Administrative Bloat in Higher Education
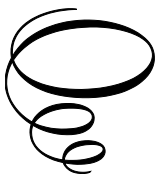
Administrative Bloat in Higher Education

By

J. David Johnson

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To our various dogs, especially Celtic and Bourbon
(who often shared what he thought of my writing in very direct ways)

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PREFACE

I have served in nearly every departmental administrative role (e.g., Director of Undergraduate Studies as the State University of New York and Director of Graduate Studies at Arizona State University) including chair of the Communication Department at Michigan State University (MSU) for five years and was Dean of the College of Communication and Information Studies at the University of Kentucky (UK) for eleven years.

When I was Dean I often resisted the proliferation of associate deans and other administrative roles (e.g., development officers) especially since during most of my tenure our college was under heavy enrollment growth. But various pressures, which I detail later in this work, led to the inevitable growth in our College's bureaucracy.

A note on methods

The author was a participant observer in many of the events described in the following cases. There is an extensive literature in organizational behavior of researchers who were also actors in higher education using their experiences to develop insights into their field (e.g., Eisenberg, Murphy, and Andrews 1998; Cohen and March 1986; Gioia et al. 1994). While this raises some potential problems with objectivity, this is offset with the public nature of the enterprise. The cases rest on documents that are publicly available, most often on the institution's website and the University of Kentucky meetings described were all subject to the Commonwealth's Open meeting laws. Interestingly then Provost Riordan often used the university as an exemplar in many of her articles published in the more popular management press.

What follows is close to an analytically structured history where searches of archival records enables the construction of a narrative surrounding theoretical constructs (Rowlinson, Hassard, and Decker 2014). A mix of methods was used to develop this research. Critical university documents and websites were reviewed related to the specific cases and events described in the chapters. From 1998 to 2009 the author was an active participant in the developments focused on here. From a rhetorical, organizational culture perspective 'living in' the organization is often a very useful method of gathering insider-based data (Shapiro and Schall 1990).

The approach here is a mix of participant observation and autoethnography. After 2009 the author was a more remote observer, serving as a faculty member who for a time was a student advisor who often had to implement the programs detailed here.

Personal experience

I have also had the good fortune to be an active researcher who has focused on organization structures. Most notably I have followed a number of innovations in a large state government agency and in a unique virtual organization, the Cancer Information Services Research Consortium. In my book *Innovation and Knowledge Management: The Cancer Information Service Research Consortium* I detail the efforts to create an innovation factory within the Cancer Information Service. Interestingly, one of the more enlightening insights into personal interests came in a reviewer's response to my work on Technology Transfer Offices–these offices were needed, and even essential; it was everyone else (e.g., diversity offices) who were engaging in bloat. I have also taught a graduate seminar focusing on structuring on several occasions.

Audiences

This book is intended for two primary audiences. First, it could be used by practitioners and policy makers whose everyday work is often focused on these issues. Second, the book is intended for a scholarly audience in that it provides an alternative viewpoint on structuring that could be used as a supplement for many of the courses that focus on innovation processes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AES	Agricultural Extension Services
AHC	Academic Health Centers
APLU	Association of Public and Landgrant Universities
ASTeCC	Advanced Sciences and Technology Commercialization Center
AUTM	Association of University Technology Managers
CEI	Center for Engineering Innovation
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CIS	Cancer Information Service
CI	Communication and Information
CMI	Center for Medical Information
CTS	Clinical and Translational Science
DISC	Dissemination and Implementation Sciences Consortium
EDA	Economic Development Administration
EFS	Entrepreneurial Faculty Scholars
HIB	Historical Incremental Budgeting
ICC	Innovation and Commercialization Center
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
iNET	Innovation Network for Entrepreneurial Thinking
MBO	Management by Objectives
MOOC	Massively Open Online Courses
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NCI	National Cancer Institute
OM	Outreach Manager
OTC	Office of Technology Commercialization
PD	Project Directors
PDQ	Physicians Data Query
RBV	Resource Based View
PPBS	Planning Programming Budgeting System
R & D	Research and Development
RCM	Responsibility Centered Management
RO	Regional Office
RPR	Researcher-Practitioner Relationships
SHB	Structural Hole Brokers
SLIS	School of Library and Information Science

