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# A Rubric of Shared Leadership:

## “Revolutions are no trifles”

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In a letter reflecting back on the heady times of revolt against the tyranny of England, John Adams makes the observation that “revolutions are no trifles.”<sup>1</sup> Adams and other founders of the new republic knew full well the seriousness of declaring independence and setting out on a new course of governance for the colonies. While that is true on the macro level of geo-politics it is also true on the micro level of organizational culture. Embarking on a dramatic change in social structure, whether great or small, ought not to be taken lightly. Thorough planning and careful execution are important ingredients in successful revolutions. However, the essential ingredient is leadership that is passionate about the change.

### Review of Selected Literature

Few current library directors would deny that there is some urgency in preparing for and nurturing the next generation of leadership within CCCU institutions. This frequently comes up in conversation whenever these directors get together. In recent years some CCCU institutions have experienced extended searches for new directors. Getting an adequate pool of suitable candidates can be challenging. The basic premise of this presentation is that current directors must be willing to make the changes necessary to develop the leadership needed for the future. An initial step in that direction is to develop administrative structures that will encourage and empower library staff with management roles that build leadership skills.

A few selected essays on library administration inform the direction of this study. David Kaser, in a classic essay published in 1977, reflected development in participatory management. Kaser observed that while the qualities of leadership changed little there was a distinct alteration in pattern of library administration

during that period. The general environment of broadening political and social power in the early 1970s encouraged more participatory decision making.<sup>2</sup>

In the past decade, most writing on library administration reflects contemporary research on leadership and organizational culture. For instance, Sion Honea wrote an important article proposing a balanced administrative structure based on Edgar Schein's conception of organizational culture. Honea emphasized the importance of developing administrative structures that are informed by the purposes of the organization and facilitate its ability to adapt to change.<sup>3</sup> The research of Michelle Kaarst-Brown and others expanded on this by studying the characteristics of organizational culture that promote effectiveness in various types of libraries. The authors suggest that by identifying these characteristics libraries can develop leadership and structures that will lead to success.<sup>4</sup> An intriguing article by John Olson examines concepts related to the learning organization making application to library administration. He advocates the development of administrative structures that promote creativity among library staff.<sup>5</sup> Another important essay by Doug Valentine reviews the literature on gender and organizational culture making application of the findings to library administration.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> David Kaser, “The effect of the revolution of 1969-1970 on university library administration.” In Herbert Poole, ed. *Academic Libraries by the Year 2000: Essays Honoring Jerrold Orne*. (New York: Bowker, 1977)

<sup>3</sup> Sion M. Honea. “Transforming administration in academic libraries.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 23(May 1997): 183-190.

<sup>4</sup> Michelle L. Kaarst-Brown, Scott Nicholson, Gisela M. von Dran, and Jeffrey M. Stanton. “Organizational cultures of libraries as a strategic resource.” *Library Trends*. 53(Summer 2004): 33-53.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Olson. “What academic librarians should know about creative thinking.” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. 25(September 1999): 383-389.

<sup>6</sup> Doug Valentine. “Gender and organizational culture.” *Library Administration & Management*. 17(Summer 2003): 130-134.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Francis Adams, ed. *The Works of John Adams*, v. 10 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856), p. 283.

## Approach of this Study

During the fall of 2007 a short 10 item survey was distributed to the library directors subscribing to the CCCU library directors list. At the time of this survey there were 98 directors from CCCU member institutions subscribing to the list. A total of 31 useable surveys were returned for a response rate of around 31.6%.

The survey asked for five institutional demographics that were used as variables for cross tabulation. These were related to academic classification, student enrollment, library personnel, and branch libraries. There were also four questions on primary administrative responsibilities of personnel performance review, chairing of departmental meetings, and budget authority. In addition to these nine specific questions there was an open ended question asking for a brief description of the library's administrative structure.

This survey focused on developing a better understanding of the nature of library administrative structure in CCCU institutions. Two basic questions are raised in this study.

