. The members provide each other with social support. In the truest sense of volunteerism, these groups help their members, their organizations and their community.

If the Colleague stage is most important for developing a network, the Mentor stage is most important for teaching members the wisdom and moral values of the profession.

In addition to being able to teach others the goals of the previous stages, Mentors should also be able to express a code of ethics. Ultimately, each person develops her or his own ethical code, but there are fundamental ethics for volunteer administrators. The code of ethics developed by AVA is reflected in the Model shown here.

The Learning Process

Since a Mentor helps people learn through experience, it would be helpful to re-examine the learning process. David Kolb's theory of experiential learning (1979) is particularly helpful because it also offers suggestions on how to guide it.

Kolb views learning essentially as a problem solving process. The process moves cyclically through four phases. The first phase is concrete experience, which could be past or present, on-the-job or in the classroom. In the second phase, reflective observations are made about that experience. These observations can be made by the learner or by someone else, such as a Mentor. From these observations, patterns can be identified. The third phase is abstract conceptualization. Theories can be developed to explain the pattern of personal observations, or the theoretical knowledge of the field can be used to explain it. The fourth phase is active experimentation. Implications of the theory can be applied and tested to determine the validity of the theory. Finally, the cycle repeats itself, moving in greater depth or in a different direction.

This theory combines inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. It draws upon personal knowledge as well as authority and tradition as legitimate sources of knowledge. In addition to drawing upon several sources of knowledge, the theory has other advantages. It has the potential for helping people learn how they learn and how they teach. The value and potential of these concepts is explored in detail by Robert Smith (1982). Not only would professionals engage in continuing education, but they would have the potential for becoming more effective and efficient learners.

In relation to training, the Mentor is

first responsible for establishing a purpose for training and a climate of trust. Second, using Kolb's theory as a guide, the Mentor can help an Apprentice to recall prior experiences or make observations relative to the purpose. Questionnaires, tests, surveys or the Socratic method could be used either individually or in groups. At this point, understanding can be enhanced by discovering and discussing relationships among these observations. Also, theory from the Mentor's experience or from the profession can also be introduced to explain the observations. Fourth, implications of the theory can be derived for applications to the job. This test should demonstrate the usefulness of the theory. Finally, after completing the training cycle, it can also be evaluated to determine the quality of the learning and the training. Thus, there are experiential models available to help Mentors teach what they know about volunteer administration.

A Strategy for CPE for Volunteer Administrators

The key to any professional development strategy is that it is planned. Houle (1980) notes a significant weakness in the process of development as it is traditionally practices. He distinguishes between continuous and discontinuous learning. By continuous, he refers to the occasional workshops or unplanned reading and study engaged in by professionals. By continuous, he refers to a lifelong learning plan that has at least the fourteen goals he identified. These goals include shaping the field, becoming more assertive lifelong learners and developing a personal ethic to guide practice as well as keeping up with new knowledge and techniques in the profession. The implication is that the profession can provide guidance, but the professional must be assertive and innovative through continuing self-development Thus, a synergistic relationship exists between a professional association or network and its members.

A strategy that is well suited for volunteer administrators is self-directed learning. It is a strategy that uses natural learning resources such as experience, networks and mentors. In addition, it is a learning process that is managed by the volunteer administrator. Adapted from the adult education model presented by Malcolm Knowles (1978), it has five steps. These steps are described in terms of what each volunteer administrator should do.

Step 1 – Diagnosis

The first step in self-directed learning is a diagnosis of personal learning needs relative to the self-development goals for volunteer administrators. A learning need is a gap between your present level of competence and your desired level of competence for each goal.

For each goal, brainstorm your present strengths and weaknesses. An alternative is to rate your level of competence for each goal. You will naturally discover you do have strengths as well as weaknesses. The key is to validate and reinforce your strengths, which eliminating or over-coming your weaknesses.

Because these are self-assessments, keep in mind that you may be overrating or underrating yourself. Compensate for this source of error by using the wisdom of a Colleague, Mentor, or Sponsor. Be prepared to explain or present evidence to validate your assessment wherever you identify great strengths or great weaknesses.

Another source of error in this self-assessment is in the model itself. The four sets of standards may be inaccurate or ignore important points. Use your learning resource person to discuss additional learning goals. A third source of error is

that these learning goals may not reflect important strengths and weaknesses that you are aware of. Make notes on these items and include them in your assessment.

