

# THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION DIRECTORS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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This research study presents the findings of a nationwide research study undertaken at Utah State University during 1977-78. The purposes of this study were to: 1) determine the head role of the cooperative education director as perceived by directors, their immediate supervisors, and faculty; 2) determine the differences between the actual and ideal role of cooperative education directors as perceived by directors; 3) determine the differences in actual and ideal role perception between two- and four-year college directors; 4) to determine the differences in actual and ideal role perception among directors, their immediate supervisors, and faculty. This article will present the major findings and resulting recommendations from this study in the order of the purposes stated above.

## **Sampling Procedures and Questionnaire Returns**

Three reference groups were utilized to determine the role of the cooperative education director: 1) cooperative education directors, 2) their immediate supervisors, and 3) faculty who actively participated in the colleges' cooperative education program. The subjects for the study were drawn from the 1,030 institutions of higher education identified in the *1976 Cooperative Education Directory*. A 20 percent random sample was drawn. The sample was stratified by level of program (two-year and four-year) to insure proportionate representation. The percentages were drawn from each category based on Brown & Wilson (1976), "Survey of Cooperative Education, 1976". Thus, 46 percent of the sample (95 cooperative education directors) was drawn from two-year colleges and 54 percent (111 cooperative education directors) was drawn from four-year colleges. Table 1 presents a summary of the percentage of questionnaires returned for each of the three reference groups.

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**Table 1**  
**Returns of Directors, Supervisors, & Faculty**

| Instructional Level                  | Directors |       | Supervisors |       | Faculty |       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Four-year Colleges<br>& Universities | (86)      | 77.4% | (66)        | 82.5% | (54)    | 72.9% |
| Two-year Colleges                    | (73)      | 76.8% | (54)        | 84.2% | (38)    | 65.5% |
| Total                                | (159)     | 77.2% | (125)       | 83.3% | (92)    | 69.7% |

### Research Questionnaire

The questionnaire completed by directors, supervisors, and faculty contained 44 role behavior activity statements dealing with the role of the cooperative education director. These statements were determined through a review of the cooperative education literature as well as the use of nationally known cooperative education experts.

### Purpose 1: Ideal Roles of Directors

For descriptive purposes, the arithmetic means of all 44 ideal role behavior activity statements were calculated. These means were ranked by individual reference groups from 1 through 44 with a ranking of 1 assigned to the role activity with the greatest amount of ideal emphasis and 44 to the role activity with the least amount of ideal emphasis. Because of space limitations this article does not report the rank ordering of all 44 role behavior statements, but rather presents the top 15 as reported by all three reference groups. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and rank by reference groups for the top 15 ideal role behavior statements as reported by four-year directors. Table 3 gives the same information for two-year directors.

**Table 2**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, and Rank by Reference Group of Top 15 Ideal Role Behavior Statements**

| Role Defining Groups<br>and Statements   | Ideal Role |      |      |
|--|------------|------|------|
|  | Mean       | S.D. | Rank |
| <b>Four-year Institutions</b>  |            |      |      |
| Recruiting and selecting employers for participation in the cooperative education program. |            |      |      |
| Directors  | 3.56       | .68  | 1    |
| Supervisors  | 3.77       | .58  | 1    |
| Faculty  | 3.70       | .66  | 1    |

Developing, supervising, and administering policies for cooperative education at the institution.

|             |      |     |   |
|-------------|------|-----|---|
| Directors   | 3.55 | .63 | 2 |
| Supervisors | 3.44 | .61 | 6 |
| Faculty     | 3.38 | .77 | 8 |

Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education.

|             |      |     |   |
|-------------|------|-----|---|
| Directors   | 3.48 | .67 | 3 |
| Supervisors | 3.53 | .56 | 2 |
| Faculty     | 3.52 | .69 | 3 |

Facilitating communications between faculty and administration not involved in the daily activities of cooperative education.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.48 | .73 | 3  |
| Supervisors | 3.26 | .71 | 12 |
| Faculty     | 3.15 | .72 | 19 |

Insuring that there is continuity in terms of employment opportunities for coop students.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.47 | .95 | 5  |
| Supervisors | 3.28 | .84 | 11 |
| Faculty     | 3.38 | .82 | 8  |

Having contact and conducting personal interviews with students.

|             |      |     |   |
|-------------|------|-----|---|
| Directors   | 3.45 | .68 | 6 |
| Supervisors | 3.42 | .66 | 7 |
| Faculty     | 3.57 | .64 | 2 |

Soliciting and maintaining faculty involvement in the program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.43 | .72 | 7  |
| Supervisors | 3.38 | .76 | 9  |
| Faculty     | 3.36 | .68 | 11 |

Assisting participating employers in improving the quality of students' job experiences.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.41 | .71 | 8  |
| Supervisors | 3.50 | .66 | 3  |
| Faculty     | 3.33 | .81 | 12 |

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Recruiting and selecting students for participation in the cooperative education program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.37 | .84 | 9  |
| Supervisors | 3.50 | .75 | 3  |
| Faculty     | 3.30 | .88 | 14 |

Soliciting and maintaining administrative support of the program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.37 | .76 | 9  |
| Supervisors | 3.26 | .73 | 12 |
| Faculty     | 3.37 | .82 | 10 |

Evaluating the effectiveness of participating employers.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.36 | .77 | 11 |
| Supervisors | 3.39 | .72 | 8  |
| Faculty     | 3.43 | .69 | 5  |

Developing and reviewing long-range goals for cooperative education.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.33 | .70 | 12 |
| Supervisors | 3.47 | .56 | 5  |
| Faculty     | 3.39 | .72 | 7  |

