

DOMAIN CONSENSUS IN A CONSORTIUM:

A CASE STUDY OF THE

LANCASTER MODEL

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## PREFACE

This study is concerned with the question of how a consortium in higher education matures, what dangers could be expected and how they might be dealt with, and what could be learned from the mistakes of others.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to his major adviser, Dr. Thomas Karman, and to the other members of the committee, Dr. Kenneth St. Clair, Dr. Adrian, and Dr. Thomas Johnsten, for their assistance and their patience.

A special note of thanks is given to my Mother-in-Law, who thought she was loaning me the typewriter for only a couple of months.

And to my wife, who had a lot more faith in me than I ever held in myself, I cannot put into words, and would not try for public consumption, my feelings.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. PROBLEM DEFINITION . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	5
Significance of the Study . . . . .	8
Definition of Terms . . . . .	9
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	11
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	12
Inter-Institutional Cooperation . . . . .	12
Defining "Consortium" . . . . .	16
Model for Consortium Development . . . . .	19
III. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	37
IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA . . . . .	50
Evidence on Stage IV . . . . .	50
Primary Linkages Outside the Central Agency . . . . .	50
Programs Centered on Member Campuses . . . . .	53
Central Agency as "Supportive Services" . . . . .	55
Evolving-Project Interactions . . . . .	59
Development of "Community" . . . . .	64
Evidence on Stage V . . . . .	70
Evolution of Domain Consensus . . . . .	70
Summary of Stage IV . . . . .	82
Summary of Stage V . . . . .	85
V. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	87
Summary . . . . .	87
Research Questions . . . . .	90
Methodology . . . . .	91
Major Findings of the Research Questions . . . . .	94
Discussion . . . . .	100
Minimizing the Central Agency's Role . . . . .	102
Changes in Organizational Structure . . . . .	106
Changes in Program Emphasis . . . . .	109

Chapter	Page
Questions for Further Research . . . . .	115
Conclusions . . . . .	118
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	128
APPENDIXES . . . . .	132
APPENDIX A - RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SECOND- LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS . . . . .	134
APPENDIX B - RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS . . . . .	139
APPENDIX C - COMPARISON OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS . . . . .	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Preferred Source of Assistance in Faculty Matters . . . . .	74
II. Preferred Source of Assistance in Administrative Matters . . . . .	77
III. Preferred Source of Assistance in Academic Discipline Matters (Science and Technology) . . . . .	79
IV. Preferred Source of Assistance in Academic Discipline Matters (Humanities and Letters) . . . . .	80
V. Faculty Preference for Cooperation in Academic Discipline Matters . . . . .	81
VI. Comparison of Administrator/Faculty Preferences on Cooperation in Academic Discipline Matters . . . . .	83

## CHAPTER I

### PROBLEM DEFINITION

#### Introduction

Higher education does not exist within a vacuum; it is constantly interacting with the society in which it operates. Patterson (1970) organized those interactions into what he considered to be society's four most significant areas of impact upon higher education:

1. The emergence of new social, scientific, and technical needs which result in changes in curriculum, facilities, and personnel.
2. Demands for specialization, research, and job-oriented education which require cooperation of a complex nature beyond institutional boundaries.
3. The compulsion to innovate, experiment, apply modern technology, serve society more directly, and affect social, political, and economic change.
4. Mounting costs required to support institutions and the increasing competition for public and private funds, resulting in financial uncertainty (p. 2).

The pressures listed by Patterson have not abated (Schwenkmeyer and Goodman, 1972, p. 1; Lombardi, 1973, p. 15; Patterson, F., 1974, pp. 91-94; Grupe, 1975, p. 1; Powell, 1975, p. 4).

Being aware of these pressures, the higher education community has searched for ways to respond constructively to them. One response has been an increase in inter-institutional cooperation, including formally organized consortium arrangements. Broadly defined, an academic consortium is a cooperative venture involving two or more institutions of higher education in which faculty, facilities, basic



equipment, and/or money are shared (Moore, 1968, p. 3). The concept of academic consortia is not new, for the basic structure can be traced from University College, founded in 1249, and the subsequent development of Oxford University (McCoy, 1968, p. 30).

But higher education's reaction to the pressures that have developed during this century resulted in a rapid and undirected increase in the number of inter-institutional arrangements. Academic cooperation between and among various institutions of higher education in the United States became so common that it was difficult to speak of the arrangements in meaningful generalities. A directory of arrangements for inter-institutional cooperation in higher education compiled through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare listed 1,107 such working partnerships in 1965 (Moore, 1968). Included were a wide range of cooperative interactions, from two-party casual exchanges between close geographic neighbors to statutory inter-state commissions.

In an attempt to introduce some standard for consortia, Lewis Patterson suggested a defining paradigm for consortia in higher education. To be classified as a consortium by Patterson (1970) an academic cooperative arrangement must satisfy five criteria:

1. a formal voluntary organization,
2. three or more member institutions,
3. multi-academic programs,
4. at least one full-time professional to administer the programs, and
5. a required annual contribution or other tangible evidence of the long-term commitment of the member institutions (pp. 2-3).

Although the total number has varied from year to year, only about one hundred inter-institutional arrangements could be called "consortia" under Patterson's criteria.

With consortia defined, it became possible to examine consortium

development and to begin building theoretical foundations for the movement. Research into consortium growth started at the more concrete level of case descriptions and compilations of field taxonomies. Grupe (1970) and Murphy (1974) categorized legal relations between consortia and state education agencies; Kramer (1972) chose to concentrate on the formal instruments of collaboration within various consortia. Naumcheff (1973) listed the non-academic programs of selected consortia, while Powell (1975) attempted to define more general categories of consortium activities. Schwenkmeyer and Goodman (1972) addressed the question of degrees of effectiveness or success in terms of stated objectives in a select group of consortia, and Tudor (1973) prepared job descriptions for the chief administrative officers of consortia he considered to be highly successful. Powell (1975) summarized programs undertaken by selected consortia.

In 1969, both Grupe and Sagan studied existing consortia and used their findings to prepare a policy guide and a PERT network, respectively, for the creation of a consortium. But it was Lancaster (1969) who first looked beyond the time of the creation and dealt with consortium growth at a theoretical level. His model proposed five stages through which a consortium would mature, based upon the evolution of interdependencies and the responses of the members of the consortium to the conflicts that would result:

Stage I--Period prior to the development of a formal organization; characterized by ad hoc and largely informal cooperation.

Stage II--Establishment of the formal organization; characterized by central agency efforts to initiate interdependencies between itself and the member institutions.

Stage III--Period of strengthening of the interrelationship network; characterized by conflict and competition between and among the member institutions and between the central agency and the members.

Stage IV--Development of more complex inter-dependencies; characterized by recognition of lack of strong central authority and acceptance of a support role by the central agency.

Stage V--Evolution of specialization and domain consensus within the cooperative network; characterized by consistent patterns of dispersed program responsibility (pp. 13-18).

Although the model established benchmarks, it did not attempt to outline the dynamics of the process by which a consortium would develop from any one stage to the next.

The model described a network of autonomous institutions united by a common belief that something positive might result from cooperation, or that "at least, it could not hurt" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 46). According to Lancaster's model the member institutions entered into the consortium as peers, bringing with them their various goals, historical missions, and expectations for themselves and for the cooperative arrangement. By allowing themselves to be moved into situations of closer interaction with one another, the member institutions had created an atmosphere of direct confrontation over matters of program priority, budget allocation, and general utilization of resources. The central agency was not simply an adjunct to the members, but rather a competitive element within the environments of the member institutions. Likewise, the member institutions were not super-hierarchies encompassing the central agency, but were competitive elements within its environment. These competitive tensions were the common theme running through Stages III, IV, and V of Lancaster's model. The conflicts that arose from these tensions would be of two general types: "Some of these conflicts are over the competition for scarce resources, others are more concerned with the new identity problems posed by association in the consortium" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 16). A mature consortium, one

that had evolved to Stage V of the model, would be characterized by the domain consensus predicted as the mechanism developed for legitimizing and controlling these conflicts.

In his analysis of a developing consortium, identified in the study by the pseudonym Midwestern Association for Higher Education (MAHE), Lancaster reported that the first three stages of his model accurately reflected the reality he found in the field. He found, however, that MAHE had only recently moved into Stage III, and he was unable to verify the last two stages of the model. The field verification supported his contention that cooperation in such an arrangement had to be fostered with care. But the study was not able to examine completely the periods during which the model called for conflict, severest pressures against the continuation of the consortium, and the creation of mechanisms to deal with those conflicts and pressures. Lancaster's (1969, p. 17), sole observation on the evolution of domain consensus was the comment that, "lacking a strong central authority, the recognition of mutual inter-dependencies is the essential means of providing a broad and lasting basis for coordination." He recognized that each of the member institutions would retain its autonomy and would accept domain consensus only within narrowly-defined program areas. But he left to later case studies the problem of discovering detailed support for his predictions.

#### Statement of the Problem

This research will address the verification of the final two stages of Lancaster's model for consortium development.

The model for development of inter-institutional cooperative

arrangements in higher education first proposed by Lancaster in 1969 included five stages in the maturation process. He used field observation of a case consortium during the 1968-69 academic year to verify the first three stages of the model. But he found that the consortium being studied, identified as the Midwestern Association for Higher Education (MAHE), had not yet achieved the final two stages predicted. It would be during the final stages that the consortium would face the severest pressures against its continued existence. Competition over scarce resources and conflict resulting from new identity problems would have to be recognized, legitimated, and controlled if the consortium were to remain viable. The characteristic of a fully matured consortium, according to Lancaster, must be a clearly-defined domain consensus, or program specialization, within the network of interacting institutions. Domain consensus would be recognized from a consistent pattern of dispersed program responsibility.

The direction of the study can be outlined by the following research questions:

1. Has the consortium reached Stage IV of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium? This would be characterized by considering the following related questions:
  - a. Have primary and sustaining linkages been established between or among the member institutions?
  - b. Have programs resulting from linkages between or among member institutions been centered on campus rather than at the central agency offices?
  - c. Has the central agency moved from the role of "prime mover" to a role of "support services" provider?
  - d. Have the linkages between the member institutions and the central agency moved from single-project to continuing--or evolving-project interactions?

- e. Is there evidence of a feeling of individual involvement in the course of the consortium, though there has been no loss of member autonomy?

2. Has the consortium reached Stage V of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium? This would be characterized by considering the following related questions:

- a. Has domain consensus developed within the consortium?
  - i. Were presently recognized program strengths apparent at the time the consortium was formed?
  - ii. Was recognition of program strength requested by the member institution, assigned by the consortium, or both?
  - iii. If more than one member sought recognition of a program strength, how was the consensus assigned?
  - iv. Was recognition of a program strength considered in granting membership to an institution seeking to join the consortium?
- b. How stable is the pattern of domain consensus within the consortium?
  - i. Has recognition of program strength been shifted between any member institutions by the consortium?
  - ii. Has the central agency been responsible for attempts to shift the consensus?
  - iii. Has any member withdrawn from the consortium as a result of disagreement over domain consensus?
- c. What is the position of the central agency within the consortium?
  - i. What is the domain of the central agency?
  - ii. Has the domain of the central agency changed during the existence of the consortium?
- d. To what extent will the member institutions agree that a stable pattern of program responsibility (i.e. domain consensus) has developed?

### Significance of the Study

The traditional American pattern of strict institutional autonomy is being severely tested by the combined pressures of limited resources and virtually unlimited demands (Patterson, F., 1972, p. 55). A new pattern of inter-institutional cooperation is being built upon the hypothesis that by coordinating their efforts institutions may complement one another and provide more flexible and better organized program offerings; smaller schools are also attracted by the possibility of expanding their offerings and increasing their drawing power among potential students (Five Colleges Long Range Planning Committee, 1969, p. 4; Patterson, L., 1970, p. 6; Provo, 1971, pp. 86-87; Nelson, 1972, p. 547; O'Neil, 1974, p. 7; Patterson, F., 1974, p. 4; Grupe, 1975, p. 1; Powell, 1975, entire work).

Creation of cooperative arrangements, generally referred to as consortia, for the purpose of improving either the quality or the number of the program offerings or both, has been endorsed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1971, pp. 93-94) and by leaders in the cooperative movement (Grupe, 1975, p. 3). But there has been little formal research on the assumptions at the foundations of the movement. Grupe (1975) noted:

The creation of many consortia has been unsatisfactory because a simplistic belief existed that the formalization of an organization permitted the easy transfer of program ideas from one location to another (p. 1).

Tudor (1973, p. 119) argued that effective cooperation should result in more clearly defined goals and in the development of new specializations, but such cooperation should not be expected to function well or for long unless there were "mechanisms that permitted each partner

to learn from the experience".

Lancaster's (1969, pp. 13-18) model predicted the evolution of domain consensus as the main mechanism permitting the cooperative arrangement to develop heuristically. It has been the only theoretical model that has considered the possible adaptations of the consortium to its environment after its establishment. Research into the topics of inter-institutional conflict, the responses of the consortium to such conflict, and the effect of the conflict upon the pattern of interactions within the consortium must begin somewhere. While the processes, and the results, will probably differ from one consortium to another, it would be beneficial to determine whether Lancaster's model could provide a criterion against which the differences and the commonalities among consortia may be illuminated and analyzed. There has been no study that determined fully the acceptability of Lancaster's model as such a criterion. Such a study would be useful (Jackson, F., 1978; Patterson, L., 1978).

#### Definition of Terms

Consortium--An inter-institutional organization in higher education that meets the following five criteria: (1) a voluntary formal organization; (2) three or more member institutions; (3) multi-academic programs; (4) at least one full-time professional to administer the programs; and (5) a required annual contribution or other tangible evidence of the long-term commitment of member institutions (Patterson, L., 1970, pp. 2-3).

Consortium Member--Any separate and autonomous institution within the network of interaction provided by the consortium.



Central Agency--The organizational unit created to administer the affairs of the consortium, distinct from the administration of any member institution.

Model for Consortium Development--The theory of the evolution of interdependencies and the formal elements to legitimize and control the resultant conflicts, divided into five overlapping stages as delineated by the direction and intensity of inter-relationship among and between the members (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 13-18).

a. Stage I--The period prior to development of an organization for interaction, during which any inter-relationships among the potential members would be characterized as ad hoc and casual (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 13-14).

b. Stage II--The period during which a formal organization was established, with cooperative programs initiated by the central agency in an attempt to legitimize its position within the network of member institutions (Lancaster, 1969, p. 15).

c. Stage III--The period characterized by growing fears of the authority of the central agency and of perceived loss of autonomy by the member institutions, and by the resultant conflicts within the consortium (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 16-17).

d. Stage IV--The period during which member institutions would develop strong relationships among themselves and begin to perceive the role of the central agency as that of providing support services (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 17-18).

e. Stage V--An open-ended period characterized by the development of domain consensus, or program specialization, to legitimize and control earlier conflicts, during which member institutions would

accept the responsibility for generating program ideas that would utilize the central agency in a supporting role (Lancaster, 1969, p. 18).

Domain Consensus--Agreement among members of the network regarding the appropriate role and scope of each member (Benson, 1975, p. 235) and characterized in a consortium by consistent patterns of dispersed program responsibility (Lancaster, 1969, p. 18).

#### Limitations of the Study

A case study relies upon the good auspices of the individuals who have had direct involvement in the situation being studied; it assumes that individual biases or prejudices and individual lapses of memory will, in the final analysis, balance one another to the extent that research conclusions may be assumed to have some validity. In addition, every case study recognizes the severe limits upon its potential for generalization beyond the specific case under study. This study is intended to determine whether a specific model of consortium development does carry a significant validity.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Inter-Institutional Cooperation

The concept of inter-institutional cooperation in higher education dates from the founding of University College, in 1249, and its subsequent development into Oxford University (McCoy, 1968, p. 30). Although the most commonly accepted characteristic of higher education in the United States involves autonomous institutions existing in laissez-faire competition with one another, attempts to improve academic quality through cooperation among institutions began as early as the 1870's.

When President Andrew White of Cornell was unable to recruit the quality faculty he felt the institution needed, he borrowed from the faculties of other colleges and universities (Unterbrink, 1973, pp. 4-5). Resistance to admission of women at Harvard prompted individual members of the faculty to begin the "Annex" for women on an informal basis in 1879. In 1894, this "women's branch" received a charter as Radcliff (Brubacher and Rudy, 1958, p. 69).

In 1925, President Blaisdell envisioned the formation of a cluster of colleges as an alternative to the continued uncontrolled growth of Pomona College. His proposal contained sharp differences with other forms of inter-institutional cooperation since he called for the creation of a distinct, new administrative entity charged with

responsibility for coordination of the programs undertaken by the member colleges. Miss Ellen Browning Scripps responded to President Blaisdell's request for basic financial support, and her benefaction provided the base upon which The Claremont Colleges Group, of California was founded (Clary, 1970, pp. 1-5). Four years later, in 1929, Atlanta University (Georgia), Spelman College, and Morehouse College followed the example of the California group and formalized the cooperative programs they had been developing since 1921. Several small Negro colleges joined the arrangement, called the Atlanta University Center (Georgia), in an attempt to improve the quality of their academic programs (Bingham, 1974, p. 25).

Few examples of formalized inter-institutional cooperation could be found during the periods of the Depression and the Second World War. But the influx of returning veterans, encouraged to continue their educations by the G. I. Bill, exerted pressure for rapid growth in higher education. The cooperative arrangement movement also enjoyed a period of renewed growth. In the middle 1950's, two events occurred that gave a significant boost to the cooperative growth in higher education.

In 1954, fourteen Southern states joined in the formation of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (Guide to Interinstitutional Arrangements: Voluntary and Statutory, 1974, pp. 27-28).<sup>1</sup> The Board was statutory in nature, deriving its legal base from the various state

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<sup>1</sup>Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Programs of the SREB include public information and publications, consultation, and divisions on educational opportunity, mental illness and retardation, and regional cooperation, in addition to its general research functions.

legislatures which had created the organization to administer interstate compacts in higher education. While the SREB did not have direct control over any of the colleges or universities within its geographic region, it did provide an opportunity for state legislatures to gain influence in the cooperative movement. Other states began considering the formation of interstate compacts; the SREB had given at least preliminary legitimacy to the entrance of political elements into cooperation within higher education.

As a countermeasure to prevent a compulsory regional compact for the midwestern region, members of the Big Ten plus the University of Chicago formed the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC) in 1957 (Howard, 1967a, pp. 105-107). This was the first example of formal inter-institutional cooperation among larger institutions of higher education and the first operated totally at the graduate level; the CIC gave legitimacy to the cooperative movement among prestigious institutions of higher education.

During the late 1950's, smaller institutions, generally grouped under the heading "Colleges in Trouble," moved toward cooperative programs. The small independent liberal arts colleges, the church-related colleges (both Catholic and Protestant), and the predominantly Negro colleges saw formal cooperation as a way to sustain their existences and to improve the quality of their academic programs (McCoy, 1968, p. 33; Provo, 1971, p. 81). At the same time, many cooperative arrangements were established among institutions in and around major metropolitan centers. The Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education appeared officially in 1962 (Bingham, 1974, p. 26).

Interest in improving educational opportunities for minority students prompted President John Kennedy to involve the federal government in inter-institutional cooperation. The result was the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). Title III of the HEA of 1965 was intended to provide support for developing colleges engaged in programs of cooperation with stronger colleges (Howard, 1967b, p. iii). But the legislation did not define a "developing college." The Office of Education simply invited institutions to support their claims to being developing institutions, then prepared a guiding definition, and established a funding pattern based upon the early justifications (Patterson, F., 1974, p. 24). Under the HEA of 1965, a total of eighty-four new cooperative arrangements were funded to begin operation in September of 1966 (Howard, 1967a, pp. 109-110). Private foundations followed the same procedure in developing guidelines for grant approval, and money became available for almost any venture in higher education that used the word "cooperative" in its title. A survey conducted through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1966 found more than 1,000 institutions which identified themselves as members of at least one such arrangement, by then generally known as consortia (Moore, 1968, p. 2).

The rapid proliferation of consortia continued into the current decade. Writing in 1974, Franklin Patterson reported that "over one-half of today's consortia have been organized in the past five years" (p. 4). Lewis Patterson found that the "number of national higher education organizations that are beginning to show an interest in

furthering the voluntary cooperative approach is growing" (1974, p. 1).<sup>2</sup>

### Defining "Consortium"

The lack of a unifying paradigm with which to bring order to the rapid growth of cooperative arrangements bothered leaders of the consortium movement. While he was President of the Great Lakes College Association, Eldon Johnson (1968) argued that it was

. . . not conducive to analysis to mix these forms indiscriminately; statutory and voluntary; formal and informal; coordinative and operative; interstate and intrastate, and intracity; groups which confer and groups which administer; groups to do all things and groups to do one thing; groups of two and groups of 70; groups tied together only by name and groups bound into federations; groups without budgets and groups with great resources; and groups as ephemeral as a single seminar and groups as enduring as the founders themselves (p. 342).

