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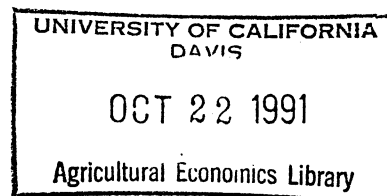
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SOME ALMOST-IDEAL REMEDIES  
FOR  
HEALING LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES



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## SOME ALMOST-IDEAL REMEDIES FOR HEALING LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES

This paper follows up on the "Land Grant University Revitalization Debate" so forcefully and eloquently led by Schuh, Bonnen and others. The paper offers some small steps that might be taken (little things that might be done) by way of internal institutional reform to enhance the prospects for sustainability and contribution of the land grant tradition in the 21st century.

Two topics are addressed in the spirit of institutional reform -- (1) fixing administrative structure, titles and responsibility consistent with a collegial environment of individual faculty entrepreneurs, i.e., a university environment, and (2) fine-tuning faculty incentive mechanisms, i.e., faculty evaluation processes for annual merit-salary increments and promotion and tenure. The centrality and preeminence of the single, coherent mission of educating resident and nonresident students through teaching/learning/discovery is an underlying subtheme. The general pedagogical strategy is to discuss "the way it is," followed by "the way it ought to be -- an ideal," and concluding with "a way it might possibly be -- an almost ideal." That is, the plan is to conclude each section with suggestions for reform that are hopefully doable -- that move us in a positive direction and that stand some chance of gaining acceptance within the academic community. A modest number of ideas are offered that might lead us from where we are toward greater service to society given the fundamental nature and purpose of a university.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Certainly prominent among those calling attention to apparent problems in the direction and priorities of our land grant universities have been Schuh and Bonnen. In his widely read and cited piece in Choices, Schuh argues that our land grant universities have "lost their way" and are in serious need of "revitalization." Among the symptoms of malaise he notes are faculties introverted in their disciplines, publishing for professional peers to the disadvantage of applied work, and consulting for the highest paying firm or agency in lieu of public service. Schuh calls for a recommitment to the tripartite mission of teaching, research and extension, and to an institutional mission of contributing to the solution of society's problems.

Schuh challenges us to (1) capitalize on what we have learned about agricultural development, specifically, to invest more in human capital formation (I take that to mean a higher priority on our teaching functions), (2) respond to the changed economics of education, i.e., recognize the opportunity cost of students and adapt our teaching/training programs accordingly, (3) train and educate students for the international economy, (4) contribute to the design of institutions, (5) span the ever-widening gap between the frontier of knowledge and the problems of society, and (6) give university administrators more authority. Watts and I expressed concern about the validity of Schuh's allegation that the applied gap between the frontier of knowledge and societal problems was not being addressed, and we (and others) wrote in strong opposition to the proposition that university administrators be granted more authority (Beattie and Watts; Bromley; Smith). Neither of these two issues need be recounted here. Suffice it to say that most, if not all, of what Schuh had to tell us is worthy of our serious consideration and corrective action. I find Schuh's first four tasks and giving even greater attention to "spanning the ever-widening gap" compelling indeed.

Bonnen, in his 1986 AAEA Fellow Address, lends support to a number of Schuh's themes. Bonnen, like so many others, is concerned that the reward structure of most contemporary land grant universities under-values applied "subject-matter and problem-solving research" relative to "disciplinary research." He is concerned about "the basis for effective extension education and problem solving," and by implication a "penalizing" of those who do empirical work.

Harold Enarson, a past president of The Ohio State University and senior advisor to the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, draws significantly from Schuh in expressing his concerns. He notes that many land grant universities, along with the best of the other state and private universities, have

become "premier national institutions" -- attaining the status of so-called research universities. Enarson poses the question, "How can the land-grant universities embrace the research university model and yet be faithful to the land-grant mission?" (p. 3). Regarding that mission or vision, Enarson writes, "The land-grant university was the nation's chosen agent for ever-expanding opportunity, for purposeful social as well as economic development. **It was the deepest article of faith that the university would not only generate new knowledge but would also apply that knowledge to real-life problems. This is what is distinctive in the land-grant concept.** This is now blurred as the land-grants have drifted away from the strong sense of mission which made them distinctive" (p. 3).

As these concerns are played out, it occurs to me that our land grant institutions are engaged in a war involving two closely related yet distinguishable battlefields. There is the external war for the hearts, minds, support and tax dollars of the citizens that support and sustain us. It seems clear that this external war is on the minds of many, e.g., Hildreth, Enarson, McDowell and others. Yet clearly the external war is intimately connected to a battle within the university about what is going to count, what we are about, and who are going to be the principal players. It is this internal battle to which most of my remarks are directed. It is a battle of particular importance to our colleges of agriculture, and one, in my view, that we must win if we have any hope of success in the larger struggle.

To put it rather directly and perhaps a bit harshly, the internal war has to do with the perceived irrelevance and inferior scholarship of many, if not most, of the more applied professional programs within our land grants -- agriculture being a prime example. It has to do with the matter of the relative importance of teaching or human capital building vis-a-vis new knowledge discovery of initial primary interest to ourselves and our peers, and to the legitimacy and scholarly quality of the extension mission. It is my view that if we applied-types can better position ourselves within the land grant university, then our and the university's chances of success in the external war and opportunities for greater social service are decidedly enhanced. Those of us in the application business and in the professional schools are a minority. The sooner we recognize that and begin to compete with first-class scholarship and a mind set in concert with academia generally, the sooner we will be able to win over the "rest of the university" and get on with the important work of enhancing the status of resident and nonresident teaching and obtaining recognition for the high social value of rigorous applied-knowledge. For colleges of agriculture, getting our minds in concert involves nothing more than modifying our language and administrative structures to something the rest of the university can understand and relate.

Enough said by way of background. To be sure there are many among us, perhaps even a majority, that believe there are problems of priority, of lost mission, of under-valuation of teaching (including extension). The voices of these individuals have not fallen on deaf ears. Probably every land grant university is presently giving serious discussion and attention to these matters -- especially to the alleged under-valuation of excellence in teaching. With the aim of redressing some of the perceived maladies, this paper offers some ideas for rethinking how we view our role, how we administer and govern ourselves and our programs, how we might modify our incentives structure and evaluation processes, and how we might adopt a heightened view of teaching (both resident and nonresident varieties).

#### FIXING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, TITLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

In my humble opinion the administrative structures of most of our land grant universities are, to put it mildly, a mess. It is little wonder that many of us find ourselves concerned about the lack of coherence of our academic programs, about the lack of integration of research and teaching, including nonresident teaching (extension), about the apparent low priority of teaching generally, and a number of other maladies. Consider a simplified organization chart for the typical land grant university (figure 1). Amazing -- and mind you, this is simplified! I've not bothered to add in the complexities of that whole army of so-called academic professionals that oftentimes I get the feeling run the university -- the offices of the registrar, of admissions, of affirmative action, of student affairs and services, of facilities planning and management, of intercollegiate athletics, etc., etc. Nor does my schematic include all the invisible curved lines that connect every "lower level" with each and every "upper level." Actually, these omitted (invisible) lines are among the most important. Also missing

from my chart is the vast array/network of interdisciplinary institutes, centers and specialized study programs (for every imaginable topic) that permeate and infest so many land grant universities these days. (But that's another topic best left for another time. Suffice it to say, my attitude about such creatures is not unlike Stigler's. I recommend his essay on "Specialism: A Dissenting Opinion" [pp.9-16] for your enjoyment.) Finally, I have not included the sometimes lightening-bolt-like lines that connect the state legislature and governor's offices to various levels of the official organization chart.