- How might the size and nature of the institution predict the development of certain library administrative structures within CCCU institutions?
- In what ways and to what degree are administrative responsibilities shared within the libraries of CCCU institutions?

Beyond seeking answers to these central questions, the purpose of the survey was to develop a rubric of shared library leadership. This is an exercise in finding some best practices for establishing effective shared leadership within academic libraries intentionally committed to faith integration.

There are some important caveats that must be mentioned at the outset. The results are not construed to be scientific or comprehensive in nature. This was a very simple survey administered through SurveyMonkey to a complete but quite small population. At the same time, the restriction to just ten questions total meant that many potentially rich variables were left unexplored. For instance, no gender question was included. Such detail

might have revealed important cultural insight. At a recent workshop where mentoring for library leadership was being discussed there were just two men participating in the session. The observation was made that in life there are only two things sure to rise to the top: male librarians and dead fish. It is a fact that males predominate as directors within CCCU libraries even though females greatly outnumber males among all librarians serving those institutions. Unfortunately, the limitations of this survey did not allow for the exploration of this variable. It is also important to note that this study examines administrative structures that develop in the social context of particular libraries that remain unknown due to the simplicity of the survey. For example, no attempt was made to learn the personal leadership style of the respondents. This might well reveal a good deal about why certain libraries develop patterns that differ from others.

For the purposes of this study two broad categories of library administrative structure have been defined. One is termed **unitary**. A unitary library administrative structure is defined as any structure in which leadership is strongly centralized in one individual as dean or director. The other administrative structure is called **distributed**. It is defined as any structure that shows evidence of the development of either department heads or associate directors where there exists some sharing of leadership. Evidence for the distinction made here is the degree to which personnel performance evaluation, chairing of meetings, and budget authority is shared with the dean or director.

## Institutional Variables of Library Administrative Structure

The results this survey strongly suggest that size matters. The size of the library's staff combined with the size of the institution's enrollment does seem to be a strong indicator of a distributed administrative structure.

Enrollment	Unitary	Distributed	Total	% Distributed
Under 1500	5	5	10	50%
1501-2000	4	3	7	43%
2001-2500	2	3	5	60%
2500-3000	1	3	4	75%
Over 3000	1	4	5	80%

*... the essential ingredient is leadership that is passionate about the change.*

*The observation was made that in life there are only two things sure to rise to the top: male librarians and dead fish.*

Four of the libraries reported the presence of an assistant or associate director with significant administrative responsibilities. Of these, three were among the larger groups of institutions with enrollment over 2500. The remaining school was in the smallest group of enrollment under 1500. Two of these four libraries reported the presence of a branch campus with permanent full-time library staff on location. Of these four libraries two were classified baccalaureate, one masters, and the other did not report. The staff size for each of these four libraries was above the median of all responses with three being among the highest quartile. Clearly, for these four libraries the size of enrollment and especially the size of staff seem to be indicative of a distributed administrative structure.

Another 14 libraries reported department heads or supervisors with some administrative responsibilities. Of these, four were among the larger groups of institutions with enrollment over 2500 and three were among the middle group with enrollment between 2001-2500. Interestingly, nine were among the smaller groups of schools with enrollment of no more than 2000. Unlike the libraries with assistant or associate directors where the size of enrollment is indicative of distributed structure it does not seem to be a factor in these libraries with a traditional functional department structure. Five of these 14 libraries reported the presence of a branch campus with permanent full-time library staff on location. In addition, of these same 14 libraries four were classified baccalaureate, five masters, two doctoral, and one special. The remaining two did not report classification. It's the staff size of these 14 libraries that seems to be the major factor in the development of distributed structure. Ten of the 14 libraries have staff above the median of all responses with six of these among the highest quartile.