TQM	Total Quality Management
TSM	Telephone Service Manager
TVC	Technology Venture Commercialization
U	University of Utah
UK	University of Kentucky
UK LEADS	UK Leveraging Economic Affordability for Developing Success
USF	University of South Florida
VAC	Von Allmen Center
WGU	Western Governors University
ZBB	Zero Based Budgeting

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Abstract

After defining administrative bloat, this chapter describes the various forces, including environmental factors, structural forces, and agency that have contributed to its development. Institutionalism reflects how universities conform to each other often in the pursuit of prestige from their brethren. Stakeholders often dangle the promise of new revenue streams (or implicitly threaten old ones) to have universities do their bidding. This all leads to a not so virtuous cycle associated with the structural forces of differentiation and integration which beget ever more layers of the bureaucracy to integrate activities and increasingly complicates university politics reflecting the agency of individual actors. The consequences of bloat are many: escalating costs, power shifts, and corruption. One of the direct consequences of bloat is a loss of agile, creative responses to changes in the world around the university. Administrative bloat creates significant internal problems for universities and increasingly it impacts their public image. If the full story of corruption, sweetheart deals, and rewards for bureaucratic parasites was known, the public and students (who increasingly bear the direct costs) support for universities would be liable to further precipitous declines. This chapter provides a foundation which will be applied to much more detailed explorations of case studies that focus on one or another aspect of bloat.

Introduction

> They [universities] constitute one of the largest industries in the nation, but are among the least businesslike and well-managed of all organizations (Keller, 1983, pp. 5).

There is little doubt that American colleges and universities are facing a near perfect storm: declining funding; rising costs; unsustainable fringe benefit costs; pressures to cap tuition increases; possibly disruptive

technological changes; and, most recently, COVID 19. An increasingly skeptical public (and relatedly their political representatives) are turning their attention to the internal operations of universities (Fisher 2019). To meet these challenges Universities often implement new offices and programs which in the end further exacerbate them. One of the constant complaints of faculty and of outside stakeholders is that university administrators continue to grow disproportionately in their numbers in relation to those who actually do the work (e.g., Mussano and Iosue 2014). Bloat has become so pervasive that some decry the growth of the 'all administrative university' (Ginsberg 2011b).

Here I will focus on the administrative bloat that occurs when more managers and associated staff than needed populate a university. Administration includes staff and technical support jobs as well as those who enforce rules and shuffle papers. Of course, with stakeholders demanding reports, some of this is necessary for running any organization. The fundamental question is excess and size relative to the parts of the organization that actually perform its essential functions. The synonyms for bloat are many: exaggerated, hyperbolized, inflated, outsize, overblown, overdrawn, and overweening (Merriam-Webster 2018). Although, as universities have developed, there concomitantly has been a growing expansion and simultaneous dilution of arguments concerning what is essential to their mission. So, what is truly a necessary element for the running of a modern university has become a matter of some debate. I view the essential mission of any university as teaching. If an administrative element of the university supports this mission efficiently, then bloat is not present. However, if it supplants, diminishes, or encumbers this central mission, then one can begin to question if bloat is occurring.

Why bloat?

A variety of reasons have been advanced for the development of administrative bloat ranging from those rooted in organizational theory, economic policy perspectives, university politics, and pragmatic behaviors rooted in personal interests. Figure 1-1 describes the processes that lead to bloat and then details its various consequences. The causes of bloat are numerous and here we organize them by three levels: environment, structure, and agency. This follows classic levels arguments and the notion of bracketing or trying to understand the focal level by appreciating processes immediately above it, and below it (Hackman 2003). For example, several works on tech commercialization offices evoke levels arguments to describe what is needed for successful ones (H. Etzkowitz