Lewis Patterson noted the problem of finding literature on consortium development simply because there were no generally recognized reference terms.

Early confusion in research on consortia centered upon the choice of characteristics to consider significant for study. Moore established a subjective categorization of arrangements, based upon the instruments to agreement and the loss of individual autonomy required of the members by each agreement. He listed the types of agreement in decreasing degree of lost autonomy and arrived at the following six categories: (1) charter; (2) incorporation; (3) contract; (4) memoranda

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<sup>2</sup>The idea of cooperative arrangements again attracted the attention of state legislatures, who were aware only of vague promises of significant increases in academic and financial efficiencies. Pressure was exerted for "voluntary" coordination under the control of statutory statewide agencies, even though most of the arrangements amounted to little more than "master plans" for sharing facilities and eliminating program overlaps (Grupe and Murphy, 1974, p. 173).

of agreement; (5) exchange of letters; and (6) agreements that would be classified as spontaneous or completely informal (Howard, 1967a, p. 322). But the legal document did not influence the styles of the member institutions significantly, and Grupe (1972a, p. 5) had argued that a consortium should be the vehicle to bring about a "lasting reorganization of institutional resources". Ertell (1957, p. 8) agreed that such a level of cooperative relationship should "move to the center of institutional academic activity and practice . . . [since] they involve more or less radical changes in institutional procedures".

Naumcheff (1973) subsumed Moore's categories under the distinction of whether the agreement had been the result of voluntary or involuntary action by the members:

Both voluntary and involuntary consortia are divided into two forms, bilateral and multilateral. Bilateral cooperation involves only two institutions; multilateral indicates the involvement of three or more institutions.

Voluntary, but not involuntary, consortia are further classified according to the working agreement into two types, formal and informal. A formal consortium is founded on a contractual agreement which legally binds the institution for the period of time indicated in the contract. Most formal consortia result in the foundation of an agency to assist with the cooperative endeavors; often this agency becomes incorporated. An informal consortium is based on a verbal agreement and exists upon the mutual good faith of the cooperative institutions (p. 4).

This combination of criteria did not produce a taxonomy useful for further research and analysis of cooperative arrangements, and the line of thought being developed by Moore and Naumcheff was dropped.<sup>3</sup>

Franklin Patterson (1974, pp. 14-24) developed a taxonomy, based

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<sup>3</sup>Kramer's (1972, pp. 1-5) cataloging of the formal instruments of cooperation in his existing consortia has been the only major research effort undertaken that approached the consortium movement from this foundation.



upon the general purpose of the agreement, that resulted in three categories: (1) cooperative consortia, composed of those arrangements involved in joint academic planning and cooperative academic programs; (2) service consortia, with those utilizing cooperation principally to provide one or more services, either academic or nonacademic in nature; and (3) Title III consortia, including groups holding both of the above mission statements but similar to one another in that they derived their financial support from Title III funding from the Higher Education Act of 1965. The first two groups were rejected as not significant to explain reality. Grupe (1975, p. 14), for example, argued that the use of inter-institutional cooperation as the basis for differentiation was "decidedly inadequate. Colleges don't cooperate. More specifically, they structure exchanges of information . . . . They exchange students or they act to purchase services from one another." The third category was so general that it represented nothing concretely distinctive. This line of thought proved void of foundation for meaningful research.

L. Patterson (1970, pp. 2-3) elected to concentrate upon voluntary consortia, judging that they would be more flexible, less constrained by political boundaries, and more open to the psychological atmosphere of participatory decision-making that would actually reflect needs or desires. He defined a consortium on the criteria of organizational structure, listing five items as critical: (1) a voluntary formal organization; (2) three or more member institutions; (3) multi-academic programs; (4) at least one full-time professional to administer the programs; and (5) a required annual contribution or other tangible evidence of the long-term commitment of the member institutions.

Defining a consortium in terms of the organizational structure avoided many of the problems that had arisen with definitions based upon mission statements, sources of funding, or self-categorization. Patterson used his definition as the criterion for inclusion in a series of directories of cooperative arrangements published under various titles from 1967 through 1971. The American Association for Higher Education used the definition as the criterion for inclusion in the 1973, 1975, and 1977 editions of the Consortium Directory. Although each Directory noted that its listings were not intended as a basis for establishing exclusiveness, almost all researchers in the area of consortia since 1970 have used listing in either Patterson's directories or the AAHE directories as the criterion for selection of the cases to be studied.

Even within the restrictions of Patterson's criterion the number of consortia has continued to increase. Comparison of the 1973 AAHE Consortium Directory with Patterson's 1967 Academic Cooperative Arrangements Directory indicated an increase of more than 150 percent, from 31 listings to 80 listings. The total number of listings had risen to 115 in the 1977 AAHE Consortium Directory.

#### Model for Consortium Development

During the growth period of the mid-1960's, Howard (1976, p. 97) lamented that "we don't as yet understand what is happening, let alone have the means for directing change in higher education. The mental need is for a theoretical framework."<sup>4</sup> In 1969, Richard Lancaster

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<sup>4</sup>Leaders in the cooperative movement gathered in 1967 for the

suggested such a framework.

Lancaster (1969, pp. 13-18) assumed that inter-dependencies would develop after the consortium had begun creating cooperative interactions, rather than springing into existence at the moment the cooperative arrangement was established. He assumed that the evolution of inter-dependencies would be accompanied by conflict between and among the participants in the arrangement as they moved into new patterns of interaction with one another. Lancaster's model for consortium development was based upon the evolution of both the inter-dependence pattern and the responses to conflict within that network as the participants learned new ways of thinking of one another.<sup>5</sup> The model proposed five overlapping stages through which a consortium must grow:

Stage I represented the period before the consortium had been formally organized. Although there were external pressures that would seem to have been moving the institutions toward cooperation, the individual colleges did not perceive inter-dependencies. Any cooperative programs were ad hoc and informal. The movement toward formal cooperation was a response to the general "cultural values" supportive

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purpose of sharing their perceptions of the direction in which the movement had been, and would be, going. At the end of the conference, in the summary of the minutes and presentations, the general tone of the exchange of information was described as having been nothing more than "reports of the day-to-day operations as viewed by the executive officers of the confederations" (Howard, 1967a, p. 3).

<sup>5</sup>Lancaster (1969, pp. 13-18) considered the central agency that administrative entity created by the arrangement, to be one of the active participants within the network. That position has been supported by L. Patterson (1974) who saw that central agencies were "consuming portions of the very limited resources for postsecondary education available from public and private sources" (p. 1).

of such activities (pp. 13-14).

Stage II began with the formal establishment of the cooperative arrangement. The linkages of the members were primarily with the central agency created by the formal agreement, and there were no serious attempts at interactions between member institutions. Programs were initiated by the central agency with the goal of fostering more permanent inter-dependencies between itself and the member institutions (p. 15).

Stage III was characterized by the recognition of inter-related goals and the development of stronger ties among member institutions. Member institutions felt growing fears of loss of autonomy, and the central agency was forced to begin surrendering its leadership position. Conflict and competition arose in response to the effects of the new interactions upon the individual campus administrative structures and inter-personal dynamics, and mechanisms developed to preserve member independence. Conflict was being legitimized as being "consistent with the consortium's inter-organizational character" (p. 16).

Stage IV was predicted by Lancaster to be the crisis period for the consortium; the central agency would have relinquished its authority, and the inter-dependencies among member institutions would have become the basis for lasting coordination. Programs would be suggested by member colleges, and the initiation of second and third generation type developments would link colleges and central agency in more complex ways. The central agency would provide support services required by member institutions (p. 17).

Stage V was perceived by Lancaster as an open-ended period follow-

ing resolution of the crisis period's conflicts and was "very difficult to characterize." Lancaster's model predicted that domain consensus would evolve as the mechanism for control of conflict and would determine whether a program would be undertaken on a centralized basis or as the concern of an individual institution. Lancaster predicted that there would be a general movement toward closer formal affiliation of the members, with the possible formation of a "cluster" university structure (p. 18).

Lancaster (1969) chose as the consortium for his study one that had "some maturity of development, sufficient size to provide a variety of institutions", and national recognition as one of the leaders among the newly-developing cooperative movement (p. 27). The consortium was identified as the Midwestern Association for Higher Education (MAHE). Lancaster prepared his case study on the results of a mailed questionnaire and a follow-up personal interview with current and past leaders and participants in the consortium.<sup>6</sup> Minutes of administration board meetings, public relations releases, articles and editorials from the local news media, and other research and development papers of the consortium provided additional information on the formal history of the case arrangement.

Lancaster found that the history of the consortium conformed to his predictions for Stage I. The various institutions that were members of the consortium at the time of the study had been founded

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<sup>6</sup>Lancaster (1969, pp. 25-26) interviewed current and past presidents of institutions, academic deans, business managers, student deans, faculty representatives, members of the central staff, and non-educational leaders in the community who had been involved in the formation of MAHE.

as much as 105 years earlier. They reported having felt no significant competition among themselves, and they reported having felt no particular need for cooperation. The colleges had drawn their students and their financial support from relatively discrete, mutually exclusive populations (e.g. Baptists, Catholic men, Catholic women, art students, Latter Day Saints).<sup>7</sup> Programs had been developed by the individual institutions in response to contemporary demands, without regard to future consequences and without regard to programs of other institutions. The atmosphere resembled that designated "disjointed, but benign, co-existence" by O'Neil (1974, p. 6).

By the late 1950's demographic shifts and changes in social and economic conditions had caused the unique target populations of the institutions to collapse into a single general client pool. Competition was still "friendly" and the institutions reported having felt no awareness of conflict beyond the traditional school rivalries.

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<sup>7</sup> Any organization must have or control certain elements if it is to achieve its goals, including clients, resources in the form of equipment, specialized knowledge, or the funds with which to acquire them, and the services of people to direct those resources to the client pool (Levine and White, 1961, p. 586). The need to acquire these scarce and valued resources is the motivation for any interaction between an organization and its environment (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967, p. 900).

The definition of "resources" has not been interpreted in education as being limited to physical or economic units alone, and such intangible units as reputation or prestige (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967, p. 900), services (Benson, 1975, p. 231; Evan, 1965, p. 8-221; Levine and White, 1961, p. 600), and authority or legitimacy (Benson, 1975, p. 232; Evan, 1965, p. 8-221) have been accepted as being organizational resources.

Since the institutions had not perceived limiting criteria among these resources during the years that Lancaster identified as Stage I, there would have been no motivation for interaction. Analysis of developing patterns of interactions should emphasize "adaptation and change in the organizational patterns of resource-getting" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967, p. 901).

Involvement in cooperative ventures, when it did appear, was tentative and best characterized as ad hoc.

But Lancaster (1969, p. 41) reported that the distinctions among the institutions had tended to lessen, leaving them as more nearly similar entities.<sup>8</sup>

Organization of the consortium in the early 1960's, was the result not so much of a desire to continue something that had been happening, but rather of a feeling that something could be made to happen. At the very least, they felt that it "could not hurt" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 46). Lancaster found that, while there had been no significant opposition to the formation of the consortium among the participants, there had also been very few precedents for interaction among the formal representatives of the various institutions.<sup>9</sup>

Pressures for cooperation had been placed upon the various institutions by business leaders of the community, the local newspaper, general public opinion on the future of higher education in Midwest City, and the local Association of Trusts and Foundations. But the primary external pressure forcing the members to consider closer cooperation had been financial considerations. "One would have to say

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<sup>8</sup> Societal pressures and financial conditions were forcing all institutions of higher education into more intense competition at that time (Grupe, 1975, p. 1; Lancaster, 1969, pp. 37-40; Lombardi, 1973, p. 15; Patterson, F., 1974, pp. 91-94; Patterson, L., 1970, p. 2; Schwenkmeyer and Goodman, 1972, p. 1).

<sup>9</sup> Provo (1971, p. 80), in his study of bilateral cooperative arrangements, found no signs of hostility developing in response to initial moves toward cooperation. However, Sagan (1969) stressed the importance of providing for interpersonal exchanges during these early periods in the formation of the consortium so that hostilities could be "aired" and "diffused" (p. 48).

that, finally, mutual poverty brought them together" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 49).<sup>10</sup>

MAHE entered the second stage of its development when the consortium was formalized, with a central agency to coordinate the bureaucracy of the cooperative programs. Lancaster's (1969) model predicted three distinctive characteristics of the second stage:

1. Interdependencies created between the central agency and the member institutions;
2. Consortium staff serving as specialists; and
3. Interdependency between member colleges limited to a type of pooling of resources, rather than anything more complex or involved (p. 56).

The consortium hired as its first executive a strong administrator who understood his role in the creation of linkages "first between the central office and the member colleges" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 64). This first director worked adeptly at all three aspects of the development of interdependencies. He described his primary task as that of seeing to it that the central staff "dreamed up projects that paid off" for the members (p. 58).<sup>11</sup> Early projects were designed to justify the existence of the central agency in the minds of the member colleges; the final goal was to induce members to look to the central agency for leadership with ideas that bore fruit (p. 58). Member institutions continued to exhibit limited awareness of potential interdependencies

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<sup>10</sup>Provo's (1971, p. 75) respondents indicated that finances had been one of the main forces in moving their institutions toward cooperative programs and Bradley's (1971, p. 21) subjects listed a need for "grantsmanship" as one reason for their cooperative arrangements.

<sup>11</sup>This aspect of the chief executive's function has been widely recognized in the consortium movement (Grupe, 1975, p. 41; Kramer, 1972, p. 39).



and generally expressed the hope that the central agency would "come up with something" (p. 61).

Second, the Executive Director cultivated a series of interpersonal dependencies.<sup>12</sup> Executives of the Midwest City Association of Trusts and Foundations, whose grant had been instrumental in the founding of MAHE, felt that the important goal at first was helping the member presidents overcome their suspicions of one another (p. 56).<sup>13</sup> The Executive Director was wise enough to allow himself great flexibility in positions taken and goals advocated during the second stage of MAHE's development.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the Executive Director functioned as the leader in a continued examination of the directions in which members felt the cooperative arrangement should develop (p. 58).<sup>15</sup> As described by J. Stuart Devlin, former Executive Director of the Association of Colleges of Eastern North Carolina, the director acted to bring member institutions into a state of "reciprocal dependence" (quoted in Kramer,

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<sup>12</sup>Grupe (1974, p. 14) observed that campus personnel would tend, at least initially, to think of the consortium in terms of their relationship with the director.

<sup>13</sup>The executive director of the consortium was in a unique position to be friend and confidant of college presidents. Several presidents commented on the personal and professional assistance received from the MAHE executive (Lancaster, 1969, p. 68).

<sup>14</sup>The role of the consortium director should develop as a conscious response to the requirements for building productive relationships, according to Grupe (1974, p. 13).

<sup>15</sup>Mauermeyer (1974, p. 5) equated efforts of the member colleges with vector quantities; when not unidirectional they would diminish the resultant force by a factor of the angles separating them. He assigned the central agency the task of helping members identify the direction that would maximize existing resources. Grupe (1975, pp. 53-54 and p. 56) agreed.

1972, p. 39).

Lancaster (1969, p. 63) found that the central agency was formally proposing the ideas, and that the central agency staff was providing the manpower to implement the ideas during the second stage of development.<sup>16</sup> Staff members were increasingly regarded as specialists in the areas of their work, but they had not yet attempted to take full advantage of the authority being accorded them. Lancaster's prediction that the central agency would attempt to make itself "invaluable to the colleges" was not supported (p. 67).

Projects that had been undertaken during this period were selected because they would provide high visibility with low levels of perceived threat or resource commitment. Most notable of the early cooperative ventures were the coordination of evening classes to avoid duplication, a series of Saturday morning seminars, a joint library proposal, and guest speakers of wide public recognition among both lay and academic people (p. 58). It was obvious that none of the schools involved was being asked to give up anything, nor become involved in a complex change because of the new association (pp. 64-65). Lancaster characterized the projects from this period as simple pooling of resources.

Lancaster concluded that the second stage of his model had been verified.

At the time of his study, Lancaster found MAHE in a period of both exciting growth and disturbing conflict, corresponding to Stage III

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<sup>16</sup>Bradley (1971a, p. 36 and pp. 151-152) found that a relatively large central staff was involved in "virtually all facets" of the governance process in his cases and Naumcheff (1973, p. 90) reported that almost 60 percent of the programs in the forty consortia of his study were directed by the central agency personnel.

of his model. As predicted, more complex programs were resulting in demands for serious cooperation and stronger ties among the participants of the consortium. Those demands raised questions about the roles of the various participants and about the defense of the independence and autonomy of the member institutions (p. 70).

Again, Lancaster found that the members had decided to become part of the consortium without consideration of long-term consequences; none of the members had considered that changes in the task environment of the individual organizations would result in changes in the organizations themselves (p. 80).<sup>17</sup> As originally planned, the consortium organizational structure included fourteen committees, with each having a representative from each campus.<sup>18</sup> The meetings of these so-called Functional Committees brought together personnel from the various campuses for exchanges of opinions and ideas and provided the first opportunities many had enjoyed to visit other physical plants (pp. 77-79). In addition, students were moving from campus to campus, although still in small numbers.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the central agency had

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<sup>17</sup>Grupe (1974) was surprised that so few administrators had recognized that the very act of forming a corporate body "gave authority to meetings of other administrators, faculty, and students" (p. 14).

<sup>18</sup>The committees were Academic Deans, Admissions Directors, Business Managers, Calendar, Deans of Students, Distinguished Lecturer Series Representatives, Humanities, International Programs, Library, Natural Sciences, Performing Artists Series, Public Affairs, Social Sciences, and Foreign Area Materials (Lancaster, 1969, p. 76). These were generally grouped under the heading of "Functional Committees" in the papers of the consortium.

<sup>19</sup>Bradley (1971a, pp. 141-142) found that students who had studied outside the single campus were forcing changes in course offerings, faculty qualifications, and policies of their home institutions.

established a National Defense Student Loan (NDSL) Center at a local bank in an attempt to work directly with students from the member campuses. Lancaster concluded that the potential for impact on the member campuses and organizational structures was highly significant--the isolated nature of many of the members was being broken down, with predictable consequences on the individual campuses (pp. 77-79).<sup>20</sup>

Discontent was also reported over the "hidden costs" of the consortium. The time required for meetings, both on the campuses and at the central agency offices, and for correspondence among the members had proven to be much greater than anticipated by any of the members, including those who had anticipated them at all.<sup>21</sup> Two colleges had withdrawn from MAHE, and two others which had planned to join did not follow through on their intentions. Although the increase in annual dues was cited as the reason in all four cases, Lancaster felt that a more accurate statement would be that their disagreements with the goals, methods, and potential influence of the consortium led them to remove themselves (p. 81).

Although most of the conflict was directed against the central agency, competition had begun among the members, and it was obvious that the consortium was in danger unless the conflict could be control-

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<sup>20</sup>Provo (1971, p. 85) found open conflict among members and concluded that administrators had to be willing to alter the decision-making processes (p. 101).

<sup>21</sup>Since member campuses were as far as 120 miles from the central agency offices, travel time was significant. Swerdlow (1972) studies forty consortia and concluded that there must be greater concern for the "hidden costs"(pp. 99-100).

led.<sup>22</sup> Lancaster's model proposed four common mechanisms for conflict management that would develop during this period: (1) division of labor;<sup>23</sup> (2) a system of checks and balances; (3) decentralization; and (4) coalitions (p. 96).

In the case consortium the division of labor had begun on two levels. A series of working papers had formalized the assignments of responsibilities to specific central agency administrative positions.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the Board of Directors had mandated development of a set of long-range goals for the consortium. Those goals recognized the relative strengths of the individual member institutions.<sup>25</sup>

Checks and balances had been built into the original operating agreement in the form of the administrative "functional committees," with

. . . the policy of having the president of each member college a member of the Board of Directors, every dean on the deans' functional committee, and a balance between Protestant and Catholic as well as between public and private colleges on the Executive Committee . . . (Lancaster, 1969, p. 100).

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<sup>22</sup>Jordan (1970, p. 38) studies consortia that had existed for up to fifty years and warned that there would be constant "struggles between institutions preserving their autonomy and attempting to enhance their own effectiveness through cooperation." She warned that the conflict had to be controlled.

<sup>23</sup>Lancaster (1969) later used the phrase "domain consensus" (p. 18).

<sup>24</sup>MAHE had felt this move to be necessary. From their own experiences, Mauermeyer (1974, p. 68 and pp. 72-73) and Grupe (1974, p. 13) urged retention of as much flexibility in the role of the director as possible.

<sup>25</sup>Mauermeyer (1974, p. 7) stressed the need for such goals, but found them to be the exception among consortia.

