

AN ASSESSMENT OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
AT TINKER AIR FORCE BASE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today's issue of equal employment opportunity may well be tomorrow's issue of equal right to survival--survival as individuals, families and corporations. If this is what we all face in our future, then the need for the cooperation and coalition of employers and employees, men and women, majority and minority is clear (Hennig, 1978, p. 238).

Cooperative Education was founded in the United States by Professor Herman Schneider at the University of Cincinnati in 1906. Professor Schneider realized that many facets of education could not be taught in the classroom, but could be learned only through direct experience on the job. He also recognized that many students required part-time employment during the school year as well as vacation periods in order to remain in college. He further observed that part-time and vacation work experiences seldom, if ever, had any relationship to the students' ultimate career plans. Schneider envisioned an educational plan which would allow a student to engage in meaningful work experiences as he pursued his college education. Under this plan, the college would design an academic program which would provide an employer with a pair of students who could perform a job on a full, year-round basis through alternating periods of work with periods of study (Cohen, 1978).

Background of the Cooperative Education

Program at Tinker Air Force Base

The Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) is comprised of five

government installations and is the second largest command of the United States Air Force. As one of the major military-industrial installations in the world, Tinker Air Force Base (AFB) supports the Department of Defense mission of maintaining America's aerospace team. At Tinker AFB many of the Nation's major aircraft are kept at peak operational capability through aircraft maintenance and modification.

As one of Oklahoma's largest industries, the workforce employed at Tinker AFB is comprised of approximately 12,000 civilians and 9,000 military personnel. The economy of Oklahoma City and various sister communities benefit from the \$400 million yearly payroll of this government facility (Tinker Brochure, 1980).

During early 1970, and in response to a federal directive, government officials sought methods to increase minority representation in the professional areas. The Consortium of Black Universities recommended a cooperative education approach to the equal employment opportunity problem. Formal agreements were signed with the Consortium Universities and it was decided that the Air Force would pay the Consortium schools a fee for recruitment and transportation of qualified minority students for a cooperative work/study appointment to a specific federal installation. During 1972 the first Cooperative Education Program began operation at Tinker AFB with the goal to strengthen the underrepresented and understaffed professional categories with academically qualified freshmen from the Consortium Universities. Base officials determined that this cooperative work/study effort would attract and increase the percentage of minorities in specific federal career areas and be responsive to the equal employment opportunity philosophy embraced by the U.S. Government.

In addition, the Consortium of Black Universities was awarded a sizable grant from the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. This grant was awarded for the purpose of a long term study of disadvantaged minority students living far from their rural home communities (Courtney, 1981).

At the present time, a new Cooperative Education Program is under development at Tinker AFB. An assessment of the attitudes and perceptions of former Cooperative Education Program student and management personnel would be a beneficial input to this new program in terms of program recruitment, training, and student retention.

Purpose of Study

An assessment of the first Cooperative Education Program (1972-1979) at Tinker AFB by students and managers will aid in the development of the new Cooperative Education Program. Managers and students who were involved in the former program can contribute important data relative to recruitment, training, and retainability of future program appointees.

Statement of the Problem

The goals and objectives of any cooperative education effort can best be realized in a work situation that is beneficial to both the student and the employer. This "climate of learning" between them is a key factor in the career education and development of the student to his full potential as an employee. A positive learning and working atmosphere is the essential link. The mutual student and employer view of this link would be an important assessment of the pilot (1972-1979) Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB and could supply that vital

information for the new program objectives and general program format. Information and recommendations from this study will provide recommendations for a new Tinker AFB Cooperative Education Program.

Need for Study

A manager/student assessment of the first Cooperative Education Program would provide a balanced perspective and contribute a full range of program recommendations. Using some of the information found in this study, a Tinker AFB Cooperative Education Guidebook and program brochure will be produced to enhance the student and administration understanding of the new Cooperative Education Program.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Gather data on participants' perceptions of the Cooperative Education process at Tinker AFB.
2. Identify supportive features that existed in the program.
3. Analyze benefits and weaknesses of the previous programs.
4. Elicit suggestions for improvements of revised program.

Definition of Terms

Cooperative Education - An educational plan which integrates classroom experience and practical work experience in industrial, business, government, or service-type work situations.

Cooperative Agreement - An understanding involving three parties: the student; the employer; and a representative of an educational institution. The purpose is to ensure a mutual consent of the education/work program activities.

Post-Secondary - Public supported or private educational facilities which serve the education needs of the population beyond the high school level.

Learning Objective - Result or intended outcome that one is interested in achieving on the job during a specific evaluation period. The learning objective describes the change in behavior or learning that is intended.

Manager - Supervisory or administrative person employed at Tinker AFB having a cooperative student under direct supervision or person having an administrative position with the Cooperative Education Program organization at the base.

Organization of Study

Chapter I introduces the study, presenting the background of cooperative education, presentation of the problem of the study along with the purpose, need for the study, objectives and definition of terms. Chapter II includes a review of related literature concerning the background of cooperative education, Federal involvement, climate for learning, individual and industrial needs, educational and training objectives and evaluation. Chapter III reports the procedures utilized in this study, including a description and selection of subjects, creation of interview schedule, collection of data and analysis of data. Chapter IV discusses each question in detail and concludes with the observations. Chapter V includes a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations for future cooperative education programs at Tinker AFB.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cooperative Education began as a means of broadening the classroom experience with a combination of theory, practice and vocational exposure to the student. This chapter reviews the literature in the following areas: (1) background of Cooperative Education; (2) Federal involvement; (3) climate for learning; (4) individual and industrial needs; (5) educational objectives; (6) training objectives; and (7) evaluation.

