

# THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATOR

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## Introduction

By common definition, an administrator is one who directs or manages affairs of some kind. Interpreted broadly, but still accurately, this makes any person engaged in any direction or management an administrator. This is true for the president of a large corporation or institution, and also for the single individual who is directing and managing his own individual labor.

Regardless of the number of these "individual administrators," one person is commonly designated to direct and manage all the activities of a unit or organization, and is called the administrator. All this results in the chief administrator's being necessarily involved in a greater amount of direction and management, a greater scope of activities, and more responsibility than an individual member. In addition, the administrator is totally responsible for the activities of the other members of his unit or organization.

## The Educational Administrator

An educational administrator is appointed to an existing unit such as a department, college, or university. This unit may be a very small one that is in its initial stage of existence, or it may be a large one of long standing. In either instance, his first step, and most important one, must be to decide why the unit exists which he is to administrate, for whom the unit is trying to provide education, and what kind of education it is trying to provide. The decisions should be developed by the thought and effort of all members making up the unit. With units where large numbers of people are involved, the use of committee and sub-committee systems will probably be necessary.

## Forming Objectives

When these decisions are finalized to the satisfaction of at least the majority of the members within the unit, and in line with the total institutional purposes and policies, they should be clearly stated and published as formal objectives. As an example, one objective of an agricultural educational institution could be somewhat as follows:

"To place major emphasis on agricultural instruction by evaluating and using research findings of this and other institutions, recommending those agricultural enterprises and practices best adapted to the local geographical area, and conducting, insofar as facilities and resources permit, research and/or demonstrations which are primarily applicable to the area."

Other logical objectives should be developed relative to curriculum, faculty, degrees to be offered, accrediting agencies, student guidance and counseling, physical facilities, area services, university farm organization and operation, and the reciprocating cooperation and aid between the unit and the total institution.

## Carrying Out Objectives

When the objectives are clear, ways and means for attaining these must be developed and carried to completion. Here, the administrator is forced to contend with many details and problems, some within his control, but many that are highly dependent upon other units of the institution and the total institution itself. In addition to educational problems, many others arise pertaining to ever-increasing enrollments, faculty recruitment, increased services, non-academic help, physical plant, budgets, inventories, purchasing, sales, accounting, correspondence, complete records of all activities and transactions, and the like.

Particularly difficult for the university administrator at various times is the fact that professionalized faculty members possess, in many instances, a monopoly of specialized knowledge at a given institution. Some of these have a commitment to a profession, or to their own goals, which they frequently place above loyalty to their unit or institution. Some believe that they are appointed only to teach, or do research in their specialty, and that there should be nothing to interfere. Such faculty members must be made to realize that they are an integral part of the unit, as well as the institution, and that they can not consider their individual work totally separate.

## Administrator Responsibility

Regardless of the number of problems, or the size of each, the basic administrative problem is that of directing all personnel towards completion of the formulated objectives through the established ways and means, regardless of the amount of detail and procedure necessary. The administrator must always realize that he is totally responsible for the actions of those he directs, whether or not they follow his direction or the policies and procedures of the institution.

Direction and responsibility make up a vast and major portion of the administrator's work. Even with many great obstacles existing, objectives, ways and means, policies, and procedures can usually be developed. The real work comes

in attempting to make them work properly.

#### **Attention to Details**

One prime ingredient for success, by any administrator, is total attention to details.

When a person is given an assignment, full and complete directions must be given with it. These directions should be sufficiently adequate to allow any other qualified person to carry out any portion of the assignment even in the absence of the person responsible for completion of the assignment. Sufficient records must be kept to enable any person to obtain a full and complete history of the total work completed at any given future date.

#### **Chain of Authority**

The administrator himself is given many assignments. Department heads are responsible to deans, deans to presidents, presidents to boards of trustees or governors, and so on. The administrator must follow the direction and management of his "superiors" just as he expects his staff to follow his. He must remember that they are responsible for his actions. All correspondence must be answered promptly. All forms must be filled in accurately and returned as requested. All procedures and policies must be followed in every respect, and if departures appear necessary, permission from the appropriate authority must first be obtained. With practical ways and means, as well as workable policies and procedures, there should be few departures. All details and procedures, regardless of how minor or unimportant they may appear to any individual, must be completed thoroughly and accurately.

#### **Completing the Job**

Whether the administrator wants to complete a given assignment or not, he must always

remember that he is an employee of the institution, and that he must exert every possible effort in applying all his skills and ability towards completion, just as though he were 100 percent enthusiastically in favor of the assignment.

#### **Qualities of the Leader**

Leadership, cooperation, organizational ability, authority, initiative, philosophy of education, fairness, firmness, and ability to inspire confidence make up terminology often used relative to the work of the administrator. All such abilities are highly important, but they are really appropriate only as long as the users of such terminology do not lose sight of the fact that the administrator must still be a **worker**. The majority of his work may be in directing others, and it is of utmost importance that he do this, but he has a job to do, just as any other worker, and he must produce. He cannot be merely an idealistic philosopher developing incomplete ideas, then directing someone else to finish the job. Such a person is merely an "idea man." The administrator must be able to provide the direction for completion of the job, and he is the one person designated by the institution to see that all work is completed efficiently, accurately, and totally.

#### **Work of the Administrator**

Regardless of the many types of work, variations of activities, and total responsibilities involved, the work of the administrator may be divided into three logical procedural steps:

1. Develop and state the objectives.
2. Develop ways and means for accomplishing the objectives.
3. Provide direction and management for himself and his staff in all activities in completion of the ways and means.

# **Philosophy of Education**

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#### **Introduction**

As a professional discipline philosophy of education is the product of a liaison between philosophical speculation and educational practice, and, as a consequence, philosophers of education are abandoned offspring, often rejected by both philosophers and educators, and in constant search for a rightful place in academia. To some extent, this problem is shared with certain

other philosophies such as philosophy of history and philosophy of science. Yet it would be presumptuous to maintain that philosophy of education has nothing to say to educators, in general, or to agricultural educators, in particular. What it says is disputable and often disputed. But at least is some sense philosophy of education influences educational practice and, therefore, is exceedingly relevant. What John