Step 2 – Objectives

After diagnosing your learning needs, you are ready to state your learning objectives. These objectives are statements of what you want to learn. Make each objective relevant for you by writing a list of questions that you want answered to help you achieve the objective.

These questions should be derived directly form you diagnosis in Step 1. When writing these questions, use terms that are meaningful for you. State the knowledge, skills and/or attitudes that you want to learn. These questions will then be used to guide your learning through interviews with a Colleague, Mentor or Sponsor.

Step 3 – Strategy

Your purpose is to achieve the learning objectives in Step 2. There is a wide range of resources available to help you achieve these objectives. Reflecting on your experience and applying concepts that you read are two important strategies. However, learning does not take place in a vacuum. It generally occurs in a relationship. Seek out a relationship that will be beneficial to both yourself and the resource person. Depending on your level of career development, it could be an Apprentice, Colleague, Mentor Sponsor or a network. In this field, you should not experience much difficulty finding someone to help you learn voluntarily.

The key to learning in this relationship is assertiveness in giving and receiving feedback. Firs, actively solicit feedback from your resource person. The objectives that you developed will help you to explore areas that are unknown to you. Also, your resource person cannot be very helpful to you unless you ask for what you want and you must freely disclose information that you already know. Unless your resource person understands where you are in your own development or is sensitive to your work situation, he/she will not be relevant to you. It is important that you let your resource person learn about you.

Having assessed your present levels of competence in Step 1, you have probably noticed that you learned something from that experience alone! Thus, you are a learning resource to yourself. Although this is helpful in achieving your learning objectives, this kind of private learning does not necessarily help you to apply it in your organizational setting nor to a future job. These are two more reasons for seeking out a resource person.

Having identified your learning objectives, discuss them with your Mentor. Depending on the amount of time available and the depth and breadth of your learning objectives, schedule a meeting or a series of meetings. To maximize the learning benefits of these meetings, use the following guidelines.

Establish a learning climate before discussing your learning objectives. Engage in personal, informal conversation or discuss your Mentor's thoughts and feeling about the project. Another way to set the climate is to determine the amount of time available for the meeting, the purpose of the meeting and how to set aside distractions such as the phone or visitors. Also encourage frankness and openness. After establishing a climate, share your strengths and weaknesses to give your Mentor a sense of your present level of competence. Your Mentor may have questions or comments on the justifications of your self-ratings. Be prepared to share.

The third phase of the interview is to discuss your learning objectives. As you describe what you want to learn, take notes on the key points that your Mentor makes.

Find out how these competencies are actually practiced in organizations and how important they are. The notes should be brief and answer your questions identified in Step 2. Together with your personal knowledge, most of your questions should be answered. Summarize these key concepts. The questions that have not been answered can be tabled for further research on skill development in your continuing education plan.

The fourth phase of these interviews with your Mentor is to discuss strategies in which you can develop these competencies. Because learning is a continuous process, this is a critically important part of this project. Before this project, you will have already learned parts of these competencies and after the project, you will continue to develop them. The key concept here is that awareness precedes action. The more concise your awareness of the competencies you are studying, the more precise your actions will be.
Therefore, be sure to learn from your Mentor what you can do to develop these competencies within your organization.

The fifth phase is closure. When the interview is completed, briefly summarize the key concepts that you learned. Conclude the meeting with an expression of gratitude.

Step 4 - Report

Think about what you have learned about your learning objectives. Perhaps you became more sensitive, more knowledgeable or perhaps you did something that you haven't done before. This is the topic for your final report.

It must be emphasized that writing reports is an essential competency. However, aside from this practical consideration, it is an important learning resource. If you know something, you are able to express it. If you can't express it, you don't know it. Therefore, by articulating what you have learned, you and others can evaluate what you have learned.

Similarly, if you have learned skills, you should be able to demonstrate them. Therefore, be prepared to provide some evidence of the skill, i.e., develop a flyer, a PSA, a plan, etc.

It is very probable that you learned many things that were not specified in your objectives. Perhaps the most important thing you learned was discovering what you need to know. Regardless of what you learned and how much you learned, some things were more important to you than other things. Therefore, because this report should be brief and concise, report on your major learnings.

