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The State of NPS

Harrison Shull

November 28, 1989

Once again it is my pleasure to appear before you with comments on changes at NPS this past year and our plans for the near future. Last year's report was that of a newcomer, full of first impressions and only glimmers of concepts that deserved some consideration. Today I want to spend my time in a more directed look at the organization of this University (or at least my part of it) and to outline for you some significant changes in the administrative structure that will be implemented during this next year.

There are some important general principles I try to keep in mind in making administrative changes.

I don't believe in change for change's sake. Any significant change should confer a positive benefit which outweighs to a considerable extent the cost to the institution of making the change.

Additional bureaucratic layers should be avoided if at all possible. Rather than imposing new ones, one should try to eliminate them.

Decision-making should be pushed down as far into the organization as decisions can be made appropriately and effectively.

In so far as possible, decisions should be made once, and, once made, these decisions should be reviewed once and only once.

It is incumbent upon management to prepare for smooth future succession to management with adequate development programs for potential new managers.

Management should be as cost-effective as possible, so that the maximum amount of available resources is made available in support of the basic mission of the institution.

With these in mind, let me make some general comments on our current situation.

First and foremost, the leadership represented in the Deans and Chairs is absolutely first-rate. The individuals involved are expert, hard-working, dedicated leaders. But the management is very, very thin. It may be hard

to imagine from the viewpoint of a faculty member, involved in the demanding day-to-day world of instruction and research, how different the administrative world really is. There is a constant flow of visitors, altogether too constant a flow of high priority short-fuse requests from Washington, a regular parade of reviews, audits, and inspections., and a plethora of detailed instructions, laws, notices, and budgetary changes that make change and variation the norm rather than the exception. To the extent possible, the School's administration is sincerely dedicated to trying to keep these events from impinging upon the mission of educating our students, but it isn't always possible to do so. You may be dismayed at the amount of forms and detail work that is requested of you. You would find it sobering to discover how much has been kept from you.

The present structure, as viewed by the myopic vision of the Provost, is schematically illustrated in this slide. SLIDE 1. It is working fine, but there are obvious flaws. The division between 05 and 06 is arbitrary, and the rationale for some departments being on one side or the other is somewhat vague, beyond perhaps some desire to keep the two divisions about equal in size. My very first interviews and discussions displayed to me a significant amount of jealousy, envy, and concern about the distribution of resources between the two divisions (not exclusively in any one direction). I believe the arbitrary separation has also led to decreased interactions between some departments which should be natural relatives just because one was under 05 and the other under 06.

Fortunately, the two Deans work very well together, or there would be additional problems with this divided structure. I am told this division was introduced some 13 years ago when the change served the institution well, but the reasons for that step at that time no longer seem relevant.

Answering directly to the Provost in the organization when I arrived, besides the two Deans, were 013, Joe Barron, 011, Bob Zucker in Continuing Education, 012, Gil Howard, Director of Research Administration, 014, Gerry Lindsey, Dean of Academic Administration, and the four interdisciplinary groups, ASW, EW, C3, and Space for a total of 10 (besides Elaine). Last December, Bob Zucker retired, and I asked Gerry Lindsey to assume the duties he had handled. [Slide 2]. Later, a budget crunch and the absolute necessity of getting on top of our safety and procurement problems, together with the coincidental departure of individuals from the Continuing Education Office, led us to shut down most of that operation. [Slide 3]

In August, Gerry himself returned to the Aero Department as Academic Associate, and his duties were divided into two parts. I assumed temporary responsibility for one piece encompassing the Library, the

Computer Center, and the MIS function. The second piece, consisting of those parts of a more academic administrative nature: the registrar, director of admissions, and scheduling I temporarily assigned to 05. [Slide 4]. As of November 1, I announced the appointment of Barry Frew as Director of Computer and Information Services, and he has vigorously taken on the considerable responsibilities of these important sectors of the institution. [Slide 5]

Finally, another change that has forced me to think through the various alternatives was the decision of Dean Kneale Marshall to seek new stimulating activities after a long stint as Dean of Policy and Information Sciences. He will be taking leave as of January 1 for a period of renewal at the University of California at Berkeley, returning to NPS in July of this year.