Background of Cooperative Education

Unlike many of the undergraduate and graduate forms of higher education which had their origins in Europe, the cooperative plan of education is a distinctly American philosophy of higher education. It includes all of the academic requirements of the other types of higher education plus learning while doing and applying what is being studied while still a student (Woolridge, 1973, p. 8).

The origin of cooperative education is most often credited to Dean Herman Schneider, who in 1906, established a program at the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, in which engineering students received their training by alternating periods of classroom training with periods of full-time work in engineering companies. Schneider felt that theory could best be learned in school; but an understanding of man and his mechanism could be learned only where they operate. The major idea is that of balanced training.

In 1921, Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, brought its Liberal Arts College into this cooperative education program concept, becoming the first non-engineering institution to institute a cooperative education program. In 1924, the first industry sponsored program began with the General Motors Institute.

The 1947 Truman Commission report referenced the need for work study efforts, along with seven other major federally supported commissions from 1947 to 1973.

. . . The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and the Newman Task Force Reports, both concerned with improvements in higher education, suggest greater utilization of non-classroom experience and the reduction of academic time in college programs. These and other current trusts for change have been accompanied by strong public support in the form of Federal legislation and funding for initiating and strengthening programs in cooperation education (Dawson, 1973, pp. 5-6).

But Federal dollars were made available for the first time in 1970 for cooperative education programs in the United States.

From the vantage point of governmental involvement, as a source of financial support, it is clear that cooperative education has achieved a higher degree of acceptance and stature as a part of American higher education. From financial aid to a means for quieting unrest to an integral part of the academic experience, cooperative education has involved to its present status of respectability or at least lip service to that status (Bender, 1975, p. 46).

The National Commission for Cooperative Education reported 566 colleges, universities, and two-year institutions offering co-op programs in 1973. In 1977, James W. Wilson, Director, Cooperative Education Research Center, North Eastern University, reported that, "Currently there are over 1,000 institutions of higher education with cooperative education programs." This growth is compared to only 100 institutions with bonafide programs in 1966 (Bender, 1975, p. 69).

The cooperative education concept moved through periods which saw it branch out as a financial aid vehicle, a means of quieting student protest, and finally, as an educational endeavor supplementing and improving classroom learning via both the public and private sectors. With this progression, "It can not be denied that the influence of the Federal government has been an important factor in the development and expansion of cooperative education" (Bender, 1975, p. 73).

Federal Involvement

A dramatic growth of post-secondary cooperative education programs developed over the past decade. This can be directly traced to the involvement of the Federal government in terms of political backing and financial aid for both the public and private sector.

In 1973, the first edition of this pamphlet (Undergraduate Programs in Cooperative Education in the United States and Canada by National Commission on Cooperative Education) reported 576 programs. The current 1976 listing is 1,030 programs of which 855 are known to be operational and the remaining 175 are either planning or about to implement cooperative programs (Peart, 1977, pp. 18-19).

It cannot be denied that the influence of the federal government has been an important factor in the development and expansion of cooperative education . . . The ultimate influence of the federal government comes, of course, with the injection of federal dollars. After almost a quarter century of growing interest in cooperative education, federal financial support was introduced in 1970 (Bender, 1975, p. 56).

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), formerly the Civil Service Commission, as an arm of the executive branch of the U.S. Government, implements the internal development of cooperative education programs. OPM functions to provide the regulations under which other

federal departments and agencies develop cooperative education agreements with schools to meet the staffing needs of the Government.

"Most schools indicate that the governmental agency initiated the contracts (agreements) and both the school representative and the agency representative signed the agreements" (Peart, 1977, pp. 70-71).

Those Federal agencies which have developed effective on-the-job work assignments have consistently reported very high retention rates among graduates who enter the permanent work force, and students employed following graduation from cooperative education programs are immediately productive (Poole, 1972, pp. 59-61).

Climate for Learning

Cooperative Education is a learning process, with the main educational thrust targeted toward the student. To recognize the atmosphere needed for personal growth and learning is the first step that ultimately can strengthen both the individual and institutional objectives. "The key issue for climate setting for the cooperative education learning process would be to recognize the cooperative education student as self-directing and as an autonomous person" (Downing, 1975, p. 38). All participants in the cooperative education relationship grow in an atmosphere conducive to the exchange that takes place in the work environment. Rogers (1951) theorized that people could best develop and change in an atmosphere of complete positive regard and understanding.

A 1975 Journal of Cooperative Education article by Bob Downing, Assistant Director, Cooperative Education Research Center, claims cooperative education programs should include an educational approach that includes more than the "job knowledge" cognitive learning experience. It is claimed that, in the proper work environment, the individual can

develop to an even greater "whole man" potential. Lasch (1973) in his *Inequality in Education* says even the leaders of compulsory education Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, felt that schools' foremost tasks should be the development of these personal traits, "tasks far more important than instruction in academic subject" (pp. 21-22).