To summarize the format for this report, the beginning should state what you wanted to learn. The middle should state what you learned that was most meaningful to you. If it was a skill, describe what you learned about the skill as well as what you did. The end should describe what you intend to do to continue your learning.

Step 5 - Evaluation

The purpose of the self-directed learning project is to facilitate your development of volunteer administration competence. These five steps should be applied to each competency. There are two persons who are best suited to assess the extent to which this purpose has been achieved: yourself and your Mentor (or Colleague, Sponsor, etc.).

Your report is a summation of what you learned. However, to evaluate it, it must be compared to something. The basis for the evaluation is the learning goal or learning objective that the self-directed learning project was designed to meet. Therefore, both your Mentor and yourself should rate the extent to which you achieved the purpose of your project. By comparing evaluations, you can be more confident in how realistic your progress has been.

In addition to providing a basis for evaluation, the report serves you as a statement of what you will do in the future to continue your learning. In essence, this is a more accurate description of self-directed learning.

A final word on self-directed learning. Documentation is an essential skill and a portfolio is the best device for documenting your learning and achievements. A portfolio is a collection of reference papers, reports, notes, letters of evaluation and printed evidence of projects you have developed. In order to be useful, this material should be well organized, concise and brief.

Summary

To summarize, it is proposed in this paper that alternatives for the preparation and education of volunteer administrators is critically important to meet the demand for competent volunteer administrators. Considering that volunteer administration is a professionalizing vocation, a professional association or network is an important element in the delivery of continuing professional education. Through this network, individual goals for each professional's education can be planned, and resources for meeting these goals can be provided. Finally, a self-directed learning plan is an effective strategy for maintaining continuity, self-development and on-the-job relevance.

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Practical Volunteer Administrator Professional Development Strategies

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(Editor-generated) Abstract

The author argues that the world in which volunteer administrators operate is demanding more and more sophisticated leadership and management to keep volunteer based organizations healthy. He suggests that by improving individual understanding of personal professional development as volunteer administrators, a foundation can be laid for leading others in their professional development planning. The process he suggests is designed to help volunteer administrators: 1) identify and define the components of professional development relevant to them; 2) communicate the role of each component to others; and 3) design and lead the design of professional development for themselves and others.

(Editor-generated) Key Words:
professional development, personal development, leadership, management, issues, trends

Introduction

By improving individual understanding of personal professional development as volunteer administrators, a foundation can be laid for leading others in their professional development planning. Expertise must be created in order to build quality practical models to be shared more widely. Leaders of volunteer administrators are challenged to build personally to act locally to impact globally!

Building on volunteer administration's traditions in direct service functions, additional administrative training is crucial to meeting the challenges of an increasingly complex management environment. The days of providing leadership and making decisions based on past experience alone are gone. The world in which administrators operate is demanding more and more sophisticated leadership and management to keep volunteer based organizations healthy. It is time to develop an active personal approach to professional development and the ability to lead others in their own professional development. It may be among the most important things volunteer-based organization leaders can do for the future.

This paper presents a simple and practical process that is intended to take the reader through a personal analytical experience to establish a professional development plan. The primary audience includes heads of organizations who provide leadership to volunteer administrators. It should also be useful as a planning guide to volunteer administrators themselves. An improved understanding of the process, an awareness of the current issues, and a focus on planning should help administrators who must lead others in establishing professional development plans. The process is designed to help volunteer administrators: 1) identify and define the components of professional development relevant to them; 2) communicate the role of each component to others; and 3) design and lead the design of professional development for themselves and others.

This will be accomplished through a

combination of information presentation and analytical exercises on historical perspectives, relevant issues and trends, curricular and co-curricular components, and potential training alternatives.

Historical Perspectives

To establish an understanding of current professional development practices in volunteer administration, it is useful to develop some insight into its history. It is important to know who the first volunteer administrators were and where they developed their skills. The history of organized volunteer activities in this country shows that the leaders were most often selected from within the volunteer group itself. Special skills and expertise came mainly from the experience of doing the particular work. There were no specific administrative preparation opportunities. Early volunteer administrators included militia captains, fire chiefs, and wagonmasters.