For the 13 libraries revealing a unitary administrative structure nine were among the smaller group of institutions with enrollment of no more than 2000. Two were in the middle

group between 2001-2500 enrollments and two were in the larger groups of schools with enrollment over 2500. Only one of these 13 libraries reported the presence of a branch campus with permanent full-time staff on location. For these 13 libraries four were classified baccalaureate, four masters, and the remaining five were unspecified. Only two of these 13 libraries were above the median in staff size. Again, it is apparent that staff size is a significant indicator of the development of distributed administrative structures.

Staff Size	Unitary	Distributed	Total	% Distributed
3.75 to 7.25	7	1	8	13%
7.26 to 9.47	4	4	8	50%
9.48 to 15.00	2	7	9	78%

Clearly, size matters as an indicator of the development of a distributed library administrative structure. This is especially true for the size of library staff and to a lesser extent the size of enrollment.

One other factor that seems to be an indicator of a distributed structure is the presence of a branch campus with permanent full-time library staff on location. Six of the 18 libraries utilizing either assistant directors or department heads for some administrative functions also report the presence of such branch campus library staff. Only one of the 13 libraries with unitary structure reports such branch campus library staff.

### Shared Responsibility in Library Administrative Structure

The survey explored the sharing of responsibility for some key administrative functions to see what patterns emerged from the responses. Four questions asked who was responsible for evaluating professional librarians, evaluating paraprofessional support staff, chairing departmental meetings, and exercising budgetary authority.

The performance evaluation of library staff is an administrative function important to its vitality. Because of its role in the development of more effective personnel it is one of the most important of any administrator. Among the libraries responding to this survey the dean

or director evaluates the professional librarians almost without exception. Only two shared this responsibility with an associate director or department head. These two libraries employed the largest staff among all responses.

There is much more shared responsibility for evaluation of paraprofessional support staff. Sixteen of the 31 libraries reported assistant directors, department heads, or immediate supervisors conducting performance evaluation for paraprofessionals. For five other libraries the library director or dean works together with department heads to evaluate support staff. In eight of these libraries the dean or director handles the performance evaluation or all personnel, librarian and paraprofessional. It is worth noting that the administrative structure in all eight of these libraries is defined as unitary. The remaining two libraries did not report on this question. So, for 72% of the 29 reporting libraries the sharing of performance evaluation of paraprofessional support staff is an important expression of shared responsibility for administration. This may be the chief characteristic of an administrative structure that seeks to share leadership.

The chairing of departmental meetings is another administrative function important to its vitality. Conducting purposeful and informative meetings in which all staff get opportunities to openly participate in decision making is critical to the effectiveness of any library. In 18 of the libraries responding to this survey the director or dean chairs department meetings. Twelve of these 18 libraries have administrative structures that are defined as unitary. The other six have distributed structures. On the other hand, nine libraries reported sharing of responsibility for chairing department meetings. Four libraries did not report on this question. This means that for 33% of the 27 reporting libraries the administrative responsibility for leading department meetings is shared beyond the dean or director. While not as broadly adopted as the sharing of support staff evaluation there is still a sizable 50% of those libraries exhibiting distributed structures that engage in such sharing of departmental communication and decision making. Libraries seeking to expand

the base of leadership might do well to explore ways to share the chairing of department meetings.

The sharing of responsibility for budgetary authority seems to be somewhat under utilized structural device compared to the sharing of paraprofessional evaluation and the chairing of departmental meetings. Only seven libraries share budget authority beyond the dean or director. Since only 23% of responding libraries report the sharing of budgetary authority it isn't a very widely adopted device of sharing leadership. Perhaps this is due some reluctance to share this critical administrative function. Could this be the last frontier of shared leadership?

### **Reaching Critical Mass in Library Administrative Structure**

There seems to be a sort of critical mass of institutional complexity that signals the development of distributed administrative structures in the responding libraries. For the most part this is a matter of the weight of numbers. Clearly, size matters in terms of the staff size and to a lesser extent the size of enrollment. Those libraries that utilize an associate or assistant director are much more likely to be at larger institutions in numbers of staff and enrollment. In addition, those libraries with who report functional department heads are typically those with larger staff. The results of this survey reveal that very few of the libraries exhibiting a unitary structure had a total staff size exceeding the median of 9.47 or an enrollment above 2500. Therefore, these numbers might be used as a rule of thumb for the consideration of need for developing a distributed structure that shares leadership in meaningful ways.