Evaluating the cooperative education program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.30 | .77 | 13 |
| Supervisors | 3.36 | .60 | 10 |
| Faculty     | 3.40 | .77 | 6  |

Collecting and disseminating occupational information to assist coop students.

|             |      |      |    |
|-------------|------|------|----|
| Directors   | 3.25 | .84  | 14 |
| Supervisors | 3.18 | .85  | 17 |
| Faculty     | 3.11 | 1.02 | 20 |

Maintaining liaison with faculty and administration through college and university committee participation.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.25 | .74 | 14 |
| Supervisors | 2.98 | .69 | 23 |
| Faculty     | 3.21 | .74 | 18 |

**Table 3**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, and Rank by Reference Group for Top 15 Ideal**  
**Role Behavior Statements**  
**Two-year Institutions**

| Role Defining Groups<br>and Statements  | Ideal Role |      |      |
|---|------------|------|------|
|   | Mean       | S.D. | Rank |
| Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education.               |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.69       | .60  | 1    |
| Supervisors   | 3.66       | .58  | 3    |
| Faculty   | 3.58       | .85  | 1    |
| Developing, supervising, and administering the policies for cooperative education at the institution. |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.62       | .62  | 2    |
| Supervisors   | 3.53       | .68  | 11   |
| Faculty   | 3.37       | .69  | 8    |
| Developing and maintaining administrative support of the program.                                     |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.59       | .64  | 3    |
| Supervisors   | 3.41       | .72  | 16   |
| Faculty   | 3.35       | .77  | 9    |
| Recruiting and selecting employers for participation in the cooperative education program.            |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.54       | .77  | 4    |
| Supervisors   | 3.76       | .65  | 1    |
| Faculty   | 3.56       | .91  | 2    |
| Developing and reviewing long-range goals for cooperative education.                                  |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.53       | .63  | 5    |
| Supervisors   | 3.58       | .62  | 7    |
| Faculty   | 3.47       | .62  | 3    |
| Evaluating the cooperative education program.   |            |      |      |
| Directors   | 3.50       | .61  | 6    |
| Supervisors   | 3.59       | .67  | 5    |
| Faculty   | 3.40       | .69  | 4    |

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Assisting participating employers in improving the quality of students' job experiences.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.49 | .69 | 7  |
| Supervisors | 3.64 | .55 | 4  |
| Faculty     | 3.33 | .85 | 12 |

Recruiting and selecting students for participation in the cooperative education program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.49 | .90 | 7  |
| Supervisors | 3.68 | .60 | 2  |
| Faculty     | 3.34 | .87 | 10 |

Soliciting and maintaining faculty involvement in the program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.49 | .65 | 7  |
| Supervisors | 3.57 | .62 | 9  |
| Faculty     | 3.21 | .73 | 19 |

Having contact and conducting personal interviews with students.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.42 | .88 | 10 |
| Supervisors | 3.58 | .65 | 7  |
| Faculty     | 3.38 | .89 | 7  |

Facilitating communication between faculty and administration not involved in the daily activities of cooperative education.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.41 | .73 | 11 |
| Supervisors | 3.44 | .73 | 14 |
| Faculty     | 3.29 | .83 | 13 |

Soliciting employer's opinions concerning the quality of the cooperative education program.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.39 | .76 | 12 |
| Supervisors | 3.46 | .60 | 13 |
| Faculty     | 3.15 | .78 | 23 |

Insuring that there is continuity in terms of employment opportunities for cooperative education students.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.38 | .80 | 13 |
| Supervisors | 3.57 | .68 | 9  |
| Faculty     | 3.26 | .90 | 16 |

Insuring that coordinators properly match students with available jobs in business, industry, and government.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.38 | .90 | 13 |
| Supervisors | 3.50 | .80 | 12 |
| Faculty     | 3.39 | .83 | 5  |

Enabling decisions regarding academic credit, grading policy, coop plans, etc.

|             |      |     |    |
|-------------|------|-----|----|
| Directors   | 3.34 | .77 | 15 |
| Supervisors | 3.31 | .67 | 20 |
| Faculty     | 3.10 | .88 | 29 |

### **Recommendations Related to Role Information**

The role information generated by this research study resulted in the descriptive rank ordering of the 44 ideal role behavior statements by all three reference groups. Recommendations related to this descriptive information included the following:

1. The three reference groups' perceptions of what should constitute the ideal role of cooperative education directors could serve as a good reference guide for the evaluation and possible revision of existing job descriptions for the director's position. Since ideal role behavior represents how directors, their supervisors, and faculty perceive directors behaving in a future sense, existing job descriptions should possibly de-emphasize those role behavior activities which were ranked consistently low by all three reference groups and place greater emphasis on those which were ranked consistently high.
2. When hiring directors in the future, institutions may wish to consider utilizing the 44 role behavior statements generated by this study to measure how prospective candidates rate themselves on each of the 44 role statements in an ideal sense. These ratings could then be compared with the results of this study to determine how closely prospective candidates compare to national averages or to the institution's conception of the position.

### **Purpose 2: Differences Between Actual and Ideal Role of Directors as Perceived by Directors**

At both the two- and four-year college levels, a t-test among correlated means was used to compare mean responses of the actual to the ideal role of directors. The level of significance was set at 0.01.

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### Four-Year Directors (Actual versus Ideal)

A significant difference (.01 level) was found on 34 of the 44 role behavior activity statements for four-year directors. These statements are shown in appendix A. Of those role behavior activity where a significant difference was found, the ideal exceeded the actual on all but one statement — role statement number 6, preparing routine correspondence and other paper work required for the day-to-day operation of the cooperative education program.