The early leaders of efforts to formalize the work of volunteer administration were those organizations that involved the most volunteers. At some point the amount of administrative functions grew to where some assigned time had to be given to those growing responsibilities. When such assignments were made, the first formally-recognized volunteer administrators were created. Hospitals, youth organizations, and community recreation programs were among the first to take this evolutionary step when they created positions called Directors of Volunteers and Volunteer Supervisors. These were among the first professionals in the field and set the stage for both paid and unpaid staff being assigned the' official responsibilities to administer the work of volunteers (Ellis & Noyes, 1990).

Although efforts to organize the work of volunteer administration are important steps toward professionalization, there is still much to be done before it can be called a formal profession. It is useful to consider the generally-accepted attributes of a profession and determine how volunteer administration compares. Greenwood's (1957) early studies of the social work field present a list of the attributes of a profession that is still useful: systematic body of knowledge and theory, professional authority, sanction of the community, regulative code of ethics, and professional culture. A quick review of this list illustrates that volunteer administration, in some settings and with some organizations, may have nearly all of these attributes. However, these are not universally identifiable with the work and its practitioners. Further efforts will likely pay the most dividends if they are focused on contributing to the body of knowledge in volunteer administration, and on understanding and applying the knowledge base. Then will come the identification of the profession (Wilensky, 1964, p. 138).

A review of the professional organizations emerging in the field shows that support for a wide range of professional development activities is being established. The Association for Volunteer Administration has led the movement since 1960 and set the stage for efforts geared toward professionalism. A number of other organizations have been established to focus on a range of aspects of the work of administering volunteer-based programs. The Independent Sector was established in 1980 to connect major, national voluntary, non-profit, youth and human service organizations and private foundations. VOLUNTEER: The National Center was created in 1984 (it has now merged into the Points of Light Foundation) to mobilize for support to volunteerism. These and others offer opportunities for professional development, research, advocacy, and other

important needs of a profession. Although this is by no means an inclusive list of related professional organizations, it does illustrate the history of such efforts and the demonstrated interest and support for volunteer administrators working in the field (Ellis & Noyes, 1990).

There are a number of important challenges to professionalization that must be considered as we move ahead with efforts to further refine our practice. The relative youth of the knowledge base is a problem that can only be addressed by continuing a concerted effort to study volunteer administration and build understanding and a strong conceptual framework. There are some real elements of resistance to such efforts. There is an historic and somewhat natural tension between professional practice in the field and higher education. Experienced professionals in a young profession naturally resist the attempts to move their discipline into the academy. They often believe that experience is the only teacher. Higher education must deal with this to do a credible job of study in the field. This situation also makes it difficult to have campus-based theoretical findings applied in the field.

There is also a natural pulling between the expectations of practice in direct service positions and administrative positions. It is likely that those moving into administrative positions have little or no formal training in this arena. It is more likely that they will have training and
experience in the direct service work of the organization. This is a challenge for those providing administrative training and a point of concern for those impacted by untrained practitioners. As the knowledge base expands and training opportunities become more readily available, there is a need for flexibility and balance in program design and content.

A case can be made for study in several disciplines within the academy today. The work of volunteer administration crosses many academic disciplines. Academic programs need to take this into consideration, along with the individual needs of the learners and their work settings. An improved understanding of the historical perspectives helps planning for the future. It becomes increasingly important to an emerging profession that professionalization through the developing body of knowledge and professional preparation programs does not ignore or limit the history, social impact and activism, open and broad community perspective, and caring attitudes valued by volunteer-based programs (Silin, 1985).

Issues and Trends

Future volunteer administrators may be best described as "Community Resource Developers"—people skilled at identifying human needs within the community and organizing resources to address these problems. Less concern will be given only to the volunteer aspect and more attention to bringing all necessary and available resources to bear on the need. Administrative skills will be called upon to create, as well as manage, the responses to the needs. This projected trend illustrates the growing demand for new elements and approaches to preparing administrators to lead important community-based programs.

The focus of this section is on identifying a list of issues and trends that will impact volunteer administration. The following questions can be used to increase awareness of the issues and serve as a basis for a critical analysis of the potential trends. Such an exercise can provide personal insight to areas of needed professional development. (The sample responses may be useful in the process.)