But Lancaster (1969) found the perceived threat to members' autonomy to be greater than the perceived strength of the original checks and balances.<sup>26</sup> The chief executives of the member institutions were upset. They saw significant differences between what they considered to be "bread and butter" needs for their institutions and the projects then being undertaken by MAHE. The members felt that the projects were too oriented toward development of the central agency or to the provision of "exotic" services for the larger institutions (p. 85). College representatives were upset. They expressed general suspicion that the central agency wanted the consortium to become a dispersed university (p. 91).<sup>27</sup> Members of the central agency staff were seen as controlling the functional committees of the central administration.<sup>28</sup>

MAHE had met this potential source of conflict by undertaking a major re-organization of the administrative structure. The Executive Board, composed of the member presidents, was structured into four sub-committees to allow the Board to act independently of both the functional committees and the consortium executive director, retitled

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<sup>26</sup>This problem has been well recognized within the consortium movement (Provo, 1971, p. 78; Bradley, 1971a, pp. 142-143 and p. 186; Kramer, 1972, pp. 145-146; Patterson, F., 1974, p. 43; Typer, 1974, entire work). Evan (in Thompson, 1966, pp. 180-182) argued that conflict of this nature was the logical side effect of the development of more closely unified goals.

<sup>27</sup>The same fears were found by Bradley (1971a, pp. 214-215) and Davis (1967, pp. 350-351) in their case studies.

<sup>28</sup>Bradley (1971a) found strong resistance to any change on the basis of what the "central agency thinks" would be efficient and the feeling that the central agency should "stay in the educational areas" (p. 69).

"Consortium President." Members of the Board had begun assuming more authority by moving into executive session and excluding the consortium president and his staff when discussing such questions as the roles of the Board and the president in the leadership of the consortium (pp. 98-99). Budget controls were being implemented.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the authority of each college president to exercise veto power over any consortium project on his or her campus was formally recognized.<sup>30</sup>

Lancaster (1969) found that members of the central agency staff had begun a program to disperse the central agency personnel among the member campuses.<sup>31</sup> Initial steps in implementing the planned decentralization had moved the institutional research officer and the coordinator of academic affairs away from the original headquarters facilities. At the time of his study, Lancaster was unable to determine the results of the dispersion in the newly-emerging authority structure of the consortium.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, Lancaster (1969) found that MAHE had actively culti-

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<sup>29</sup>Such a move was being advocated in the cases studied by Bradley (1971a, p. 71, p. 89, and p. 153), as part of a general change in governance.

<sup>30</sup>The issue of areas of authority has been acute in cooperative movement (Mauermeyer, 1974, p. 76; Burns, 1973; Grupe, 1974, pp. 16 and 18; Grupe, 1975, p. 46).

<sup>31</sup>The Great Lakes Colleges Association avoided this conflict by assigning major aspects of program planning and development to persons on the individual campuses. In addition, the consortium allowed individual member colleges to administer particular programs for all the members (Bradley, 1971b, pp. 31-33).

<sup>32</sup>L. Patterson (1970, p. 6) argued that the issue of centralized vs decentralized central staff was meaningless. Interinstitutional programs could not be developed and administered without investments and costs. The same conclusion was reached by Mauermeyer (1974, p. 81).

vated contacts with other consortia, with nationally recognized organizations in higher education, and with the federal government through the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.<sup>33</sup> The member institutions had maintained their contacts with other colleges, with regional and local small colleges organizations, and with national private funding sources. In addition, as Lancaster (1969) had predicted, they were tending to form coalitions within the consortium itself (p. 104).<sup>34</sup>

Although the case did not match the predicted characteristics exactly, Lancaster (1969) concluded that sufficient elements existed to claim verification of Stage III of his model.

The fourth stage in Lancaster's (1969) hypothesized maturation process was a period of horizontal development, a short-lived catching-of-breath before the final metamorphosis. Member institutions had just successfully challenged the perceived authority of the central agency. It was now necessary that they take upon themselves responsibility for the continuation of the cooperative venture. Stage IV encompassed the period during which the commitments of members both to the letter and to the spirit of the consortium's formal organizational agreement determined not only the direction of program evolution

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<sup>33</sup>Bradley (1971a, pp. 81-87) found that groups within his case study were also forming coalitions.

<sup>34</sup>External connections maintained by the members of the Great Lakes Colleges Association numbered "in the hundreds" (Bradley, 1971a, p. 100), and the listing of such ties of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest would prove an "enormous task" (Bradley, 1971a, p. 152).



but also the very existence of the group.<sup>35</sup>

Specifically, Lancaster (1969) predicted that State IV would be characterized by the development of interdependent bonds between the members, basically irrespective of the central office. He also anticipated the maturation of the bonds between members and the central agency serving to provide support services that were required by the members (pp. 108-109). He did not attempt to forecast either specifics of the period of development or theoretical bases of the interactions that would lead to evolution of this stage.

Two examples of interdependent bonds between member institutions were reported by Lancaster (1969). Two of the small colleges had begun an inter-library loan arrangement with the Midwest City Public Library (pp. 109-110). Two non-coeducational Catholic schools in a small town outside Midwest City had begun the process of merging. Faculty were subject to joint appointment, students could take courses in either college with a single course schedule, and the schools had begun a type of domain consensus, with arts and education at one campus and mathematics and sciences at the other campus (pp. 110-111).

The study found little evidence of the development of any second or third generation type projects between the members and the central agency.<sup>36</sup> The installation of a telephone communications system de-

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<sup>35</sup>"One must recognize, however, that at best the consortium can exert some influence on a member college, but the member college exerts real power over the consortium" (Grupe, 1974, p. 16).

<sup>36</sup>There was little substantial evidence that projects were more than "first generation, or 'one-shot' trial efforts" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 112).

signed to provide both direct dial and conference capacities was the single example of a "higher order" project (p. 114).

Although he found nothing to question the accuracy of his model, Lancaster (1969, p. 115) was forced to conclude that Stage IV remained "largely untested" in his research.

Stage V of the model was characterized by the striving after, and attaining of, recognition for individual areas of competence. This consignment of areas of competence, called "domains" by Lancaster (1969, p. 18) was the method for controlling potentially wasteful expenditures of scarce resources and of insuring a continued place within the network of the organization. According to the model, the central agency would accept as its domain, or area of specialization, the provision of services to the member institutions (p. 18).<sup>37</sup>

Lancaster (1969) did not predict the dynamics of the negotiations that were to lead to the establishment of domains within the consortium; Stage V of his model simply predicted that such domain consensus would emerge. And he envisioned "new collegiate options" that would result from mergers of member institutions into "a stronger corporate entity" (p. 18). Again, Lancaster (1969) did not expand upon his predictions. He admitted that this stage of consortium development would be well beyond the situation found at MAHE at the time of the study.

In summary, Lancaster (1969) concluded that his research had provided field verification for Stages I, II, and III of his model.

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<sup>37</sup>This was also predicted by Mauermeyer (1974, pp. 73 and 120), Acres (1971, p. 252), and Grupe (1975, pp. 99 and 105).

He found significant evidence in support of Stage IV of the model, and he had not even expected to find evidence relating to State V.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

After having reviewed the literature, Lancaster (1969) decided to use a case study approach to his analysis of consortia. He wanted research results that would "contribute to a theoretical framework, build a model for broader understanding, and provide generalizations for further research" (p. 33).<sup>1</sup> Since this research seeks to verify the final stages of Lancaster's model, the case study method was continued.

A case study is not so much a separate and specific technique as it is a way of organizing all the pertinent aspects of the social data that may be derived from a single situation. The goal of the case study is to determine the unitary character within the social object being studied and to describe that character (Good and Scates, 1954, p. 726; Coode and Hatt, 1952, p. 331; Helmstadter, 1970, p. 49). The case study is like the survey, except that it makes an intensive study of a limited number of relatively large social units (Van Dalen, 1962, p. 219).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Those are the attributes of the case study method as characterized by Helmstadter (1970, p. 52).

<sup>2</sup>In the case study, the gathering and interpretation of data will emphasize the changes in time, as well as the processes by which those changes took place . . . . [T]he concern is with recording the relevant characteristics as they appear in interaction, not merely recording

The initial step in any case study is to determine the relative importance of the issues in the case to be studied (Selltiz, 1959, p. 56). This research study accepted the priorities assumed by the Lancaster (1969, pp. 13-18) model (i.e., the major characteristics of Stages IV and V as outlined by Lancaster in his theory of consortium development).

A case study depends upon historical documents and contemporary personal interviews as the sources of data upon which to build the study. In this research, historical papers of the consortium, minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors, research and development papers prepared by the staff of the central office, MAHE Newsletter back-issues, in-house memoranda, and reports on specific programs and the consortium in general were reviewed for the period from 1969 through the time of the study. The papers were read in the library of the MAHE central office during a week-long visit in June of 1978. Points not fully explained by the formal documents were taken to staff members and program directors for clarification. The staff of the central office were also able to provide contemporary publicity releases, program brochures and pamphlets, and catalogs of all member colleges.<sup>3</sup>

These documents were read for the purpose of determining the types of programs undertaken by the consortium, the relative involve-

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them at two separate instants in time for a before-and-after comparison (Goode and Hatt, 1952, p. 334).

<sup>3</sup>The availability of such documents should not be minimized; to overlook their significance as "inexpensive, valuable sources of data on the policies of the organization and the conduct of its members is to fail to exploit the natural resources of the research field" (Blau and Scott, 1962, p. 18). Similar statements are made by Selltiz (1959), p. 330).

ments of the member colleges within those programs, the debates that had accompanied development and involvement for each program, and other statements or implications of the interactions that had accompanied the consortium programs. These documents gave indications of the specific people to interview, and the general questions to ask of each, in learning more about the types of events that Lancaster had predicted. Specifically, from these documents was drawn information on the types of programs undertaken or not undertaken, the arguments for and against each of the types of programs, the positions of the various actors in the discussions on the merits of each program, the details of the translation of programs from policy guidelines to concrete implementation, and the responses of the various actors to the effects of the implemented programs on the consortium and on the member college structures.

By attending a regularly-scheduled meeting of the Campus Liaison Representatives, who assembled for an annual progress and planning session, the researcher was able to observe current interaction patterns among the members. The researcher was also able to gain insights into potential consortium domain consensus.

A regularly-scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors provided an opportunity for the researcher to meet and talk with the presidents of the member colleges and to observe the pattern of interaction among the chief administrative officers of the member colleges. Those observations and casual conversations with members of the Board supplied additional data on areas of conflict, methods of conflict resolution, and the perceived contemporary pattern of domain consensus. Although the discussions at the meeting were conducted in the presence

of a number of members of the Board at any given time, almost every president seemed willing to discuss both positive and negative perceptions openly. Much information was gained from the conversations that started between Board members as the result of disagreements on some point.

At the end of the week-long visit at the MAHE central offices, members of the central agency administration and staff were interviewed, both collectively and individually. These semi-structured, open-ended interviews were tailored to the individuals being interviewed, and there was no single interview form that could be reproduced for later examination. In general, each interview was guided by information on the actions, position, and anticipated mind-set of the individual that had been gained from the reading of the formal documents, earlier casual discussions with central office personnel, and observations from the meeting of the Campus Liaison Representatives and the Board of Directors. Several members of the central office staff and administration had been with MAHE for the entire period covered by this research, another sizeable contingent had been with MAHE since 1972, and some of the Program Directors had been active in the consortium for shorter periods of time.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours, though most were closer to one hour in length. Each person being interviewed was asked to explain his or her point of view, the feelings, thoughts, and pertinent experiences that had surrounded several potentially important events or periods in the recent history of the consortium. Each was also invited to speak about his or her perceptions of the future of the consortium. All the people interviewed were open in their discus-

sions and in the sharing of their opinions, although two of the members of the administration and staff did ask that their names not be used in further interviews or discussions. These interviews also supplied information on the actions of specific member presidents or institutional representatives who had been instrumental in "behind-the-scenes" resolutions of conflicts during the period being considered.

Data and impressions gathered from the formal documents and from the interviews were used as the basis for identification both of specific areas of conflict and of the major actors within the consortium who had been involved in the creation and/or resolution of each conflict.

Immediately following the visit to the central offices, appointments were made for individual interviews with the chief administrative officers, or their designated representatives, on the campuses of each of the nineteen colleges that composed the membership of MAHE at the time of this study.<sup>4</sup> The interviews were conducted over a five-week period during the summer of 1978 in an effort to meet with the men and women at times when they would be least pressed by other matters. An interview was also scheduled with the president of an institution that had withdrawn its membership in the consortium; attempts to arrange interviews with the presidents of two other former consortium members were unsuccessful.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Lancaster (1969) declined to describe the members of MAHE too closely, so that anonymity of the participants could be respected. This study will continue that respect.

<sup>5</sup>In all, interviews were conducted with fourteen Presidents, two Acting Presidents, one Assistant to the President, one Dean of Academic Affairs, and one Dean of Student Services.



The interviews with member presidents, or their representatives, were semi-structured and open-ended (Appendices A & B). Questions had been prepared based upon the data gathered during the earlier visit to the MAHE central offices and through the casual discussions at the meetings of Campus Liaison Representatives and the Board of Directors. Questions used by Lancaster in his interviews were included where they retained relevancy. The questions were designed to serve as places to begin discussions. As with the earlier interviews of central office personnel, the questions were meant to elicit feelings, thoughts, and pertinent experiences, and the course of each interview was determined by the individual circumstances. As before, the participants seemed anxious to discuss their own perceptions of the work of consortium, their opinions on previous actions, and their thoughts on the future of the cooperative arrangement. All were assured of anonymity, and all were willing to discuss issues that had arisen and to list names, dates, personal positions, details of exchanges and other specifics.

Notes from each interview were transcribed, and additional comments were tape recorded each evening. Follow-up letters offering further clarification of one or more points from the interviews were received, unsolicited, from two of the member college presidents. One person also wrote to suggest that an invitation to comment upon specific events in the recent history of the consortium be sent to an individual who was not directly connected with the consortium, but who had been a participant in the discussions surrounding the events under consideration. The invitation was extended, by letter, but the individual expressed a desire to remain out of this study.

A questionnaire was prepared for mailing to the second-level administrators at the member colleges (Appendix C). Following the example set by Lancaster, these questionnaires were mailed to:

1. Campus Liaison Representatives;
2. Chief Academic Officers;
3. Chief Student Affairs Officers;
4. Chief Business Officers;
5. Chief Development Officers;
6. Admissions Directors;
7. Registrars; and
8. Deans for Graduate and Occupational Studies.

These administrators were selected to be questioned on the basis of their day-to-day involvement in the activities of the colleges. It was felt that these actors would be in the best positions to recognize the differences, if any, between the policies and abstract understandings derived by the Board of Directors and the translations of those abstractions into the actual functionings of the various programs.<sup>6</sup> These questionnaires were developed around the data that had been derived from earlier sources, and particularly from the original work of Lancaster. It was felt that Lancaster's questionnaire had presented the general opportunities for respondents to the areas of perceived conflict and conflict resolution. Additional questions were included as they were appropriate for the individual to whom the questionnaire

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<sup>6</sup>Selltiz (1959, p. 55) stressed the importance of utilizing people involved in the day-to-day operation of a social unit to become aware of "important influences" operating in any situation.

was being mailed. Additional questions also dealt with "domain consensus" as it may or may not have been perceived by these actors.

Copies of the questionnaire for second-level administrators were sent to the officers at three institutions that had withdrawn from MAHE membership. There were no returns from that group.

In total, fifty-two of the eighty-seven questionnaires, representing almost 60% of those mailed, were completed and returned. Many of these respondents accepted the opportunities provided by open-ended questions and supplied responses that went far beyond the specific wording of a question. While these additional insights were appreciated, and have added to the depth of this study, they made it impossible to quantify precisely the responses to any given item on the questionnaire. Analysis of these questionnaire responses was based upon their general statements rather than upon any statistical analysis of coded responses.

A second, shorter questionnaire was prepared with the objective of determining the depth which the concept of domain consensus may have reached within each member institution's organizational structure. These were mailed to the department chairpersons of the five departments found to have been most involved in consortium programs during the recent history of the consortium. At the same time, these departments were found to be listed in the catalogs of all the member institutions. This provided an opportunity to compare directly the perceptions of equivalent actors in departments involved:

1. Department of Business and Economics;
2. Department of English, Language, and Literature;
3. Department of Biological Sciences;
4. Department of Political Sciences; and

#### 5. Department of Mathematics.

For Stages IV and V of his model, Lancaster anticipated that there would be deeper commitment by the members to the concept of interinstitutional interaction and that generally recognized domains would emerge. That anticipated situation served as the guide for the selection of faculty members to be questioned. In addition, the faculty members needed to be in positions of such authority that their opinions would be sought and given consideration in any decisions on committing the colleges to courses of action. Department chairpersons were thus selected as the faculty members to be questioned. It was also necessary that the participants be in positions that enjoyed the existence of peers in other members of the consortium. Thus departments that were recognized, under various generally synonymous titles, in the catalogs of all the member colleges were selected.

A total of forty-seven questionnaires were mailed in this group; thirty-nine, or approximately 83%, of the questionnaires were completed and returned. However, questionnaires were returned from only thirteen of the nineteen member colleges. Several of the respondents included responses that went far beyond the information required to answer the questions.

Finally, specific individuals whose roles in conflict situations had been revealed in responses to the questionnaires were contacted by mail and were invited to comment upon the situations as they had perceived them.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Another characteristic of the case study approach seems to be the latitude and apparent general freedom which the investigator has with respect to the type and amount of data gathered, the sources of information, and the procedures used to gather the information. Sometimes even a well-done case study seems not to be a systematic study

Comments from the personal interviews were sorted into categories drawn from the research questions upon which this study was based.<sup>8</sup> The sorting was done subjectively, according to the interpretation of the researcher, where responses did not confine themselves to any one particular question area. At the discretion of the researcher, decisions were made on what significance a response had to any one or another of the research questions.

Responses from the questionnaires for second-level administrators were also sorted subjectively. Certain of the items on the questionnaire had been drawn to relate to specific research questions. The comparison of research items with questionnaire items is included in the appendices. Where the responses were limited to the question, they were easily sorted into the category for that research question. Where responses went beyond the immediate question, they were sorted subjectively into the categories which they seemed best to address. For all sortings, the characteristics and descriptions of Lancaster were used as the criterion for judgment, although the judgments were at the discretion of the researcher.

Information on the returned questionnaires from faculty members was sorted subjectively into the research question categories, when additional comments had been included on the returns. The responses to the questions as they had been phrased were used to prepare tallies

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of a scientific problem at all, but a general hodgepodge of information gathered by an investigator following capricious whims and inclinations" (Helmstadter, 1970, p. 50).

<sup>8</sup>Supra, pp. 6-7.

of listings as the college, or source, of preferred assistance to a department. Tallies were also prepared for the preferred partner in a program of exchanging students within each separate academic discipline.

For the final analysis of the data, it was assumed that Lancaster's predicted characteristics were valid as descriptions of the developmental stages for a consortium. For each research question data derived from formal documents, from personal interviews, and from mailed questionnaire responses were examined and compared with Lancaster's criterion. Simple tallies of the incidences of supporting information and the incidences of conflicting information were drawn, with each datum given a subjective weighting based upon the position of the person, or the gravity of the document, that had been the source of the information.

In general, members of the Board of Directors were assumed to be the primary source for information on policies and general goals of programs. Members of the central agency administration and staff were credited with the greatest credibility in matters of long-range, or philosophical, goals and the translation of abstract objectives into actual programs. Second-level administrators were assumed to have the clearest perceptions of the effects of programs upon the individual campus, and faculty members were assigned primacy on questions of interaction patterns of respect, or domain consensus, within academic programs. In much the same manner, minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors were given weight in questions of program intent, memoranda from the MAHE President and staff working papers were recognized as primary documents on questions of goal implementation, and other formal

documents were used for general background information on the atmosphere of the consortium as a whole.

The tallies of favorable and conflicting responses, together with the relative weightings of the responses, were noted. Additionally, patterns of responses were sought, both for any single individual and for potential groups of individuals. The responses were examined to determine whether any single actor within the consortium were consistent in his or her responses to a variety of potential activities of the consortium, whether any single actor had been particularly influential in discussions of potential activities of the consortium, or whether any particular groupings of actors seemed to have occurred consistently in discussions of potential activities of the consortium.

Patterns of involvement in the affairs of the consortium, whether in the matter of suggesting programs and goals or in the matter of objecting to programs and goals, were sought. Such patterns were considered by individuals on the Board of Directors, by individuals within each member college, and by institutional distance from the central offices. Evidence was sought for conflict between individuals on the Board of Directors and the central office administration, among members of the Board of Directors, and among the members of the administrations of each of the member colleges. Changes in any perceived patterns over the recent history of the consortium were also sought.

For the responses of the members of the faculties, simple tables were drawn to determine the existence of patterns of interaction, or domain consensus, as perceived by the respect of the faculty members for one another or for one another's institutions.