Notwithstanding these important omissions, there are sufficient serious problems of structure and title on this simplified, official organization chart (figure 1) to make one's head swim. To begin, the solid vertical lines are presumed and sometimes actual lines of authority. The dashed lines denote staff functions -- unfortunately, they are most often staffed with PhDs and may or may not have significant duties, responsibility or authority. The first problem that should be apparent to almost everyone is that there are far too many layers of administration above those that carry out the principal purposes and valuable work of the university, viz., the faculty. Not only is the overburden enormously expensive and cumbersome, it is often obstructive and not always prone to good judgement. It is certainly not compatible with fostering creativity.<sup>1</sup>

A second problem with the chart (figure 1) for many members of academia is the curious title of "director" that appears here and there -- especially in colleges of agriculture. Can you imagine the reaction of an historian, a philosopher, a mathematician, a physicist or a professor of modern languages to the very idea that there might be someone (especially an administrator) that somehow "directs" the programs of individual faculty members or some collective of same? The very idea is foreign and repugnant to most of academia. And it should be to us as well. But even if it is not, we, in colleges of agriculture, should shed ourselves of such administrative titles in the interest of opening up the lines of communication with the rest of the university if we wish to successfully push the case for the importance of extended education and applied research.

To pursue these ideas further consider figure 2. Here is a revised version of figure 1 with a bit more specificity, using agriculture as the example college. This typical university is fortunate that it is not so complex to need chancellors and vice chancellors. Also, to simplify further, this organization chart, unlike figure 1, does not show the morass of linkages between and among associate deans and vice presidents nor does it show any assistant deans within the example college of agriculture.

Notice that the repugnant title of director has been eliminated but several severe problems still remain (figure 2). First of all, look at the roster of vice presidents. Remember that often this is the cast of characters that forms the president's cabinet and sets the larger direction and resource allocation decisions for the university. The most notable problem here is that typically fewer than one-half (often many fewer) have programmatic responsibility central to the academic mission of the university. In fact it is sometimes the case that there is only one vice president with main line academic responsibility -- the academic VP or provost. The implication of such a situation for core academic programs within the university is not promising. I might add as a footnote here that one would expect the VP for research and the VP for extension to be strong advocates for the primacy of academics within the greater university, but unfortunately this is not always the case. Often the VP for research, no matter how well intended and oriented he or she might be, over time becomes principally a tax collector for the university -- often working at odds with faculty who are attempting to garner resources to do their job and be creative. It never ceases to amaze me, the number of such individuals that measure their success and the success of the university in terms of total grant and contract dollars, not to mention indirect cost dollars, generated, as though that was some measure of output or productivity. (I will return to some of the pitfalls of this mad dash to individual and institutional stardom through grantsmanship later in the paper.) And, equally unfortunate is the fact that some VPs for extension (or in some cases, directors of extension) are far too preoccupied with service per se and not necessarily extended education or teaching.<sup>2</sup>

A second and crucial problem with the administrative structure depicted in figure 2 is, as Marc Johnson (Jan. 1987) has pointed out, its disintegrative nature. For purposes of completeness, the separation of resident instruction, research and extension is shown at the vice presidential level, at the college level, and at the departmental level. Obviously, this functional separation does not occur at every level at every land

grant university, but I dare say it is characteristic of most. Please note that on my version of the typical organization chart, despite the disintegrative functional organization at the department and dean levels, there is a solid connecting line between the faculty and the department head and between the department head and the dean. When these lines do not exist (and sometimes they don't) the problem of disintegration is even further exacerbated. The structuring of our administration along functional lines is not conducive to a concept of oneness of purpose and of the faculty. It is unfortunate indeed that our land grant universities are burdened with an administrative structure that falsely separates that which should be inseparable, namely, resident teaching, nonresident teaching or extension, and research and creative activity. We, in colleges of agriculture, are the most guilty of all in this regard. It separates and divides us in a way that is particularly debilitating and counter-productive in our efforts to achieve equal standing for all forms of instructional/educational efforts along side and in concert with research. Such a structure contributes to what Farrell and colleagues have called "a culture of separatism" between extension and the rest of the university. I think the same might be said for resident instruction.

The very idea that research should be thought of separately from teaching is unfortunate to say the least. It is foreign to the very conception of a university. As Watts and I have argued elsewhere, it is foreign even in common usage of the term university as codified in most dictionary definitions (Beattie and Watts). In terms of agricultural economics specifically, Warren Johnston reminded us as recently as last year that indeed the common glue of our profession is applied research. It is not some [functional or] subdisciplinary interest groupings that constitutes the core of our profession, rather our common interests in the conduct and application of research in either a "disciplinary, subject-matter or problem-solving" context that is our central core (p. 1119) [my addition in brackets]. I submit that the notion of separation of research from teaching is especially repugnant to the majority elements of the university outside of colleges of agriculture. If we within colleges of agriculture and those at top levels of the university truly believe that all three functions are important, then we would, curiously enough, best serve our cause by making less, not more, of a distinction between the functions. Wouldn't it be nice just once to hear a university president say, "Teaching, including extension, is so important and so intertwined with active involvement in research that I herewith announce elimination of the positions of vice president for research, resident instruction and extension and am assigning those responsibilities to the provost/academic vice president." Wouldn't it be nice to hear a dean of agriculture say, "The missions of resident instruction, outreach and research are so important and crucial that I am forming a new position of vice dean of agriculture, and am eliminating all the line associate dean and director positions." Rather, what we almost inevitably hear is exactly the opposite. Statements like, "Extension is so central to the mission of this university that I am creating a new vice presidential level position to raise this function to its rightful position in the university." And what is the consequence? Almost always just the opposite of what is desired ultimately happens. The inseparable function becomes separate, loses standing in the minds of the majority of the university faculty, with the usual consequences.

If we learned nothing else from the great civil rights movement in this country, we learned that the concept of "separate and equal" is an oxymoron! If extension and/or resident teaching are somehow separate or separated (administratively, in annual merit evaluation, in promotion and tenure, in housing/space arrangements, or in purpose), then they will undoubtedly not be equal to each other or, most importantly, to research/creativity in status or reward. How many land grant universities either have, or are seriously talking about, separate merit evaluation processes and/or criteria, separate promotion and tenure processes and/or criteria, separate housing arrangements (buildings, floors, wings or office suites), separate secretarial assignments, etc., for extension faculty or undergraduate teaching faculty? All such arrangements, however major or minor, contribute to "the culture of separatism" and divisiveness of mission and purpose of our land grant universities. Such policies and arrangements must be resisted continually.