2016). So both environmental factors and human agency interact to determine structural manifestations of bloat within universities.
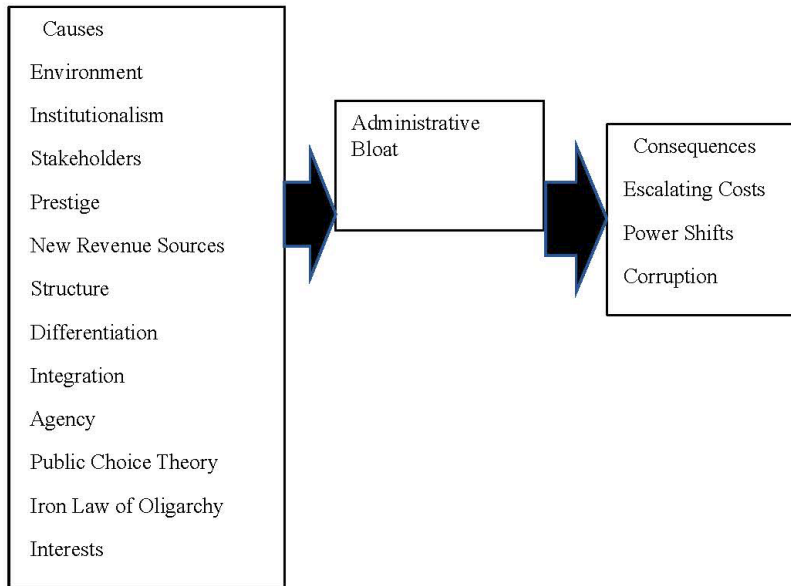
Figure 1-1: Causes and Consequences of Administrative Bloat

Environmental Factors

Several environmental factors–institutionalism, stakeholders, prestige, and new revenue sources–have been implicated in the growth of administrative bloat.

Institutionalism

> Finally, we need a climate in which colleges and universities are less imitative, taking pride in their uniqueness (Boyer 1990, pp. xiii).

> A university anywhere can aim no higher than to be as British as possible for the sake of the undergraduates, as German as possible for the sake of the graduates and the research personnel, as American as possible for the sake of the public at large – and

> as confused as possible for sake of the preservation of the whole
> uneasy balance (C. Kerr 2001, pp. 14).

American colleges and universities have drawn from a number of traditions throughout their history from an early emphasis on religion, to a 19th century emphasis on utility (Rudolph 1962), coupled with the German tradition of research universities (which also in many ways served industry). The founding of A (agriculture) & M (mechanical, mining, military) colleges reflects the emphasis on utility in state institutions (J.R. Thelin 2004). The Morrill Act which established land-grant universities introduced a political element to American universities (Zywicki and Koopman 2017).

The array of strategies that universities pursue is typically rather limited (Schmidt November 10, 2008) in part constrained by these historical developments. More recently there has been a movement to rationalize universities (J.W. Meyer 1986) in part through the diffusion of management fads (e.g., Total Quality Management) which were often championed by the nation's top political leadership (Birnbaum 2000). These fads inevitably contribute to administrative bloat and create offices that linger on even after the fad disappears. In neo-institutional frames the imprinting of contextual, historical milieu on universities can affect their operations for very long periods of time, sometimes centuries (V. Johnson 2007).

Many university critics, such as Peter Drucker, have long foretold their demise, since they are as ill-suited for their changing environment as the dinosaurs were (Rhodes 2001). Even though major changes appear to be on the horizon there is a reluctance to create unique institutional changes. So, university presidents often look to the actions of their more prestigious colleagues for inspiration. This tendency towards emulation, rather than developing unique approaches, substantially dampens true innovation and institutional creativity within American universities. The general conclusions of institutional theory are particularly appropriate for the modern research university and the rise of administrative bloat.

