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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 Volunteerism²; (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

Our 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 certificate. 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 fail 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 face 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 ongoing 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-grams 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 from the history of professionalization in other fields 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 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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