Many top university officials are smitten these days with an especially bad idea that is being championed as a means to elevate teaching (including extension) to higher status within the university. The logic follows these lines. University productivity will be enhanced by recognizing the diverse interests and abilities of faculty, i.e., exploit comparative advantage through specialization. And we are to accomplish this by recognizing the distinct and equal "scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, and of teaching" (Boyer). This separate-but-equal philosophy is to be formally recognized through "differentiated staffing" with

"different tracks" for merit evaluation and for promotion and tenure based on appointment, assignment, funding or expectation in resident instruction, nonresident instruction and/or research. The idea sounds innocent enough. The problem, to be sure, is not with recognizing and capitalizing on the benefits of some degree of specialization. But, formalized "different tracks" for promotion, tenure and merit evaluation is another matter. Such ideas will most certainly not foster a sense of oneness of purpose, mission and standing among the university faculty. Such notions tend to separate, and with separation, inequality of status and reward will undoubtedly prevail (in the long run if not sooner). Rather than separate tracks, what's needed, in my mind, is a modest fine-tuning and broadening of the existing single track.

There is yet another reason why a functionally separate administrative structure is debilitating to colleges of agriculture. This is a bit of an aside, but nevertheless is a pragmatic and important problem. Without question (I think) our deans of agriculture carry a much greater administrative responsibility than their counterparts in other colleges. Deans of agriculture have external responsibilities involving extension, branch station management, public relations for the college and university, and budget garnering, second only to the president. Consequently, we often find ourselves with no one tending the store when crucial resource allocation and policy decisions are being made on campus. An associate dean, or deans as the case may be, filling in for the dean, is (are) often out-maneuvered, out-flanked and certainly out-ranked when the provost calls a meeting of the deans. (The University of Arizona has gone a long ways toward fixing this problem by naming a strong and effective vice dean from among the usual cadre of associate deans.) It is crucial in the on-going resource allocation process that our colleges of agriculture be represented by a strong functionally-integrated administrator with appropriate standing among the competitors. The typical college of agricultural administrative structure is often not conducive to that outcome.

Again, the fundamental integrality of the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, i.e., research and teaching (resident and nonresident), is so imbedded in the consciousness of the academe, and rightfully so, that it is imperative that we reorganize ourselves administratively to correct this fundamental structural inconsistency. To this end I offer you my ideal land grant university organization chart (figure 3). Recall, this is to be followed with an almost-ideal, but hopefully politically acceptable alternative. So don't panic!

In my idealized view of things, I include (above the top dashed line) those the university presumably serves -- our students of all varieties -- labelled "external" public. The limiting of our external public exclusively to those carrying the title of student is not an oversight -- it is purposeful. I wish to emphasize the primacy, in fact, exclusivity, of the educational mission (see also Beattie and Watts). In my world, all that is legitimate that the university does must be captured one way or another under some output category where the recipient of the service is in a learning mode. I accept no other purpose for a university and I allege it is the only purpose for which we have a comparative advantage. And, in this day of shrinking real budgets it is more than we can do well. While those an organization serves are not normally part of the formal organization chart of the institution, it is useful here to provide context.

Before leaving the matter of our "external public," a term (in addition to director) that we in colleges of agriculture and the extension service should purge from our vocabulary is that of "clientele."<sup>3</sup> It should be dropped in favor of nonresident students. The words client and clientele conjure up bad, or at least inappropriate, vibrations for many academicians. Immediately, I think of a doctor writing prescriptions, or an attorney giving an opinion, an accountant filling out my tax forms yet another year, the plumber unplugging the drain one more time, or "Mr. Goodwrench" doing the annual tune-up on the family car. The professional-client relationship is one characterized as repetitive, service oriented and most importantly does not involve an intended teaching/learning experience. Consider the dictionary definition of client: "...1: one that is under the protection of another: DEPENDENT 2 a: a person who engages the professional advice or services of another <a lawyer's - s> b: CUSTOMER <hotel - s> c: a person served by or utilizing the services of a social agency <a welfare - >.." (A Merriam-Webster, p. 248). Notice the subservient role and dependency status of the client that is involved in the professional-client relationship. (My dependency on people who can fix mechanical things is total, repetitive and hopeless. There are certain things in life I never intend to learn

how to do -- like how to run a VCR, let alone fix the damned thing. Thank goodness for people who can. They are important and highly valued members of society as far as I'm concerned.)

But the so-called "clientele" of the university, in particular those whom extension serves (or at least ought to serve) are fundamentally different. Our comparative advantage, and I submit our only legitimate purpose, is to teach those who come to us how to do it themselves -- we must engage them in learning. If there is no learning involved then surely there is a better way, a less socially expensive way, than \$40 to \$100 K professors to provide such services, including the "dissemination of research-based information." Again, appealing to my 1989 Merriam-Webster, a student, in contrast to a client, is a "...1: SCHOLAR, LEARNER... 2: one who studies: an attentive and systematic observer..." (p. 1170). We can dream, I suppose! But do notice that the focus is on learning, and I submit that this distinction is fundamental and important. Among other things, it has important pragmatic implications. Faculty are much less likely to become captured by their students than by their clientele, who are by their nature dependent, may be even desperately so. Faculty and students do their work together; they are jointly engaged in a learning situation and opportunity. I submit the student-professor relationship is different, special and socially valuable, and it should never be confused with the equally important relationship between other professionals and their clients. The responsibility to engage others in a learning situation is a special opportunity and we must never forget that that is all of what we are about. Whether engaged in classroom instruction, nonresident (extension) instruction or research (some of which is to teach ourselves and our peers), the exclusive purpose (single mission, if you will) is teaching/learning (Beattie and Watts; Watts).

Between the two dashed lines (figure 3) are the "internal facilitators." The direction of facilitation should be from the bottom up -- some administrators and some faculty have been known on occasion to forget that fundamental point. Faculty fall into the category of facilitator only as related to student learning and development. Department chairs, deans and the academic vice president, if they do their jobs well, focus the vast majority of their attention on serving the needs, i.e., facilitate the agenda of the faculty and student education. This facilitation involves mainly "coaching, cheer-leading, clearing the path of debris and serving as referee." Coaching, cheer-leading (including making the case to upper-level administrators for protection or augmentation of his/her unit's budget) and clearing the path of debris are primary and the most beneficial roles for the facilitative-minded administrator. These are valued characteristics in successful administrators. Every game is governed by rules of conduct and the academic game is no exception. To be sure, a fair bit of administrator effort must be devoted to refereeing. Faculty and students are, after all, real people and real people will all at one time or another, in the pursuit of self-interest, take some liberty with the rules of the game. (See Beattie for more on the facilitative role of administration.)

The most important feature of the "internal facilitator" block of figure 3 for our purpose is to note that all assistant or associate heads, deans and VPs are cast in a staff role rather than a line position. The disintegration of figure 2 has been "officially" eliminated. To be sure, the jobs of department head, dean and provost in most, if not all, of our land grant universities are more than one person can say grace over. These people need help. They need advice and counsel and considerable staff support on a daily basis. While these offices should be lean and mean, it would be naive to think in this day and age of accountability and litigation that most of the assistant and associate positions can be eliminated (although I am confident, as are many of you, that a number could be eliminated and the productivity of the university enhanced!). The key feature is a minimum number of levels and oneness of function -- resident instruction, nonresident instruction and research/creativity, it's all the same ball of wax.

Finally, below the bottom dashed line of figure 3, we have our "external facilitators" in contrast to "external publics" at the top of the chart. I trust most of you have no difficulty with the notion that the job of president (and below) is mainly external to the university. Theirs' is the important role of public relations and budget garnering that without question is crucial to the short-and long-term health of the institution and unquestionably a full time job these days.