Of course, one of the reasons organizations change is that the world around them does. However, a major organizational change is a risky endeavor involving considerable uncertainty. One way to deal with uncertainty is to look to others to see what has worked for them in similar circumstances. Often this involves considerable emulative pressures related to institutionalism. While often mimetic changes by implication are criticized as being influenced by conformist, often faddish behaviors, it is also possible that they represent population level learning where a whole set of organizations comes to understand that there is a better approach to structuring their activities (Aldrich and Ruef 2006). In this way the mimetic becomes normative forms and practices across particular populations of

organizations are instantiated in manager's macro-culture (Scott 1995). The enthusiasms of Provosts and Presidents in their national meetings trickle down to their institutions. Organizations adopt policies and structures (e.g., new offices that contribute to bloat) to signal their legitimacy (Lammers and Garcia 2014).

Meyer and Rowan's (1977) original theoretical work focused on mythic institutional rules that resulted in particular organizational structures, but more recent developments have extended their work to innovations which are often associated with bloat. When this work has been related to innovations it has usually focused on practice innovations given its roots in institutional rules. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) elaborated on the mechanisms – coercive, mimetic, and normative – through which institutional impacts are diffused through a field. So states are more likely to use coercive isomorphism strategies in periods of funding declines for universities (Covaleski and Dirsmith 1988).

More recently, attention has focused on means-ends decoupling (Bromley and Powell 2012). In Ginsberg's 'all-administrative university' the traditional end goals of teaching and research of the faculty has been supplanted by administrators views of these activities as means to achieve their end goal of enhanced resources for empire building (Ginsberg 2011b). A focus on symbolic attempts to gain legitimacy may make seemingly irrational behaviors, at least in terms of performance and efficiency, rational in terms of pursuit of other valued goals (Brown 1994). These innovations are not likely to be successfully implemented and are adopted for purposes beyond the innovation itself. This results in the paradox of widespread adoption, but less effective implementation, associated with primarily decoupled symbolic appropriation processes. Interestingly, management fads are much more likely to be adopted by public institutions, presumably because of the interference of political stakeholders, than private ones (Birnbaum 2000).

Fads and fashions

Fads and fashions in adoption of innovations were classically articulated by Abrahamson (Abrahamson 1991b; Abrahamson and Rosenkopf 1993). In part, he was trying to explain why both technically efficient and inefficient innovations may be widely adopted. Often, entities outside of an organization have considerable influence on their choices, such as regulatory bodies, consulting firms, and accrediting bodies. In conditions of uncertainty such as those facing the modern university, there are mimetic pressures to adopt innovations, particularly when there is not clear evidence one way or

another about their efficiency. When imitative processes influence the adoption of innovations and organizations have a fair amount of autonomy in choosing innovations we have the conditions for a fad.

Birnbaum (2000) has completed a detailed book length analysis of the adoption of management fads from business to higher education settings drawing from his experience in higher education administration. His book focused on management fads [e.g., Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS), Total Quality Management (TQM), Management by Objectives (MBO), Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB), strategic planning, benchmarking, reengineering] that were adopted in the four decades from 1960 to 2000. By and large, these management fads focused on producing the lowest cost goods desired by customers - in other words, to make higher education more like a business that could be rationally run. They appealed to stakeholders who sought to make higher education more efficient. They played on the relative inexperience and lack of educational preparation of most academic administrators who are drawn from disciplines ranging from creative writing to physics to medicine and then asked to manage large-scale enterprises. Fads to Birnbaum were new management approaches that enjoyed brief popularity and widespread adoption in higher education.

These fads followed a predictable cycle with early enthusiasm that it would handle some 'crises;' then by widespread dissemination; implementation in name only; followed by disillusionment; and then decline. The central ideas of the fads often appeared to be brilliantly original, but at the same time commonsensical. They were so reasonable, so rational that they defied disagreement and objection. Inevitably, failures were attributed to poor leadership, faulty implementation, institutional intransigence and resistance, lack of resources, and lack of true commitment. The least likely response was to question the new technique and its premises. Needless to say, these complex systems distracted the attention of management, involved considerable resources (often contributing to administrative bloat ironically under the guise of promoting efficiency), and eventually lowered morale when all of the effort involved came to naught (Birnbaum 2000). Even more troubling, the vestiges of these fads lingered contributing to differentiation which resulted in ever more integrating mechanisms and bloat.