The social contacts available in a cooperative work environment can give the student additional depth and a view of the adult world of work conducive to his overall development. This positive climate of learning can be a key factor in overall job satisfaction. "To emphasize the co-op formula's potential in developing ones' interpersonal skills is not to deny what some regard as the programs essential mission: job placement" (Ehrlich, 1977, p. 29). In his 1977 study of the La Guardia Community College Cooperative Education Program, Ehrlich claimed that, ". . . the student stands to gain the experience of an interaction with an employer and fellow employees as well as to gain insight into a social segment perhaps was not previously considered" (p. 29).

In 1974, Winer, Howe, and Berestecky conducted a study of cooperative education engineering students and found that the climate for learning and general job setting were critical to job satisfaction expressed by all the engineering students surveyed. The climate for learning present in any work situation can provide the worker the opportunity to acquire information which allows for better career decision making.

Clearly, without adequate and accurate information a student cannot wisely choose a current job or a future career path . . . The individual must initially understand what the co-op program is, how it works, and what purpose(s) it can serve (Rabino, 1980, p. 29).

At the workplace, supportive managerial personnel can make a significant impact on the adjustment of the cooperative education student to his new work environment, and, if these same people have a voice in

student selection, a more positive situation will more likely result.

"It will be natural for employers to work a little harder to ensure successful experiences for students whom they have chosen . . ."

(Stadt et al., 1977, p. 191).

Individual and Industrial Needs

Cooperative programs will only be viable so long as both parties--university and industry--gain tangible benefits . . . The benefit to industry is the influx of enthusiastic hard working young people who can be guided and groomed for excellent career opportunities (Beaumont, 1976, pp. 77-79).

Promising new employees enter the labor force often unsure of their own needs and unclear of the greater needs of industry. Moreover, Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs applies to cooperative education student learning, i.e., lower needs must be satisfied before higher needs can act as motivators.

As a student moves up and down the Maslow motivational hierarchy, he would tend to stabilize at a level of basic satisfaction. The ultimate goal of the training may well be to find out ways of helping the student to strive toward self-actualization (Downing, 1975, p. 40).

The cooperative education experience can aid in the clarification of both individual and industrial needs. "Programs are developed and implemented to meet identified career development needs of student clientele. Program policies and procedures should be established with those needs in mind" (Stadt et al., 1977, p. 185).

Educational and Training Objectives

Training objectives are often divided into the categories of instructional and behavior objectives. Whatever the format, emphasis

is on written documentation of specific and understood objectives that can result in valid job placement.

Objectives should be committed to writing, a form designed for such a purpose can double as an evaluative tool providing space for all three parties (school, student, and employer) to indicate the degree of attainment of objectives (Burman, 1973, p. 63).

"Poor jobs and unrelated jobs have been named by faculty as predominant weaknesses in cooperative education programs" (Pratt, 1973, pp. 39-41).

It appears important that the student be included in the formation of his own training and educational objectives if he is to embrace the structure with personal commitment. Efforts channeled into establishing individualized training objectives for the cooperative education student provide a career foundation that can aid in greater personal growth and professional contribution. "Cooperative education in the contemporary language should emphasize the total or whole man effect of the work experience as benefits the specific objectives of the individual and the institution" (Bender, 1975, p. 49). "Planning, sequencing, and correlating depend on development of comprehensive training plans in accordance with training needs of individual students" (Stadt et al., 1977, p. 213). "Since the student is probably at the peak of his curiosity and learning process the impact of formalized employment during the college years is profound and lasting" (Collins, 1973, p. 7).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the cornerstone of any successful cooperative education program and efforts in this direction merit close attention without regard to program size. Each party involved should be aware of just

what will be evaluated and all matters concerning this evaluation written in the agreement. In a 1975 study by Cranger, it was reported that less than one-fourth of the programs surveyed had written agreements. The commitment to the cooperative venture was strengthened, they thought, only when a written agreement was present. The ultimate goals of the cooperative education concept are met when adequate evaluation techniques are implemented. Further, only through evaluation can the career placement goals be known. This concerns all cooperative education participants.

A balanced evaluation effort should be accomplished for all cooperative education program participants for a complete and valid program assessment. "Success in a co-op can best be measured by evaluating the quality of the co-op experience by all participants" (Lauver, 1975, p. 80).

Employee follow-up surveys should be companions to student follow-up surveys. The two kinds of surveys provide check and balances on similar kinds of information and information which can only be gotten via one or the other (Stadt, 1977, p. 79).

Cooperative education programs provide unique opportunities for both the prospective employer and the prospective employee to evaluate each other in terms of an appropriate 'match' for possible permanent employment (Woolridge, 1976, p. 10).

The key to successful cooperative programming appears to be meeting the expectations of all participants. Evaluation is the major vehicle for measurement of this delicately balanced relationship.

Judgments about program quality are a function of the relationship between the expectations the various participants have for the job setting and the experience actually obtained there . . . Placement occurs in expectation that the needs of each member of the triad (college, student, and employer) will be met and the ensuing job experience provides data supporting or disconfirming these expectations (Lauver, 1975, p. 84).

Summary

A review of current cooperative education literature highlights a number of points important for successful cooperative programming. Cooperative education is a unique American work/study concept. This educational approach was first implemented shortly after the turn of this century.

The growth of the cooperative education concept over the past 10 years is primarily due to the influx of Federal dollars. Programs inside Federal agencies have shown dramatic growth and operate under the guidelines established by the Office of Personnel Management.