Since even I, with my great insight and power of persuasion, will not likely convince most people to view university administrative structures right-side-up, I offer figure 4 as an almost-ideal structure in hopes that it is something toward which we might strive. By way of summary, the key features are:

1. The president position is recognized for what it is -- mostly external with little responsibility for management of the academic enterprise.
2. The provost/AVP is the chief academic and managerial officer of the university and its only vice president. All other VPs carry with their title the modifier, associate or assistant, and are answerable to the provost. (In larger complex institutions this cast of characters will be admittedly large.)
3. At the college level, the dean has responsibility and administrative authority for all academic functions germane to that college including resident and nonresident instruction and research/creative activity. In the case of the college of agriculture it may be necessary to add a single vice dean as a line position given the external demands on the dean's time.
4. Ditto 3 for the department chair level.
5. Faculty must always remember that they too are facilitators, that their exclusive function is education and in a university that includes both the discovery of knowledge and the transfer of knowledge to students in a manner conducive to learning.
6. Only persons above or below on the vertical chain report to, answer to, ask of, demand of or whatever of others.
7. All titles of director are eliminated.
8. All persons served should be thought of, and where feasible referred to, as students and university interaction with same should be in an educational/teaching context.

I admit and recognize that these views are extreme and there is much gray area. Nevertheless I believe that principles are important in guiding our actions and day-to-day work. I submit that if the principles imbedded in figure 4 -- limiting the university's role to that of teaching, minimizing administrative levels and eliminating all possible opportunities for functional disintegration -- were front and center in all our minds, it would help immeasurably in our revitalization efforts. In particular, it would give those of us with interests in applied research and extension an opportunity to win over the main stream of academia by eliminating terminology and ideas that are repugnant to them. I turn now to a second area of crucial importance in providing direction in the university -- the matter of faculty evaluation and promotion and tenure.

#### FACULTY EVALUATION

A former colleague of mine at Montana State, Richard Stroup, had a favorite expression, which I hereby proclaim as Stroup's Law (see also Gwartney and Stroup, pp 8-9). Stroup's Law is the most fundamental of economic laws in that virtually all other economic laws and principles follow from it (except the law of diminishing returns which really isn't an economic law anyway). Stroup could almost daily be heard to say, "Well I'll be, incentives matter!" It is rather amazing how much of our life we are constantly bombarded with policies, great ideas, and all manner of wondrous things for which the proponents are flabbergasted to discover consequences entirely different than intended or expected. We economists know, if we know anything, that changes in policies and rules and regulations inevitably involve changes in incentives and that human behavior will be altered accordingly. It is this propensity of we economists to be looking for, and gleefully pointing out, these unintended consequences that endears us to our colleagues in and outside the university and to politicians and their constituencies.

As good as we are at this, and even with our constant vigilance to the notion that a change in the incentives will without doubt bring about predictable behavioral response, it is interesting, I think, that so many of us are so often surprised to find that the model also applies to the behavior of professors. Sure enough we too respond to incentives, self-interest and all those things we economists attribute to real people. In our case, response perhaps even to some of the annual merit evaluation and promotion and tenure criteria nonsense that we impose on ourselves and our colleagues. In the interest of conserving time and space (not to mention lost energy and creativity on the part of the author) I dispense with "the way it is" and "the ideal" and move directly to "an almost ideal faculty evaluation/reporting instrument for land grant universities." Actually no great harm is done here in that most of what is "ideal" with respect to faculty evaluation is, I expect, potentially doable in most land grant university environments. And most of you are as familiar as I am with many of the wondrous items that presently appear on faculty evaluation/reporting forms -- things like involvement in interdisciplinary efforts, creative and imaginative teaching methods employed, grant and contract dollars generated, research activities (as opposed to output), extension program planning activity, etc., etc.

The main problem with our faculty evaluation (incentive) structures is the propensity to confuse input with output -- means with ends. It happens over and over again and at every university with which I am familiar. Productivity, at least to an economist, should have something to do with output relative to input. A measure to which many of us could relate might be "quality-adjusted output per unit of input"<sup>4</sup> where output is expressed (thought of) in terms of final demands of the university. Initially, let me presume that there are some quantifiable final demands of the university for teaching (both resident and nonresident students) and for research as it might be delivered through some teaching medium. The problem with our university evaluation/incentive processes is that invariably we want to count means and process as output when it is in fact input, so we end up seriously understating the denominator and overstating the numerator in productivity calculations. Faculty, being reasonably bright and sometimes rational economic men and women, respond not surprisingly.

In terms of "the way it ought to be," I give you my "almost-ideal faculty evaluation/reporting instrument" (Table 1). Notice two key features of Table 1 -- service has been degraded to minimal status, i.e., a necessary evil that must be done well, yet nevertheless minimized, and extension has disappeared. Or did extension disappear? Actually it did not, rather it has been up-graded, renamed and fully subsumed within the single and most important function of the university, namely teaching, nonresident teaching to be precise. (I believe this is consistent with Henderson's view that education [teaching] is the basic mission of extension.)

Now you may say, what's the big deal -- just semantics or worse yet extension has now been down-graded even further to the status of undergraduate instruction -- we all know the university could give a hang about undergraduate instruction and those who do it well. Just look at what universities do, not what they say, not their rhetoric. On that point I must confess to some uneasiness. Whether or not the status of undergraduate instruction will rise at land grant universities is yet to be seen. Nevertheless I believe a strategy of subsuming extension education within the umbrella of teaching/instruction is a good one. Particularly if the goal is to gain recognition and raise the status of extension faculty in the minds of the greater university faculty, who for the most part don't have the foggiest idea about what extension is all about and who are, to say the least, suspicious.

I submit that language makes a difference -- it is not just a matter of semantics. I have only anecdotal evidence from serving on "umpteenth" different college and university committees. My interaction with faculty and administrators from across several campuses impresses upon me how much of a "black box" the extension service and the agricultural experiment station is to those outside the college of agriculture, including upper-level administrators with agriculturally-related backgrounds and who have spent their entire careers in and around land grant universities. Faculty and administrators outside the college of agriculture, have not the faintest idea about extension and the agricultural experiment station, could care less, and are suspicious that faculty associated therewith are engaged in fluff, are inferior academics and are over-funded and underemployed.

Is there some truth to what they say? If there is not, is there reason to blame them or point fingers at them for not knowing what it is we do, or to condemn them for abandoning or not understanding or appreciating the tripartite mission of the land grant university? I think not. Rather we would serve our self-interest and the cause of resident and nonresident teaching and of applied research by changing our, not their, mind set. We must infiltrate the game following their rules, adopting their academic jargon, their administrative structure, their passion for academic excellence, their insistence of arms-length relationship with "clientele." I believe a strategy of infiltration and winning from the inside is surely wiser than emphasizing our differences and our "enlightened and presumably superior" sense of the land grant mission. Colleges of agriculture are but a small cog in the land grant university wheel. That wheel is not all bad and is capable of understanding where we are coming from if we will but give it a chance -- by making ourselves more like the wheel, rather than fighting a losing battle of hoping the entire wheel will mold itself in the image of a shrinking cog. Friends, right or wrong, remolding the university in the image of colleges of agriculture "ain't a gonna happen!" We have to buy in, we must adopt their language, their mind set and their ideals. Once we have done that, then I believe we will be pleasantly surprised how many within the "rest of the university" share our interest in applied research and in teaching willing learners wherever they might be.