When one would be asked to complete a sentence involving the fad and its properties, one might say a fad is: a product, a narrative, magic, rhetoric, technology transfer, rejected innovation, an institutionalized innovation, a meme, a political process, a placebo, an alternative to management, and/or a social construction. This long litany of ways of potentially describing a fad points to their appeal. For example, instead of

thinking deeply about what might work in a particular, often deeply political university context, inexperienced academic administrators adopt whole cloth a system that has appeared to work in institutions they seek to emulate (Birnbaum 2000).

The specific mechanisms that lead to the transfer of fads from business to academic settings have not been rigorously researched, although boundary spanners (e.g., board members), professional associations, and popular media and books all play a role (Birnbaum 2000). Consultants may be especially important since their rise in business has been accompanied by increasingly marked faddish cycles in management techniques (Strang, Akhlaghpour, and David 2014). Both consultants and managers reap benefits from being early adopters, so once a fad is well under way their need to be on the cutting edge leads them to the next new thing, producing pronounced boom and bust cycles driven by interests and agency (Strang, Akhlaghpour, and David 2014). Being on the cutting edge of new fads also makes administrators more attractive hires for other institutions in search of 'visionary' leaders (Ginsberg 2011b).

On the other hand, when organizations outside of a particular industry, such as accrediting bodies, determine the nature of innovations there is more of a trend towards fashion which is perpetuated by institutional factors (Abrahamson and Eisenman 2008). Disturbingly under the conditions of fads and fashions organizations will adopt innovations even when they know they will yield negative returns (Abrahamson and Rosenkopf 1993) and they leave legacies embodied in organizational routines and offices (e.g., strategic planning) that may endure long after the fad has passed (Birnbaum 2000).

Stakeholders

Ironically stakeholders increasingly decry bloat (e.g., Archibald and Feldman 2011) even though its development is in part attributable to a natural organizational reaction to outside pressure groups. Unfortunately, in our increasingly divided body politic, a majority of Republicans view colleges and universities as having a negative impact on the country's direction (Cooper and Marx 2018). The growth of accountability demands by stakeholders, which inevitably results in more offices, and thus bureaucracy begets bureaucracy–the more you hire the more supervisors they need (June 2017). Stakeholders should understand the more pressure they apply, the more likely there is to be development of formal positions, which may make the problems they are concerned about even worse since it further drains resources and distracts attention.

This growth is an inevitable organizational response to ever more complex environmental demands. For example, in the United States the federal government has repeatedly increased the size of university administrative staffs by enforcing compliance standards in a number of areas (e.g., research, human subjects, gender equity, financial aid, and so on). So, you have the paradox of the same stakeholders who decry the problem actually exacerbating it.

Universities are in highly fragmented fields that are moderately centralized (e.g., state boards, accrediting bodies) with stakeholders who are likely to impose conflicting institutional demands (Pache and Santos 2010). They often have problematic goals, unclear technologies, and fluid participation of different professions. They are also relatively opaque fields where observers have difficulty: establishing causal relationships between policies and outcomes; identifying the nature of prevailing practice; and measuring results (Wijen 2014). Goals and information are often unclear or ambiguous, cause-effect relationships are poorly understood, and there is cultural diversity (Bolman and Deal 1991). No one really understands the nature of prevailing practices, the causal relationships involved, or how goal accomplishment should be measured in opaque organizations (Wijen 2014).

Often in 'adoption by mandate' situations (e.g., instituting new safety regulations from a government agency which may entail the development of a risk management office), organizations emphasize and inform employers of change required by law. Not only can managers utilize information about stakeholders' perceptions of innovation to facilitate the adoption and implementation of innovations in the interest of meeting specific strategic objectives; the ways in which managers respond to stakeholders' attitudes may influence the organization's ability to generate future innovations which in a continuing spiral lead to future bloat. For example, students and parents want more services than in the past and most universities need to recruit students, especially in an era of declining demographics and a more prosperous economy.