Role Statements where there was no significant difference for four-year directors between actual and ideal role behavior included the following:

Statement

Number

Role Behavior Statement

Recruiting and selecting employers for participation in the cooperative education program.

### Recommendations for Two-Year Directors

1. The mean ideal score was significantly higher than the mean actual score on 36 of the 44 role behavior activity statements. On every role behavior activity statement where a significant difference was found, the ideal exceeded the perceived actual. Two-year directors, like their four-year counterparts, appear to not be satisfied with their own performance on these activities, or also tend to be very idealistic (even more idealistic than four-year directors) in terms of their present job performance. It is recommended that two-year directors examine these 36 role behavior activity statements and decide whether they should place greater emphasis on these activities, striving for more uniformity between the actual and ideal role.
2. That there was no statistical difference between the actual and ideal role behavior mean scores on 8 of the 44 role behavior activity statements indicates that two-year directors apparently are functioning close to the ideal on these 8 role behavior activities. No increase or decrease in emphasis is recommended for these 8 role behavior activities.

### Recommendations for Both Levels.

1. The perceptions held by directors concerning what should constitute the ideal role of cooperative education directors at both levels may be unrealistic in terms of the amount of time available to the director. If directors perceive that it is desirable for them to increase their emphasis on a particular role activity, then a corresponding decrease in emphasis may have to occur in other role behavior activities. This implies that coop directors will either have



to know how to more effectively utilize the time they have available, cut back or stop performing certain activities, or increase the amount of time they have available to perform these activities. Specific recommendations which may help in addressing this potential time problem include:

- 9      Preparing the annual report for cooperative education.
- 11     Administering the budget and making financial reports.
- 14     Preparing state and federal proposals as required for program funding.
- 23     Preparing and presenting a proposed budget for cooperative education.
- 25     Establishing and maintaining a student record keeping system in the cooperative education office.
- 27     Developing and implementing short-range goals for cooperative education at the institution.
- 32     Recruiting and selecting students for participation in the cooperative education program.
- 43     Insuring that coordinators properly match students with available jobs in business, industry, and government.
- 44     Having contact and conducting personal interviews with students.

**Two-Year Directors (Actual Versus Ideal)**

A significant difference (.01) was found on 36 of the 44 role behavior activity statements for two-year directors. On every role behavior statement where a significant difference was found the ideal exceeded the perceived actual. Appendix A presents these role statements.

Role statements where there was no significant difference for two-year directors between actual and ideal role behavior included the following:

| Statement |  |
|-----------|--|
| Number    | Role Behavior Statement  |
| 6         | Preparing routine correspondence and other paperwork required for the day-to-day operation of the cooperative education program. |
| 11        | Administering the budget and making financial reports.   |
| 14        | Preparing state and federal proposals as required for program funding.   |
| 25        | Establishing and maintaining a student record keeping system in the cooperative education office.                                |

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- 28      Developing and reviewing college catalog information related to cooperative education.
- 32      Recruiting and selecting students for participation in the cooperative education program.
- 41      Enabling decisions regarding academic credit, grading policy, coop plans (alternating, parallel, extended day), etc.
- 44      Having contact and conducting personal interviews with students.

### **Recommendations for Four-Year Colleges.**

1. The mean ideal score was significantly higher than the mean actual score on 33 of the 44 role behavior activity statements. The large majority of role behavior statements where ideal significantly exceeded the actual indicates that directors may be dissatisfied with their own performance on these activities or that they tend to be very idealistic in terms of their future job performance. Four-year coop directors should examine these 33 role behavior activity statements with the possibility that they may wish to consider placing more emphasis on these activities, so that there is closer conformity between actual and ideal role behavior.
2. A significantly lower mean ideal score was found on only one role behavior activity statement—role statement number 6, “Preparing routine correspondence and other paperwork required for the day-to-day operation of the cooperative education program.” Directors should consider placing less emphasis on the future and perhaps delegating routine correspondence responsibilities to the senior secretary in the coop office.
3. There were no significant differences in the ideal and actual mean scores on 10 of the 44 role behavior activity statements. In these areas, four-year directors are apparently functioning close to what they consider to be ideal. No increase or decrease in emphasis on these 10 role behavior activities is recommended.
  - A. Directors could maintain a daily log of their activities and the time required for each. Such a record would provide directors with the data required to analyze what they do, the importance of these activities, and the amount of time they spend performing them. An analysis of this nature would allow directors to make more logical decisions regarding the most effective utilization of their time.
  - B. Directors should delegate non-critical tasks to subordinates within the coop office. Simple, relatively non-complex activities could be delegated

to competent secretarial personnel, or other more important, time consuming activities could be delegated to coordinators in the office.

- C. The time available to directors for the performance of administrative and leadership activities could be increased substantially if the director would become less involved in day-to-day student coordination activities. Directors should weight the advantages and disadvantages of this approach for increasing the amount of time available to them.

2. Since there appears to be such a wide discrepancy between directors' perceptions of their actual and ideal role at both the two- and four-year college levels, it is recommended that further research be conducted to determine whether this difference results in job dissatisfaction among directors or whether it represents their idealistic perceptions of their role.

### **Purpose 3: Differences in Role Perception Between Two- and Four-Year Directors**

To determine if there were differences between two- and four-year directors in terms of actual and ideal role behavior, a series of t-tests for independent samples on mean responses of all 44 role statements was computed. The level of significance was set at .05.