At this point, some may wonder if this is just about the weight of numbers. That appears to be the case for the most part in the results of this study. However, the one area related to academic programming that seemed to also signal the development of a distributed structure was the presence of a significant branch campus. Significant here means the

assignment of permanent full-time library staff to be on location. All but one of the libraries reporting such branch campus staff also reported a distributed structure. In today's academic environment such branch campuses can be very important aspects of the overall academic program of institutions. What was somewhat surprising in this study was that fact that the academic classification of the parent institutions of these libraries seemed to have little bearing on the nature of administrative structure. The presence of a graduate program is now common among all sizes of institutions. This study only looked at the most basic classification of baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and special. If the full Carnegie classification for these institutions was used would it have revealed some correlations that the basic level did not pick up? Perhaps so, but it might also confirm the weight of numbers with the libraries with larger staff and from larger enrollment schools. Intuitive observation seems to suggest that those institutions with more complex academic programs of multiple graduate programs in varied disciplines would also be the ones with larger enrollment and library staff.

### Leadership Styles and Organizational Models

A few years ago Bill Robinson, President of Whitworth College, published a book that reviews the contemporary understanding of leadership style. He provides very helpful insights through reflection on his particular approach to leadership. It is Robinson's basic assertion that "leadership grows out of the longing people have for their leaders both to follow and lead them."<sup>7</sup> The effective leader must easily comprehend when best to assert leadership and when best to follow others toward consensus.

The contemporary management environment facing academic libraries calls for some radical new approaches to administration than has been evident over the past two decades. Even with the move to participatory management

the essential pattern of most libraries has been hierarchical. The pace of change now being experienced demands more broad-based decentralized administrative structures. Younger workers coming out of educational systems that emphasize self-direction and autonomy may only be satisfied in a workplace that provides empowerment and flexibility. Hierarchy is dysfunctional in such an environment. The research of Kaarst-Brown and her colleagues suggests administrative models that that emphasize teams will function more effectively today. Such teams may be clustered around certain functional tasks or could be ad hoc groups composed to develop new services.<sup>8</sup>

Another reason structures rooted in hierarchy do not function well in most academic libraries today is the restraints such structures place on ingenuity and initiative. As Olson observes, hierarchy is not only dysfunctional but "creativity has no hierarchy." On an organizational level creativity is encouraged when administrators empower staff through open entrepreneurial administrative structures.<sup>9</sup> A decade ago Honea suggested, "The main concern of the leader will be the widespread development of leadership." Effective library management today requires administrators who understand broadly the needs of the organization and possess the ability to focus various functional elements within the organization toward common purpose.<sup>10</sup> The message is clear. Administrative structures that empower staff are more conducive to the development of leadership.

### Rubric of Shared Library Leadership

From what is learned in this study it is possible to propose a rubric of CCCU library administrative structure. Of the four structural devices examined in this survey three seem to be most valuable as tools for developing shared leadership in libraries. The structural device most frequently reported was the sharing of paraprofessional performance

<sup>7</sup> William P. Robinson, *Leading People From the Middle* (Provo, Utah: Executive Excellence Pub., 2002), p. 47.

<sup>8</sup> Kaarst-Brown, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Olson, p. 383.

<sup>10</sup> Honea, p. 189.



evaluation which was reported in 72% of the libraries. Another device used in these libraries involved the chairing of department meetings by staff other than the dean or director. This was reported in 33% of the libraries. A third device, used in only 23% of the libraries, was the sharing of budgetary authority. A final device examined in this survey, sharing of the performance evaluation of professional librarians was reported in only two libraries. All of these devices involve the use of functional department heads and/or assistant directors to share administrative responsibility.