Prestige

> The association of cost with quality creates a perverse incentive
> for colleges and universities to spend as much as they can per
> student (R.E. Martin 2011b, pp. viii).

The coin of the realm for universities is prestige (Schmidt November 10, 2008), if not necessarily money, although in times of budget cuts often money rises to the top as a criteria for consideration. Veblen (1918) recognized long ago that prestige (and the associated need for publicity) was

more central to universities than it was for profit making enterprises. Climbing the ranking ladder and the Harvardization of aspiring universities have often driven forces of emulation (Rhodes 2001).

The more uncertain consumers are about quality (which administrators at universities have always resisted measuring) the higher the costs they will pay (R.E. Martin 2011b). The prestige, status hierarchy of American higher education institutions has inflated costs (Ehrenberg 2002; R.E. Martin 2011b), leading to an insatiable appetite for money and resources, but it also has increased competition among them that has led to more rapid scientific advancements and their elite standing among other institutions in the world that do not have the same competition locally or federally (Graham and Diamond 1997). Of course, the opposite side of the prestige arms race is that it is insatiable (and risky) as long as your competitors stay in the game.

In the presence of uncertain environments and ambiguous goals organizations are more likely to model themselves after those that are perceived to be successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Since the advantages and prospects of an innovation are often unclear, social pressures can result in over adoption which often means that inappropriate innovations, which contribute to bloat, are taken up because they are status conferring (E. M. Rogers 1983). Tuchman (2009), drawing on a report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, described six characteristics of a Wannabe University: translates strong regional presence (e.g., state Flagship) into national recognition; spends 100s of millions on buildings, recruits top faculty, and students; develops slick advertising and branding; publicly states ranking aspirations; argues that it acts as an engine for the state's economy; and nurtures start-up companies in its research park. We will touch on many of these characteristics at greater length in later chapters and most of them are associated with the growth of administrative bloat.

Espeland and Sauder (2007, 2016) conducted a thorough study of the impact of ranking systems on law schools. Over the last couple of decades a variety of measures designed to increase the accountability and transparency of various university programs have been developed by nonacademics. These measures are often used by students in their selection of which universities they should apply to. However, while often these measures are well-intentioned, the very act of measuring programs results in reactivity where people change their behavior in reaction to being evaluated, observed, or measured.

This is a global phenomenon with budgets, hiring, and evaluation of faculty often dependent on ranking systems of one sort or another (Bornmann 2014). Espeland and Sauder's study focused on *US News and*

World Report rankings examining how reactivity in this case resulted in redistribution of resources, redefinition of the work, and the proliferation of gaming strategies often reflected in redefined administrative roles. The rankings became so important they permeated almost every element of an institution's decision-making.

         While administrators are often deeply suspicious of ranking systems, their impact on resource allocation, and prestige, drive them to engage in various gaming strategies to try to manipulate the rankings to their benefit. So they encourage students who have low GPAs and/or low LSATs scores to be admitted to special programs that are not included in the schools normal rankings. They also develop expensive promotional materials to distribute to their colleagues who may participate in the standardized questionnaires that determine the rankings. Needless to say, the money spent on these promotional activities, which inevitably increase bloat, cannot be spent on hiring faculty.

         "The status motivations for adopting innovations have been understudied in past diffusion research" (E. M. Rogers 1995, pp. 214). Often coalitions of organizations develop standards that they impose on other organizations (e.g., accreditation) who wish to join them (Wejnert 2002). In the presence of uncertain environments and ambiguous goals, organizations are more likely to model themselves after organizations that are perceived to be successful (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In adopting public policy, states will sometimes use another state's reputation for innovativeness as a signal they do not have to engage in deeper research or thinking about the long-term consequences of adoption. High salience, low complexity policies are more likely to be widely adopted (Nicholoson-Crotty 2009). Since the advantages and prospects of an innovation are often unclear, social pressures can result in over adoption which often means that inappropriate innovations are taken up because they are status conferring (E. M. Rogers 1983) which, in turn, contributes to bloat.