Within the various cooperative education programs, participants learn best in an environment that includes both cognitive, and affective learning situations. A positive learning climate allows for greater job understanding and responsive supervisory support. The needs of all participants in the cooperative education program are viable and, thus, student needs should be identified along with industrial needs.

Program objectives and evaluation procedures/format must be written down and understood by all participants prior to job placement. Evaluation must include both students and management for balance, since the judgment of program quality is often the result of net expectations by all participants in the cooperative education experience.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

This chapter details the procedures for collecting data relevant to the purposes of the study outlined in Chapter I. Included are: (1) description and selection of the population and sample; (2) the creation of the interview schedule; (3) the collection of the data; and, (4) the procedures selected for analyzing the data. The study focused solely on Tinker AFB and no attempt was made to telescope the results to another military installation or to the Federal government at large.

Description and Selection of Subjects

The Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB had not been studied prior to this research effort. An open-ended interview approach was selected to allow a free flowing of responses. The total population of subjects used for this study were employed at Tinker AFB or retired from the Tinker workforce. Their participation was completely voluntary and the author stressed to all subjects that names were optional.

The student population included twelve former cooperative education students, four males and eight females. These subjects were the only former student participants of the Cooperative Education Program still employed at the base. The management population included nine males and three females. The twelve subjects were chosen because of their close

association in a key administrative or supervisory capacity with the Cooperative Education Program during the 1972 through 1979 time-frame.

Creation of the Interview Schedule

The interview method was employed by the author for assessment of the Tinker Cooperative Education Program (1972-1979). Managers and students closely involved with the program were identified at Tinker AFB and were contacted for individual interviews. Student subjects were interviewed first, followed by the managers.

The interview questions compiled by the author covered general employment experiences: (1) orientation briefing; (2) program goals; (3) evaluation; (4) support structure; and (5) personal needs assessment. At the close of the interview, each of the subjects was asked to list both positive and negative features of the Cooperative Education Program from their personal experiences. Recommendations and suggestions for future cooperative programming were requested from the subjects at the close of the interview.

A field test of the first draft of the interview format was conducted on a sample population of ten students and ten managers. The ten managers were chosen from the Tinker AFB workforce and were positioned in the various base units. No thought was given to age, sex, or background of the field test group. Participation in the field test was voluntary. Time constraints permitted the interview of only ten subjects in each category. The field test subjects were informed that the interviews were to be used to assess the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB from 1972-1979. These pilot subjects were requested to comment on interview clarity, format and length. Adjustments were made from the results of this field test.

Collection of Data

A nine question open-ended interview format was then used for the study. The interviews were conducted primarily by telephone and the interview time ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. The student subjects were interviewed first, followed by the manager subjects. Due to accessibility or preference, eight interviews were conducted face to face with seven of the subjects requesting to continue the interview by a follow-up visit to further elaborate on details and experiences.

Analysis of Data

To analyze the data collected from manager and student interviews, the author compiled the responses of each subject group. The findings were then organized according to interview questions and presented in table format using number and percentage. Totals often indicated more than one response per person. In addition the author included observations from the interviews to provide the background information on the emotional climate that existed. This climate was important to explore because all responses were biased by very strong emotions.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this section the results of the interview schedule with managers and students are presented in detail. An attempt was made by the author to allow the subjects freedom to relate all information they perceived as pertinent to the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB between 1972 to 1979.

Findings are organized according to interview questions and presented in table format using number and percentage. Totals may indicate more than one response per person. In addition, observations by the researcher are included in this chapter to provide background information on the emotional climate that existed with the interviews. This climate was important to explore because all responses were biased by very strong emotions.

Question 1: Goals

Responses to Question 1 are given in Table I below. In general, the managers responded to Question 1, "In your opinion, what were the intended goals and objectives of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", that the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB was instituted to bring minority employees into the federal workforce at professional levels and to meet the equal employment opportunity goals.

TABLE I
 INTENDED GOALS OF THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Minority Quota	9	75%	9	75%
2. Exposure to Federal Labor Force	9	75%	3	25%
3. Identify Qualified Students	4	33%	4	33%
4. Pay College Expenses	3	25%	5	41%
5. Experience (in Academic Field)	3	25%	4	33%
6. "Handout" Program	3	25%	0	0%
7. Match Job to Person	2	16%	2	16%
8. Don't Know	1	8%	1	8%

* Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

The students' response to Question 1, "In your opinion, what were the intended goals and objectives to the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", also relates that the equal employment goals were, in their opinion, the primary reason for the Cooperative Education Program.

Seventy-five percent of the managers and students believed the goal of the Cooperative Education Program to be the increase of the minority quota at Tinker AFB. Seventy-five percent of the managers considered exposure to Federal Labor Force to be an intended goal of the Cooperative Education Program compared to only 25% of the students. Other significant student responses were payment of college expenses and experience in academic field.

Question 2: Introductory Briefing

Responses to Question 2 are presented in Table II below. In

general, managers responded to Question 2, "What introductory briefing was provided to Cooperative Education Students at Tinker AFB?", with a range of answers that spanned from what was described as a complete briefing to no briefing provided at the start of employment.

TABLE II
INTRODUCTORY BRIEFING PROVIDED COOPERATIVE
EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Complete Briefing	4	33%	1	8%
2. Minimal Briefing	5	41%	6	50%
3. No Briefing	3	25%	5	41%

The students responded to Question 2, "What introductory briefing was provided for you as a Cooperative Education Program student at Tinker AFB?", that they occasionally had a minimal briefing.