In each instance, patterns were examined, when indicated, and a

subjective rating of the support for the research question was made. In turn, these "scores" for the research questions were used to determine the degree to which the case conformed to Lancaster's predicted characteristics. Where the data did seem to support Lancaster, it was concluded that the model was accurate; where the data did not seem to support Lancaster, the information was used to hypothesize processes as alternatives to the model. The alternatives were then compared with the model, and an attempt was made to set a value on the degree of damage done to the model by acceptance of the alternative. These decisions were made subjectively, using the information at hand and comments on the alternatives to the future of MAHE supplied by various participants in the study.

Finally, the conclusions were stated in terms of the agreement of the case with the characteristics of the model, rather than in terms of the validity of the model. This was consistent with the style adopted by Lancaster (1969, pp. 23-26) in the original work.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The basic danger in the case study method is the "response of the researcher. The researcher comes to feel a false sense of certainty about his conclusions." The result is a temptation to extrapolate unwarrantedly (Goode and Hatt, 1952, pp. 334-335).



## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The questions for the personal interviews and for the mailed questionnaires were designed to be open-ended. It was intended that they provide points of entrance into the recollections and opinions of the respondents. Respondents were assured of confidentiality; they were identified only by career position and the names of the institutions were disguised. No lists of interviewees, questionnaire respondents, or documents cited were included in the appendices. Most of the actors within the consortium were not just open, but seemingly delighted to share their opinions and knowledge about the history, contemporary status, and possible future of the consortium. As a result, almost none of the answers was confined to the questions as unique, separate items. There were, however, some consistencies within the ranges of answers that allowed an elementary quantification.

#### Primary Linkages Outside the Central Agency

Lancaster (1969, p. 17) predicted that the most significant characteristic of Stage IV would be the shift of primary and sustaining linkages within the consortium. Previously, the central agency had been the partner in such linkages with the various member institutions.

In Stage IV, member colleges were to establish the linkages among and between themselves.

The formal literature of the consortium showed a consistent pattern of attempts by the MAHE President to motivate such linkages among member colleges. As early as 1974, (Special Statement from the President to the Board of Directors; February 1, 1974) he had dealt with the issue at a philosophical level:

Educational institutions are accustomed to arrangements in which they contract to buy some one's [sic] services, whether it be a teacher, a management consultant, or a food service.

Although the predominance of that model creates habitual, almost automatic, expectations, it turns out, in the case of a consortium, that those expectations are misplaced because the model is inappropriate. The subject of the contract--or better, covenant--which creates a consortium has to do with what the institutions bind themselves to do together, or individually in behalf of all. The primary responsibility for performance or non-performance lies, therefore, with the institutional parties to that covenant. (emphasis in original)

Much can be accomplished in institutional cooperation without the formal MAHE sponsorship or identification; institutions in the membership sometimes get together for specific purposes without the third-party assistance of the central staff (p. 2).<sup>1</sup>

At the time of this study, and during the two-year period immediately preceding the study, the formal papers carried a consistent recognition that the shift of linkages had not taken place as hoped:

And we have learned that campus response (pieties aside) result in the least amount of action when efforts are directed at making the campuses inter-dependent, either institutionally or individually (faculty exchange, student exchange, cooperative instruction, and other forms of inter-linking). (Memorandum, MAHE President to Members of the Board of Directors: September 13, 1977, p. 3.)

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<sup>1</sup> Supporting statements were frequent from that time (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 30, 1974 and September 13, 1974; MAHE Newsletter, January 1, 1974 and May 1, 1974).

Members of the central sataf agreed that the formation of linkages independent of the central agency had failed to develop.<sup>2</sup>

Sixteen members of the Board of Directors were interviewed personally. Only one was able to think of an example of a program linkage developed and maintained without the active participation of the central office of the consortium.<sup>3</sup> Another member of the Board of Directors (President, Midwest City Art Institute--personal interview, June 28, 1978) expressed deep concern over the seeming lack of commitment to the concept of cooperative action:

It is my personal and professional opinion that, unless we are all willing to contribute more time, money, and resources, as members of the consortium, that we are in danger of losing the consortium.

But the majority of the members interviewed were more concerned with the problems of survival as individual institutions. As explained by the President of Lee College (personal interview, June 20, 1978), "I'm not sure any of us are so committed to the concept of a consortium that we are willing to give up anything or fight our own faculties."

Second-level administrators and faculty members of the member colleges did not, for the most part, recognize the existence of any

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<sup>2</sup>The common thought in interview responses was best voiced by a Vice President of MAHE (personal interview, May 25, 1978), who explained that "they don't have time or staff to come up with ideas. They think institutionally; we have to think inter-institutionally. If you think of the consortium with the central agency as the hub of a wheel and the members out on the rim, all the interaction is from individual members to the center. This hasn't changed."

<sup>3</sup>"We wanted to develop a new television course. We had the qualified instructors, [another member college] had the technical facilities. Our membership in MAHE brought us together, and we're offering the joint course to other MAHE members as well" (President, Pine College--personal interview, June 28, 1978).

linkages among members. Nor did they seem to feel that such linkages were an important goal for the consortium. Of the fifty-two second-level administrators who returned the mailed questionnaires and responded to the question on short-term and long-term goals for the consortium, only five (approximately 9%) mentioned any goals that would include development of linkages within the membership of institutions.<sup>4</sup> The other respondents indicated that the consortium should be strengthening member institutions as individual institutions. Of the thirty-seven faculty members who responded to the mailed questionnaires, none suggested the creation of member-member linkages as an important function of the consortium.

The general feeling of the respondents, both from the personal interviews and from the mailed questionnaires, was best articulated by a member of the Board of Directors, (President, Taylor College--personal interview, June 29, 1978) who admitted the need for an "excuse to invest the time and money, and our egos, in trying to work with each other." Or, as stated by a Chief Academic Officer (Garfield College--mailed one questionnaire, August 1978) at one of the member colleges, most actors felt the need of the "psychological cushion provided by the central agency in dealing with our potential enemies."

#### Programs Centered on Member Campuses

Only one program linkage outside the central agency had been indicated in the study, and it was centered on the member campus rather

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<sup>4</sup>The most succinct answer in this category was that MAHE would "unite the members of the consortium into a viable, effective academic unit" (Registrar, Frontier College--mailed questionnaire).

than at the central office.<sup>5</sup>

The questionnaires mailed to second-level administrators included two questions dealing with the possible on-campus impact of consortium programs:

Have you observed any changes or differences in the patterns of activity on your campus as a result of consortium programs or projects?

Have any of the programs of MAHE made a real impact on your campus? In what way?

Thirty-one of the administrators responded to these questions. Twelve felt that there had been significant influence upon the local campus by one or more of the consortium's programs; five felt that there had been "some, but nothing insignificant" from the programs; fourteen reported no observed changes or differences on campus as a result of consortium programs or projects.

The programs cited by second-level administrators as having significantly impacted the local campus environment were all directed through, and centered at the central agency. All twelve mentioned the influence of a "more diverse student population as a result of the student exchange program" (Registrar, Dillard College--mailed questionnaire, August 1978). And ten of the twelve mentioned the "increased confidence of staff as a result of inservice experiences" (Chief Academic Officer, Garfield College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978). Two respondents felt that the tuition exchange program had been influential, but both qualified the statement by explaining that the influence had been in allowing children of faculty members to

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<sup>5</sup> This project was the "new television course" mentioned by the President of Pine College and included in the earlier discussion of program linkages outside the central agency (Supra, p. 52).

attend college at other institutions.

Faculty members to whom questionnaires were mailed were asked to indicate whether membership in MAHE had been beneficial to their own departments or divisions. Sixteen of the thirty-nine respondents had felt no benefits from membership; four felt that there had been only "extremely slight" influence at the department or division level; nineteen answered that they had felt some positive effects from consortium membership. Seven of the faculty members who reported changes at the department or division level as a result of consortium activities included examples of the areas in which they had felt MAHE influence. In every case, the program cited as having produced a change was a specific ad hoc professional development workshop. All of the workshops mentioned had been developed and marketed through the central agency.

As one faculty respondent stated, "MAHE has been beneficial only on an individual basis" (Faculty Respondent, Raleigh College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978). In general, respondents did not know of any programs centered on member campuses, and they did not perceive of the consortium programs or influences as separate from the central agency.

#### Central Agency as "Supportive Services"

The third of Lancaster's predictions for Stage IV in the developmental growth of a consortium concerned the specific role of the central agency. He called for that unit to assume the position of providing many of the support services required by the institutions as they

established linkages outside the central agency (Lancaster, 1969, p. 109).

Consortium papers showed a relatively consistent series of attempts by the staff of the central agency to move into a service role. Particularly after the hiring of a new President for MAHE in 1972, actions taken by the central staff reflected a philosophical concept of the consortium central office as a service unit.

In late 1972, the missions statement for the consortium was revised. Under the new statement of goals, services to programs of the member colleges were given priority.<sup>6</sup> The actual programs undertaken by the consortium during the 1972-73 academic term reflected the new missions priorities (Program Development, Addendum to Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting; May 28, 1978, p. 4).<sup>7</sup> There were no programs undertaken outside the central agency during that period.

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<sup>6</sup>The mission of MAHE was to be "to improve the quality of higher education in the Midwest City region through cooperative activity designed to strengthen each member institution in its diversity; and secondarily, to provide an agency for cooperative planning and action to help meet the growing and more diverse higher educational needs of the area" (Minutes, Board Committee on Purposes and Planning Meeting; September 14, 1977, p. 2).

<sup>7</sup>Programs developed through MAHE for the 1972-73 academic term included:

Cooperative Aging Program	On-Campus Consultation Services
Telenetwork Lecture Program	Cooperative Social Welfare Program
Library Periodical Bank	Cooperative American Indian Program
Academic Resource Sharing	Centralized Student Placement Services
Faculty Development Grants	Joint Admissions Activities
Administrator Conferences	Cooperative Insurance Services
Writer-In-Residence Program	

(Program Development, Addendum to Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting; May 28, 1978; p. 4).

In a message to the institutional employees on the several member campuses, the new President explained the concept of the central agency as a responder and a service unit:

Communication is a two-way process and awaits a corresponding response from teachers.

We are delighted to recognize you as colleagues, and we hope that you will increasingly recognize us as colleagues and MAHE as an important resource for your own teaching (MAHE Newsletter, May 1, 1973, p. 1).

A memorandum from the staff to the Board of Directors sought official recognition of the new program emphasis (Position Paper on Style of Operation: May 29, 1973).<sup>8</sup> The Board of Directors accepted the new direction for the central agency at the meeting of June 21-22, 1973 (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting; June 21-22, 1973, p. 2). A review of programs implemented during the 1973-75 terms revealed the extent to which the new direction was translated into actual activities (Program Development, Addendum to Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 28, 1978, p. 6).<sup>9</sup>

At the time of this study, MAHE was again evaluating its mission statement. The concept of the central agency as a service unit seemed to retain its priority, but the discussions had not been concluded and it was not possible to make definite statements about the outcome of

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<sup>8</sup>The emphasis of the central agency was to be: (1) programs initiated and largely sustained by the member institutions with the central staff providing support services; (2) staff working with individuals within member institutions' campus organizations; and (3) programs involving cooperation among member schools directly, without the intervention of the central agency.

<sup>9</sup>Programs developed during the 1973-75 period included:

Faculty Conferences	Center for Professional Development
Informational Services	Education Consultation Services
Cultural Events Coordination	Policy Issues Conferences
Personal Growth Groups	Personnel Search Service



the evaluation.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of this study, every member of the Board of Directors felt that the legitimate role of the central agency lay in the area of support services. Only two of the Board members mentioned a role for the central agency that included leadership of the arrangement.<sup>11</sup>

Members of the central agency staff, and its administrators, saw what they considered to be a dual role for their unit of the consortium. On the one hand, they viewed the agency as the support unit of the cooperative arrangements that should develop among the member colleges; on the other hand, they recognized the need of the member colleges to "maintain face" with their peers, and not to be seen as the originators of suggestions that proved later to be unworkable.<sup>12</sup> Although every central agency member interviewed admitted that program ideas had been coming from the central agency, at least publicly, without exception they believed that the service-unit model was being slowly implemented. One statement, which met with considerable agreement was that:

You have to judge the actions of the consortium in light of the most probable future of higher education in this area at this

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<sup>10</sup>The President of the Board of Directors had stated that "we have to make ourselves indispensable, in light of the drop in college-aged population. That is, there has to be one service, or a cluster of them, so important that an institution cannot afford not to support the organization" (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: September 22, 1977).

<sup>11</sup>As expressed by the President of the Midwest City Art Institute (personal interview, June 28, 1978), MAHE should be "consciously developing cooperative academic work--not allowing or hoping that it will happen accidentally."

<sup>12</sup>"Up until last year, the center was mainly reactive (responsive); now we are trying to be more eclectic. Still, I envision the consortium as a service organization providing cheaper, more effective services, rather than spending its time fighting brush fires. But there's always the chance an idea will bomb, and it's better that MAHE made it" (MAHE Vice President--personal interview, May 26, 1978).

time. You have to conclude that consortia built upon inter-institutional sharing will go down with the members; MAHE, and other service consortia can survive (MAHE Program Director--personal interview, May 23, 1978).

Second-level administrators were asked to indicate what, from their point of view, should be the major goals of MAHE, both short-range and long-range in nature. Of the fifty respondents who completed that questions, six included leadership in establishing cooperative linkages as a short-range goal for MAHE. The other forty-four felt that services should be the goal of the consortium; none was any more specific in the response than such general suggestions as "answer questions," "provide assistance," or "help the member institutions with individual problem areas."

On long-range goals for MAHE, however, ten of the fifty respondents felt that the consortium should be developing a cooperative unit of the individual member institutions.<sup>13</sup> The rest of the respondents felt that the long-range goal of the consortium should be to continue the provision of services upon request.

Although none of the faculty members to whom questionnaires were mailed was asked about goals for the consortium, four did include statements of opinion on the future of MAHE. All four wanted the consortium to continue in its present service mode of operation.

#### Evolving-Project Interactions

Lancaster's fourth characteristic for Stage IV was the movement

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<sup>13</sup>Typical of these responses was the opinion that MAHE should be the motivator directing "member institutions in their growth closer and their learning to cooperate in all areas for the benefit of all areas" (Occupational Studies Director, Lee College--mailed questionnaire August, 1978).

from single-project interactions to programs that were evolving and continuing the interactions among the membership. He cited the, then recent installation of a relatively complex telephone communications system as an example of the type of program he was predicting (Lancaster, 1969, p. 115).

Funding for the communications network was dropped by the central agency when Title III monies ended with the 1973-74 term. Some of the member colleges picked up the cost of the existing lines and continued operation of their parts of the network.<sup>14</sup>

The President of MAHE used the loss of Title III funds to urge the redirection of consortium program priorities:

It seems increasingly clear to me that the most critical needs of our members will be met, not by extrinsic ad hoc 'add-ons,' but by the consolidation, re-allocation, and sharing of intrinsic resources, . . . (Mid-Year Report of the President to the Board of Directors: January 30, 1973, p. 2).

The consortium did begin new programs designed to be on-going and to involve member colleges in direct interactions (Annual Report, Academic Services, 1974-75: July 3, 1975, p. 1).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"I mean, communications is where life is in a real way. The phone lines are still in and the idea that a professor can pick up the phone and call a peer at another institution is just the sort of thing I'm talking about" (President, Bishop College--personal interview, June 20, 1978).

<sup>15</sup>Programs were undertaken for student exchange, faculty exchange, a "writer-in-residence" for English and Language Arts units, student work and performances with the Midwest City Philharmonic, and coordina-

By the end of the 1977-78 academic term, the consortium was able to list no fewer than twelve areas of resource sharing supported within MAHE (Resource Sharing Addendum to Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 28, 1978, pp. 2-3).<sup>16</sup> Some of the listed areas were nothing more than formalized policies for ad hoc situations. But the very act of formalizing policies was seen as a move toward Lancaster's predicted state.<sup>17</sup>

There was evidence that MAHE had begun to move back toward a pattern of strictly single-project interactions. The major undertaking of the period of this study had been the "Institute for Advanced Professional Studies in Higher Education." The Institute was a series of seminars, spread over a three-year period, on topics suggested by respondents on internally circulated questionnaires (Institute for Advanced Professional Studies in Higher Education: 1977-78 Catalog,

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<sup>16</sup>The list included: (1) adjunct staff from member colleges working with individual clients for professional development; (2) teachers on member campuses responding to requests for information on texts and teaching materials; (3) administrators responding to requests for information about programs and policies through the reference service; (4) teachers at one school located through the personnel search service for part-time positions at other schools; (5) sharing of ideas at administrator conferences; (6) sharing of ideas at faculty conferences; (7) students at one school participating in off-campus programs at other schools; (8) students at one school participating in regular coursework at other schools; (9) dependent children of staff receiving tuition-remission at some member schools; (10) administrators questioning one another through questionnaires; (11) campus consultant presentations made available to staff at other member institutions, by invitation; and (12) facilities and equipment on one campus made available for use by other member schools, by special arrangement.

<sup>17</sup>Members of the central staff recognized that these were often one-shot operations, but felt they had the seeds of more complex exchanges (Report on the MAHE Center for Professional Development: 1977-78, p. 2).

pp. 6-7).<sup>18</sup> Five members of the Board of Directors cited the Institute as an example of the future they perceived for the consortium.<sup>19</sup>

A majority of the members of the Board of Directors felt that MAHE had moved in the direction of greater complexity of interaction. Seven of the Directors mentioned specifically the recently-mandated preparation of a long-range plan for MAHE.<sup>20</sup> Five others referred to vague "gut-level" feelings that there had been an increase in complexity of activities.<sup>21</sup> But fourteen of the sixteen members were firm

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<sup>18</sup>Topics included: Basic Management; Marketing in Higher Education; Fund-Raising Methods; Financial Management; Public Relations and Publications Skills; Curriculum Development; Improved Library Services; General Education; Remedial Learning; Ethnic and International Learning; Innovative Teaching Methods; Effective Traditional Teaching Methods; Testing and Grading; Learning, Cognition and Teaching Style: Retention: Concepts, Problems, Solutions; Counseling Undergraduates: New Approaches; The Teacher as Developing Professional; Current Issues in Higher Education; Organizational and Institutional Change; Campus Government: Issues and Alternatives; The Student Affairs Administrator: New Roles; Long-Range Planning Techniques; Institutional Research Methods; and Program Evaluation Methods.

<sup>19</sup>"That's where it's going to be for MAHE. Their strength is in being able to provide information and consultation in areas that we see as being our own problems. After all, they are supposed to be serving us--not us providing the excuse for them to exist. In reality, they are a service organization from whom we pick and choose programs that we want to 'buy into'" (President, Jones College--personal interview, July 13, 1978). While four other Board members expressed this same general opinion, none of the others was quite this harsh in stating the case.

<sup>20</sup>"We are finally moving beyond the idea of keeping the consortium as a consultant to whom we rush when a problem arises, and getting to think of it as a way to plan and work to prevent problems" (President, Midwest City Art Institute--personal interview, June 28, 1978). The project was mandated by the Board (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: September 22, 1977).

<sup>21</sup>"It's hard to put your finger on, but the atmosphere has changed. We're bigger than the consortium--we're growing beyond the limits of our beginnings" (President, Bard College--personal interview, July 11, 1978).

in their beliefs that the consortium should be a service organization from which the member colleges bought specific program packages; single-project interactions, operated through the central agency, was the future they saw for MAHE.<sup>22</sup>

Second-level administrators were asked to estimate the degree to which membership in MAHE had enabled them to accomplish tasks or take advantage of opportunities that might otherwise have been missed. All of the subjects did respond to this question. Four of the fifty-two reported that membership had not benefitted them in any way. Eight mentioned the opportunity to establish personal involvements with their professional peers, and all eight reported that such "friendships" had flourished far beyond the formal functions of the consortium.<sup>23</sup> Three of the administrators listed benefits they felt they had received from one-shot seminars or workshops. The remaining thirty-seven second-level administrators cited one or another of the on-going programs of resource sharing, although two of the programs cited had been discontinued by the time of this study.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>"MAHE should be the delicatessen where we go to pick the program that will speak to our needs at the moment" (President, Pratt College--personal interview, July 13, 1978). None of the Board members seemed troubled by the incongruity between their views on long-range planning and their desire that MAHE return to its position of reacting to requests by members rather than moving proactively.

<sup>23</sup>The administrators themselves recognized the value of such peer networks. "It's important to be constantly involved with the other institutions for exchange of ideas and information. This 'rubbing of shoulders' is crucial to one's professional growth, and it's good for the schools, too" (Admissions Director, Pratt College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>24</sup>Programs cited included: library resources inter-loan; central National Defense Student Loan site (discontinued); time-share computer programs (discontinued); faculty exchange; student exchange; and sharing of cultural events.