New Sources of Revenue

Colleges are increasingly desperate for new sources of revenue, and finally, bureaucracy begets bureaucracy (June 2017). This never-ending search for new revenue streams contributes to administrative bloat with the growth of offices such as philanthropy, entrepreneurship, various entertainment options (e.g., sports), and on and on. Administrators have devoted considerable attention in recent years to the related tasks of image building and fundraising which provides them with a revenue stream that is not dependent on faculty which considerably increases their internal freedom of

action (Ginsberg 2011b). Administrators can turn their expanded cash flow and new revenue streams into higher compensation and expansion of their staffs which expands their empires (which in turn justifies higher compensation) (Zywicki and Koopman 2017).

Third party payers, as in health care, contribute to this problem; the people who are paying for the services of higher education are often not the ones who receive the service (R.E. Martin 2011b). This is reflected in the so called Bennett Hypothesis (after the former Secretary of Education) that increases in government financial aid gave universities the freedom to raise prices (Archibald and Feldman 2011). Relatedly, the growth of student loans vastly inflated the cash flowing into universities (Zywicki and Koopman 2017) and by and large made up for declining state support of public institutions (Geiger and Heller 2011). Their ready availability has often been associated with the often unscrupulous practices and steady growth of for profit institutions (Geiger and Heller 2011), until the latter years of the Obama administration when some of their abuses of student loans were curtailed.

Summary

The forces identified in this section have driven administrative bloat. Institutionalism reflects how universities conform to each other often in the pursuit of prestige from their brethren. Stakeholders often dangle the promise of new revenue streams (or implicitly threaten old ones) to have universities do their bidding. Universities have responded to these environmental pressures by increasing the numbers of differentiated offices they have which in turn must be integrated into existing programs and initiatives.

Structure -Differentiation and Integration

Formal approaches to organizational structures almost exclusively focus on authority relationships between defined positions and roles. At relatively low levels of uncertainty an organization can rely on rules and programs, the hierarchy, and goal setting to accomplish the integration needed to address university wide problems. These strategies constitute the traditional formal managerial structure. However, we live in an increasingly complex and uncertain world that often requires the addition of various integrating mechanisms (Galbraith 1995). Exceptional circumstances may arise which require coordination by management to insure that proper levels of relationships are maintained between units to insure completion of projects.

So, the increased number of units required for compliance also increases vertical differentiation with additional management layers added to oversee the operation of these units. Ultimately bureaucracy begets bureaucracy in a not so virtuous spiral.

Universities have become umbrella organizations for professional guilds, splintered into different functional groupings and 'occupational communities' (J.D. Johnson 1993). Loosely coupled, but collegial, they often defy the established canons of management (Rhodes 2001), while at the same time attempting to adopt many managerial practices (Birnbaum 2000). They have taken on the structure of classic multidivisional organizational structures. At the heart of the M-form organization is a separation of strategic and tactical planning (Freeland 1996). The complexity of M-form organizations requires delegation to lower level divisions (e.g., colleges) which then begin to view their activities from their limited horizon and pursue goals that may or may not be in concert with those of the larger organization (Mouzelis 1968). However, upper level management still needs to be informed of the activities of units and the units need to feel some commitment to strategy that develops in part from their having input in its formulation. The extensive use of fiat will result in disorder (Deans undercutting university goals with key stakeholders and faculty) and various forms of passive-aggressive behavior (Freeland 1996). One unfortunate feature of M-form structure is the development of doppelganger units at the divisional level that contributes to the further growth of bloat. So, if the university has an Office of Research, then every college feels compelled, in turn to have an assistant/associate dean for research.