Forty-one percent of the managers considered the introductory briefing minimal along with 50% of the students. Only 25% of the managers claimed no introductory briefing yet 41% of the students claimed no introductory briefing.

Question 3: Assessment of Needs

Responses to Question 3 are presented in Table III below. Managers responded to the question, "What provisions were made for assessing the needs of the Cooperative Education Program students?" Generally managers felt that 58% of the time a "hit and miss" approach was used.

TABLE III
METHODS OF DETERMINING STUDENT NEEDS*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. "Hit/Miss"	7	58%	1	8%
2. One-One Counseling	3	25%	3	25%
3. Training Guide	1	8%	1	8%
4. None	1	8%	9	75%

*Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

Seventy-five percent of the students responded to, "What method was employed to determine your needs as a Cooperative Education Student at Tinker AFB?", they were not assessed during the years they participated in the program. Students, as well as managers, felt that 25% of the time there was one-to-one counseling.

Question 4: Co-Workers Receptiveness and Support

Responses to Question 4 are presented in Table IV below. In

general, the managers responded to the question, "What was the attitude/receptiveness of co-workers toward the Cooperative Education Student/Workers and what type of help was given to the Cooperative Education Student/Worker from co-workers?", that co-workers did not have sufficient information about the program (83%).

TABLE IV
CO-WORKER RECEPTIVITY AND HELP TO COOPERATIVE
EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Lack of Information (about Cooperative Program)	10	83%	11	91%
2. Mislabeled	6	50%	11	91%
3. "Hot/Cold"	6	50%	5	41%
4. Resentment	4	33%	6	50%
5. Limited Acceptance	4	33%	5	41%
6. Hostile	2	16%	3	25%
7. Discrimination	1	8%	4	33%
8. Threatened	1	8%	1	8%
9. Friendly	1	8%	1	8%
10. Ignored	0	0%	4	33%

*Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

Students' response to the question, "In your opinion how receptive were co-workers toward you as a Cooperative Education Program Student and what type of help did you receive from these co-workers?" indicated that they felt mislabeled by co-workers (91%). Ninety-one percent

of the students also believed that there was a general lack of information about the program.

Question 5: College Supervisor Support

Responses to Question 5a are presented in Table V below. In general the managers responded to 5A, "What support was given to the student/worker by the colleges and universities involved in the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", that the colleges and universities were not helpful to the student.

TABLE V
SUPPORT TO STUDENT FROM COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. None	8	66%	3	25%
2. Minimal	4	33%	5	41%
3. Complete	0	0%	4	33%

Students in general responded to Question 5a, "What support was given to you as a Cooperative Education Student from your college or university?", that they received support to a much greater degree than managers reported. Thirty-three percent responded that they received complete support while an additional 41% reported minimal support.

The managers' response to Question 5b, "What support was given to you as a supervisor/administrator by colleges and universities involved in the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", is presented in Table VI. Managers believed that the colleges and universities were minimally supportive only 25% of the time.

TABLE VI
SUPPORT TO MANAGER FROM COLLEGES
OR UNIVERSITIES

	Managers	
	N	%
1. None	9	75%
2. Minimal	3	25%
3. Complete	0	0%

The general response to Question 5b, "What support was given to you as a Cooperative Education Student from your supervisor at Tinker AFB?", is presented in Table VII below. Students felt that supervisors did not provide any support in 66% of the cases. However, 8% did feel that there was complete support.

TABLE VII
SUPPORT FROM MANAGERS TO STUDENTS

	Students	
	N	%
1. None	8	66%
2. Minimal	3	25%
3. Complete	1	8%

Question 6: Evaluation Methods

Responses to Question 6 are presented in Table VIII below. In general the managers responded to the question, "What methods/procedures were used to evaluate the student/worker's progress?", by stating that some form of written appraisal was used to evaluate the students on the job progress in only 33% of the cases. Random appraisal was used 58% of the time. The students' response to, "What methods/procedures were used to evaluate (or assess) progress on your job?", was that some form of written appraisal was utilized in 16% of the time but that a "hit and miss" random appraisal effort was used 58% of the time.

Question 7: Program Benefits

Responses to Question 7 are presented in Table IX below. The managers responded to, "In general what do you see as the benefits of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?" with diverse answers. The most frequently mentioned items were getting a job (91%), work experience (75%), and financial help (33%).

TABLE VIII
METHODS OF STUDENT EVALUATION*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Random Appraisal	7	58%	7	58%
2. Scheduled Written Appraisal	4	33%	2	16%
3. No Written	0	0%	3	25%
4. No Known/None	1	8%	4	33%

* Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

TABLE IX
BENEFITS OF THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Job	11	91%	9	75%
2. Work Experience	9	75%	12	100%
3. Financial Help	4	33%	3	25%
4. No Competition Exam	3	25%	5	41%
5. "Free Ride"	3	25%	0	0%
6. Organizational Contacts	2	16%	6	50%
7. Social Benefits	2	16%	4	33%
8. Fringe Benefits (health plan, insurance)	2	16%	1	8%
9. Travel Options	1	8%	2	16%
10. Experience (in Academic Field)	0	0%	3	25%
11. Miscellaneous	0	0%	1	8%

* Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

The students responded to, "In general what do you see as the benefits of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB for students?" as the benefit of work experience (100%), getting a job (75%), and organizational contacts (50%).