Additionally, two other observations are pertinent. First, the top layer of administration is very thin. There is little possibility of grooming successors as we are currently organized. Second, there is relatively weak understanding "on the Quadrangle" of what really happens "on the Mezzanine". There is no mechanism for rotating some faculty through administrative positions, on the one hand to see if they have an interest and proclivity in that kind of work, and on the other hand to provide an opportunity of bringing new viewpoints to the administration as well as eventually providing back to the faculty a greater understanding of the activities and pressures of the central administration.

All of these factors taken together have led me to the conclusion that we should not try to replace the 05 Dean and continue the present structure. Rather, I have decided to combine the two offices into a single office, that of the Dean of the Faculty. Obviously, this remedies any possible detriments that may have accrued from the separation of the two divisional Deans, but it exacerbates a problem of span of control, for now Dean Schacher is faced with eleven departments, not just 5 or 6. [Slide 6]

The solution to this problem has been exemplified at several other institutions with which I am familiar, by providing within the office structure of the Dean of the Faculty, sufficient faculty level administrative support to make the office work. Consequently, Dean Schacher has been seeking appropriate Associate Deans to work with him in the Office of the Dean. He has appointed Bob Bourke as the first of these, and Bob has already been in his position for the last month. These positions are not familiar to this institution so they deserve a little description.

The intent is that each Associate Dean be half-time, in the sense that the

individual selected is expected to keep active in his or her original department, maintaining currency and status so that there is an easy return to departmental duties at a later time. The Office of the Dean must not introduce a new bureaucratic layer. The participants in the Dean's Office must have an understanding of a common direction, and each individual in the office should be expected to act for the Office on the vast majority of items presented for review. It is my experience that there will develop very natural functional specializations on the part of those in the Office, but such functional specialization must not be allowed to require additional chops on desired actions. Each specialist must therefore also be a generalist.

This functional change permits additional faculty to be involved in administration without increasing the total portion of the budget devoted to administration. Those departments giving up half a faculty FTE to serve in the "Deanery" will, of course, be recompensed so that replacement adjuncts can be secured to take up the instructional duties left behind.

Now let me turn to other parts of the structure under the Provost. It was almost a universal comment, upon my arrival, that NPS needed a Dean of Research. I believe this interest arose, not from any dissatisfaction with the work of Gil Howard as Director of Research Administration, but rather from a realization that much more needed to be done, more than could ever be expected of Gil, already heavily overloaded with administration of hundreds of research proposals and accounts as well as the problems introduced with Direct Funded Research as a new administrative device.

It now seems appropriate to move ahead to appoint a Dean of Research, and, in line with time-honored procedures of the faculty, I will appoint a Faculty Committee to advise me on the selection of such a Dean. In tune with the other comments I have made earlier, I think of this individual as half-time in administration. The new research functions that need to be divided up in the new Office of the Dean of Research would especially be those associated with external funding opportunities and interactions. I would hope that we can have a new Dean of Research in place by July 1.  
[Slide 7]

Now let me turn to a new function that is perceived by those of us who have to answer the mail from the Pentagon as very necessary. I mention it here in order to solicit any ideas you may have as to how to establish and staff it. I believe we need a small Office of Institutional Research to collect and analyze the data about this institution and to keep abreast of the data that are required on all too frequent occasions to justify our very existence, or to demonstrate the effectiveness of our use of Navy funds. Such an Office could report to the Provost, or be a part of any of the other

offices mentioned, but, of course, it would serve all. I think of this as an opportunity for a relatively high level civil service position, although perhaps some faculty member would also find it a stimulating opportunity. [Slide 8]

Finally, let me turn to the remaining activities that answer to the Provost. These include those academic administrative functions that reported to Gerry Lindsey, the four interdisciplinary groups, the Academic Council, together with some other miscellaneous, but important, activities such as the Advanced Instructional Workshop, the Faculty Orientation Program, the administration of the SOF's, etc. In addition to these, there are certain other activities that seem important to me, but are left with little attention. Among these are the faculty inputs to curricular reviews, the Academic Associates, the monitoring of excellence in instruction apart from the SOF's, a new function of keeping up with our alumni, and possibly of actively pursuing advanced continuing education with them. These are too important to deserve short shrift.