As noted earlier in this study, second-level administrators did not see increased complexity of activity as the future for MAHE; these administrators felt the consortium should stick with a strictly service-providing model.<sup>25</sup>

Faculty members at consortium institutions were not asked for their views of the future of MAHE, but thirteen did include their opinions on the question. Eleven of the thirteen hoped that the consortium would continue in its role of providing services to individuals on an ad hoc basis. Two spoke of some program or project that might have been considered on-going, or higher-order.<sup>26</sup>

#### Development of "Community"

Finally, Lancaster (1969, p. 17) predicted that Stage IV would be characterized by the development of a feeling of "an emerging sense of community," or a feeling of personal involvement in the consortium.

The central agency had made an effort to present the appearance of a "community spokesman" to external populations. MAHE was actively involved in the Midwest City region with the local chapter of the National Alliance of Businessmen, the Midwest City Council on Philanthropy, approximately seventy-five social welfare agencies, the Council on Education of the Civic Council, the local High School Counselors association. MAHE was also listed in the yellow pages of the telephone

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ing of cultural events.

<sup>25</sup>Supra, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup>One was a literary magazine jointly sponsored by the departments of English, through MAHE. The other was a series of exchanges and get-togethers by members of Biology departments (since discontinued).

directory for "Higher Education Information."<sup>27</sup> The Board of Directors had authorized several mass media projects by the central office designed to increase the visibility of the consortium (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 28, 1978, p. 3), and the Board had authorized a unified fund-raising effort by the consortium (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: February 14, 1977, p. 2).

In January of 1978, the President of the Board of Directors reported having been approached by a large national firm that wanted to fund a full-time MAHE staff member for a specific project in the Midwest City region. He was told that industry viewed the consortium as the single representative for all higher education in the area (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: January 5, 1978, p. 2).

Fourteen members of the Board of Directors felt that their institutions could not afford to withdraw from membership in MAHE, although the reasons given did not specifically allude to a sense of community.<sup>28</sup> In spite of this, most Board members saw the relationship with the central agency as a service-organization/customer exchange. In discussing the perceived futures for the consortium, twelve of the members spoke of services being offered to individual schools on a

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<sup>27</sup>The center received as many as 100 calls each month through this "role as a provider of college information to the community" (Memorandum to Liaison Officers: May 11, 1978, p. 1).

<sup>28</sup>"Membership in MAHE is very important to us, not in terms of the programs or workshops, but at the level of contacts, of being a part of the higher education community" (President, Raleigh College--personal interview, June 28, 1978).

"We want to 'sit with the prestige schools' in the eyes of the people in the community" (President, Frontier College--personal interview, July 12, 1978).



"take what you want" basis.<sup>29</sup> The two members of the Board who did not feel that any serious negative effects would result from withdrawal of membership represented relatively large institutions.<sup>30</sup>

Second-level administrators were asked to respond to two questions that related to the perception of "community" within the consortium:

Has your attitude toward MAHE changed as you have worked with the consortium? In what way?

Do you see any threats to or changes in the independence and autonomy of your institution as the consortium grows or bonds between the members are strengthened? If YES, what are those threats or changes? If NO, how do you account for the ability to maintain your independence as inter-dependence grows?

Eleven of the fifty-two respondents indicated that their opinions or attitudes had not changed. However, of those eleven, one reported that he had not yet been in his position long enough to feel qualified to answer; one had not been in favor of the membership and had retained that opinion;<sup>31</sup> and the other nine reported that they had always been in favor of the consortium membership and still felt that MAHE was at least moderately important to their institutions.

The other forty-one respondents felt that their opinions or atti-

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<sup>29</sup>"It is necessary that MAHE prioritize its offerings of services so that they will have available what the members will need to meet problems" (President, Pine College--personal interview, July 13, 1978).

<sup>30</sup>"We got into it because we owe it to the smaller schools--we could have done them some real good if they had come to us in the first place" (President, Jackson College--personal interview, July 12, 1978).

<sup>31</sup>"For the money spent, we can see no change of any real significance. I was against it from the first, and now my position is being proven" (Chief Academic Officer, Pine College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

tudes had changed as they had worked with the consortium. Of those forty-one, three reported that their attitudes had become more negative, although none offered an explanation for the change. The other thirty-eight second-level administrators reported that their attitudes had become significantly more positive.<sup>32</sup> All of the respondents felt that the changes had been the result of having become more closely involved in the operations of the consortium and of having become better acquainted with their peers at other member colleges.<sup>33</sup>

Fifty-one of the respondents felt no danger to their institutions' independences or autonomies from membership in the consortium; one respondent felt he had not gained sufficient information to make a judgment. Of the fifty-one who did make judgments on the questions, one gave the opinion that the consortium was not doing anything and, therefore, could not possibly constitute a threat.<sup>34</sup> The other respondents cited the voluntary nature of the consortium membership and of the participation in any particular program. Several offered comments on the concept of mutual assistance as the guard against loss of

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<sup>32</sup>"I have moved from a perspective of forced involvement to one that is positive as a result of the valuable supportive activities and information that emanate from the consortium. It's almost like an extended family--there is someone out there with the desire and the know-how to help in any situation" (Chief Academic Officer, Dillard College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>33</sup>"The chance to compare notes with peers and to consider new ideas and struggle with common problems is healthy to us as an institution, but mostly as individuals. We are a unique group" (Registrar, Osburn College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>34</sup>"Interdependence on what?" (Chief Academic Officer, Pine College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

autonomy.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, these second-level administrators were divided on their views of the future goals for the consortium. Forty-six of the respondents spoke of the goals of the consortium, both short-range and long-range, in terms of services being provided to the member colleges by an outside agency selling a product.<sup>36</sup> Five of the respondents envisioned the consortium as moving more deeply into the areas of true interdependence, as cited earlier in this study (Supra, p. 47).

Members of the central agency administration felt strongly the separation between the member schools and their unit of the consortium. Every one of the administrators at the central agency mentioned the seeming "we/they" thinking of the other actors within the consortium.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>"I can't imagine the consortium stifling independence--only enhancing quality. We are in this to help the overall quality of education, not to fight one another" (Registrar, Garfield College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

"Each institution's uniqueness is capitalized upon to the advantage of one another in that the best aspects of each are recognized as bases for improvement from institution to institution" (Chief Business Officer, Taylor College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

"The relationships are symbiotic--mutually beneficial. The institutions are strong enough to stand on their own. We just make each other better" (Chief Academic Officer, Midwest City Art Institute--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>36</sup>"We are beginning to find more ways to use the services of the agency" (Chief Student Affairs Officer, Bishop College--mailed questionnaire, September, 1978).

"I use more the sources or resources of the consortium as I get better acquainted with what they have to offer" (Chief Academic Officer, Osburn College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>37</sup>"We treat the Board of Directors like clients--these are the services we supplied or provided for you--and they think of the dues as money sent out of their campuses" (Vice President--personal interview, May 26, 1978).

But they had not changed their opinions that the consortium should be a member-centered organization. They still pictured MAHE as an opportunity for the members to work directly with one another.<sup>38</sup>

Faculty members at the member colleges were not asked to indicate their feelings on the question of "community," but a number did volunteer such information. Eight of the faculty respondents made clear their comments that they saw the central agency as a separate organization from whom services could be purchased as needed.<sup>39</sup> One faculty member did think of the programs of the consortium in terms of "us," and indicated that she would work to keep that concept alive.<sup>40</sup>

The one concrete example of a feeling of community resulted from what the member Presidents saw as outside pressure, or competition, for the students in the region. The Board of Directors authorized the central agency to speak for the entire group in dealing with a state

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<sup>38</sup>"Everybody's too polite; they just smile and nod. There isn't enough feedback or exchange. I would rather see the Board of Directors around the table with their shirtsleeves rolled up and really talking and comparing notes" (MAHE Program Director--personal interview, May 24, 1978).

<sup>39</sup>"We really use their packages for professional development. It is worth the money just to be able to buy into those opportunities" (Faculty Member, Morgan College--mailed questionnaire, September, 1978).

<sup>40</sup>"I feel we are good for MAHE. Our school personnel are great leaders and creative people who share and encourage the consortium. MAHE then takes ideas and suggestions and implements them into the consortium and we thus benefit on a larger scale. I intend to invite representatives of all of [the specific discipline departments] to come to a meeting here--coffee and doughnuts--to keep the feeling and the sharing alive" (Faculty Member, Bishop College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

education agency that was beginning a master plan for higher education. At the same time, the Board authorized the central agency to speak for the entire group in dealing with the problem of proprietary schools and new extension courses in the area by non-MAHE member schools (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: January 5, 1978, p. 1). But the feeling of community had not yet solidified; the President of MAHE referred to an earlier statement about the time and psychological distance necessary to be able to think inter-institutionally when he was asked, in a personal interview, for his opinion on the question of a sense of unity.<sup>41</sup>

#### Evidence on Stage V

Lancaster (1969, p. 18) admitted that Stage V would be "very difficult to characterize." His description of the characteristics for the final stage in the maturation of a consortium was written entirely in the subjunctive, with an alternative implied for almost every characteristic. The one foundation characteristic, upon which the alternatives seemed to be based, was the evolution of "domain-consensus" within the consortium (Lancaster, 1969, p. 17).

#### Evolution of Domain Consensus

Formal documents prepared by the consortium indicated that domain

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<sup>41</sup>"From their separate locations, even chief executive officers--to say nothing of their non-director campus colleagues--appear to think of the consortium as an independent entity whose perpetrator is its staff. From this day-to-day campus perspective, the consortium is 'they,' and not 'we'" (MAHE President, A special Statement from the President to the Board of Directors: February 1, 1975, p. 1).

consensus had not been achieved, or even strongly sought.<sup>42</sup> Administrators at the central agency echoed this position in personal interviews and suggested that the "problem" rested with Lancaster's implied definition of the concept.<sup>43</sup>

Members of the Board of Directors were ambiguous in their responses to the concept of concrete domain consensus. Although two of the member college presidents had assigned areas of academic specialization to their own institutions and had made their decisions known to the membership at large, the programs that had most closely approached the concept of negotiated areas of specialization had been the student and faculty exchange projects.<sup>44</sup> Both had been the result of work by the central agency rather than the result of direct interaction among the members.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>"In our case, MAHE is not intended by its Directors to be a regional university, and thus its capacity for cooperative complementarity is intentionally limited" (Center for Professional Development, promotional pamphlet, pl 1).

<sup>43</sup>"If 'domain consensus' means 'dividing the territory' for curricular offerings, then we haven't. But remember that resource sharing may take many forms. One problem with consortia is the lack of examination of alternatives to traditional ideas. Consider the idea exchange, run like a mini-NEXUS" (MAHE Vice President--personal interview, May 26, 1978).

<sup>44</sup>"Membership in MAHE has helped us keep [a specific program]. I tell the faculty that this is our area of strength; if we don't offer these courses, others will, and we will lose" (President, Midwest City Art Institute--personal interview, June 28, 1978).

"We told MAHE to stay out of [a specific subject area]. This is our baby and we don't intend to let go of it" (President, Bishop College--personal interview, June 20, 1978).

<sup>45</sup>"The members don't want to take the time and effort to negotiate a domain consensus. They don't have the time, they don't have the resources, and they don't have the experience for negotiations between institutions on such matters" (MAHE Program Director--personal interview, May 24, 1978).

Six members of the Board of Directors made comments either stating or strongly implying that any attempt to create domain consensus within the consortium would be strongly opposed.<sup>46</sup> Four Board members spoke in favor of the development of formally recognized areas of specialization with the membership of MAHE.<sup>47</sup> Other members of the Board took no position, either in favor of or against an agreement on primary responsibilities for specific academic programs.

Second-level administrators were asked to indicate the source from which they would seek assistance with questions in each of a number of areas. For each question area, including subject disciplines, faculty matters, and general administrative functions, the administrators were given the choices of any other member of MAHE, their own campuses, MAHE central offices, campus liaison representatives to MAHE, or an outside organization.

Fifty of the second-level administrators responded to the question, although several did not indicate a choice on every question area. Ten of the respondents, representing 20% of that group, listed the MAHE central office as their first choice for assistance on every question area; five of the administrators, or 10% of the group, listed

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<sup>46</sup>"MAHE is supposed to be helping us as individuals. We didn't join to be made into some kind of super-university" (President, Bard College--personal interview, July 11, 1978).

<sup>47</sup>"It's only recognizing reality--nobody can hope to be strong in all of the academic areas. And nobody can hope to support all of them we now have as the result of years of trying to be all things to all people" (President, Morgan College--personal interview, July 17, 1978). Shortly after this study, the man who had been one of the three strongest advocates of domain consensus resigned his position at the member college and left the Board of Directors.

an outside organization for every question; and approximately 8%, or four of the administrators, listed their home campuses as the source of assistance in every possible problem or question area.

The consortium had a tradition of providing consulting and counseling services in the area of faculty development and faculty evaluation; these services had been provided by personnel from the central agency. Of the thirty-three respondents who indicated a preferred source for assistance in these areas, eighteen would go to MAHE central offices first for Faculty Evaluation while twenty-six would go to MAHE central offices for Faculty Development. Of the fifteen who did not designate MAHE as the first choice in Faculty Evaluation, eight would go first to an "Outside Organization," and seven would go to some individual or organizational unit within the home campus structure. Of the eight who would go outside the consortium for assistance in this area, two checked "Outside Organization" for every question area. There was no significant pattern to the home institutions or administrative positions of the individuals who preferred to work strictly within the home campus structure.

Of the seven who did not designate the MAHE central offices as the first choice for assistance in the area of Faculty Development, three elected to go first to an "Outside Organization," two chose to work through individuals or units at the home campus, and two designated other MAHE member colleges. Of the three who would have looked outside MAHE, two checked "Outside Organization" for every question area. There was no significant pattern to the home institutions or the administrative positions of the individuals who preferred to work strictly within the home campus structure. The two respondents who



designated other MAHE colleges did not name the same "preferred other." These results are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I  
PREFERRED SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE  
IN FACULTY MATTERS

Preferred Source	Question Area	
	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Development</u>
MAHE Central Offices	18	26
Outside Organization	8	3
Home Campus	7	2
Raleigh College		1
Midwest City University		1

Another relatively traditional area of activity by MAHE was consultation on procedures for general administration in the member colleges. For the entire life of the consortium, conferences and workshops for administrators had been a large measure of the programs sponsored (Center for Professional Development, undated promotional pamphlet, p. 2). For these services, however, the consortium had tended to bring together administrators from the member colleges or to bring in nationally recognized consultants in the particular problem area (Center for Professional Development, undated promotional pamphlet, pp. 2-3). The responses to the question areas in administrative functions were more varied than those for faculty matters had been.

Forty-one second-level administrators designated a preferred source of assistance on questions concerning Admissions. Fourteen selected the MAHE central offices, nine selected an outside organization, four mentioned Raleigh College, three cited Jackson College, and the rest were evenly divided among other member colleges. Of those forty-one respondents, seven listed the MAHE central offices for every administrative area problem, three listed an outside organization for every administrative area problem, and seven listed the home campus structures for every administrative area problem.

Thirty respondents listed a preferred source of assistance with problems in the operation of the institution's Development Foundation. Seventeen listed the MAHE central office, including seven who listed that source for every administrative problem; seven listed a home campus structure, including all seven who listed the home campus for every problem; six listed another consortium member. For this problem area there was unanimous agreement among the respondents who listed another member college; all six listed Raleigh College as the source of assistance in the area of Development Foundation.

Thirty-four administrators checked preferences on sources of assistance for problems in the area of Enrollment. Fifteen checked the MAHE central office, including seven who listed that source for every administrative problem; seven listed a home campus structure, including two who selected the home campus for every problem, eight indicated an outside organization, including three who listed that preference on every problem; and seven listed other member colleges within MAHE. Of the seven who named other MAHE colleges, two each selected Raleigh College and Jackson College, and one each selected Bard College, Miles

College, and Garfield College. There was no significant pattern to the selections of the other member colleges, either by home campus or by administrative position of the respondent. One respondent indicated that he would work through the Campus Liaison Representative to get to the MAHE central offices.

On the question of assistance with recruitment problems, thirty-three of the second-level administrators indicated a preferred source. Seventeen of the respondents preferred to work directly with the MAHE central office, including six who indicated that preference on every administrative question; three listed the home campus, including two who listed that source on every question; eight listed an outside organization, including three who indicated that choice for every administrative question; and five listed another member college in MAHE. Of the five who listed other MAHE members, three mentioned Jackson College, and one each mentioned Raleigh College and Osburn College. There were no significant patterns among the answers for this problem area.

Finally, thirty second-level administrators indicated a choice for assistance with problems in Student Affairs. Sixteen indicated MAHE central offices, including the seven who listed that source for every administrative problem area; six listed an outside organization, including the three who listed that source for every problem; two listed the home campus, although neither had listed that choice for every problem in administration; and six indicated other members of the MAHE membership. Of those six, two mentioned Midwest City University, and one each mentioned Jackson College, Raleigh College, Garfield College, and Pratt College. There were no significant patterns among the choices for assistance in this problem area.

Considering the area of administrative problems as a whole, there were no significant patterns among the responses when members indicated other members as their first choices for assistance. There was no incidence of "pairing," with two members consistently mentioning each other; there was no pattern of geographic clustering; there was no significant pattern of selections based upon the administrative position of the respondent. There were no significant patterns based upon the characteristics of respondents who indicated a specific source (e.g. MAHE Central Offices, Outside Organization, home campus) for every area to which they responded.

The results on the question of preferred source of assistance with problems in the areas of Administration are summarized in Table II.

TABLE II  
PREFERRED SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE  
IN ADMINISTRATION MATTERS

Preferred Source	Question Area				
	Admis- sions	Development Foundation	Enroll- ment	Recruit- ment	Student Affairs
MAHE Central Offices	14	17	15	17	16
Outside Organization	9		8	8	6
Home Campus Liaison Officer	7	7	3	3	2
Bard College			1		
Garfield College	1		1		1
Jackson College	3		2	3	1
Midwest City University	1				2
Miles College	1		1		
Osburn College				1	
Pratt College	1				1
Raleigh College	4	6	2	1	1
Total Responses	41	30	34	33	30

The second-level administrators were also invited to indicate choices for assistance in several academic disciplines. Several of the respondents declined to indicate choices in that area, stating that they did not have close enough contact with academic work to make a choice. Of the respondents who did make choices here, one checked the home campus for every academic area, one checked the Outside Organization for every academic area, and two checked the Campus Liaison Office for every academic area. Beyond that, the only significant pattern in the responses was the heavy number of respondents who indicated the Midwest City Art Institute as the source of assistance with problems in Art courses.

The results on the questions concerning academic discipline matters are summarized in Tables III and IV.

Department or division chairpersons were invited to express their choices for assistance in discipline development or in student exchange within the discipline. Thirty-seven questionnaires were returned (Table V).

The respondents favored Raleigh College for cooperation in Business. If anything, the pattern of responses was related negatively with the geographic distance of the respondent from the Raleigh College campus. Respondents from member colleges located relatively close to the Raleigh campus were the ones who indicated the central offices as their preferred choice.

With Biology, too, there did not seem to be a pattern to the responses that could be related to geographic clusters of colleges. There was no indication of pairings among the colleges; there was no pattern of respondents' naming reciprocal sources for cooperation.

TABLE III  
 PREFERRED SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE IN  
 ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE MATTERS  
 (SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY)

Preferred Source	Question Area					
	Biology	Business	Home Economics	Math	Physical Science	Social Science
MAHE Central Offices	4	4	6	5	6	7
Outside Organization	4	3	3	3	3	3
Home Campus	5	5	3	3	5	2
Liaison Officer	2	2	2	2	2	1
Bard College					1	
Birch College			1			
Bishop College						1
Dillard College		1				
Jackson College				1		2
Jones College	1					
Lee College					1	
Midwest Art Institute						
Midwest City University	5	1	1	4	3	
Miles College	1		3			
Pratt College					1	
Raleigh College		7				1
Total Responses	22	23	19	18	22	17

TABLE IV  
 PREFERRED SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE IN  
 ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE MATTERS  
 (HUMANITIES AND LETTERS)

Preferred Source	Question Area				
	Art	Education	Speech/ English	History/ Government	Fine Arts/ Humanities
MAHE Central Offices		6	6	6	5
Outside Organization	1	2	3	3	3
Home Campus	3	5	4	2	5
Liaison Officer	2	2	2	2	3
Bard College			1		
Bishop College				1	
Garfield College		1			
Jackson College					2
Midwest Art Institute	19				1
Midwest City University		4	3	1	3
Pine College			1		
Pratt College		1		1	
Raleigh College				1	1
Total Responses	25	21	20	17	23

TABLE V  
 FACULTY PREFERENCE FOR COOPERATION  
 IN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Preferred Source	Question Area				
	<u>Business</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Biology</u>	<u>Political Sciences</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
MAHE Central Offices	2	6	1	1	3
Outside Organization		1		2	2
Home Campus			1		
Bard College		1			
Bishop College				1	
Jackson College			1		
Midwest City University			1	3	4
Raleigh College	5		3	1	
<hr/>					
Total Responses					



The responses of second-level administrators and of faculty members are compared in Table VI--Comparison of Administrator/Faculty Preferences on Cooperation in Academic Discipline Matters.