#### **Two- Versus Four-Year Directors, Actual Role**

On actual role behavior there was no significant difference (.05 level) on 35 of the 44 role behavior activity statements. Two-year directors were significantly higher than four-year directors on actual role behavior statements 2, 3, 28, 39, 40, and 41. Four-year directors were significantly higher than two-year directors on actual role statements 1, 19, and 36. Table 4 provides a summary of the significant differences between two- and four-year directors on mean actual responses.

**Table 4**  
**Differences between two-year and four-year directors on actual role where significant differences were found at the 0.05 level**

| Role Statement  | 2-Yr.<br>4-Yr. | Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | t-Value | Degrees<br>of<br>Freedom |
|---|----------------|------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1. Recruiting and selecting employers for participation in the cooperative education program. | 2              | 3.00 | .83                   | -2.73   | 157                      |
|   | 4              | 3.36 | .83                   |         |                          |

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|  |               |              |            |       |     |
|--|---------------|--------------|------------|-------|-----|
| 2. Evaluating the cooperative education program (conducting studies designed to improve the excellence of cooperative education at the institution). | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.88<br>2.50 | .76<br>.81 | 3.01  | 157 |
| 3. Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education.   | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.32<br>3.02 | .74<br>.78 | 2.40  | 157 |
| 19. Insuring that there is continuity in terms of employment opportunities for coop students.  | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.79<br>3.11 | .91<br>.89 | -2.17 | 156 |
| 28. Developing and reviewing college catalog information related to cooperative education.   | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.71<br>2.41 | .92<br>.89 | 2.08  | 156 |
| 6. Maintaining a library of pertinent information relating to participating companies for student use.   | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.12<br>2.66 | .99<br>.94 | -3.50 | 157 |

|   |               |              |              |      |     |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|------|-----|
| 39. Interpreting federal and state laws as they relate to the administration of cooperative education programs.         | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.73<br>2.33 | .98<br>1.04  | 2.46 | 156 |
| 40. Identifying and explaining the role and job responsibilities on coop coordinators.                                  | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.75<br>2.35 | 1.02<br>1.08 | 2.34 | 150 |
| 41. Enabling decisions regarding academic credit, grading policy, coop plan (alternating, parallel, extended day), etc. | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.18<br>2.73 | .88<br>1.03  | 2.91 | 151 |

### Two- Versus Four-Year Directors, Ideal Role

There was no significant difference (.05 level) between two- and four-year directors' mean responses on 28 of the 44 ideal role behavior statements measured. Two-year directors were significantly higher than four-year directors on role behavior statements 3, 11, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39, and 40. Table 5 provides a summary of the differences between two- and four-year directors' responses on ideal role where significant differences were found at the .05 level of significance.

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**Table 5**  
**Differences between two-year and four-year directors on ideal role where significant differences were found at the .05 level.**

| Role Statement   | 2-yr.<br>4-yr. | Mean         | Standard<br>Deviation | t-Value | Degrees<br>of<br>Freedom |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 3. Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education. | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.69<br>3.48 | .60<br>.67            | 2.07    | 153                      |
| 11. Administering the budget and making financial reports.                                 | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.00<br>2.68 | .86<br>.93            | 2.21    | 155                      |
| 14. Preparing state and federal proposals as required for program funding.                 | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.00<br>2.65 | .88<br>1.09           | 2.17    | 152                      |
| 15. Working with advisory committees which provide guidance to the coop program.           | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.21<br>2.81 | .79<br>.84            | 3.04    | 153                      |
| 18. Preparing brochures, writing news releases, and other promotional activities.          | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.17<br>2.87 | .82<br>.74            | 2.38    | 155                      |
| 20. Recruiting and selecting coop coordinators.  | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.07<br>2.51 | .89<br>1.01           | 3.54    | 146                      |
| 21. Speaking before on- and off-campus organizations to promote cooperative education.     | $\frac{2}{4}$  | 3.25<br>3.02 | .69<br>.72            | 2.00    | 153                      |

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|--|---------------|--------------|------------|------|-----|
| 22. Conducting workshops and seminars for participating employers.   | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.78<br>2.50 | .83<br>.86 | 2.05 | 154 |
| 23. Preparing and presenting a proposed budget for cooperative education.                                      | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.01<br>2.66 | .78<br>.97 | 2.47 | 153 |
| 24. Administering follow-up studies of coop trainees who have completed their assignments.                     | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.08<br>2.75 | .77<br>.93 | 2.41 | 155 |
| 29. Providing in-service education and training for coordinators involved in the program.                      | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.13<br>2.60 | .81<br>.90 | 3.72 | 147 |
| 30. Soliciting employers' opinions concerning the quality of the cooperative education program.                | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.39<br>3.08 | .76<br>.73 | 2.55 | 154 |
| 31. Working with the various academic departments and divisions in terms of scheduling of classes and courses. | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.04<br>2.57 | .94<br>.97 | 3.06 | 154 |
| 33. Developing and maintaining administrative support of the program.  | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.60<br>3.37 | .64<br>.76 | 2.01 | 154 |

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|   |               |              |            |      |     |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------|------|-----|
| 39. Interpreting federal<br>and state laws as<br>they relate to the<br>administration of<br>cooperative<br>education<br>programs. | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 2.97<br>2.59 | .98<br>.94 | 2.48 | 153 |
| 40. Identifying and<br>explaining the role<br>and job<br>responsibilities of<br>coop coordinators.                                | $\frac{2}{4}$ | 3.14<br>2.71 | .89<br>.98 | 2.78 | 146 |

### **Recommendations Related to Differences in Role Perception between Two- and Four-year Directors**

In terms of actual role behavior there appeared to be only minor differences between two- and four-year directors. Significant differences appeared on nine of 44 role behavior statements. In terms of ideal role behavior (or where directors see themselves performing in a future sense) there appeared to be moderate (16 of 44) differences between two- and four-year directors. The following recommendations are based on this information.