One more item by way of set up before we take up the details of faculty evaluation implicit in Table 1. That is, Beattie's First Rule of Faculty Evaluation: Beware the Bean Counters! Anyone who desires to reduce, or who thinks faculty evaluation can be reduced, to a numerical process with subcategory scores ultimately giving rise to a weighted-average grand total score is NUTS. Evaluation is subjective and that's the way it is -- PERIOD. Ultimately, some will be judged more productive than others, some will get higher raises than others, some will make promotion and some will not, some will gain tenure and some will not. It is inherently a process of shooting at a moving target with constantly changing judges with their own principles, ideas and criteria (Johnson, Sept. 1987). It isn't great, but it's workable and, in my view, better than overly structured, overly detailed, overly quantified, naïve alternatives.

I believe a simplified faculty reporting instrument limited to just the items on Table 1 serves the purpose of (1) heightening the status of teaching, including nonresident teaching, (2) keeping the focus on output rather than input and/or process and (3) relegating service to internal busy work having to do with running the academic enterprise, not to be confused with the output of the enterprise. I believe this is the way that the academe (outside of colleges of agriculture) has viewed the role of university professors for eons.

With regard to teaching/advising (Table 1) only three things are important: (1) the amount of teaching I do, (2) the quality of that teaching as subjectively perceived by my partners in the learning process, viz., students, and (3) the quality and content of that teaching as subjectively perceived by my disciplinary peers. This is true whether my teaching is of the classroom or one-on-one variety, whether my students are resident or nonresident, or whether my instruction is formal or informal. And, it makes absolutely no difference what teaching methods I use -- old yellowed lecture notes or the latest technological gadgetry! Evidence of one's teaching quantity, i.e., (1) above, and quality, i.e., (2) and (3) above, must be offered for annual merit evaluation and for promotion and tenure. A judgement must then be rendered by peers (including the appropriate disciplinary administrator) vis-a-vis one's colleagues and some notion of minimally acceptable performance for promotion and tenure. The process, especially that of evaluating quality-adjusted teaching and research output, can not be reduced to a mindless mechanical/clerical process. There are times when the continued pursuit of quantification is not the way to go -- faculty evaluation is one of those instances.

Returning to Table 1, notice that under "Publications and Other Evidence of Scholarly Output/Accomplishment" publications are not subcategorized into peer-reviewed (important) and lay-or student-oriented (unimportant). I expect I may be the last professor of my cohort (or younger) that still does not have publications classified on his/her curriculum vitae by various categories. I refuse to do it. (The fact that I have never had to stand for a real P & T review probably has something to do with it!) The point is that subcategorization of publications is just another form of unnecessary disintegration in land grant universities and it should be discouraged, not institutionalized or encouraged. Some of my best papers appear in peer-reviewed journals, so do some of my worst. Some of my more valuable scholarship appears in lay-oriented

publications. To reduce the concept of scholarly contribution to the mere counting of refereed journal articles under some pecking-order of journals is to oversimplify the notion of research productivity, i.e., "quality-adjusted output per unit input," to say the least. Such subcategorizations are especially silly on annual merit review reporting forms. If someone writes so many papers in a given year that I can't sort out what's there, then the appropriate conclusion is that individual has written too much for any of it to be of much quality! It is not out of the range of possibility that an annual faculty productivity report with one refereed journal article and two lay-oriented pieces could represent greater scholarly output and social value, than a full page of refereed paper titles.

Service, the last item on Table 1, is problematic. Service in a university and a professional association such as the AAEEA is a cost of doing business rather than an educational output. But benefits of well done service accrue to our colleagues, and those who do these chores well deserve some reward lest we all decide the best strategy is to "free-ride." The main point to remember is that within the university, intramural service of a colleague can be valuable in terms of facilitating the agenda of one's peers, and is therefore meritorious. But for the university as a whole, intramural service is not a final-demand output.

The problem of what to do about grantsmanship is more difficult. You will notice on my list that grantsmanship is listed under service (chores) and that it is followed by the initials NPEO or "net positive externalities only." Grantsmanship is much like intramural service, if our peers are good at it, then it is entirely possible that the effective resource base of a department, above and beyond the resources needed to complete the contracted research, is enhanced. From this and only this viewpoint, grantsmanship should be considered in evaluating the performance of individual faculty. The part of the grant that is expended in the conduct of the grant's intended purpose is not an output, but rather an input. The output of that input is what should be counted -- the research and/or educational literature produced, the graduate or undergraduate students trained, or the workshops and conferences conducted -- but not the grant dollars generated. We must not confuse input with output when attempting to evaluate productivity -- inputs go in the divisor and outputs (including net positive externalities) in the numerator.

As alluded to earlier, there is not one vice president for research in the world that understands the importance of this fundamental accounting distinction. The opportunity for perverse outcomes as our land grant universities become increasingly dependent on grant and contract funds for their day-to-day operation is not pleasant to contemplate -- perhaps we should ask one of our colleagues from Stanford about the risks involved in this rat race to university stardom through grantsmanship. It is, to say the least, an area of faculty evaluation and university management that needs some serious attention and thoughtful consideration, especially in these times of budget stress. It is such times when those of us in administration might be tempted to throw caution to the wind and embrace anything and anyone that has money that might generate some desperately needed indirect cost recovery to replace our ever-shrinking hard money operations support. Remember Stroup's Law, incentives matter -- even to we level-headed, highly-principled and infallible administrators!

As with university administrative structure, it has been my experience that our colleges of agriculture are among the worst offenders in coming up with all kinds of nonsense when it comes to faculty evaluation and promotion and tenure. I am amazed how often college of agriculture department heads and faculty express the belief that evaluation and P & T criteria should be considerably different for faculty with different funded-appointments, like if God had meant for philosophers to do research then she would have created a philosophical experiment station. Or, as is more often the case, if Professor X in animal science has no experiment station appointment, then it is appropriate (perhaps even desirable) that he be judged solely on the basis of his teaching for merit and promotion and tenure. And certainly in extension we are far too prone to confuse or substitute process for output in evaluation matters. Again, such behavior on our part confuses and puzzles our peers in the rest of the university. It hinders our efforts to gain respect and higher status for nonresident teaching and applied research.

## CONCLUSION

There seems little doubt that our land grant universities, their colleges of agriculture and extension services, and their departments of agricultural economics are "under the gun" (or at least believe they are). Allegations of lost focus and mission, of misplaced emphasis, of self-serving professors rather than professors tending to the needs of their students and of society, and of sustainability are common themes of addresses, papers, strategic planning efforts, and study commissions. These topics and efforts seemingly occupy a disproportionate share of the time and energy of top-level administrators and others in our land grant universities and their colleges of agriculture. It may even be possible that the amount of introspection is out of control relative to any hope of insight or benefits from same. Despite that distinct possibility, this paper attempted to provide some specific suggestions for fine-tuning within the land grant system (and colleges of agriculture in particular), to focus attention on the one function/mission for which universities have a comparative advantage, and to get on with the task of heightening the status of, and fully integrating, resident and nonresident teaching within the university administrative and reward structures. Suggested institutional reforms were offered in the belief that winning the internal war (getting our house in order) is an essential prerequisite to winning the external war for the hearts, minds and pocketbooks of those we serve and whom sustain us.