What societal issues are impacting the need for professional development?
Litigation; Child care; Family structure; Changing work place; Government services; Homelessness; Child abuse; Health risks; Changing demographics; Specialization; Profit organization services; Less community concern

What organizational issues are impacting the need for professional development?
Competition and duplication; Tax laws; Health insurance; Fair Labor Standards; Volunteers as a budget item; Employee benefits

What administrative issues are impacting the need for professional development?
Volunteer/staff relations; Training; Screening and selection; Risk management; Computer management; Reduced budgets; Cutback management

What volunteer issues are impacting the need for professional development?
Leadership; Effectiveness; Training; Evaluation

Curricular Components

It is important to have a strategic plan for professional development because there are limited resources and time to engage training. There is a need for a balanced curriculum which includes human growth and development, leadership development, and management training (Jachowicz & Long, 1991). Across these curricular components, a list of administrative competencies and qualities needs to be established and accepted in order to develop useful plans. The Association for Volunteer Administration's "Summary of Competency Statements" could serve as a useful guide in developing the list. An acceptable list of administrative competencies could include the following categories, taken from the American Humanics Competency Outline (Jachowicz & Long, 1991): leadership, planning, recruiting, motivating, program development, funding development, public relations, management, personnel management, training, evaluation, financial administration, and marketing. The following five discussion questions are designed as a guide for the process of refining individual lists:

1. Which competencies are usually the strongest and weakest for volunteer administration?
2. Which competencies are best developed in class?
3. Which competencies are best developed in experience?
4. Which competencies are best developed in a combination of the two?
5. What foundation experiences are most useful to volunteer administration?

A thorough analysis of an individual list and answers to these questions will serve as useful preparation for professional development planning. Either rank ordering or identifying key points is the best way to select the individual curriculum components to be pursued. Figure 1 is a "Professional Development Plan Design" sheet that may be useful in the planning process.

Co-Curricular Components and Training Sources

Building from the listing of qualities and competencies needed in a curriculum, it is important to identify a list of developmental experiences that may be accessed for training. There is a wide range of possible educational formats and approaches to be considered in designing professional development plans. Creativity in locating existing opportunities or establishing new ones is essential.

*Figure 1.*Professional Development Plan Design

What personal "qualities" are essential to your success as a volunteer administrator?

What professional "competencies" are essential to your success as a volunteer administrator?

List the qualities and competencies that you would like to address in your professional development plan:

List the subject areas that you would include in your plan and potential sources for each auricular and co-curricular area. Separate the areas into two categories:

REQUIRED (or absolutely necessary to your continued success):

SUBJECT:	SOURCES:
_____	_____
_____	_____

ELECTIVE (or not necessary but useful to your professional development):

SUBJECT:	SOURCES:
_____	_____
_____	_____

Look to the institutions of higher education in a local area for professional development, extramural courses, continuing education, and guided individual study (correspondence courses). Investigate the wide range of professional associations and organizations providing related training programs. Work within the local cohort group of related organizations to examine opportunities for collaborative training. There may be interest in cooperative training and resource sharing programs.

Consider organizing "cross-training" programs that could broaden the experience base among similar organizations and serve as a valuable training vehicle. In such a program, people could be traded among organizations for specific projects, expertise, and time frames to accomplish a task and gain targeted experiences. Focusing on the internal opportunities within a given organization will likely find similar cross training options within and among positions. Special training programs can be organized around staff retreats, workshops, and seminars. Always consider sharing expertise among the staff of the organization where the costs are less and the rewards can be great.

A special internship program could be organized to focus on a very specific individual training need and the work could benefit the organization. The resource and expertise could be targeted and the experience negotiated around a formal agreement.

Finally, the individual should be empowered to organize personal professional development opportunities. From direct volunteer experiences with targeted administrative assignments to service on a local board of directors, there is tremendous potential to engage field work for training. A creative approach to organizing a personal mentorship with someone identified as having the desired expertise can be easily negotiated and yield tremendous benefits to the individuals and the organizations involved. The whole idea of self-directed learning is at the historic roots of volunteer administration and may still be the best method of getting exactly what is desired out of a professional development experience.

Conclusion

Engage all those possibly connected with the design of professional development programs. Help them assess the issues and work through the following strategic planning steps: 1) Build a list of desired qualities and competencies; 2) Match the list with training opportunities; 3) Lead the development of personal design strategies; 4) Help build a personal rationale for the plan; and 5) Revisit/rethink decisions regularly.