1. Job descriptions for cooperative education directors may need to be different for two- and four-year directors positions reflecting the differences identified above.
2. Future training programs which discuss the role of the cooperative education director should point out the differences between the perceptions of the two- and four-year directors as they relate to the role of directors.

### **Purpose 4: Differences in Role Perception Among Reference Groups**

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) among the means of the three reference groups (directors, supervisors, and faculty) was used to determine if differences in actual and ideal role perception existed. The analysis of variance was applied to each item (1-44) for the three respondent groups from two- and four-year colleges. Where significant differences at the .05 level appeared, the Scheffe' test was used to locate the pair or pairs of means accounting for the difference or differences. Scheffe' comparisons were made at the .10 level of significance because of the rigor of the test. Only significant differences between directors and either of the other two groups are presented here.



### **Four-Year Directors (Actual Role)**

There were no significant differences among directors, supervisors, and faculty on 34 of the 44 role behavior statements contained on the research questionnaire. The ten actual role behavior statements where significant differences (.05 level) were found among reference groups included the following:

*Role Statement 3.* The significant differences in perception of actual emphasis given to *listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education* was between directors ( $X = 3.02$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 3.31$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.37$ ). Supervisors and faculty perceived directors as giving more emphasis to this role activity than did directors.

*Role Statement 11.* The difference in perception of the actual emphasis given to *administering the budget and making financial reports* were between directors ( $X = 2.60$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.06$ ). Faculty perceived directors as giving more emphasis to this role activity than did directors.

*Role Statement 16.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *attending professional meetings and conferences* was between directors ( $X = 2.44$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 2.84$ ) and faculty ( $x = 3.16$ ). Supervisors and faculty perceived directors as giving significantly more emphasis to this role activity than did the directors.

*Role Statement 20.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *recruiting and selecting coop coordinators* was between directors ( $X = 2.09$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 2.59$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.56$ ). Supervisors and faculty perceived directors as giving significantly more emphasis to this role activity than did the directors.

*Role Statement 21.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *promoting cooperative education through speaking engagements* was between directors ( $X = 2.45$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.87$ ). Faculty perceived directors as giving significantly more emphasis to this role activity than did the directors.

*Role Statement 22.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *conducting workshops and seminars* was between directors ( $X = 1.62$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.05$ ). Directors perceived their involvement role activity to be significantly less than did the faculty.

*Role Statement 23.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *preparing and presenting proposed budgets* was between directors ( $X = 2.54$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 2.88$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.12$ ). Directors perceived their role in this area to be significantly less emphasized than did the supervisors and faculty.

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*Role Statement 24.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *administering follow-up studies* was between directors ( $X = 1.99$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.58$ ). Faculty perceived directors as taking a significantly more active role in follow-up studies than did the directors.

*Role Statement 30.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *soliciting employer feedback* was between directors ( $X = 2.53$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.00$ ). Faculty perceived directors as giving significantly more emphasis to this role activity than did the directors.

*Role Statement 39.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *interpreting laws related to cooperative education* was between directors ( $X = 2.33$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 2.77$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.82$ ). Directors perceived their actual role in this area with significantly less emphasis than did the other two respondent groups.

### Four-Year Directors (Ideal Role)

In terms of ideal role (or where reference groups see the directors performing in the future sense) there were no significant differences on 40 of the 44 role behavior statements. The four ideal role statements where significant (.05 level) differences were found included the following:

*Role Statement 6.* The difference in perception of the ideal emphasis given to *completing routine paperwork* was between directors ( $X = 2.69$ ) and supervisors ( $X = 3.00$ ). Supervisors apparently felt that directors should give more emphasis to this role activity.

*Role Statement 8.* The difference in perception of the ideal emphasis given to *facilitating communication between faculty and administration* was between directors ( $X = 3.48$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.15$ ). Faculty, ideally, see directors placing less emphasis to this role activity than would directors.

*Role Statement 14.* The difference in perception of the ideal emphasis given to *preparing state and federal proposals* was between directors ( $X = 2.70$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.14$ ). Faculty, ideally, see directors placing less emphasis on this role activity.

*Role Statement 23.* The difference in perception of the ideal emphasis given to *preparing and presenting a proposed budget* was between directors ( $X = 2.66$ ) and both supervisors ( $X = 3.03$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.07$ ). Directors, ideally, would give significantly less emphasis to preparing and presenting a proposed budget than ideally preferred by supervisors and faculty.

### **Two-Year Directors (Actual Role)**

There were no significant differences between reference groups in 40 of the 44 actual role behavior activity statements. Those role behavior statements where significant differences (.05 level) were found include the following:

*Role Statement 1.* The difference in perception of the actual emphasis given to *recruiting and selecting employers* was between directors ( $X = 3.00$ ) and supervisors ( $X = 3.41$ ). The mean scores of the two groups showed that supervisors believed that directors were more involved with recruitment and selection of employers than did directors.

*Role Statement 14.* The difference in perception of actual emphasis given to *preparing proposals* was between directors ( $X = 2.81$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.43$ ). Group means showed that faculty perceived directors as emphasizing proposal preparation considerably more than did directors.