In this study the presence of such shared leadership is the defining mark of a distributed administrative structure. To develop this rubric the brief descriptive statements of library administrative structure were analyzed carefully to break the 31 reporting institutions into categories of shared leadership (see Appendix). This revealed three general levels of shared leadership: limited, traditional, and broad. A fourth level was added to these to provide a level toward which even the most broadly shared library leadership might extend itself.

In the limited level almost all leadership is concentrated within one individual as Dean or Director. The traditional level is characterized by a functional departmentalization where department heads and/or an associate have responsibility for some performance evaluation and meetings. For the broad level some responsibility for all categories of leadership is distributed to an associate and/or department heads. With the extensive level not only are the categories of leadership shared broadly but in some areas the department heads and/or associate are empowered to act independently with full authority.

### Possibilities for Further Study

This study is limited to only a few of the formal structural aspects of library administration in a relatively small group of institutions. No attempt

was made to explore cultural variables such as gender, leadership style, staff stratification, or work environment that can influence the development of particular structures. There are also informal structures of organizational culture that may be equally important in supporting and developing leadership. A follow-up study examining some of these issues in the same set of schools might uncover additional important variables impacting the development of library administrative structure as well as characteristics of shared leadership.

### Next Generation Leadership

A revolution is coming to CCCU library leadership. In academic librarianship much has been made of the looming crisis in recruiting library leadership for the next generation. The 2002 report of the ACRL Ad Hoc Task Force on Recruitment & Retention Issues reveals that a high rate of retirements was expected during the current decade.<sup>11</sup> An unpublished study of CCCU library recruitment in 2004 found a similar result. It predicted that 20% of CCCU librarians would retire within five years. It went further to show that another 37% would retire by 2020.<sup>12</sup> This underscores the importance of current CCCU library leadership making an intentional effort to help prepare the next generation of leaders. The point of this present study is to show that one strategy in that process must be the establishment of administrative structures that encourage the sharing of leadership. By empowering colleagues with substantive authority in the areas of performance evaluation, chairing of department meetings, and even budget control they will gain valuable experience and be encouraged to develop the skills needed to effectively lead the next generation.

*Administrative structures that empower staff are more conducive to the development of leadership.*

<sup>11</sup> *Recruitment, Retention & Restructuring: Human Resources in Academic Libraries* (Chicago: ACRL, 2002), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Steven L. Baker, "CCCU Librarian Recruitment & Retention Survey." Unpublished manuscript (May 2004), p. 2.

## Appendix: Rubric of Shared Leadership

Structure	Limited	Traditional	Broad	Extensive
<b>Librarian Evaluation</b>	Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of all professional librarians	Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of all professional librarians	Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of all professional librarians with input from department heads and/or immediate supervisors	Dean/Director shares the performance evaluation of professional librarians with an Associate Dean/Director and/or other department heads.
<b>Support Staff Evaluation</b>	Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of all paraprofessional support staff with input from department heads and/or supervisors	Dean/Director shares the performance evaluation of some paraprofessional support staff with Associate Dean/Director and/or other department heads	Associate Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of some paraprofessional support staff independently	Associate Dean/Director conducts the performance evaluation of most paraprofessional support staff independently
<b>Meeting Chairs</b>	Dean/Director sets the agenda and chairs all library departmental meetings	Dean/Director chairs all library departmental meetings and invites any library staff member to place items on the agenda	Dean/Director chairs all general library staff meetings and invites any staff member to place items on the agenda; other departmental meetings are chaired by Associate Dean/Director and/or department heads	Dean/Director shares the chairing of some general library staff meetings while inviting any staff member to place items on the agenda; other departmental meetings are chaired by Associate Dean/Director and/or department heads
<b>Budget Authority</b>	Dean/Director retains all budgetary authority	Dean/Director retains all budgetary authority	Dean/Director shares some budgetary authority with an Associate Dean/Director in prescribed areas	Dean/Director shares full budgetary authority with an Associate Dean/Director