Seven of the member colleges of MAHE were not mentioned by any of the respondents as a cooperative partner in any of the academic disciplines listed. There was no significance to the distance of the college from the metropolitan Midwest City area. Three of the seven were more distant from the city area; however, four of the seven were within the metropolitan area, or within ten miles of it. If those seven, five did not appear as a choice on any of the questionnaires returned by second-level administrators. For the administrators, distance of the college from the metropolitan area did not seem to be a significant consideration; the five not selected by administrators included colleges both within and at a distance from the city region.

#### Summary of Stage IV

At the time of this research, in 1978, there were conflicting indications of the development of MAHE into Stage IV of Lancaster's model. The nature of the relationships between the member colleges and the central office had matured. Members were responsible for initiation of the project ideas for most of the activities undertaken by the consortium, although they presented those ideas "anonymously" through the central agency staff. The central agency had tried to move to a position of providing support, or individual development, services for the programs of the consortium.

But the shifting of responsibility to the shoulders of the members schools had been the direct result of action, and inaction, by the chief

TABLE VI  
 COMPARISON OF ADMINISTRATOR/FACULTY PREFERENCES  
 ON COOPERATION IN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Preferred Source	Question Area				
	<u>Business</u>	<u>English<sup>A</sup></u>	<u>Biology</u>	<u>Political Sciences<sup>B</sup></u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
MAHE Central Offices	4/2	6/6	4/1	6/1	5/3
Outside Organization	3/	3/1	4/	3/2	3/2
Home Campus	5/	4/	5/1	2/	3/
Liaison Officer	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/
Bard College		1/1			
Bishop College				1/1	
Dillard College	1/				
Jackson College			/1		1/
Jones College			1/		
Midwest City University	1/	3/	5/1	1/3	4/4
Miles College			1/		
Pine College		1/			
Pratt College				1/	
Raleigh College	7/5		/1	1/1	
Total Responses	23/7	20/8	22/7	17/8	18/9

<sup>A</sup>For purposes of space, the Question Area entitled "Speech/English" on Table IV has been shortened to "English" for this table.

<sup>B</sup>For purposes of space, the Question Area entitled "History/Government" on Table IV has been shortened to "Political Sciences" for this table.

executive of the consortium and his staff. The MAHE President had led the move to a new governance structure and a new style of operation. By his insistence upon review of options and their logical consequences, he had forced the consortium to accept a higher level of maturity. Even so, member schools were still hesitant about being perceived by their peers as having accepted responsibility for leadership in programming ideas or implementation. On more than one occasion, the central agency administration and staff had diplomatically refused to make any moves until directed to do so by the Board of Directors or one of its sub-committees.

The membership seemed to be sliding contentedly back into a Stage III relationship with the central office (i.e. primary bonds from center to individual member, with responsibility for the consortium programs resting at the center, and with only minimal bonds between members). Again, policies of the central agency executive and the members of his staff were the only restraint holding the consortium in a pattern of more mature responsibility dispersion. Individual members of the Board of Directors expressed concern over the perceived state of the situation, but they were unable or unwilling to exert direct influence upon the other members of the Board toward redressing the grievance.

Complex cooperative ventures between and among members promised to be on the increase, but they remained the exception rather than the rule. Most interaction patterns were the result of personal affiliations and resulted in one-shot, or ad hoc, programs of mutual support. Many of the men and women who had originally supported the concept of strong inter-dependencies were no longer active on the Board of Directors. Those who remained on the Board were seriously concerned

about the future of the consortium. Lack of trust was evident in talking with people involved in the consortium.

In spite of the weakness of the development, it was apparent that the consortium had moved beyond Lancaster's Stage III. Inter-dependent bonds were being formed among parts of the membership, and many of the programs did involve a degree of reciprocity in the commitment of institutional resources. A feeling of "community" was beginning to be manifested, to varying degrees, by the member institutions. As Lancaster had found in his original study of the consortium, it seemed that pressures from the external environment were more effective in forcing the members into closer working relationships than were the professed abstract concepts of inter-dependencies and their opportunities for mutual support and improvement.

There was little evidence to support the hypothesis that awareness of, and participation in, the objectives of the consortium had moved to any depth in the structures of the member colleges. Second-level administration personnel were just beginning to be "won over" to the positive possibilities of the cooperative venture, and faculty members did not seem to see any potential benefits beyond one-shot seminars or workshops for individual development.

The case of the consortium did not seem to support many of Lancaster's predictions for the fourth stage of development.

#### Summary of Stage V

This study found MAHE well short of the developmental plateau envisioned by Lancaster for Stage V. The members still regarded the central office as a separate entity existing for the purpose of packag-

ing workshops or seminars, to be purchased as desired by the individual member schools. For most members, the most abstract concept of the cooperative arrangement involved nothing more than one anonymous member communicating to the lumped "membership-as-a-whole" through the central office. While some of the persons involved in the member campus activities had begun to think in terms of inter-member sharing and exchange, these thoughts had not yet been translated into concrete programs. There is a long distance between saying what would be done in a hypothetical situation and actually approaching a peer with an admission of an area of problem or question.

Domain consensus had not developed, and the types of conflict predicted by Lancaster had not appeared. There was no move toward mergers of the member colleges into "new corporate entities," nor was there any evidence of the other forms of "alternative arrangements" listed as possibilities by the model.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Institutions of higher education have been caught between the spiraling costs of facilities, faculties, and specialty programs on the one side the the increasing demands of society and students for public services and widely disparate narrow academic majors on the other (Schwenkmeyer and Goodman, 1972, p. 1; Lombardi, 1973, p. 15; Patterson, F., 1974, pp. 91-94; Grupe, 1975, p. 1; Powell, 1975). An increasing number of colleges and universities have entered into cooperative academic arrangements. The goal has been a network of interdependent, yet autonomous, institutions that would provide a broader range of academic and service offerings than any single member could have afforded. But the lack of a defining paradigm resulted in a pattern of pragmatic, ad hoc undertakings that made it increasingly difficult to speak of the movement in terms of meaningful generalities or concepts.<sup>1</sup> Educators have had no way to compare and contrast the "generally accepted" benefits of cooperative arrangements with the actual results attained by

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<sup>1</sup> A directory of arrangements for inter-institutional cooperation in higher education compiled through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare listed 1,017 working partnerships in 1965. These represented a wide range of cooperative interactions, from two-party casual exchanges between close geographic neighbors to statutory interstate commissions (Moore, 1968).

such endeavors.<sup>2</sup>

The first step toward establishment of the defining paradigm was taken by L. Patterson (1970, pp. 203), who suggested five criteria for the definition of an academic interinstitutional cooperative program, called a "consortium."<sup>3</sup> General acceptance of Patterson's definition allowed researchers to limit the number of field cases upon which to conduct further investigation.<sup>4</sup>

A second step toward the establishment of the concept paradigm was taken by Lancaster (1969), who articulated a theory of consortium development. Lancaster predicted five stages through which a consortium would grow as it moved toward maturity:

Stage I--Period prior to the development of the formal consortium; characterized by ad hoc and largely informal cooperation.

Stage II--Establishment of the formal organization; characterized by efforts of the newly-created central agency to initiate interdependencies between itself and the member institutions.

Stage III--Period of strengthening of the inter-relationships within the network; characterized by conflict and competition between and among the members and between the central agency and the members.

Stage IV--Development of more complex inter-dependencies; characterized by recognition of the lack of a strong central authority, and by the acceptance of a support role by the central agency.

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<sup>2</sup>As the best possible example, one of the attractive features of cooperative arrangements has been the potential for significant cost reductions by elimination of course, and equipment or facilities, overlapping. Yet Grupe (1975, pp. 93-94), found that working partnerships had realized very little savings.

<sup>3</sup>To be classified as a "consortium", an academic cooperative arrangement must have (1) a formal voluntary organization, (2) three or more member institutions, (3) multi-academic programs, (4) at least one full-time professional to administer the programs, and (5) a required annual contribution or other tangible evidence of the long-term commitment of the member institutions.

<sup>4</sup>The American Association for Higher Education used Patterson's

Stage V--Evolution of specialization, or domain consensus, within the cooperative network; characterized by consistent patterns of dispersed program responsibility (pp. 13-18).

Lancaster tested his theory in a case study of a nationally-known consortium, identified in his study as the Midwestern Association for Higher Education. He examined historical and contemporary working papers of the consortium, sat with working committees and the major administrative board, and interviewed persons who were or had been involved in the formation and continued functioning of the arrangement. In his conclusions, Lancaster stated that sufficient evidence existed to support the first three stages of his proposed model. He did not find evidence to cause questions about the verification of the final two stages, but he failed to find significant bits of supporting data for the verification of those stages. Lancaster (1969, pp. 126-130), concluded that the case consortium had not yet existed long enough to have matured beyond the third stage of his model, and he predicted that later studies would find that the process of maturation had proceeded as predicted.

This study was intended to address the verification of the final two stages of Lancaster's model for consortium development through a follow-up study of the case consortium, nine years after Lancaster's original work.

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definition as the criterion for inclusion in the 1973, 1975, and 1977 editions of the Consortium Directory.



## Research Questions

Specifically, this research addressed the following questions concerning the development of the case consortium:

1. Has the consortium developed into, or through, Stage IV of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium?<sup>5</sup>
  - a. Have primary and sustaining linkages been established between or among the member institutions outside the central agency?
  - b. Have programs resulting from linkages between or among member institutions been centered on campus rather than at the central agency offices?
  - c. Has the central agency moved from the role of "prime mover" to a role of providing support services?
  - d. Have the linkages between the member institutions and the central agency moved from single-project to continuing- or evolving- project interactions?
  - e. Is there evidence of a feeling of individual involvement in the course of the consortium, though there has been no loss of member autonomy?
  
2. Has the consortium moved into Stage V of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium?<sup>6</sup>
  - a. Has a consistent pattern of program responsibilities (i.e., a domain consensus) developed within the consortium?

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<sup>5</sup> Stage IV of the model was characterized by development of complex interdependencies outside the central agency in response to perceived threats to the autonomy of member institutions from authority that had developed within the central agency office during the early period of consortium activity (Lancaster, 1969, p. 17).

<sup>6</sup> Stage V of the model was to be characterized by the development of well-established limits to the responsibilities of each member institution and of the central agency. With the limits to responsibility were to go limits to the authority of each member for program offerings. These "domains" were to have developed as the mechanism for controlling conflict during earlier stages (Lancaster, 1969, p. 18).

- i. Were presently recognized program strengths apparent at the time the consortium was formed?
  - ii. Was recognition of program strength requested by the member institution, assigned by the consortium, or evolved quite independently of involvement within the consortium?
  - iii. If more than one member sought recognition of strength in a particular program, how was the consensus assigned?
  - iv. Was recognition of a program strength considered in granting membership to an institution seeking to join the consortium?
- b. How stable is the pattern of program responsibility (i.e., the domain consensus) within the present consortium?
- i. Has recognition of program strength been shifted between any member institutions by the consortium?
  - ii. Has the central agency been responsible for attempts to shift the consensus?
  - iii. Have any members withdrawn from the consortium as a result of disagreements over domain consensus?
- c. What is the position of the central agency within the consortium?
- i. What is the domain of the central agency? What specific program areas are reserved to the central agency by the member institutions?
  - ii. Has the domain of the central agency changed during the lifetime of the consortium?
- d. To what extent will the member institutions agree that a stable pattern of program responsibilities (i.e., a domain consensus) has developed?

#### Methodology

Lancaster field-tested his theory on a nationally-recognized consortium, which he identified only with the pseudonym Midwestern Association for Higher Education. This study returned to that consortium,

still active and still recognized as a leader in the consortium movement (L. Patterson, personal correspondence, March 15, 1976). During a week-long visit to the consortium central office in June of 1978, historical papers of the consortium, minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors, research and development papers prepared by the staff of the central office, back issues of the in-house newsletter, in-house memoranda, and reports on specific programs and the consortium in general were reviewed for the period from 1969 through the time of the study. These papers were read in the library of the MAHE central office. Points not fully explained by the formal documents were taken to the staff and program directors for clarification.

Regularly-scheduled meetings of the Campus Liaison Representatives and the Board of Directors were observed, and initial contacts with presidents of the member colleges were made.

Members of the central agency administration and staff were interviewed, both individually and collectively. These interviews centered upon effective aspects of potentially important events or periods in the recent history of the consortium. Responses to these interviews were combined with information gathered from the formal papers for use as the basis for identification of both specific areas of conflict and the major actors within the consortium who had been involved in the creation and/or resolution of each conflict.

Immediately following the visit to the central offices, interviews were held with the chief administrative officers, or their designated representatives, on the campuses of each of the nineteen member institutions. Questions for these interviews were prepared upon the data gathered during the central office visit and during the casual dis-

cussions at the meetings observed during that visit. Questions used by Lancaster in his original study were included where they retained relevancy. Again, questions were intended to elicit feelings, thought, and pertinent experiences, and the courses of the interviews were determined by the individual circumstances. All participants were assured of anonymity, and all were willing to discuss issues in terms of names, dates, personal positions, details of exchanges, and other specifics.

A mailed questionnaire asked second-level administrators to comment upon their perceptions of the relationships between policies and abstract understandings achieved by the members of the Board of Directors and the actual functionings of the various programs.<sup>7</sup> Fifty-two of the eighty-seven questionnaires mailed were completed and returned.

A second, shorter questionnaire was mailed to department chairpersons of the five departments found to have been most involved in consortium programs during the recent history of the organization.<sup>8</sup> These were intended to determine the degree to which the concept of domain consensus may have reached into the administrative structures of the member institutions. Forty-seven questionnaires were mailed in this group; thirty-nine were completed and returned. Several of the respondents included responses that went far beyond the information

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<sup>7</sup> Questionnaires were mailed to Campus Liaison Representatives, Chief Academic Officers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, Chief Business Officers, Chief Development Officers, Admissions Directors, Registrars, and Deans for Graduate and Occupational Studies.

<sup>8</sup> Questionnaires were mailed to the chairpersons of the departments of business and economics, English and literature, biological sciences, political sciences, and mathematics.

required to answer the questions.

Finally, specific individuals whose roles in conflict situations had been revealed in other responses were contacted by mail and invited to comment upon the situations in which they had participated.

Data derived from these many sources were sorted into categories drawn from the research questions upon which this study was based (Supra, pp. 6-8). The sorting was done subjectively, and the significance of each item to the question was judged at the discretion of the researcher. For the final analysis of the data, it was assumed that Lancaster's predicted characteristics were valid as described for the developmental stages of a consortium. Conclusions were stated in terms of the agreement of the case with the characteristics of the model, rather than in terms of the validity of the model. Since respondents had been assured of the confidentiality of their comments, they were identified only by career position and the names of the institutions were disguised. For that reason, no lists of interviewees, questionnaire respondents, or documents cited were included in the appendices.

#### Major Findings of the Research Questions

It is, of course, not possible to generalize the finds of a case study beyond the specific case. However, these findings can be used in attempting to determine the validity of Lancaster's model as a basic predictor of the path of maturation in a consortium. The major research findings of this study are summarized in terms of the research questions.

Has the consortium reached Stage IV of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium?

1. The typical linkage within the consortium continued to be between the central agency and an individual member institution. Linkages between member institutions involved exchanges of information with peers during informal interactions and were addressed to the solution of specific task-related problems rather than to the evolution of programs.

2. Programs undertaken by the consortium were typically centered at the central agency offices and were operated through the central agency staff. These programs included the student and faculty exchanges, workshops and seminars, and the joint curriculum program in sociology. The only significant exception was the joint library holdings project, which had been administered through the librarians and the Midwest City Public Library since its inception. Attempts had been made by the central agency staff to have responsibility for programs assumed by member institutions, but those efforts had met with little success.<sup>9</sup>

3. The central agency staff remained the source of program ideas that were presented to the Board of Directors. However, central agency staff members were quick to make the point that their recommendations were often developed from ideas directed to them by consortium members.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The President of MAHE had expressed his hope that members would accept more responsibility for the future of the consortium in the general newsletter when he said, "We are delighted to recognize you as colleagues, and we hope that you will increasingly recognize us as colleagues, and MAHE as an important resource for your own teaching" (MAHE Newsletter, May 1, 1973, p. 2). The same message was presented to the Board of Directors on several occasions (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: June 21-22, 1973, p. 3, September 22, 1977, p. 1, and May 28, 1978, p. 2; Minutes: Board Committee on Purposes and Planning Meeting: September 14, 1977, p. 3).

<sup>10</sup>The representatives of the member institutions used the staff

4. The consortium seemed to be attempting to initiate some programs which were based upon the sharing of significant resources, and many of those programs held the potential of developing into continuing patterns of interaction among the member institutions (Resource Sharing, Addendum to Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting, May 28, 1978, p. 3).<sup>11</sup> However, most of those programs had not yet been operative long enough to be able to judge the directions of their growth; it was still possible that they would fail to develop beyond one-shot or short-term programs.

5. Presidents of the member institutions, who sat as the Board of Directors for the consortium, were developing feelings of involvement in the course of the consortium.<sup>12</sup> Administrators on the member campuses who dealt with higher education on broader conceptual planes also evidenced at least the beginnings of awareness of the consortium as "a part of us, and of us as a part of it" (Chief Academic Officer,

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of the central agency as a "psychological cushion" in dealing with one another (Chief Academic Officer, Garfield College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>11</sup>Programs undertaken by the consortium that held potential for involvement of resources in significant new ways included (1) adjunct staff from member colleges working with individual clients for professional development, (2) teachers on member campuses responding to requests for information about programs, texts, and teaching materials, (3) sharing of ideas at conferences for administrators and faculty, (4) facilities and equipment on one campus being made available for use by other member schools, by special arrangement, (5) campus consultants' presentations being made available to staff at other member institutions, by invitation, and (6) teachers at one school being located through the personnel search service for part-time positions at other schools.

<sup>12</sup>"We are finally moving beyond the idea of keeping the consortium as a consultant to whom we rush when a problem arises, and getting to think of it as a way to plan and work to prevent problems" (President, Midwest City Art Institute--personal interview, June 28, 1978).

Taney College--personal interview, May 23, 1978).<sup>13</sup> Campus-based administrators who dealt with higher education in terms of specific sets of tasks, such as business officers, and members of the faculties of the institutions had not yet developed a feeling of participation in something bigger than themselves. At best, these campus-based actors were involved with peers in corresponding career positions at other member institutions.

Has the consortium reached Stage V of Lancaster's model for the growth of a consortium?

1. Members of the consortium generally agreed in recognizing that the Midwest City Art Institute had a special area of expertise, and two member Presidents had assigned areas of academic specialization to their own home campuses.<sup>14</sup> But there was no evidence that other member institutions had altered their course offerings in the content areas that had been claimed as specialties by other member institutions. Nor were there evidences of significant student exchange programs for the academic disciplines involved in those "areas of expertise."

- a. The consortium was formed as a general response to individually-perceived problems, or potential problems by

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<sup>13</sup> Administrators who took a larger view of higher education included chief academic officers, development officers, registrars, and directors of adult and occupational programs. These administrators filled positions from which they could contrast and compare institutions, were more directly concerned with evaluation criteria in the non-academic world, and dealt with education on an interdisciplinary level.

<sup>14</sup> "I told MAHE to keep their hands off [a particular program area] or they would lose us" (President, Bishop College--personal interview, June 20, 1978). It is, however, interesting to note that none of the other member institutions had hesitated to develop their own offerings in that program area, nor had any of the other member insti-



the higher education institutions of the geographic region (Lancaster, 1969, p. 46)<sup>15</sup> The program strengths of the various colleges or universities were not considered in inviting or accepting applications for membership within the consortium; the only consideration for membership was that the institution specialized in "higher education" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 48).<sup>16</sup>

- b. As a consortium, MAHE had never attempted to assign recognition of program strengths, nor had the members dealt with the question of such formal recognition.
- c. Each member institution had been allowed to continue its development in the directions that it had chosen; each member had been allowed to participate in consortium activities as it had chosen. There had been no element of mutual exclusion in the development of programs or the strengthening of existing programs by the member institutions.
- d. Outside institutions had been invited to join the consortium solely on the basis of their geographic location in relation to the MAHE central offices. Strength of the

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tutions attempted to develop a student-exchange with Bishop College in that program area.

<sup>15</sup>The organization of MAHE was not in response to something significant that was happening between related colleges, but seemed to be viewed as a means of making something happen that would be of mutual benefit. The question was one of survival and, although the collective presidents were not sure what might result from cooperation, 'at least it could not hurt'" (Lancaster, 1969, p. 46).

