

## **Seminars for Public Health Administrators**

**T**HERE IS a long-standing record of co-operation between universities and public health agencies. Collaboration in the field of management and administration, however, is relatively new and limited. Although most of the established theories and practices of administration can be applied to public health management functions, a certain distinction exists between management of an industrial or commercial organization and management in government which involves relationships between Federal, State, and local units.

In the Bureau of State Services of the Public Health Service, most of the programs are headed by people who have received training in the professional arts and sciences that make up public health. A few have had training in public administration, economics, or political science. The Public Health Service has long felt that because of their varied educational background, management "know-how" of key personnel could be supplemented and enhanced by "capstone" courses in management subjects, particularly if the subject matter and presentation could be custom tailored to specific program needs.

As a result of long association and close collaboration in research and teaching projects in basic science, medicine, biology, chemistry, and the like, Emory University and the Public Health Service's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Ga., became interested in the possibility of providing specialized instruction in management subjects for personnel engaged in public health administration. Working together, professors of the university's department of political science and school of business administration and officials of the Communicable Disease Center developed a seminar program along these lines. Somewhat on a trial basis, the first seminar was held at Emory University in 1957. The 20 participants were care-

fully selected from key positions which had a high degree of management responsibility.

The first seminar was a success, and the project has now become a permanent part of the Bureau of State Services' training and career development program. The seminars are held on the Emory University campus in Atlanta each spring and fall. Six seminars have been conducted to date, and approximately 120 officials from various Bureau programs in all parts of the country have participated.

Originally lasting for 4 days, the seminar now runs for a full 5-day week. Each morning and afternoon session is devoted to a different specialized area of administration. Each session is begun with a lecture by a well-known administrator or authority on the subject under study. Generally, after the lecture there is a brief discussion or a question and answer period. Following this, the class is divided into two groups for a workshop session on a selected case study, each group headed by a moderator from the Emory University faculty. The case studies deal with problems involving the management subject previously presented by the lecturer. Other techniques include the incident process, role playing, and brainstorming.

The topics covered in the seminars have been varied to meet the needs of the participants. Program planning, organization, program staffing, budgeting, program execution and reporting, employee motivation, communications, delegation of authority, and research administration are among the subjects that have been studied.

Lecturers are selected because of their known ability in the subject being presented. They have included executives from business and industry, officials in high government positions, and professors from other universities and educational institutions.

Seminar participants live in quarters on the

university campus and take meals at the university dining hall. Usually one organized social activity is held early in the seminar period to introduce participants and staff and set the stage for informal exchange of ideas and opinions. Two group luncheons are held during the week to provide further opportunity for informal discussion.

Holding the seminars and providing living quarters at the university has proved much more satisfactory than use of government facilities. The university setting seems to foster a spirit of fellowship, and it affords an opportunity for the students to discuss informally classroom topics, as well as their job experiences, during their free time. Removing the students from physical proximity to their jobs also prevents disruption by matters related to their regular work.

To create an optimum teaching-learning environment, each seminar group is limited to 20 participants. However, graduate students of the university are permitted to attend the formal lecture if they wish. Members of the university faculty also have an opportunity to exchange ideas with lecturers during their visits.

With the limitation of students to 20, there has been a healthy competition for selection. About 2 months before each seminar, announcements are sent to the Bureau division chiefs and regional medical directors requesting nominations. At present, nominees must be commissioned officers at the full grade (lieutenant commander) or above or civil service personnel in grade GS-12 or above. As the number of nominations far exceeds the quota, a special committee chaired by the Bureau executive officer makes the selection. The committee tries to select nominees who will not only achieve the most benefit from instruction, but who will also have the greatest opportunity to apply the new knowledge in their day-to-day work. It also attempts to maintain a balanced representation from the various disciplines and from

the field of management. A group of participants with a wide variety of interests and backgrounds makes for a lively exchange of ideas and a resulting appreciation and understanding of the "other fellow's" problems.

Based on its experience and success with these management seminars for public health administrators, the Public Health Service recommends a similar arrangement for other health agencies that have a need and desire to provide such training for their employees.

Dr. Lynwood M. Holland, chairman of the department of political science, Emory University, is the presiding officer for all sessions of the seminar. He also participates, as the university representative, in program planning and seminar arrangements. In summing up the value of the seminars from the university's viewpoint, Dr. Holland has said:

"Unquestionably, the greatest benefit has been the sharing of problems in planning and conducting the seminars by representatives of the two organizations. Such an experience has brought a deeper understanding of the problems of administration in the two organizations and has enriched the programs of each. The seminars have resulted in strengthening the relationships between the two organizations."

In addition to the valuable service of Dr. Holland and other members of the university staff, I wish to recognize the assistance of Harry C. Abernathy, assistant executive officer, Bureau of State Services, and Russell B. Runnion, employee development officer of the Communicable Disease Center. Mr. Abernathy has overall responsibility for seminar matters at the Bureau and headquarters level, while Mr. Runnion is the seminar coordinator in Atlanta and arranges for speakers, development and publication of the seminar programs, and other related activities.

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