Take the time to establish individual plans in order to lead others in doing the same. More active planning of professional development efforts will improve professional practice while contributing to the professionalism of volunteer administration. It is important to build personally to act locally to impact globally!

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Moving Beyond the Volunteer Management System

Mary V. Merrill

Abstract

Researchers and practitioners have long recognized that volunteer managers deal with diverse managerial responsibilities, and for many years they have tried to make a simple itemization of the functions that are required to manage volunteer programs. This systems approach has led to a reliance on skills-based, effective, universal volunteer managers by means of a professional credential that commands solid value and respect from employers, staff, volunteers, clients/consumers, and peers.

(Editor-generated) Key Words:
volunteer management, systems, skills-based models, core concepts, profession

Picture yourself standing in front of a large poster board with a packet of Post-it® Notes in one hand and a pen in the other hand. You are a volunteer manager. Your task is to identify all of the tasks you perform in your job. Write each task on a Post-it® Note and stick it to the poster board in front of you. I will assume that you will begin to list tasks such as: answer inquiries, interview potential volunteers, return phone calls, develop orientation and training materials, write volunteer job descriptions, check on references, conduct training, identify volunteer opportunities, train staff about volunteers, manage volunteers, plan national volunteer recognition week, write thank you notes to volunteers, schedule volunteers, produce a volunteer newsletter, evaluate volunteers, etc. *etc.* etc. You will easily have 20 to 30 Post-it® Notes on your poster board. When viewed as a set of unrelated tasks, managing volunteers seems overwhelming. If however, we take the Post-it® Notes and group them into related activities we begin to develop a pattern or plan for the work. Communication tasks might include phone calls, letter writing, interviewing, newsletters, and evaluations. Arranging the parts into organized components is a systems approach to volunteer management. A system "is an organized, integrated whole made up of diverse but interrelated and interdependent parts" (Webster, 1996).

Researchers and practitioners have long recognized that volunteer managers deal with diverse managerial responsibilities, and for many years have tried to make a simple itemization of the functions that arc required to manage volunteer programs. Harriet Naylor, one of the early pioneers in the profession of volunteer management, wrote about the importance of finding, training, and working with volunteers.

Some of the earliest literature about volunteer management systems comes from 4-H, a major program of the Cooperative Extension Service. Several studies done in the early 1970s discussed the important of volunteers for program delivery in reaching the 4-H goals. Historically, 4-H has viewed volunteer management in the context of leadership development as they developed

models for training volunteers to serve in leadership capacities in youth development programs. Volunteers were (and are) engaged extensively as group and project leaders. It is not surprising, therefore that one of the earliest volunteer system models was derived from a leadership development model composed of "seven sub-processes or phases: leader identification, leader selection, leader orientation, leader training, leader utilizations, leader recognition and leader evaluation." (Smith, Miller, & Kwarteng, 1987). Boyce (1971) believed this model correlated with the basic components of a volunteer development program: identifying volunteer opportunities, selecting volunteers, orienting volunteers, utilizing volunteers, recognizing volunteers, and evaluating volunteers, programs and program managers.
By 1992 this I.S.O.T.U.R.E. model (derived from the first letter of each of the preceding components) for volunteer program development was widely recognized among 4-H professionals as a practical, easy to learn and apply system for volunteer program development (Safrit & Smith, 1992).

Marlene Wilson, (1976) one of the earliest authors on volunteer management practices, taught the first formal volunteer management courses focusing on six components of a volunteer management system: organizational climate; planning and evaluation; designing jobs and recruiting; interviewing and placing; training and communications. Ellis (1986) divided the components into new subsets and developed a Volunteer Management Task Analysis that included: program planning and administration; recruitment and PR.; interviewing and screening; orientation and training; supervision; motivation and recognition; program evaluation; record keeping and reporting; and other responsibilities.

In the 1980s, volunteer management was clearly an emerging profession. Sarah Jane Rehnborg, at The Charles A. Dana Center, The University of Texas in Austin, was one of the first practitioners to focus her dissertation research on a study of the competencies required for volunteer managers. This research led to the development of the four functional areas of volunteer management in the performance-based assessment program for the certification of volunteer administrators through the Association for Volunteer Administration (Rehnborg, 1982). The four AVA functional areas were identified as program planning and organizing; staffing and directing; controlling; and agency, community and professional relations.