Obviously some of these items are also in the province of the Director of Programs who wears both an academic and a military hat. I believe we need additional faculty leadership and initiative in this area, but I am not quite sure of the most effective structure or the appropriate division of duties. Tentatively, I suggest that we consider a new Dean of Instruction to work closely with the Director of Programs in this area. [Slide 9]

I propose to proceed in this direction in a two stage process, first appointing a Committee to advise on the structure and division of duties, and then establishing a second committee to advise on the selection of an individual to lead the effort. If we move reasonably quickly, we can have this new structure in place by or shortly after July 1 as well.

When all this is done, the Provost would have a reduced number of reports, there would be increased attention to the most important functions of the Institution, and there will be a very significant increase in faculty involvement in administration, all with relatively small increase in administrative costs, if any. There are many other places where we need additional resources, so it is important that we keep these costs to the minimum essential amount.

As many of you know, we have had our ABET accreditation site visit, and we have every reason to believe that our engineering programs will be re-accredited by about July 1 of next year. In retrospect, the ABET representatives were perhaps not as well selected as they might have been, for they came from institutions with far less engineering status than our own. Their positive reaction to the quality of our programs was

pleasing, but it did not serve as a satisfactory substitute for a thorough review by a group from leading engineering schools in the country whose expectations would have been considerably higher.

The next such accreditation visit comes in March when a WASC team will spend a week here. The self-study process, to which so many of you contributed, is approaching its end. A draft is scheduled to be delivered to WASC in December, and, following comments from WASC and subsequent revision as necessary, a final version will be delivered in January. Gerry Lindsey has shepherded this self-study to the very end, even after his return to Aero, and we owe him many thanks for his hard work.

The combination of the preparation of POM-92, submitted last September 1, the preparations for the GERG and GERB in November, and now the completion of the WASC self-study provide rich material for pulling together a genuine Strategic Plan for NPS. I have asked Paul Marto to take on extra duties as Special Assistant to the Provost with an eye to using his long experience, breadth of viewpoint, and clear insight to help pull together such a strategic plan. He will be working with a small Committee during the winter quarter with a goal of completing a draft strategic plan before he departs for Europe on or about April 1.

Paul will also be serving as an ex officio resource individual to another small Committee that will re-examine the Marto report, to assess our progress in realizing its recommendations, and to revise such of its recommendations that seem now to need change in the light of changing external conditions and changes in NPS itself.

All of this may seem like a lot of changes, but it really is a consolidation of functions that will, I believe, increase our effectiveness. There will be difficult budgetary times ahead, and it is incumbent upon us to be prepared to make the arguments on behalf of the School in the most persuasive way possible. It is my belief that, as the military (and The Navy) must retrench in the near future, it is crucial to maintain future readiness. We must consciously maintain activities that have long lead times. This implies a richer mix of officer to enlisted personnel ratio. Future readiness requires that we continue to educate sufficient officers to lead any expanded military that we may need in future crises. It is too late to await the crisis before gearing up the long educational process again.

The same is true for research and development of new technologies and their application to the Navy. This provides an unparalleled opportunity for graduate education and research, for nothing else contributes so solidly to future readiness. It is my belief that this School should grow,

not shrink, in these times. The cost is very small compared to the benefit to future national security. But I am preaching to the choir here, and I will be working hard to make that argument as cogently as I can to those in Washington in the period ahead.

I continue to admire the extraordinary accomplishments in education that you faculty together with our students achieve. We have a wonderful story to tell, and we need to redouble the efforts to get the word out. This is an exciting and enjoyable place to work, and I look forward with keen anticipation to another year of working together with each of you. I welcome your questions, further discussion at the Faculty Council, and also any written comments you may choose to forward. In addition, let me remind you that you are also welcome to make an appointment to see me about any subject that you think may be of mutual interest. I haven't yet had to turn off this offer because of a tremendous rush to my doors! Would that I had that problem!

Thank you for your attention.