To that end, several specific recommendations were made in the paper:

- Land grant university administrative structures, and especially the administrative structures of colleges of agriculture, should become more integrated with respect to teaching (resident and nonresident/extension) and research. In the process, the number of levels of line administration can (and should) be reduced.
- We should purge our vocabulary of the term clientele in favor of student, especially in colleges of agriculture and the extension service. Students are fundamentally different from clientele and the university's exclusive business (single mission) involves teaching students in their many varieties. (Also, I take as a given that for all individuals aspiring to the title of professor the expectation of knowledge discovery [research] is part and parcel of the teaching function, and I might add that is true irrespective of the professor's budget/appointment split.) And, while we are at it, it wouldn't hurt to use the term nonresident instruction rather than extension at every opportunity.
- We should purge the term director from our administrative vocabulary. The concept of director has no place in a university setting. There may be a place for directors at the head of an orchestra, or a manufacturing division of IBM or in state or federal government. But in a university -- definitely not!
- Faculty incentive/reward structures must be coherent, consistent, productivity based and as simple as possible. The agreed upon measure of productivity should be quality-adjusted output per unit input. All items that can not be articulated in terms of the legitimate final-demand outputs of a university should be stricken from (or greatly de-emphasized in) all merit evaluation and promotion and tenure criteria statements and documentation.

In violation of an important rule of good writing, I offer two additional thoughts not heretofore discussed in the paper:

- Active participation in meeting the undergraduate teaching responsibility of the university should be an expectation for every tenure-track faculty member except for those whose teaching responsibilities are off campus (extension) and except for those program areas where there is no or only an inconsequential undergraduate program. In the case of agricultural economics, there are few teaching/research funded faculty so valuable in research or graduate education that they should be totally excused from teaching an undergraduate class at least every other year. Undergraduates deserve, and the taxpayers pay handsomely for, the privilege of exposure and interaction with the greatest minds our profession can

provide. Teaching undergraduates is not a second-class occupation -- in fact it's a kick in small dosages (and for we agricultural economists the dosage typically is not that onerous).

- Finally, academic agricultural economics is surely an undergraduate-program dependent profession. There is not a good reliable supply of grant and contract dollars for basic or applied research to support an exclusive research/graduate program effort at least for anything like the entire academic agricultural economics enterprise as exists today. As a pragmatic matter, undergraduate interest in agricultural economics has been, and will continue to be, dominated by undergraduates with interests (at least initially) in agribusiness. Our programs and faculty would be wise to accommodate (in some way) to this reality.<sup>5</sup>

To be sure there are plenty of reasons to be pessimistic about the future of land grant universities, their colleges of agriculture, and agricultural economics. We, the members of AAEEA, have reason to be concerned about the health and welfare of all three -- especially the latter. The future is uncertain to say the least, but if we remember always to emphasize quality and to get in harness in so far as possible with the mind set of academia generally, then surely there is reason to believe that someone will "turn the light back on at the end of the tunnel!" As my friend and colleague, Jeff LaFrance, often says after something good happens, "Life ain't always bad!" (Of course, Jeff has been accused at one time or another as being both a perennial optimist and a perennial pessimist -- sometimes both at the same time.)

It is perhaps a bit trite -- but surely our future is mostly up to us. Dan Paderg advises us well -- we must learn to give a better play from an unstable institutional stage rather than the sometimes mediocre play we became accustomed to giving from the all too familiar and stable stage of the past. As I look to the future, I can not help but be optimistic. I observe, in the generations of economists following mine, an enthusiasm, the theoretical and quantitative skills, the analytical rigor and the imagination that would make any father or mother proud. I believe we are in for some "fine plays" -- and for several years to come.