Question 8: Program Weaknesses

Responses to Question 8 are presented in Table X below. In general the managers responded to, "What do you see as some of the negative (or weak) aspects of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", that the program was unfair to students who were victims of mismanagement of a bureaucratic program.

TABLE X
NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM*

	Managers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
1. Program Support/Communication	12	100%	12	100%
2. Recruitment	10	83%	4	33%
3. Training	4	33%	11	91%
4. Responsibility	2	16%	8	66%
5. Tracking (of paperwork)	2	16%	5	41%
6. Contract	2	16%	1	8%
7. Counseling	2	16%	1	8%
8. Promotions	1	8%	5	41%
9. Pay	0	0%	0	0%
10. Miscellaneous	3	25%	2	16%

*Totals may indicate more than one response per person.

The students responded to, "Generally, what do you see as some of the negative (or weak) aspects of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?", that there was a lack of program communication and support from the onset of this cooperative effort. All managers and students (100%), stated program support and communication as the outstanding weakness of the Cooperative Education Program. The managers (83%) responded that recruitment efforts were also a primary weakness yet only 33% of the students felt this to be a significant negative factor. The students (91%) cited training as a program weakness yet only 33% of the managers mentioned training as a negative aspect.

Question 9: Suggestions/Recommendations

In lieu of a table to outline responses to the following question, "How can the Cooperative Education Program be improved? Feel free to make suggestions, recommendations or elaborate with additional comments.", the author briefly highlighted the answers. For a complete listing, see Appendix C.

All 24 subjects interviewed for this study responded to this question with some measure of disappointment that the program did not meet expectations on one or more levels. Many subjects felt that any cooperative education effort at Tinker, properly recruited and well managed, could indeed be highly successful and meet with the approval of all parties concerned.

Recommendations made for future program improvements centered around honest and realistic recruitment of the cooperative student. All interview subjects were committed to a belief in the need for local control of cooperative recruitment and increased program promotional

efforts. Improvement in both understanding and communication in a large industrial complex such as Tinker AFB, would be possible under these circumstances.

Observations

Due to the interview technique employed by the author, observations were made concerning the level of emotion surrounding the institution and operation of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB (1972-1979).

All 24 interviews developed into emotionally charged experiences for the subjects. Both managers and students had fixed opinions and concerns about their experiences with the program and were very assertive in the relating of personal situations. In many cases, the interviews lasted almost 2 hours with the subject requesting an additional contact date for further discussion.

Emotionally charged, each manager and student seemed eager to unfold his/her story. Feelings spanned a predominantly negative spectrum from sadness to overt bitterness, and only occasionally did positive feelings emerge.

All participants expressed anger in their firm conviction that the Cooperative Education Program, if managed expertly from the recruitment stage to post-graduation placement, could have been a highly successful and positive benefit for Tinker AFB. The former cooperative education students interviewed expressed the feeling that there was a stigma on their federal career potential, and attributed this impression to a direct result of the negative workforce attitude about them prevalent during their college years at Tinker.

Early program directors out of necessity became substitute "parent figures" in their total care for the students both on and off the job. They related to their program experiences with parental concern for students they believed were abused and overtly discriminated against.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the study by offering a summary and discussion of the results in three parts. The first section gives an overview and summary of the complete study. The researcher's conclusions are then presented. Finally recommendations for further research and practice are presented in section three.

Summary

Early in 1970, the Air Force found minority representation lacking in the professional ranks of the federal workforce. Methods for recruitment of highly qualified minorities were explored. The Air Force turned to the Consortium of Black Colleges to assist in the recruitment of qualified minority students interested in a work/study cooperative education experience with the Federal Government.

The purpose of this assessment of both managers and students was to glean substantive recommendations of the former programs strengths and weaknesses. With this research, appropriate recommendations could be structured for the new cooperative effort under development at Tinker AFB.

The interview method used by the author provided the opportunity to talk with and discuss at length the personal observations of those people closely associated with the former Cooperative Education Program. Twelve

students and twelve managers were interviewed. All interviewed were employed at Tinker AFB or recently retired. All were most willing to share their opinions concerning the program.

The findings of this study indicate that an organized introductory program or any orientation briefing to ease the students into the workforce was minimal. Students and managers alike were confused about the basics of the program and the actual role of the student. Only rarely were the student needs considered and little effort was channeled into proper job placement based on the student's academic major.

Along with the managers' lack of understanding concerning the Cooperative Education student's role or his qualifications, resentment developed and grew. Co-workers generally felt threatened, resentful and offered little assistance to the students.

The home colleges and universities gave some assistance to the students, but managers found the colleges and universities as a whole rarely supportive. Students also reported that only in rare instances were managers caring and supportive--they often lacked an understanding of the students needs, cultural background or function in the work place. Most students were treated as "summer hires" or clerical messengers.

Although both students and managers reported some in-house assessment form was used, it was a "hit and miss" effort at best. This form was considered just a formality and not a viable evaluation form.

Benefits of the program outlined by the students emphasized the value of the cooperative work experience and the maturity gained from exposure to the diverse workforce at Tinker AFB. The students learned to be "survivors" and turn a negative situation into a positive one. The managers also cited work experience as the primary benefit of the Cooperative Education Program.