*Role Statement 16.* The difference in perception of *attendance at state and national meetings* by cooperative education directors was between directors ( $X = 2.56$ ) and faculty ( $X = 2.93$ ). The mean scores of the two groups showed that faculty believed that directors emphasize attendance at meetings and conferences more than directors actually believe was the case.

*Role Statement 35.* The difference in perception of *assigning student coordination responsibilities* was between directors ( $X = 2.38$ ) and faculty ( $X = 3.04$ ). The mean scores of the two groups show that faculty perceive directors as giving more emphasis to student assignment than did directors.

### **Two-Year Directors (Ideal Role)**

There were no significant differences between the three reference groups on 40 of the 44 ideal role behavior statements. The three reference groups did differ significantly (.05 level) on the following role statements.

*Role Statement 26.* The difference in perceived ideal emphasis for directors on *evaluating employers* was between directors ( $X = 3.31$ ) and supervisors ( $X = 3.59$ ). Group means show that supervisors would ideally involve directors with employer evaluation more than directors themselves would want to emphasize the role.

*Role Statement 34.* The difference in perception of *faculty involvement* was between supervisors and faculty and was only noted here because this study was concerned with disparities between directors and the other respondent groups.

*Role Statement 37.* The difference in perceived ideal emphasis given to *conducting surveys* was between directors ( $X = 2.69$ ) and supervisors ( $X = 3.16$ ). Super-

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visors apparently felt that ideally directors should play a greater role in conducting surveys of prospective students and employers.

*Role Statement 38.* The difference in perceived ideal emphasis given to *administering Affirmative Action programs* was between directors ( $X = 2.39$ ) and supervisors ( $X = 2.81$ ). Again, supervisors apparently felt that ideally the cooperative education director should give more emphasis to the Affirmative Action role than the directors' perceptions indicate would be ideal.

### Recommendations for Four-Year Colleges

1. There was general congruence in perceptions of the actual role of a cooperative director between directors, supervisors, and faculty on a majority of the actual role behavior statements. However, conflict did appear on 10 of the 44 role behavior statements. There is an apparent lack of knowledge on the part of supervisors and faculty concerning what cooperative education directors are doing. Because differences occurred on nearly one-fourth of the role behavior statements, cooperative education directors may wish to administer the same instrument used in this study on their campus to determine if the same disparities exist. Once differences have been identified, efforts should be made to inform everyone involved of what the cooperative education director is doing. This could lead to beneficial consideration of what the cooperative education director ought to be doing.
2. There was more disagreement over the actual role of the cooperative education director between directors and faculty than between directors and supervisors. Faculty differed from directors on all 10 of the role behavior statements that appeared significantly different. That cooperative education is relatively new to many four-year institutions could be the reason for some of the differences in actual role perception. Directors who have not done so should try to let faculty members know more about the daily operations of the cooperative education program whenever possible.
3. There was apparent general congruence in the perceptions of the ideal role of a cooperative education director as perceived by directors, supervisors, and faculty. Respondents agreed on 40 of the 44 ideal behavior statements. Where disagreement occurred, supervisors differed significantly from directors on two of four role behavior statements, while faculty differed on three of the four. Three of the items on which disagreements that might lead to conflict related primarily to program administration. Supervisors would prefer to have directors more involved in this role area. Two of the four

conflicting role behavior statements dealt with budgets and program funding. Both faculty and supervisors indicated a preference to see directors more involved in this role area. At some institutions a clear delineation of administrative duties should be made so directors know what is expected of them. The concern for program funding is natural and potential conflicts might be resolved or avoided if faculty and supervisors were kept informed of funding activities. Progress reports should be made available and input for funding proposals should be solicited from supervisors and faculty so they will feel an adequate effort to secure funds is taking place.

### **Recommendations for Two-Year Colleges**

1. There was greater congruence in the perceptions of the actual role of a cooperative education director as perceived by directors, supervisors, and faculty at two-year colleges than at four-year institutions. Respondents agreed on 40 of the 44 actual role behavior statements. Greater congruence might be achieved by making faculty and supervisors more aware of the director's activities. Greater awareness could be achieved through increased communication efforts such as in-service training, workshops, individual consultation, written communication, and job descriptions where none are presently used.
2. There was greater disparity in actual role perceptions between faculty and directors than between supervisors and directors. Supervisors may have more accurate perceptions of the director's role than do faculty members. Again, increased communication with faculty is recommended.
3. There was general congruence (40 of the 44 role behavior statements) in the perception of the ideal role of the cooperative education director as reported by directors, supervisors, and faculty. Where disagreement occurred in responses to the ideal role statements, it was between directors and supervisors. There were no differences reported in the ideal role behavior statements between directors and faculty. Supervisors would apparently prefer to see directors more involved with some of the administrative details of cooperative education. The role behavior statements on which disagreement occurred were related to administration. A cooperative effort between directors and supervisors in determining the role of the director could help to assure greater role congruence.

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### Summary

Eighty-six four-year colleges and universities and seventy-three two-year institutions participated in this national research study designed to determine the role of the cooperative education director in institutions of higher education in the United States. Based on the data provided by these institutions, this article has presented the findings and recommendations from this study. A complete copy of this research report is available from the Cooperative Education Research Center, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts.