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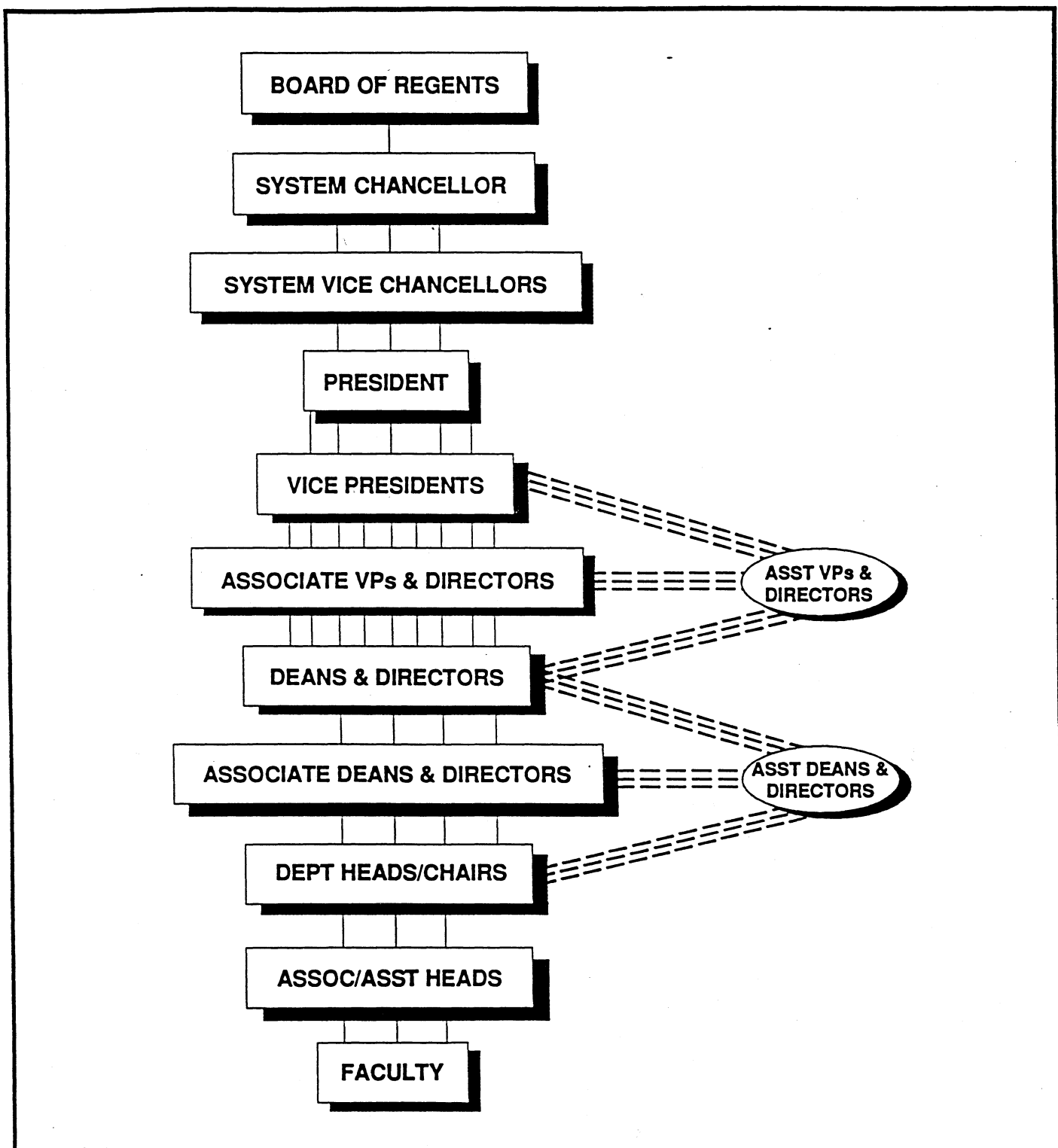
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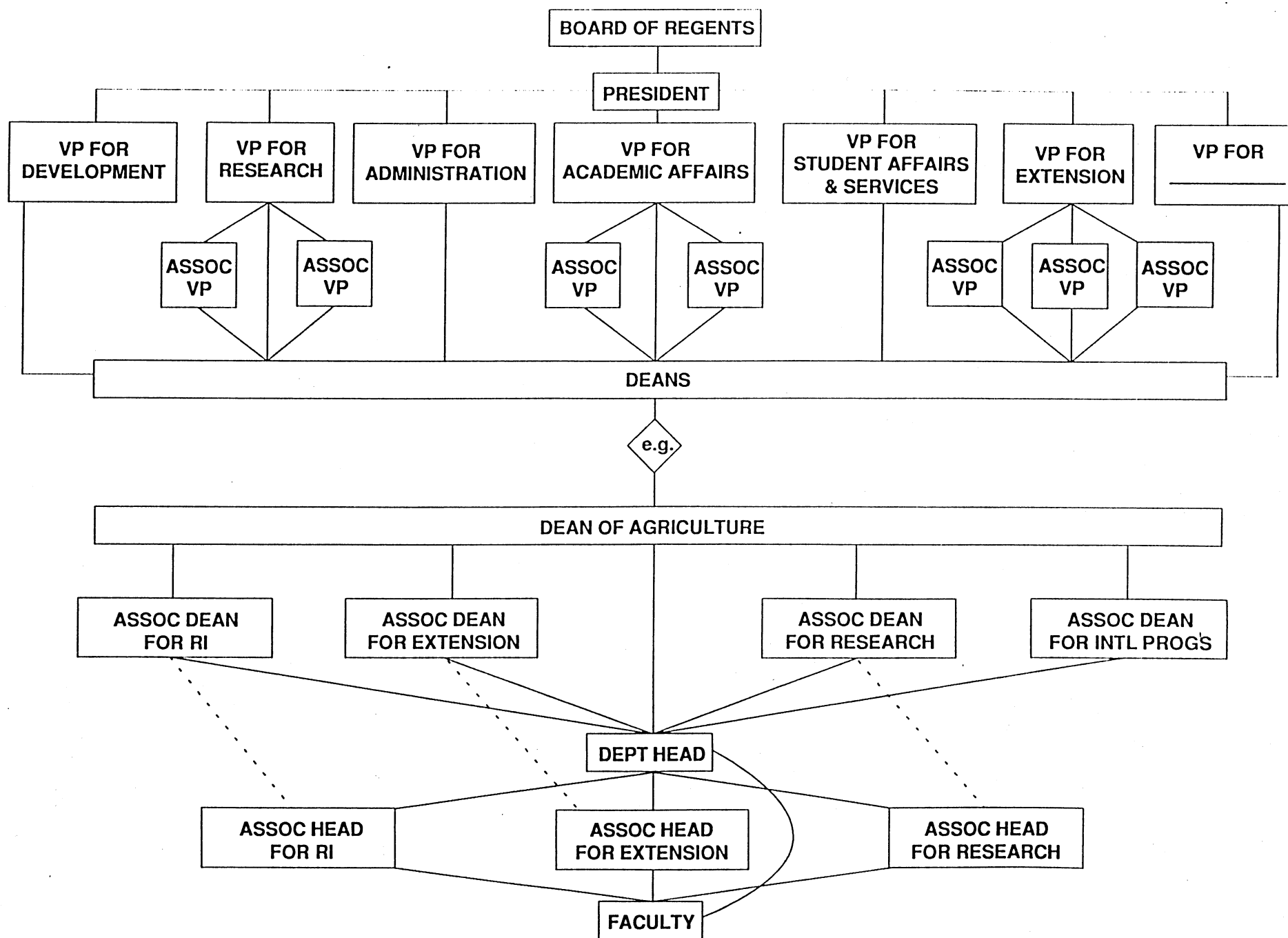
#### FOOTNOTES

- \* Bruce R. Beattie is professor and head of agricultural economics at The University of Arizona. The author makes no particular claim of originality or great insight. The ideas conveyed in this paper are due, in part, to the influence and writing of many economists. Prominent among those are Emery Castle, Ken Farrell (and coauthors), Al Halter, Dennis Henderson, Marc Johnson, Warren Johnston, Dan Padberg, Ed Schuh, Richard Stroup and especially Myles Watts. (My debt to Watts is sufficiently great that if it were appropriate to coauthor a presidential address, he would qualify in spades.) To all these people the usual caveat applies -- and with force for none of them, except Watts, had an opportunity to see the paper prior to printing. Unfortunately for the author, none of these people can be held accountable for misinterpretation of, or injury caused to, their otherwise good idea(s).
- <sup>1</sup> The expense of excessive administrative overburden is especially noticeable/painful in our "smaller" land grant universities. Such institutions, even those with fewer than 10,000 to 15,000 students, seem bound and determined to emulate their big research-university brethren in all ways -- good and bad. The need for smaller universities to streamline and reduce their administrative structure seems particularly manifest.
- <sup>2</sup> By the way, the blank VP position is for you, the reader, to fill in your favorite. In doing so, might I suggest you choose one for which "blank" best describes your perception of the duties, performance and need for the position. Every university will have at least one such VP position.
- <sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Myles Watts for pointing out to me the critical and subtle difference and importance of distinguishing between students and clientele as well as the repugnant nature of the title of director in a university setting (discussed earlier).
- <sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Jeff LaFrance for this terminology.
- <sup>5</sup> I had originally hoped to discuss a few ideas explaining how we economic-purists could "have our cake and eat it too" with regards agribusiness -- ideas that would keep economics rather than business front and center and would at the same time permit us to turn out a competitive and valuable student product to society. But given time and space constraints, I will leave that for another time and place.