<sup>16</sup>After initial attempts to determine criteria for membership it was the decision of the founding institutions that the only requirement for membership be accreditation as an institution of higher education (Lancaster, 1969, p. 48).

outside institution as a whole or strength of any specific program within an outside institution had been given little or no consideration.<sup>17</sup>

2. Faculty members at the member institutions and most of the administrators below the level of chief officer at the member institutions had not yet developed any feeling of involvement in the course of the consortium.<sup>18</sup> Among the chief academic officers, registrars, development officers, and directors of adult or occupational programs there were individuals who viewed the consortium as an organization in which they could play significant roles. The presidents of the member institutions, who sat as members of the Board of Directors for the consortium, professed to feel a sense of involvement in the future, positive aspects of the collective, but their actions did not lend support to their words.

- a. Even on the question of the Midwest City Art Institute, a nationally-recognized specialty institution, there was a lack of unanimous agreement among the membership of the consortium on assignments of program (Art) strength to any one member institution. Other members had con-

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<sup>17</sup>Two of the members of the Board of Directors did express concern that a pair of well-known institutions within the region were not members. Their concern was that the lack of inclusion of those institutions would somehow hurt the image of MAHE as the "voice of higher education" in the Midwest City area (President, Taylor College--personal interview, June 29, 1978).

<sup>18</sup>For people in these categories, feelings of involvement were beginning to develop within peer groupings, but not with the consortium as a unit. "The chance to compare notes with peers and to consider new ideas and struggle with common problems is healthy to us as an institution, but mostly as individuals. We are a unique group" (Registrar, Osburn College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978). A number of re-

tinued their own programs in the arts, and at least one had expanded its own programs. That one was within easy commuting distance of the Art Institute.

- b. In speaking of the future of the consortium, members of the Board of Directors tended to think in terms of services being offered to member institutions on an individual "take what you want" basis. The members would relate to the consortium as customers to a supermarket of educational programs.<sup>19</sup>
- c. Six of the nineteen members of the Board of Directors made statements that either stated or strongly implied that any attempt to create domain consensus within the consortium would be strongly opposed.<sup>20</sup>

#### Discussion

There is preliminary evidence to support Lancaster's predictions for the development of a consortium into Stage IV of his model. Although most of the programs of the consortium were still centered at

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spondents from the faculties of the member colleges expressed just such opinions.

<sup>19</sup>"MAHE should be the delicatessen where we go to pick the program that will speak to our needs at the moment" (President, Pratt College, personal interview, July 13, 1978). None of the Board members seemed troubled by the incongruity between their views on long-range planning and their desire that MAHE remain in its original position of reacting to requests by members rather than moving proactively.

<sup>20</sup>"We didn't join to be made into some kind of super-university" (President, Bard College--personal interview, July 11, 1978).

the central office, the members had begun a series of projects in which they could deal with one another (Supra, p. 96). Several of the actors interviewed either in person or by mail spoke of the desirability of forming intra-discipline connections, and the information exchanges being instigated through the central agency were designed to facilitate such networks of acquaintances. In at least one instance a strong academic discipline unit had evolved.<sup>21</sup> For many of the members of the faculties, the only impression of impact upon the educational environment by the consortium had been the opportunities to meet peers at other member institutions. This may not have comprised the tangible linkages, tied to formal documents and movements of students or faculties among member units, that Lancaster was predicting, but it was an equally important foundation for the development of respect between the faculty who must agree to the implementation of formal programs and the exchanges of students.<sup>22</sup>

At a more abstracted level, this research found evidence for three additional phenomena that marked the evolution of the consortium into the fourth stage of the model:

1. Attempts by the member institutions to minimize the role of the central agency in early incidents of cooperation or interdependency;
2. Changes in the formal organizational structure of the consortium to reflect the new relationships between the
3. Changes in the program emphasis of the consortium.

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<sup>21</sup>"Members of the English departments will continue to support the joint literary bulletin. I'm inviting them all to my campus for coffee, donuts, and more exchanges. We will not let this die" (Faculty Member, Morrow College--mailed questionnaire, September, 1978).

<sup>22</sup>The administrators of the member schools themselves recognized the value of such peer networks. "It's important to be constantly involved with the other institutions for exchange of ideas and information. This 'rubbing of shoulders' is crucial to one's professional growth, and

### Minimizing the Central Agency's Role

Stage III of the consortium's development had been characterized by the assumption of more authority by the member institutions in response to their perceptions of threats from the central agency. The member institutions had felt the need to assure themselves that they held control over their collective and individual futures. One aspect of that psychological state would involve the denial of any significance to the early activities of the central agency, particularly in the area of encouragement of inter-institutional cooperation.

Speaking of the period during the early years of the 1970's, when the consortium had moved through Stage III of the model, presidents of the member institutions talked in terms of the ineffectiveness of the central agency. Two specific programs serve to illustrate the tone of such discussions.

One cooperative program often cited as indicative of the development of significant inter-institutional involvement was the inter-library loan agreement. Under the terms of that arrangement, certain members of the consortium enjoyed the use of the holdings of the Midwest City Public Library for their students. None of the representatives of the institutions that had been involved in the agreement credited the central agency with any part in that cooperative venture.<sup>23</sup>

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it's good for the schools, too" (Admissions Director, Pratt College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

"I'm not going to send any student anywhere until I'm sure of what that student will get. After all, I'm the one who gets the blame if a student comes back and tells everyone that the whole thing was a waste" (Faculty Member, Osburn College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1979).

<sup>23</sup>"If this was an example of the way MAHE worked, we could have saved us all a lot of money" (President, Jackson College--personal interview, July 12, 1978).

Second, one of the smaller colleges had engaged in programs for both faculty and student exchange with Midwest City University. While those programs had been enlarged during the period after both had become members of MAHE, neither would recognize any role for the central agency in the growth of their cooperative venture. Administrators at both institutions cited geographic proximity as the major factor in their situation. Some administrators at the larger institution were openly cynical of any claim by the central agency to influence in the cooperative agreements. In general, they expressed the opinion that it was "only natural that smaller schools in the region would turn to" the larger institution for support in their academic programs (Administrative Officer, Midwest City University--personal interview, June 29, 1978).<sup>24</sup>

As the consortium moved deeply into the patterns of thinking and acting that Lancaster had predicted as characteristic of Stage IV, member institutions felt more comfortable with the new styles of interaction. As actors at the member institutions regained confidence in their autonomy, they were able to grant some credit to the efforts of the central agency. Speaking retrospectively, members were much less strident in their condemnations of the work of the early members of the central agency staff. While they did not, for the most part, elect to acknowledge actions of the central agency as having provided conceptual

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"We could have done this ourselves; MAHE had no part in it" (President, Taylor College--personal interview, June 29, 1978).

<sup>24</sup>As expressed by a faculty member, (Midwest City University--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978), "The wonder is that they didn't come to us sooner. If anything, MAHE has hurt because it gives the smaller schools the idea that they can achieve excellence without us."

leadership, they were willing to assign at least a service or catalyst role to the central agency in the development of cooperation.<sup>25</sup>

At the time of this study, further into Stage IV, the members were quite open in crediting the central agency with maintaining the cooperative spirit of the consortium. Most expressed the opinion that the patterns of interaction currently demonstrated by the members would not survive without the central agency. One president spoke for the majority of the members of the Board of Directors when he mentioned the continuing need for an excuse "to invest time, and money, and our egos, in trying to work with each other" (President, Raleigh College--personal interview).

Such a shift in the attitudes toward the function and effectiveness of the central agency was not included by Lancaster in the list of characteristics for Stage IV of his model. However, it is an important indicator of the maturation necessary for the member institutions to have begun dealing in any significant way with one another. The consortium had been formed by a group of educational institutions who found themselves moving into increasingly intense competition over what they considered to be vital resources.<sup>26</sup> The goal of the con-

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<sup>25</sup>"It's hard to say how much membership in MAHE has enabled us to make contacts with other schools. We could have done these by ourselves, but we probably would not have invested the time and effort. You might say that MAHE has given us an excuse and a model for what it took" (President, Bishop College--personal interview, June 20, 1978).

<sup>26</sup>Lancaster (1969, p. 38), spoke of the "extent to which the colleges distrusted each other at that time", but of the strong desires to improve their organizational securities (1969, p. 42). The basic motivator for the actions of any organization will be the desire to gain what that organization holds to be vital resources, and from such actions develop competition (Benson, 1975, p. 231; Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967, p. 897).

sortium had been to create a situation in which those institutions exchanged such resources for the optimum good of the network as a whole. Such a change involved significant shifts in the psychology of the environment.<sup>27</sup>

The shift in attitudes toward the central agency could be interpreted as a sign that two steps had been taken in the change of psychological positions. First, the members were now formally recognizing the worth of the effort to create exchanges. No longer were they speaking in terms of abstract wishes or vague hopes, but rather they were acknowledging that areas of possible cooperation did exist.<sup>28</sup> No longer was each member viewing the goal of the consortium totally in terms of raising itself to the level of the highest, but rather each was beginning to speak in terms of raising the level of the membership as a whole to the highest possible level.<sup>29</sup> Second, the members were now accepting the existence of the central agency as a separate unit in

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<sup>27</sup>"We suggest . . . that exchange and competition are the extremes of a continuum along which interorganizational transactions can be described" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967, p. 899).

<sup>28</sup>"Obviously, there will be no exchange of elements between two organizations that do not know of each other's existence, or that are completely unaware of each other's functions. Even more, there can be no exchange of elements without some agreement or understanding, however implicit" (Levine and White, 1961, p. 597).

<sup>29</sup>"It turns out this isn't a 'sum zero game' after all. I can raise the standard of living for my school without lowering that of another school. We are all going to have to accept the fact of hard times, and we'll find that misery loves company" (President, Miles College--personal interview, July 10, 1978).

"If we are going to call ourselves the voice of higher education in this area, then we had better worry about higher education as an institution rather than as individual institutions of higher education" (President, Jackson College--personal interview, July 12, 1978).



the network, holding the authority to call members into cooperative ventures.<sup>30</sup>

Before the members had been willing to admit that they could have benefitted from the actions or ideas of another agency, it would not have been possible to expect cooperative programs with potential competitors. It would not have been possible to expect exchanges of significant resources. Having admitted that benefits had accrued from participating in some program of the consortium, and having begun to grant to the consortium legitimation of the authority to call members into cooperative ventures, the members were ready to accept sharing of progressively more basic resources in the name of MAHE programs.

#### Changes in Organizational Structure

Changes of the relative authority positions and of the patterns of interactions among members were reflected in new organizational structures for the central agency. The process of modification continued for almost five years. The original chief administrator for the consortium was removed, and most of the original staff left at that time. One measure of the distrust felt by the member institutions in their relationships with the first administrator was the

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<sup>30</sup>"Through extended contact and negotiation, ideologies providing justification for negotiated division of labor and for a diversity of integrated approaches to common tasks may be developed." However it is almost impossible to produce and maintain such developments without "forceful intervention by third parties" separate from the institutions involved in the negotiations (Benson, 1975, p. 237). Even in the absence of consensus, calculations of "mutual benefit may draw agencies into coordinated ventures" due to the indirect or direct intervention by the third party (Benson, 1975, p. 238). Benson's discussion of such a "third party" lies within the possible directions that MAHE's central agency could have developed from the point at which this researcher found it.

decision of the Board of Directors to move outside the central agency staff in their selection of the new President for the Midwestern Association for Higher Education.<sup>31</sup>

In the process of redesigning the governance structure of MAHE, the Board of Directors agreed upon two specific actions designed to reduce the influence of the central agency staff. First, meetings of the Board were closed to members of the staff and other "outside" representatives unless invited by the Board to attend (Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 28, 1971, p. 3). This was intended to make the central agency staff more responsive to the functional committees and to eliminate what some had seen as an "intimidating presence" at meetings of the Board of Directors (President, Bard College--personal interview, July 11, 1978).

Second, the Board moved, again, in the direction of decentralization of the central agency staff. An earlier attempt to disperse the central authority by housing directors of the various programs at different member campuses had failed (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 101-103). Members of the Board of Directors had been displeased with the expenses incurred in maintaining communications among the dispersed staff, and had felt that the special problem of "central staff inbreeding" had not been solved (President, Taylor College--personal interview, June 29, 1978). The newer attempt at decentralization focused upon the psychological, rather than the geographical, aspect of dispersion of authority.

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<sup>31</sup>A list of the personal attributes to be sought in the new administrator included the desire that "he or she should not have 'empire building' tendencies" (Interim Report of MAHE Committee on Goals and Purposes, February 24, 1972, p. 2).

Under the proposed organizational changes, program authority was vested with the chief executive officer of the consortium, but only with the advice and consent of a council composed of chief administrative officers from the member institutions. A coordinator for individual consortium programs was named on each participating campus, and communication from members to central agency officers was directed through campus coordinators (MAHE Newsletter, February 1, 1973, p. 1 and May 1, 1973, p. 2. See also, Fiscal and Organizational Considerations for the Meeting of the Board of Directors: September 20, 1973). It was also intended that the coordinators should work through one another and eliminate to the greatest extent possible the involvement of the central agency staff in matters of coordination of existing programs or creation of new projects of "complementarity" (MAHE Newsletter, February 1, 1973, p. 1).

Both of these reorganizational steps were quickly superseded when the Board of Directors changed its approach toward restructuring of the governance arrangement.<sup>32</sup> Where previously the thinking seemed to have been a matter of "cutting their power," the Board of Directors began to make decisions designed to increase its own power. The new organizational structure was intended to consolidate within the Board of Directors the authority to set policy and goals, to widen participation in consortium programs by campus personnel, and to provide a single committee (i.e., the Executive Committee) to whom the MAHE President must

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<sup>32</sup>In another example of the seeming confusion that characterized the thinking of the Board of Directors during that period, one of the reasons behind the change in approach was the feeling that attempts at decentralization had destroyed the necessary "cross-feeding of the minds" in the central staff (MAHE Vice President--personal interview, July 12, 1978).

answer on matters of the total scope of the cooperative venture  
(Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: September 21, 1973, p. 2).

At the time of this study, the organizational structure had not changed significantly from that created by the Board of Directors during the early years of the 1970's. The central agency staff remained consolidated at a single location, separate from any member campus, and the directors for the various consortium programs remained central agency staff members. That had been the desire of the member institutions.<sup>33</sup> The Board of Directors retained its authority over all aspects of consortium activity, and exercised that authority primarily through personal discussions with the consortium's chief officers outside the formal setting of scheduled meetings of the entire Board.<sup>34</sup>

#### Changes in Program Emphasis

The movement of the consortium from Stage III into Stage IV was only a case of vague alterations in feelings among the participating

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<sup>33</sup>The desire of the membership on this matter had been expressed not so much directly as through inaction on several points. Members did not support the increase in dues requested to support campus program directors (Memorandum from MAHE President: March 1, 1974, p. 1; Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting: May 30, 1974, p. 2. Members did not support the campus liaison officers named by the consortium, but preferred to work directly with central staff (Documents for Review in Connection with Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors: September 13, 1977, p. 3). Member presidents did not support attempts to form working sub-clusters to control specific programs that lacked general support (Staff Papers: May 5, 1978, pp. 2-8).

<sup>34</sup>"You saw how the meeting [of the Board of Directors] went. We go through the agenda like a dose of salts; nobody says a thing or questions a thing. That's because the President [of MAHE] has done his homework well. He's been in touch with all of us on almost every point. We have our input where it will not look bad to the other members of the Board" (President, Bishop College--personal interview, June 20, 1978).

administrators toward one another. The mission statements for the consortium were re-written.

The original goals of the consortium had stressed programs designed to strengthen member institutions through general advice and aid to the  
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institution. Those had been based upon the idealistic belief that the central agency should act as a mechanism for opening formal channels of communication and providing a neutral site at which member institutions could deal with one another. It would follow naturally, went the belief, that the member institutions would recognize common problems, work toward common solutions, and realize the benefits of presenting a unified front to the rest of the academic community and to the business and social community of the region. The ultimate beneficiary of such programs would be the entire cooperative network.

Part of the reaction of the member institutions to the perceived power of the central agency was a reevaluation of the mission statements. The member institutions had not developed a concept of "commonness," and tended to view attempts by the central agency to foster such a

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<sup>35</sup> The stated missions had been: (1) to provide an agency for systematic communications among area institutions . . . and between them and other community groups; (2) to work toward development of cooperative programming among member institutions of higher education and between them and other community groups in such a way as to enrich and broaden the total program of higher education in the area; (3) to provide an agency for cooperative planning and action . . .; and (4) to act as an information center in such a way as to portray a complete and accurate picture of higher education resources in the Greater Midwest City area (Minutes, Board Committee on Purposes and Planning Meeting; September 14, 1977, pp. 1-2). Presidents of the member institutions also saw the consortium as a focal point for activity to the benefits of the individual member schools. "Public institutions were getting stronger and we needed to make ourselves visible as an alternative" (President, Raleigh College--personal interview, June 28, 1978).

concept as attempts to force the various members into a single mold as the first step toward their ultimate absorption into a new "mega-university."<sup>36</sup> The new emphasis in the missions was to be upon service to the faculty, staff, and administrators of the member institutions as individuals.<sup>37</sup> These individuals were to be strengthened in their specific career areas, for the improvements of their own abilities. It would follow naturally, went the new thinking, that these individuals would transcend the constraints of their particular situations and would begin to realize their roles in higher education at a more abstracted conceptual plane. They would develop an ability to view provincial problems in a cosmopolitan light, and they would grow beyond the narrowness of any single institution. They would be unable to avoid the perception of education as an inter-institutional endeavor. The ultimate beneficiary of these programs would be the entire education community and, as a side effect, the specific cooperative network.

While such a change in outlook was not specifically predicted by the Lancaster model, it was indicative of a significant maturation in the mental set of the consortium. Although programs undertaken with such missions in mind would not result initially in the creation of formal bonds between or among consortium members, they would create a

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<sup>36</sup> This view was expressed by representatives of both large and small member schools. As best stated, "We joined for our own betterment, not to create a toy for the personal aggrandizement of some other administrator. We will not disappear into some amorphous mass; we have a unique place and a unique mission in this area" (President, Osburn College--personal interview, July 11, 1978).

<sup>37</sup> "In general, we are emphasizing central agency services to individuals and to institutions, and giving less time to efforts to effect inter-institutional coordination and cooperation" (MAHE Newsletter: September 1, 1974, p. 1).

specific professional and philosophic atmosphere. Earlier programs had allowed each member of the consortium to build upon its own perceived uniqueness, and the logical consequence had been the strengthening of feelings of separateness.<sup>38</sup> The newer programs developed a greater awareness of "professionalism" at the several occupational levels of actors within the organizational structures of the member institutions.

As the concept of professionalism within career positions developed, the various actors within member schools would relate more closely with their peers across the member network and beyond the specific consortium. The sense of "commonness" that the consortium had originally sought to create would be within career positions rather than between complete institutions; the bonds of interaction would form between and among peers rather than between or among complete organizational units. Institutions do not enter into negotiations with one another--individuals within institutions face one another in negotiations; institutions do not implement and maintain programs of cooperation and coordination--individuals within institutions either provide or withhold the support that allows such programs to prosper. Only when individuals have become accustomed to working with one another,

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<sup>38</sup> An excellent example of the strengthening of "separateness" by the early programs of the consortium may be found in a small member institution that used the seminars, workshops, and other support services to upgrade its own art department. Although the school was within easy driving distance of the Midwest City Art Institute, it had chosen not to initiate programs of exchange for teachers or students with that institution. The thinking of the administration of the smaller school was that, "our school presents a distinct combination of academic and philosophic atmosphere that is the main attraction for most of our students. We owe it to them to maintain our integrity in all our course offerings" (Chief Academic Officer, Pratt College--personal interview, July 13, 1978).

and have developed personal judgments on the capabilities of each of their peers, can serious negotiations be conducted. Lancaster predicted that Stages IV and V in the growth of a consortium would be characterized by such negotiations and the patterns of interaction that derived from them. The newer mission statements of the consortium began laying the foundation upon which serious negotiation could be built.

Such a feeling of peer grouping existed within the Board of Directors, composed of the member presidents. For those men and women a feeling of some camaraderie was exhibited in their interactions during formal meetings and in their comments about one another during personal interviews.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note, however, that the feeling was for peers and not for the consortium.<sup>40</sup> Among the other top administrators of the member institutions there existed an opposite situation. These actors had dealt with the consortium more as a service unit that provided advice or consultation for specific pro-

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<sup>39</sup> Presidents were on first-name bases with one another, engaged in a good deal of light banter, and tended to use informal "old boy" and "old girl" terms when speaking of one another during personal interviews.