The negative aspects of the program were outlined in great detail by the students; most often cited was the reluctance to consider the student capable of responsibility and the frequent lack of professional training. An atmosphere of resentment and often a complete lack of understanding pervaded.

Managers did recognize the student as the victim in an impossible and doomed bureaucratic program. Poor recruitment procedures coupled with a lack of communication at all levels were most frequently given as the outstanding negative aspects of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB.

Recommendations

The results of this study have implications for additional research. Recommendations specific to Tinker Air Force Base are considered under the following areas: funding, program director, recruitment, training programs, orientation, student support, and managers/supervisors.

Funding

The cooperative education venture must be undertaken with a clear understanding of program goals and objectives and with serious commitment and foresight. All funding must be allocated before recruitment begins and this financial commitment made to cover the entire length of the student's academic years. The student must sign a work agreement based on the amount of funding.

Program Director

The author recommends that the Director for the Cooperative

Education Program be a highly motivated individual willing to remain in the position for a suitable length of time. This research points out that continuity suffers when there is a frequent transition in this position and confidence must constantly be reestablished between the students and the director.

The ability to relate to people, in general, minority problems in particular, and a highly developed array of the communicative skills are essential skills for a cooperative directorship. Communication on all levels is critical for proper program coordination in a large industrial environment. Students as well as managers, need the opportunity to meet with the director and establish a high level of understanding on a frequent basis.

The director, as chief motivator, must see needs before they become problems and keep ahead of the bureaucratic paperwork tracking. On-site visits to the student work areas is an essential tasks for the director. As the program monitor, the director sees that proper student training guidelines will be followed and that students will not be relegated to clerical or non-professional tasks.

Recruitment

Student recruitment must be handled by Tinker AFB. Any consortium agreement must consider this stipulation and have the understanding that the first line supervisor makes the final hiring authority decision. Emphasis must be placed on a contract negotiated between the student at the base, outlining precisely the commitments of both parties.

Student recruitment must be limited to local colleges and universities, and only students with above average academic performance

considered. A class standing of junior, or the completion of not less than 60 semester hours, must be a qualifying requirement for the Cooperative Education Program.

The recruitment official must be honest and highly knowledgeable concerning program restrictions and benefits. Any requirements for federal examinations or additional qualifiers must be clearly defined in a program contract signed by both the student and base officials. Students will be recruited only from those academic major areas with federal career potential. In addition to a student contract, an individual training program will be written to apply the academic skills of the student to a specific federal position. A written student handbook will be distributed to all those involved with the Cooperative Education Program and this handbook will contain program guidelines, objectives, and goals.

Training Program

The individual student training programs must be practical and contain quality professional training. Both the student and the students' college advisor will be given a copy of this training plan. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of the job training will take place through the combined efforts of the program director and the civilian training monitor. Any change in the training program must be accomplished with the approval of all parties.

Orientation

At least three times a year (January, September, and June) when a new group of cooperative students arrive, a complete orientation and

incoming briefing must be conducted. In coordination with this effort, a management briefing must take place to increase program understanding and communication between the director and the managers under whom the students will work. Transition counseling for entry into the federal "world of work" should continue through a one-to-one advisement effort between the director and the individual student both during on-site visits primarily and through telephone communications.

A sponsorship for each student will be organized. This person must be a volunteer and from the students' work area. The volunteers will be included in the managers briefing and must be knowledgeable about the cooperative education program.

Student Support

With all student recruitment coming from local schools, housing problems will be minimized. Both housing and transportation information is available on the base and students must be aware before appointment that they assume these responsibilities.

With limited work financial and experience, students must be urged to participate in the personal financial management courses provided by the base. When possible these courses should be included in the training program.

Encouragement must be offered the students to form their own support group. The students being involved in a work/study program benefits from the group encouragement toward both academic and professional goals.

A written work/study schedule must be the combined responsibility of the student and his or her supervisor. A signed copy of this schedule will be sent to the director and any changes must be documented

in writing. But both full and part-time cooperative education schedules offer the greatest potential in attracting the most highly qualified student who needs both financial support and prime class selection.

Managers/Supervisors

A manager/supervisor who participates in the Cooperative Education Program must do so voluntarily and consider the commitment involved. Program understanding then becomes his responsibility as well as the creation of the receptive work environment for the student. Final selection of a student must be decided by this supervisor, who also should become involved in the structure of a student contract. Through the efforts of the supervisor, the co-workers must be aware of the students' role in a pre-professional job training and be supportive of the students efforts. The supervisor monitors the student and must evaluate work and training progress quarterly. All written assessment must be discussed openly with the student and communicated in a helpful atmosphere. Questions by the supervisor concerning the program or the student must be directed to the Cooperative Education Program Director.

Supervisors who choose to participate in the program must be given proper recognition. Letters of appreciation and a photo publicity campaign would serve to spotlight each participating supervisor. The overall benefit in the Cooperative Education Program will be ultimately experienced by the supervisor, since the development of a productive employee can only enhance his unit and thus reflect favorability his supervisory capabilities.

Conclusions

1. The research method was effective in gathering data concerning the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB.
2. The interview process generated an extremely high emotional response from all participants indicating personal turmoil in their role perceptions.
3. Due to great personal investment all participants felt an over-whelming desire to discuss their negative experiences.
4. Managers by their own standards felt they had inadequate information to deal with the program. Emotions ranged from hostility to guilt.
5. Students overwhelmingly felt the need for additional communication and support. Emotions ranged from bitterness to impatience.