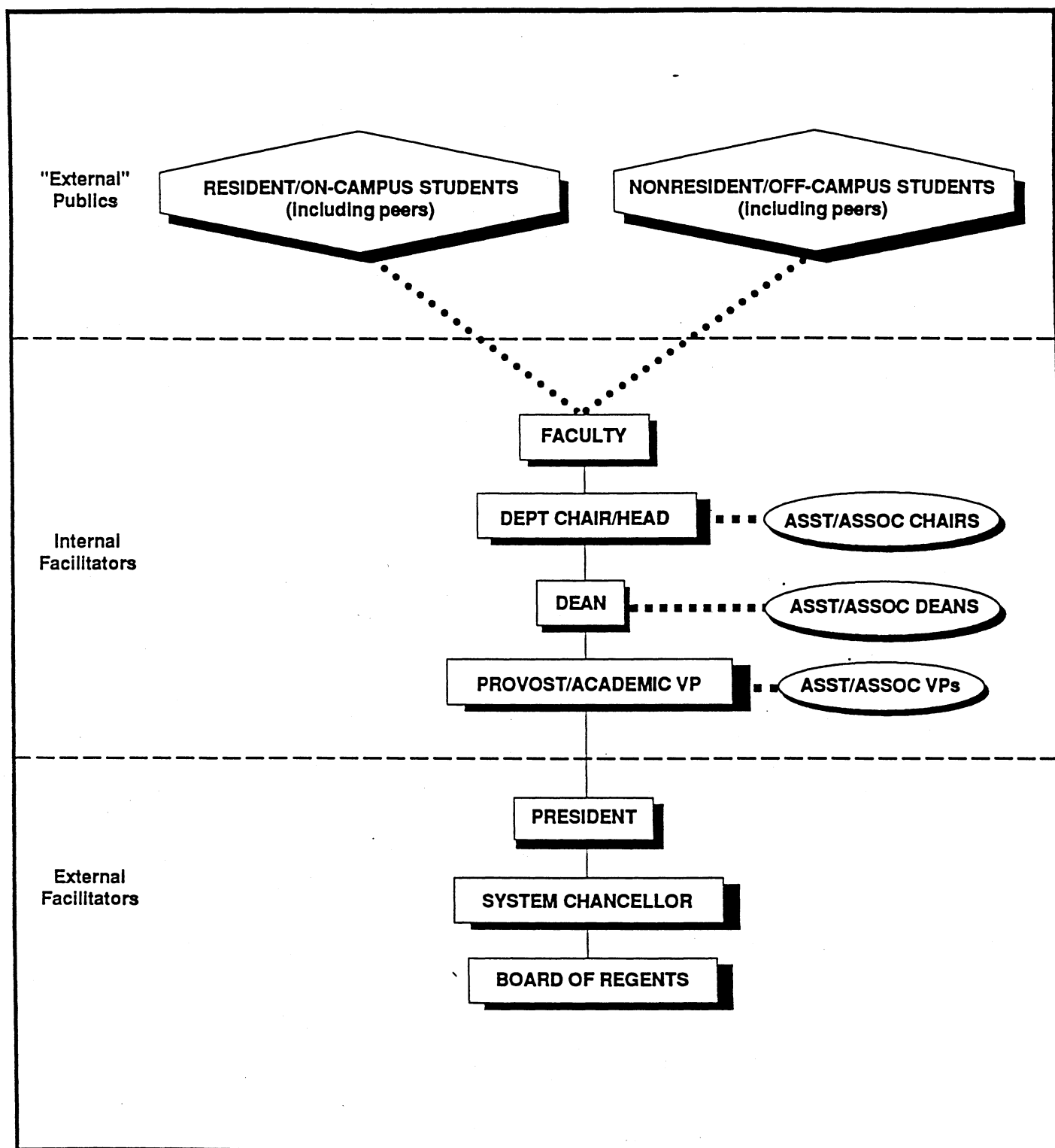




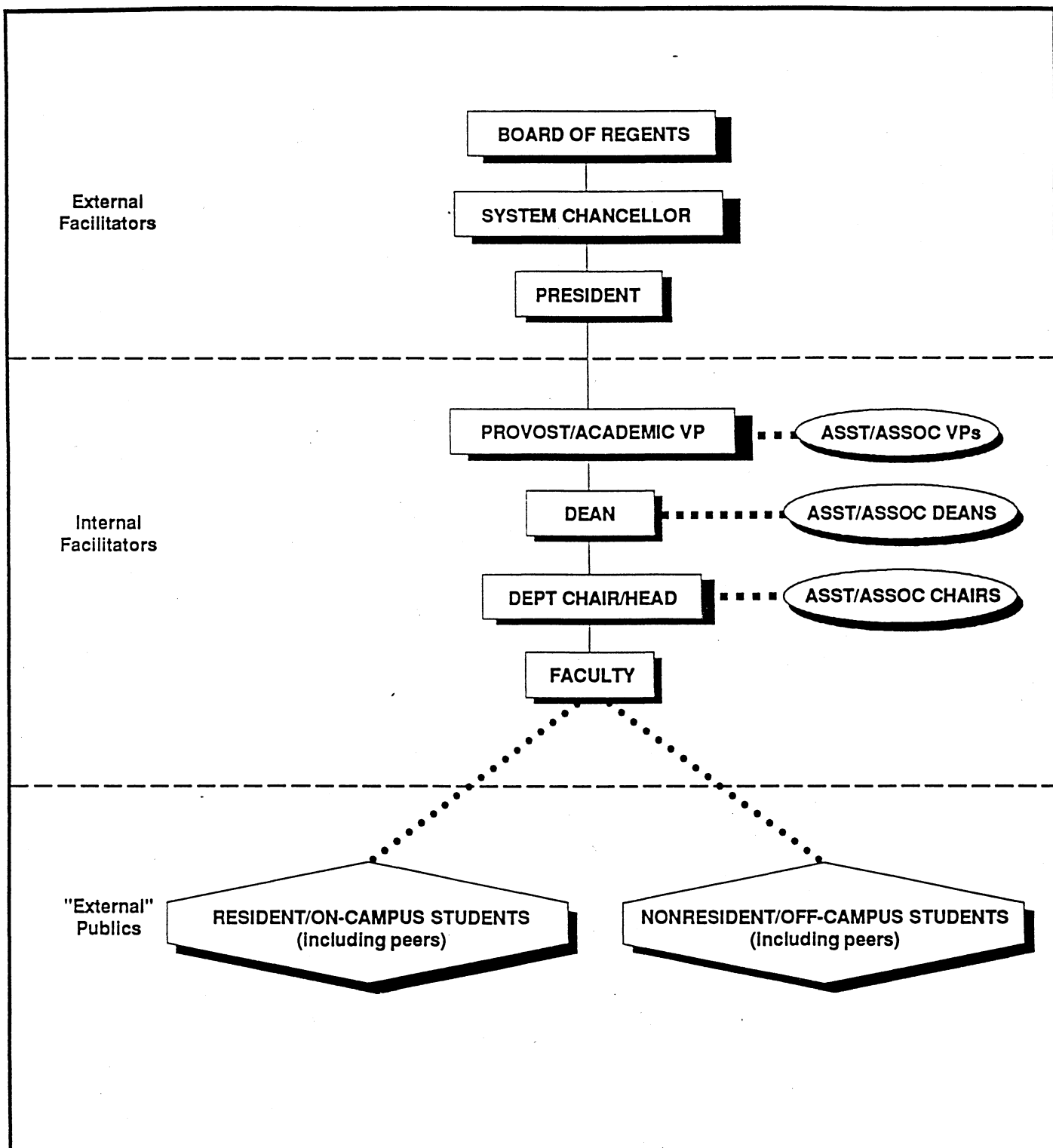
**FIG. 1. A SIMPLIFIED TYPICAL UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION CHART**



**FIG. 2. A MORE SPECIFIC, SIMPLIFIED, UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION CHART**



**FIG. 3.**  
**AN IDEAL UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION CHART**



**FIG. 4. AN ALMOST-IDEAL  
UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION CHART**

**TABLE 1**  
**AN ALMOST-IDEAL FACULTY EVALUATION/REPORTING INSTRUMENT**  
**FOR**  
**LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES**

**I. TEACHING & ADVISING**

- A. Resident (Undergraduate & Graduate)
- B. Nonresident (Formal & Informal)
- C. Awards & Recognition

**II. PUBLICATIONS & OTHER EVIDENCE OF SCHOLARLY  
OUTPUT/ACCOMPLISHMENT**

- A. Publications
- B. Other Research Output
- C. Awards & Recognition

**III. SERVICE (CHORES)**

- A. To Professional Societies
- B. To Department, College & University
- C. Grantsmanship (NPEO)