Through the 1990s a variety of management systems have been identified. The LOOP System promotes locating, orienting, operating, and perpetuating (Penrod, 1991). The Volunteer Retention Cycle focused on pre-recruitment, recruitment, interview, selection/placement, orientation, training, review, reassignment, recognition, assessment, and coaching (MacKenzie & Moore 1993). The GEMS System identifies generate, educate, mobilize, and sustain as the key elements of volunteer program development (Culp, Deppe, Castillo, & Wells, 1998).

A relatively clear pattern has emerged over the years regarding the core functions of a volunteer manager. Most "systems" included identifying needs, recruiting and selecting volunteers, training and supervision, and recognition. In recent years, some educators and authors have begun to promote higher-level functions such as program planning, risk management, advocacy, and program evaluation. In some ways, this is a return to those early professionals who initially identified the importance of organizational culture,

program planning, and evaluation. Fisher and Cole (1993) were the first authors to link the concept of leadership with management of volunteer programs and were also the first to introduce the language of impact assessment, quantitative data, and cost benefits comparisons to volunteer programs.

Contemporary researchers continue to identify new components to create new systems for managing volunteer programs. In *A Standards Framework for Managing Volunteers,* Trevor Boutall took the components of a system and established standard of performance for each component. In 2001, AVA reviewed its credentialing program and moved away from focusing on the components of volunteer management and redesigned its credentialing program around five core competencies that serve as a foundation for the profession: commitment to the profession; planning and conceptual design; resource development and management; accountability; and perspective and responsiveness (AVA, 2001).

There is no question that as a profession we must be able to identify basic competencies necessary for effectively carrying out the work of volunteer management. But, as the profession matures, success requires more than a set of standardized skills.

While agreeing with and supporting the current renewed focus on identifying and clarifying critical professional competencies needed by volunteer administrators, we believe that equally (if not more) important for the future of volunteer administration are those personal capacities needed in contemporary volunteer administration ... the higher level attitudes and aspirations needed to take fundamental competencies to our profession and easily adapt them to our ever-changing world. Professional competencies are knowledge and skill based, and serve as a critical intellectual foundation for many professions. They involve fundamental levels of cognitive learning, including assessing, comprehending and applying knowledge (Bloom, 1956) to our day-to-day roles and responsibilities as administrators of volunteer programs. (Safrit & Merrill, 1999, p. 29)

To create professionals for today's increasingly complex world, we must look beyond education that focuses on skills based training. Traditionally, those entering the field have had to rely on workshops that focus exclusively on the individual components of the work, such as position design, recruitment, retention, and recognition. These skill-building workshops help managers do the work, but they focus only on the technical aspects of the job. As long as we continue to focus on these individual components — the systems approach — and fail to demand educational opportunities that develop intellectual and personal capacity, we will continue to have individuals who view the work as a job, rather than as a profession. Professionals recognize and foster educational opportunities that increase their capacity to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and extrapolate information that can be applied to professional responsibilities and situations. Professionals understand the need to support and encourage research that builds an educational foundation. As a profession, managers of volunteers should be demanding greater emphasis on leadership development and personal capacity-building opportunities from their local networks, their international conference, and educational institutions. Two-hour skill building workshops may provide quick answers to immediate problems, but they fail, in the long term, to cultivate the critical thinking skills to help

individuals ponder, reflect, and create the new systems that will support volunteerism into the future. In her keynote address at the 1st AVA Asia Pacific Regional Conference, Arlene Schindler emphasized that we must expand our knowledge and develop our capacity as leaders in a profession that is rapidly being recognized around the world.

We must be informed not only in the field of volunteerism, but in economics, trade, medical advances, and social issues. We, who provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the shaping of their societies, must — above all, be informed— about emerging issues, about trends, about what is happening next door as well as what is happening at home. We must be informed beyond our field of volunteerism.

Secondly, we must be trained and skilled, not only by attending conferences such as this, but by broadening our own personal experiences, continuing with our education, becoming volunteers ourselves, understanding and taking advantage of the progress being made in compatible fields. For instance, what is the latest thinking in organizational development, what are the new insights in management, in the required attributes of leadership? And then, we must integrate the best of these into our personal management and leadership practices.

(Shindler, 2002, p. 8)

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