Further Research

Recommendations for further research developed from information related to this study are as follows:

1. A study of the Cooperative Education Programs at other United States Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) installations.
2. A follow-up study of cooperative education students appointed to AFLC military installations.
3. A comparison study of various college cooperative education programs.
4. An investigative study concerning the effective student recruitment methods.
5. A comparison study of various training methods employed by Federal agencies involved in cooperative education.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

MANAGERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MANAGERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- A. Name (Optional) _____
- B. Age _____ Sex: M _____ F _____
- C. Position Title at Present _____
- D. Position title when involved with the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB _____
- E. Involved with the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB:
From _____ To _____
1. In your opinion, what were the intended goals and objectives of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 2. What introductory briefing was provided to Cooperative Education Students at Tinker AFB?
 3. What provisions were made for assessing the needs of the Cooperative Education Program students?
 4. What was the attitude/receptiveness of co-workers toward the Cooperative Education Student/Worker and what type of help was given to these Students/Workers from co-workers at Tinker AFB?
 5. a. What support was given to the student/worker by the colleges and universities involved in the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
b. What support was given to you as a supervisor/administrator by colleges and universities involved in the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 6. What methods/procedures were used to evaluate (or assess) the student/worker's progress?
 7. In general what do you see as the benefits of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 8. What do you see as some of the negative (or weak) aspects of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 9. How can the Cooperative Education Program be improved? Feel free to make suggestions, recommendations or elaborate with additional comments.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- A. Name (Optional) _____
- B. Age _____ Sex: M _____ F _____
- C. Present Job Title _____
- D. Dates as a Cooperative Education Program Student:
From _____ To _____
1. In your opinion, what were the intended goals and objectives to the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 2. What introductory briefing was provided for you as a Cooperative Education Program Student at Tinker AFB?
 3. What method was employed to determine your needs as a Cooperative Education Student at Tinker AFB?
 4. In your opinion how receptive were co-workers toward you as a Cooperative Education Program Student and what type of help did you receive from these co-workers?
 5. a. What support was given to you as a Cooperative Education Student from your college or university?
b. What support was given to you as a Cooperative Education Student from your supervisor at Tinker AFB?
 6. What methods/procedures were used to evaluate (or assess) progress on your job?
 7. In general what do you see as the benefits of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB for students?
 8. Generally, what do you see as some of the negative (or weak) aspects of the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB?
 9. How can the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB be improved? Please feel free to make suggestions, recommendations, or elaborate with additional comments.

APPENDIX C

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 9

Complete listing of managers responses to Question 9, "How can the Cooperative Education Program be improved? Feel free to make suggestions, recommendation or elaborate with additional comments," follows:

1. "... match student to the correct job."
2. "... sponsor identified for each student."
3. "... choose motivated kids only with academic ability."
4. "... kids should sign binding contract for work after graduation."
5. "... supervisors must make the final decision to hire a student through a face to face interview."
6. "... encourage students to form a support group--and get together very frequently."
7. "... get facts on student testing before appointments are made."
8. "... student training program must work in practice--not just on paper."
9. "... provide base housing and open all base/facilities to all students."
10. "... provide complete orientation to all students."
11. "... students must be treated professionally--not as summer hires."
12. "... communication must exist at every level for all participants."
13. "... develop good relationship with colleges."
14. "... encourage supervisors to put all positive comments concerning students in writing."
15. "Director must be a highly motivated person and plan to stay in the job a period of time."
16. "... provide careful paperwork tracking system."
17. "... give college, student and base a copy of student evaluation."
18. "... help management to better understand student cultural gap and financial background."
19. "... give twice a year briefing about the program."
20. "... make film on program."
21. "... do lots of publicity for program--lots of visibility to spotlight students and supervisors."

22. ". . . director must know all the students and meet with them frequently."
23. ". . . recruit from local schools and consider only students with 60 semester hours."
24. ". . . director must do on-site visits frequently to student work area."
25. ". . . frequent monitoring of training program."
26. ". . . consider the cost effectiveness of the program yearly."

Complete listing of responses to Question 9 by students, "How can the Cooperative Education Program at Tinker AFB be improved? Please feel free to make suggestions, recommendations, or elaborate with additional comments."

1. ". . . supervisor should select students."
2. ". . . thoroughly brief students, supervisors, and workforce about program . . . good understanding of program."
3. ". . . director must be committed and stay for length of time."
4. ". . . written guidelines for students and supervisors."
5. ". . . director should be a minority."
6. ". . . clarify goals and objectives of program."
7. ". . . better job training."
8. ". . . complete and adequate briefing and orientation."
9. ". . . meet with supervisors and students to go over problems and training outlines."
10. ". . . treated as 'pre-professional', not student aid."
11. ". . . assist transitioning student to world of work and counsel."
12. ". . . improved tracking of paperwork for promotions."
13. ". . . director must have sharp communication skills."
14. ". . . frequently monitor training."
15. ". . . assist in knowledge of learning federal system."
16. ". . . no clerical/secretarial work."

17. ". . . director must want his job and plan to stay."
18. ". . . encourage meetings and activities to build support network."
19. ". . . insure correct student placement--field of work must match academic major."
20. ". . . meet (students) monthly at work for exchange of information from director of program."
21. ". . . frequent and individual counseling for students."
22. ". . . director should monitor supervisors performance."

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