### References

- Brown, Sylvia J., and James Wilson. "Survey of Cooperative Education", *Cooperative Education Journal*, 1976.
- A Directory of Cooperative Education*, 76. Cooperative Education Association, Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## APPENDIX A

## FOUR-YEAR DIRECTORS

| Role Statement   | Actual<br>Ideal | Mean         | t Value | Degrees<br>of<br>Freedom |
|--|-----------------|--------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 2. Evaluating the cooperative education program (conducting studies designed to improve the excellence of cooperative education at the institution). | A<br>I          | 2.48<br>3.30 | -9.87   | 83                       |
| 3. Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education.   | A<br>I          | 3.02<br>3.48 | -6.24   | 82                       |
| 4. Assisting participating employers in improving the quality of students' job experiences.  | A<br>I          | 2.61<br>3.41 | -9.80   | 84                       |
| 5. Collecting and disseminating occupational information to assist coop students in career planning.   | A<br>I          | 2.53<br>3.25 | -7.63   | 84                       |
| 6. Preparing routine correspondence and other paper-work required for the day-to-day operation of the cooperative education program.                 | A<br>I          | 3.16<br>2.69 | -4.75   | 82                       |
| 7. Developing and reviewing long-range goals for cooperative education.  | A<br>I          | 2.80<br>3.33 | -5.93   | 83                       |
| 8. Facilitating communications between faculty and administration not involved in the daily activities of cooperative education.                     | A<br>I          | 2.73<br>3.48 | -7.38   | 85                       |
| 10. Articulating cooperative education with secondary and/or post-secondary institutions.  | A<br>I          | 1.92<br>2.81 | -8.55   | 84                       |

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|   |        |              |        |    |
|---|--------|--------------|--------|----|
| 12. Maintaining liaison with faculty and administration through college and university committee participation. | A<br>I | 2.74<br>3.25 | -5.21  | 84 |
| 13. Developing, supervising, and administering the policies for cooperative education at the institution.       | A<br>I | 3.37<br>3.55 | -2.62  | 82 |
| 15. Working with advisory committees which provide guidance to the coop program.                                | A<br>I | 2.15<br>2.81 | -6.40  | 83 |
| 16. Attending professional state and national meetings and conferences.   | A<br>I | 2.42<br>2.85 | -5.02  | 84 |
| 17. Supervising and evaluating coop coordinators who assist in the operation of the coop program.               | A<br>I | 2.44<br>2.99 | -5.25  | 76 |
| 18. Preparing brochures, writing news releases, and other promotional activities.                               | A<br>I | 2.46<br>2.87 | -5.10  | 84 |
| 19. Insuring that there is continuity in terms of employment opportunities for coop students.                   | A<br>I | 3.10<br>3.40 | -4.31  | 83 |
| 20. Recruiting and selecting coop coordinators.   | A<br>I | 2.12<br>2.53 | -4.53  | 74 |
| 21. Speaking before on- and off-campus organizations to promote cooperative education.                          | A<br>I | 2.43<br>3.02 | -7.02  | 82 |
| 22. Conducting workshops and seminars for participating employers.  | A<br>I | 1.60<br>2.53 | -10.87 | 82 |
| 24. Administering follow-up studies of coop trainees who have completed their assignments.                      | A<br>I | 1.99<br>2.80 | -8.27  | 82 |



|   |        |              |       |    |
|---|--------|--------------|-------|----|
| 26. Evaluating the effectiveness of participating employers (continuously evaluating the quality of employment situations). | A<br>I | 2.78<br>3.40 | -7.67 | 82 |
| 28. Developing and reviewing college catalog information related to cooperative education.                                  | A<br>I | 2.37<br>2.63 | -3.83 | 82 |
| 29. Providing in-service education and training for coordinators involved in the program.                                   | A<br>I | 2.00<br>2.62 | -7.18 | 76 |
| 30. Soliciting employers' opinions concerning the quality of the cooperative education program.                             | A<br>I | 2.49<br>3.08 | -6.28 | 82 |
| 31. Working with the various academic departments and divisions in terms of scheduling of classes or courses.               | A<br>I | 1.98<br>2.57 | -6.40 | 83 |
| 33. Developing and maintaining administrative support of the program.   | A<br>I | 3.10<br>3.37 | -3.45 | 83 |
| 34. Soliciting and maintaining faculty involvement in the program.  | A<br>I | 2.83<br>3.43 | -7.50 | 82 |
| 35. Assigning the responsibility for coordination of students to coop coordinators.   | A<br>I | 2.34<br>2.71 | -4.42 | 75 |
| 36. Maintaining a library of pertinent information relating to participating companies for student use.                     | A<br>I | 2.63<br>3.06 | -5.03 | 83 |
| 37. Conducting surveys of prospective students and employers.   | A<br>I | 2.13<br>2.66 | -5.36 | 82 |

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|   |   |      |       |    |
|---|---|------|-------|----|
| 38. Administering the various aspects of the institution's Affirmative Action program as it relates to student placement and the hiring, retention and/or promotion of faculty and staff. | A | 1.95 | -3.09 | 80 |
|   | I | 2.21 |       |    |
| 39. Interpreting federal and state laws as they relate to the administration of cooperative education programs.   | A | 2.29 | -4.17 | 82 |
|   | I | 2.59 |       |    |
| 40. Identifying and explaining the role and job responsibilities of coop coordinators.  | A | 2.37 | -4.81 | 74 |
|   | I | 2.71 |       |    |
| 41. Enabling decisions regarding academic credit, grading policy, coop plans (alternating, parallel, extended day), etc.  | A | 2.70 | -4.68 | 78 |
|   | I | 3.08 |       |    |
| 42. Training, supervising, and evaluating related staff personnel in addition to coordinators.  | A | 2.41 | -3.48 | 78 |
|   | I | 2.72 |       |    |