<sup>40</sup> An individual formerly active in the consortium, but no longer directly associated with it, made the point that Board of Directors members needed to "develop a personal involvement in the affairs of the group" (personal correspondence). In addition, the membership of the Board of Directors was beginning to break into sub-groups on the basis of common interests. For example, the presidents of the smallest colleges were talking of withdrawing from MAHE and forming a separate unit. "Our problems and our potentials are not recognized in MAHE. Soon we will be able to do these things--seminars, workshops, programs for ourselves" (President, Frontier College--personal interview, July 12, 1978). Several of the member presidents agreed that only the diplomacy of the current MAHE President was preventing any such open splits. "But what happens if [the current MAHE President] leaves? Then you would see the groups form and re-form; then you would see the fun begin" (President, Garfield College--personal interview, July 17, 1978).



blems upon demand. Their relationships were mainly with the central agency offices. But even among this group, the opportunities to meet and become acquainted with peers had begun to show effect. A small minority of the men and women in the administrations of the member institutions spoke of developing ties at their career level, and all of those spoke of the growing impact of such peer awareness, (Supra, p. 63). Among the faculties of the member institutions there was almost no feeling of involvement or relationship with the consortium. Members of the faculties spoke almost universally of the development of relationships with academic discipline peers at other member institutions, and of the impact of such relationships.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, members of the central agency staff had begun to recognize the importance of the new mind set. At the time of this research, considerable thought was being put into the question of another change in program goals and emphasis. Many of the suggestions generated through the staff represented formal recognition of the process that had begun to occur within the consortium.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>"I feel like a college professor again. The chances to interact with my peers is worth all the time the consortium takes" (Faculty Member, Osburn College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

"The whole idea of a discipline peer group is to allow the hybridization of ideas, and to gain some hybrid vigor. MAHE has at least let me get together with my 'own kind of people'" (Faculty Member, Pratt College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

"It's like rejoining the fraternity after having been away for a long time" (Faculty Member, Lee College--mailed questionnaire, August, 1978).

<sup>42</sup>A proposal entitled, Networking--A New Approach to Resource Sharing, listed its purpose as sharing information, skills, and knowledge by the creation "of social linkages supportive of same." The method by which this purpose was to be achieved through "careful develop-

### Questions for Further Research

Lancaster's model for consortium development was based upon his predictions of the development of conflict and the evolution of mechanisms to control that conflict as the nature of the relationship among the members of the consortium became more intimate. Conditions found at the time of this study and perceived trends in the directions of future development suggested a number of additional questions for research into the validity of Lancaster's model.

1. The significant characteristic marking the development into Stage IV of the model should be the evolution of management mechanisms to control the conflict between the central office and the member institutions (Lancaster, 1969, p. 131). This study found evidence to support the contention that conflict was avoided by changing the role of the central agency rather than controlled by creating mechanisms for its management. When it began to appear that efforts of the central agency toward closer cooperation and coordination among the member institutions would engender conflict severe enough to threaten the continuation of the consortium, the mission statements were re-written. Under the new mission, the consortium was expected to work with individuals within campus organizations for the purpose of strengthening them in their specific, discrete, career functions (Supra, pp. 110-111). Study of the consortium at a later date should determine whether this was a temporary phenomenon that preceded the predicted activity, or

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ment of linkages among people in selected areas of knowledge" (Staff Papers: May 1978, pp. 2-3). Other staff proposals did not state the position so frankly, but they did include the concept of peer grouping in a number of ways.

whether it was representative of an alternative direction taken by the consortium.

2. The transition from Stage II to Stage III had not been completed until the first chief executive of the consortium and most of his staff were replaced. A later study could consider the question of whether such a replacement of central actors were necessary as a break in the patterns of interaction that would allow initiation of new negotiations leading to the next higher level of cooperative interaction. Lancaster (1969, p. 135) stated that the consortium's chief executive must remain adaptive and flexible. At question would be whether the member presidents could also adjust their views on the role to be played by the specific individual who served as consortium director, or whether they would insist upon "locking him in" to the positions he may have held at some time earlier in the development of the consortium.

3. When the relationship between the central office and the member institutions served as the focus for conflict, it was natural that the Board of Directors, composed of member institution presidents, should be the body that dealt with the conflict (Supra, pp. 106-108). What is not clear is the level at which the conflict between and among member institutions, which should characterize the next stage of development, would be managed. Additional research on this consortium could consider whether the central agency were designated the neutral agent through which negotiations over questions of specialization could be conducted, or whether the members negotiated through their own administrative structures, outside the central agency.

4. This study supported Lancaster's prediction that the member

schools would first involve themselves with one another in one-shot, or first-generation, cooperative projects, and would only later enter into projects that held the promise of more complex sharing of resources. It would seem reasonable to assume that the relationships within the emerging peer groups would follow a similar pattern. Most of the responses from faculty and second-level administration members of the member schools spoke of peer linkages formed through workshops, one-shot seminars, or other such gatherings sponsored through the consortium. However, at least one peer discipline group had moved beyond such "first generation" interactions, and the potential existed for any other group to grow beyond the consortium, too (Supra, p. 64 and p. 101). Further research would be necessary to document the growth of these groups and the growth of their influence upon the maturation of the consortium.

5. Lancaster predicted the formation of domains, or program specializations, as the mechanism to control inter-institutional conflict. This study found more evidence in support of the dissolution of the consortium into sub-groups on the basis of perceived similarity. Several of the smaller schools, who had felt for some time that the consortium was dominated by the large schools, were talking of establishing a duplicate service unit and withdrawing from MAHE.<sup>43</sup> A later investigation of MAHE should focus upon the distinction between domain consensus according to program strength and domain consensus according

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<sup>43</sup>"MAHE does not understand the smaller schools. We won't need them much longer; when our central offices gear up they'll be able to provide everything we need" (Academic Dean, Lee College--personal interview, June 20, 1978). Less striking, but equally present, were divisions on the basis of religious affiliation and on distance from the central agency.

to institutional size, mission, or academic philosophy. And that study should address the question of whether the consortium could adapt to retain the emerging sub-groups within its overall structure.

6. The formation of peer groups within the network, but outside the organization of any single institution, should produce the tension within the individual institutions that Lancaster (1969, p. 131) predicted for Stage IV of the model. At the time of this study such groups had not developed the cohesiveness to cause concern over any resultant weakening of institutional loyalty. A number of most interesting questions concerning the development of peer groups, their impact upon the individual campus and the consortium as a unit, the responses of individual administrators to such groups and their influence, and the ability of the central agency to adapt to all these concerns and reactions could be addressed in later studies.

7. This study found no significant evidence to support a conclusion that MAHE was near Stage V of the Lancaster model. This question should form the research foundation of another follow-up study of the case consortium.

8. Other viable consortia in higher education should be examined using the Lancaster model as a research framework to determine the validity of the model, or its generalizability, across the consortium movement.

### Conclusions

Lancaster's model tended to deal with discrete and distinct stage characteristics as benchmarks in a linear progression toward maturity.

as he defined it. The results of this study, undertaken to consider verification of the final two stages in that progression, called into question several of the assumptions underlying the theory and the general validity of the model itself.

The assumption of linearity in the growth of a consortium was not supported by the field case. At the time of the study, MAHE had developed out of the characteristics that would delineate a third-stage situation, but it had not attained the profile of a fourth-stage consortium.

The representatives of the member institutions no longer viewed the central agency of the consortium as a primary threat to their autonomies. And, aside from the perennial discontent over the subject of membership dues, none of the members saw the central agency as an important competitor for scarce resources.<sup>44</sup> Administrators at the member schools had begun to recognize, however, that membership in the consortium was exerting significant influence upon individual campus structures and dynamics. Policies and procedures had changed as a result of sharing ideas and solutions to common problems. Students were changing in response to experiences with other settings and with other educators, and outlooks were changing in response to the growing awareness of alternative concepts of the nature of higher education (Supra, p. 54). The problem of conflict between the central agency and the member institutions had been alleviated by conscious action

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<sup>44</sup>The complaints that the central agency was receiving funds formerly available to the member schools through government grants, private donations, or other "in-kind" compensations that had been reported by Lancaster were not found during this study (Lancaster, 1969, p. 84-85).

of the members, acting through the Board of Directors.<sup>45</sup>

But the characteristics predicted by Lancaster for the fourth stage of the model had not yet appeared. Many of the new programs being undertaken through the consortium held the possibility of sharing significant resources among the membership (Supra, p. 96). But those programs had not been implemented for a long enough time to allow conclusions about their actual development, and there was still a strong possibility that they would not prove to be more than another series of "one-shot" programs. Some of the members of the Board of Directors had begun to speak out strongly on the need of the membership to work at building bridges of cooperative interaction and resource inter-dependency (Supra, p. 96). But they were still very much a minority among the members of the Board, and it could not be determined whether their views would prevail over the "traditional thinking" that had guided decisions of the Board for the last nine years (Supra, pp. 110-111). The central agency had been changed from the catalyst for formation of strong inter-dependencies to the supplier of services upon individual request (Supra, pp. 109-114).

It was at this point that the reality of the field case differed most strikingly from the prediction of the model. Lancaster would have the members resolve conflict with the central agency by accepting for themselves the role of catalyst in the formation of strong formal bonds of mutual dependency. The members of MAHE had dealt with the conflict by changing the role of the central agency. The pressures that the central agency had attempted to exert toward development of "conscious complementarity" were eliminated by casting that unit into the position

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<sup>45</sup>The conflict situation had been removed, or at least delayed, by the change in the program priorities (Supra, pp. 109-111).

of helping individuals within member institutions strengthen themselves in their contemporary career situations. But the members were not moving to become catalysts for cooperation themselves; rather they were leaving that function to chance, attended by what could be called, at best, benign neglect (Supra, pp. 57-59).

Lancaster's model did not allow for processes of change between the individual stages in growth. The finding of a situation in the field case in which movement beyond Stage III has led to a period of conceptual turmoil, allowing of a number of developmental futures rather than the linear progression assumed for the model, must be taken as a serious failure to support the model.

Or perhaps it would be possible to avoid total rejection of the model by including a process of change between stages. If that were allowed, it would be incorrect to conclude at this time that the model lacked verification for the fourth stage of its developmental scheme. Judgment would depend upon the most probable consequences of the current consortium activities.

Contemporary consortium programs were intended to strengthen individuals and had approached that goal through a series of seminars, workshops, and personal guidance services. The logical outcome of such activities, supported at least to a small degree by the field data, would be to introduce persons to their discipline or career equals at the other member institutions within the consortium, under the instruction of a discipline or career expert (i.e., a peer from outside the consortium). Peer groups would form across the membership of the consortium and would extend beyond the limited circle of schools comprising any single consortium. Individuals would begin formulating opinions of the abilities of other individuals, would begin formulating primary



identifications with the peer group rather than with the single institution, and would begin formulating philosophies of higher education that incorporated cooperation and sharing of resources rather than competition and mutually exclusive sets.

When such new philosophies formed the conceptual bases of the actors within the organizations of the member institutions, the consortium would see the "recognition of mutual inter-dependencies" as the natural and most logical approach to the problem of survival (Lancaster, 1969, p. 131). Projects involving sharing of significant resources would be initiated because the people involved were accustomed to dealing with one another, and because the people at all levels of the institutional organization were acquainted with their peers and perceived of them as allies rather than as potential competitors or judges. Concomitantly, the development of strong peer groups would weaken the loyalty to any specific institution. Tensions within the organizational structures of the member institutions would develop, as predicted for the fourth stage of Lancaster's model (Lancaster, 1969, p. 131).

Allowing such an addition to the benchmarks of the model, preliminary support existed for the position that the consortium was in the process of transition from Stage III to Stage IV of the model.

First, if it were true that the development of the consortium depended upon the creation of peer groups at every level of the institutional organization, then MAHE had spent the better part of eighteen years working at projects that were at best peripheral to the missions that it had set for itself. This study suggests that any consortium dedicated to the creation of shared resources through formed interdependencies should begin as early as possible to bring together individuals

in peer groups, MAHE had focused upon bringing together institutions, as represented by their chief administrative officers, and had assumed that cooperation could be mandated from the top of the hierarchy. After eighteen years of such an approach, MAHE could do no more than point to a general awareness of its programs among second-level administrators, and to only the beginning of awareness of its programs and potentials among members of the various faculties (Supra, pp. 62-64, and pp. 65-68).

At the time of this study, three of the member schools within MAHE were attempting to determine whether they could keep open their doors. The activities of the cooperative arrangement would be seriously hindered while the consortium again worked through the conflicts over membership benefits versus membership costs, over the mission of the consortium, and over the relative positions of the members and the central agency at the most elementary concept considerations. Such a period of upheaval could provide another indication of the error of viewing consortium development in a linear style. It would provide the psychological opportunity for members to move from a mind set of "what types of programs" to one of "whether membership at all;" this could remove the psychological barriers to withdrawal so often mentioned by members of the Board of Directors (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 105-106; Supra, p. 65). This research found some preliminary movement toward dissolution of the consortium into competing **sub-groups**, and the weakening of the barriers to withdrawal could be just the stimulus needed to move the members from guarded suggestions to overt action on the question of sub-grouping and withdrawal from the consortium (Supra, pp. 113 and 118).

Second, if it were true that the initiation of programs designed

to form linkages among discipline or career peers were only the beginning of the move toward development of complex interactions, then the consortium had yet to face its most severe tensions. As predicted by Lancaster, the characteristic to which the consortium could look during the fourth stage of development would be conflict between member institutions and conflict within member institutions (Lancaster, 1969, p. 131). Conflict between or among member institutions would be nothing new, and the experiences in negotiation that had been gained during earlier stages in development of cooperative programs should provide a sufficient foundation upon which to build new rounds of negotiations. But conflict within each of the member institutions would be something for which the consortium would be almost totally unprepared.

It would seem likely that as peer groups gained strength and exerted more and more influence upon individual faculty or staff members at the member schools, loyalty to a specific institution and its traditional policies and procedures would be weakened. Two potential problems could follow from such a process: (1) the internal organizational structure and authority patterns of each member institution could begin to disintegrate, with concomitant organizational chaos and internal political bitterness, or (2) institutional chief officers could feel enough threat from perceived losses of internal security that they would pull back from any form of interaction with other members of the consortium. MAHE had developed no procedures for dealing with internal negotiations at a member institution. MAHE held no inducements, nor could call upon any sanctions, to impel a member president to participate in negotiations with other members or with the central agency.

MAHE, or any other developing consortium, must evolve mechanisms for resolving conflict within member institutions that result from the impact of consortium activities upon the members. In that lies the greatest danger to the continuation of a consortium, according to the Lancaster model. The question of which member of the central agency staff should be allowed into the "inner family" of the member institution to act as arbitrator, the question of the site at which such negotiations should be held, and the question of which members of the administration, staff, or faculty of the institution should be involved in the negotiations are each potentially lethal points of disagreement. Even the practical questions of how to conduct negotiations on answers to these three questions would require degrees of intimacy between the central agency and the member, and among the members, that MAHE had not begun to approach. Yet a consortium just beginning would be in serious danger of alienating the members if it attempted to move into such areas of concern during its infancy. By the point in its development that the consortium had nurtured enough confidence in its discretion that member institutions might entertain discussions of such issues, the impact upon the member campuses would probably already be great enough to have engendered the tensions that the consortium sought to anticipate and to be prepared to moderate.

This would seem to be a negative consideration in the potential future of consortia dedicated to the creation of significant resources sharing interactions among its membership. MAHE encompasses such a broad range of types of institutions that there would seem to be no common foundation upon which to develop negotiated inter-dependencies (Supra, pp. 64-68). The development of the consortium in a linear

manner would be contrary both to abstract consideration of the most logical consequences of contemporary conditions and to the reality of such contemporary conditions found in the research.

The assumed definition of "maturity" provides another point of question on the validity of the model.<sup>46</sup> Even in the consortium selected by Lancaster for his field case, the development of strict program specializations has not been one of the stated goals. The members of the central agency staff discounted the concept of domain consensus as a measure of the maturity (i.e., the desired future) of the consortium (Supra, pp. 70-71).

On this point it may be unfair to censure Lancaster's model too severely; it would seem that the model is a victim of the change in the concept of "consortium" as it now appears in higher education. The original vague ideas that promised a cooperative venture as a quick way to save money while improving the quality of services and courses has not been supported by reality (Acres, 1971, Burns, 1970; Grupe, 1975, pp. 1-12; Kramer, 1974; Patterson, L., 1971). The future of consortia would seem to be in the area of providing specific services and acting as a central communications link for the membership. If this were accepted as the definition of "maturity" provided by the field reality of consortia in existence, Lancaster's model must be seen as a casualty of the paradigm shift and totally invalid for the contemporary higher education community.

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<sup>46</sup>A mature consortium would be characterized by a strict pattern of specialized program responsibilities, avoiding duplication of services and course offerings, and avoiding conflict and competition in such areas (Lancaster, 1969, pp. 115-116).

It has been the conclusion of this study that Lancaster's model for the development of a consortium contains assumptions that cannot be supported; even granted some relatively major alterations of the model to include the processes of change between predicted stages, the study has found only preliminary and indirect evidence to support the fourth stage of the model. There has been no evidence produced that would reflect upon the final stage of the model. Finally, the evidence gathered about the process of evolution that may accompany the further development of a consortium, beyond the conditions Lancaster would classify as "Stage III," held significant implications for this, or any other, consortium's chances for organizational survival.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE  
SECOND-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MIDWEST  
ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

---

Name of College

- A. Has your attitude toward MAHE changed as you have worked with the consortium?

In what way?

- B. From your point of view, what are the major goals of the consortium?

Short-range goals?

Long-range goals?

- C. In general, do you find that these goals for the consortium are helpful and in line with what you feel your institution should be trying to accomplish?

- D. To what degree has membership in MAHE enabled you to accomplish tasks and take advantage of opportunities that you might not have otherwise?

Would you please give one or two outstanding examples?

- 
- E. On the other hand, has it seemed best not to undertake or to withdraw from some program or proposed program as a result of membership in the consortium?

Would you please give one or two outstanding examples?

- F. With which members of MAHE do you share information and ideas most?

With which members of MAHE do you share the least?

- G. Have you observed any changes or differences in the patterns of activity on your campus as a result of MAHE programs or projects?

- H. Have any of the programs of MAHE made a real impact on your campus?

In what way?

- I. How important do you feel MAHE is to your institution?

Why do you feel as you do?

- 
- J. Do you see any threats to or changes in the independence and autonomy of your institution as the consortium grows or bonds between the members are strengthened?

If yes, what are these threats or changes?

If no, how do you account for the ability to maintain your independence as inter-dependence grows?

- K. Where would you say that the most conflict arises in the consortium?

Between member institutions?

Between members and the consortium office?

- L. In your opinion, what projects, programs, or general directions should the consortium be undertaking?

Would you please give one or two that you consider most important?





APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MIDWEST  
ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Listed below are the names of the members of MAHE. If you were interested in suggestions for faculty development in the discipline of your division or department, which of the possible sources listed would you contact first?
2. Please refer again to the list of MAHE members. If you were interested in strengthening the course offerings in your department or division by a program of student exchanges with a companion department or division at another institution, with which of the possible sources listed below would you first exchange students?
3. From your point of view, has membership in MAHE been beneficial to your own department or division?

MAHE Member Institutions

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Bard College                                | 12. Midwest City University |
| 2. Birch College                               | 13. Miles College           |
| 3. Bishop College                              | 14. Morgan College          |
| 4. Dillard College                             | 15. Osburn College          |
| 5. Frontier College                            | 16. Pine College            |
| 6. Garfield College                            | 17. Pratt College           |
| 7. Jackson College                             | 18. Raleigh College         |
| 8. Jones College                               | 19. Taylor College          |
| 9. Lee College                                 | 20. Webster College         |
| 10. Midwest City Art Institute                 | 21. MAHE Central Office     |
| 11. Midwest City Community<br>College District | 22. Some Other Institution  |

APPENDIX C

COMPARISON OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS  
WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Research Question #1--Has the Consortium Reached Stage IV of Lancaster's Model for the Growth of a Consortium?

- a. Have the primary and sustaining linkages been established between or among the member institutions?

Related Questionnaire Items:

With which members of MAHE do you share information and ideas most?

With which members of MAHE do you share the least?

- b. Have programs resulting from linkages between or among member institutions been centered on campus rather than at the central agency offices?

Related Questionnaire Items:

Have you observed any changes or differences in the patterns of activity on your campus as a result of MAHE programs or projects?

Have any of the programs of MAHE made a real impact on your campus? In what way?

- c. Has the central agency moved from the role of "prime mover" to a role of "support services" provider?

Related Questionnaire Items:

From your point of view, what are the major goals of the consortium?

Short-range goals? Long-range goals?

- d. Have the linkages between the member institutions and the central agency moved from single-project to continuing- or evolving-project interactions?

Related Questionnaire Items:

To what degree has membership in MAHE enabled you to accomplish tasks and take advantage of opportunities that you might not have otherwise? Would you please give one or two outstanding examples?

On the other hand, has it seemed best not to undertake or to withdraw from some program or proposed program as a result of membership in the consortium? Would you please give one or two outstanding examples?

- e. Is there evidence of a feeling of individual involvement in the course of the consortium, though there has been no loss of member autonomy?

Related Questionnaire Items:

Has your attitude toward MAHE changed as you have worked with the consortium? In what way?

Do you see any threats to or changes in the independence and autonomy of your institution as the consortium grows or bonds between the members are strengthened? if YES, what are these threats or changes? If NO, how do you account for the ability to maintain your independence as interdependence grows?

VITA<sup>2</sup>

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