### **TWO-YEAR DIRECTORS**

|  |   |      |       |    |
|--|---|------|-------|----|
| 1. Recruiting and selecting employers for participation in the cooperative education program.  | A | 3.00 | -4.77 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.54 |       |    |
| 2. Evaluating the cooperative education program (conducting studies designed to improve the excellence of cooperative education at the institution). | A | 2.88 | -6.27 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.50 |       |    |
| 3. Listening to and encouraging ideas to improve the functioning of cooperative education.   | A | 3.32 | -4.42 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.69 |       |    |

|  |   |      |       |    |
|--|---|------|-------|----|
| 4. Assisting participating employers in improving the quality of students' job experiences.                                      | A | 2.63 | -9.35 | 69 |
|  | I | 3.49 |       |    |
| 5. Collecting and disseminating occupational information to assist coop students in career planning.                             | A | 2.75 | -5.83 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.28 |       |    |
| 7. Developing and reviewing long-range goals for cooperative education.  | A | 2.97 | -6.83 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.53 |       |    |
| 8. Facilitating communications between faculty and administration not involved in the daily activities of cooperative education. | A | 2.68 | -8.17 | 70 |
|  | I | 3.41 |       |    |
| 9. Preparing the annual report for cooperative education.  | A | 2.89 | -2.73 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.10 |       |    |
| 10. Articulating cooperative education with secondary and/or post-secondary institutions.  | A | 2.17 | -8.54 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.10 |       |    |
| 12. Maintaining liaison with faculty and administration through college and university committee participation.                  | A | 2.72 | -5.60 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.31 |       |    |
| 13. Developing, supervising, and administering the policies for cooperative education at the institution.                        | A | 3.31 | -3.69 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.63 |       |    |
| 15. Working with advisory committees which provide guidance to the coop program.   | A | 2.42 | -7.88 | 70 |
|  | I | 3.21 |       |    |
| 16. Attending professional state and national meetings and conferences.  | A | 2.57 | -6.15 | 71 |
|  | I | 3.06 |       |    |
| 17. Supervising and evaluating coop coordinators who assist in the operation of the coop program.                                | A | 2.51 | -5.73 | 69 |
|  | I | 3.20 |       |    |

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|   |        |              |        |    |
|---|--------|--------------|--------|----|
| 18. Preparing brochures, writing news releases, and other promotional activities.   | A<br>I | 2.68<br>3.17 | -5.36  | 71 |
| 19. Insuring that there is continuity in terms of employment opportunities for coop students.                               | A<br>I | 2.79<br>3.38 | -6.32  | 71 |
| 20. Recruiting and selecting coop coordinators.   | A<br>I | 2.27<br>3.06 | -6.56  | 70 |
| 21. Speaking before on- and off-campus organizations to promote cooperative education.                                      | A<br>I | 2.44<br>3.25 | -9.04  | 71 |
| 22. Conducting workshops and seminars for participating employers.  | A<br>I | 1.67<br>2.78 | -10.51 | 71 |
| 23. Preparing and presenting a proposed budget for cooperative education.   | A<br>I | 2.68<br>3.01 | -3.18  | 71 |
| 24. Administering follow-up studies of coop trainees who have completed their assignments.                                  | A<br>I | 2.06<br>3.07 | -9.15  | 70 |
| 26. Evaluating the effectiveness of participating employers (continuously evaluating the quality of employment situations). | A<br>I | 2.65<br>3.30 | -7.03  | 70 |
| 27. Developing and implementing short-range goals for cooperative education at the institution.                             | A<br>I | 3.07<br>3.31 | -2.78  | 71 |
| 29. Providing in-service education and training for coordinators involved in the program.                                   | A<br>I | 2.16<br>3.11 | -7.49  | 69 |
| 30. Soliciting employers' opinions concerning the quality of the cooperative education program.                             | A<br>I | 2.69<br>3.38 | -7.40  | 70 |

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|   |        |              |       |    |
|---|--------|--------------|-------|----|
| 31. Working with the various academic departments and divisions in terms of scheduling of classes or courses.   | A<br>I | 2.26<br>3.04 | -6.82 | 71 |
| 33. Developing and maintaining administrative support of the program.   | A<br>I | 3.15<br>3.60 | -4.70 | 71 |
| 34. Soliciting and maintaining faculty involvement in the program.  | A<br>I | 2.86<br>2.49 | -6.67 | 71 |
| 35. Assigning the responsibility for coordination of students to coop coordinators.   | A<br>I | 2.38<br>2.91 | -4.47 | 69 |
| 36. Maintaining a library of pertinent information relating to participating companies for student use.   | A<br>I | 2.13<br>2.97 | -7.86 | 71 |
| 37. Conducting surveys of prospective students and employers.   | A<br>I | 2.14<br>2.69 | -6.46 | 71 |
| 38. Administering the various aspects of the institution's Affirmative Action program as it relates to student placement and the hiring, retention and/or promotion of faculty and staff. | A<br>I | 2.13<br>2.40 | -3.45 | 70 |
| 39. Interpreting federal and state laws as they relate to the administration of cooperative education programs.   | A<br>I | 2.74<br>2.97 | -3.52 | 71 |
| 40. Identifying and explaining the role and job responsibilities of coop coordinators.  | A<br>I | 2.76<br>3.14 | -3.76 | 71 |
| 42. Training, supervising, and evaluating related staff personnel in addition to coordinators.  | A<br>I | 2.42<br>2.99 | -5.43 | 70 |
| 43. Insuring that coordinators properly match students with available jobs in business, industry, and government.   | A<br>I | 2.85<br>3.38 | -5.24 | 71 |