Inevitably increased specialization leads to a need for increased integration which initially takes the form of increased administers. The differentiation of skills required by complex modern organizations like universities makes it increasingly unlikely that differing specialties and their associated professions will have similar views (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967). This entails relatively simple code systems (e.g., numbers such as the first to second year retention metric) will be used to describe targets often specified in performance funding models used to reward compliant universities by state boards and legislators (Carey 2018). As the organization becomes more and more divided into functional subgroups, with universities generally among the most complex organizations, a corresponding pressure arises to integrate diverse groups to achieve overarching goals.

Traditional structures often have difficulty achieving the coordination required by organizations who are confronted with increasing complexity

and uncertainty. Organizations in these circumstances must focus more on communicating by integrating mechanisms (Galbraith 1973, 1974), especially the more personal ones (e.g., liaisons) who ameliorate inherent communication problems (e.g., subordinates spinning failures) of the hierarchy (Lee 1970). Lateral resources are characterized by more personalized integrating mechanisms (e.g., liaisons, task forces, and teams) characteristic of loosely coupled universities (Weick 1976). This strategy employs "joint decision processes which cut across lines of authority …. [It] moves the level of decision making down in the organization to where the information exists …. " (Galbraith 1974, pp. 81). Needless to say the intensive use of personnel is costly and may introduce inefficiencies (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967) such as those associated with bloat.

Organizations are often confronted with a choice between reducing the need for information processing or increasing their processing capacity (Galbraith 1974, 1973; March and Simon 1958). Creation of slack resources and creation of self-contained tasks are tactics that reduce communication, increase ignorance of other's efforts, and require trust that others will act in appropriate ways (Galbraith 1973). The ever burgeoning university bureaucracy has increasingly followed this pattern. In times of crises, like COVID 19, slack would seem to be resource that could be used to confront problems, but university personnel are not terribly fungible. Cross training across very specialized professional jobs is seldom even considered.

Investing in vertical information systems (e.g., big data, analytics) and in creating lateral relations are described by Galbraith as more proactive approaches. Universities in recent years have invested enormous resources in enterprise information systems (Ginsberg 2011b). More modern versions of these systems permit drill down capabilities that allow administrators to track problems such as retention not only in gross terms but also with greater and greater specificity: going down to the individual level to develop early indicators that a student is not progressing in an optimal fashion towards six-year graduation targets, for example. These systems can also generate messages on dashboards and tailored messages for students and their advisors (Carey 2018). Competitive advantages accrue to those organizations that best use these capabilities relating to their strategic objectives (Galbraith 2014b).

In a more recent theoretic work, which has been widely used for pragmatic organization design, Galbraith extended his work on structure to a more wide-ranging Star Model (Galbraith 2014a). This model has five major components-strategy, structure, processes, rewards, and people-that interact with each other to form a more holistic view of organizational design. We have extended the work on strategy by linking it with modern

views of institutional theory. Structure has been examined in terms of traditional formal hierarchical positions. Processes include routines and of information systems. Rewards are a fundamental component of interest and agency and are linked to often perverse incentives as we will see shortly. People represent various administrative specialties that require new skill sets. So advisors depart from their traditional academic focus in the case of retention to become near social workers and sophisticated analytic experts who mine big data to target potential problem students (Galbraith 2014b) with new roles like academic advocates at the University of South Florida (Carey 2018). Because of the enhanced skill sets of these individuals they often demand higher compensation than their less skilled predecessors. As specialization becomes more advanced the possibility of people assuming new jobs in response to crises becomes more and more problematic.

Galbraith (1974) identified managerial linking roles and matrix organizations with even more formal authority (and most importantly budgetary responsibilities) that could still be developed in the area of lateral relations, just as inevitably we can see more drill down capability and sophistication in the near future in vertical information systems associated with 'learning analytics" (Straumsheim 2015). [For example, a recent app allows administrators and parents to automatically track student attendance in classes (Belkin 2015).] The University of Kentucky's new strategic plan clearly rides the wave of big data and the increasing use of 'predictive analytics' as a tool for improving retention by tracking the progress of students for early interventions with a clearly ambitious institutional goal of reaching a 70 per cent six-year graduation rate by 2020 (Blanton 2015). UK was clearly following broader national trends in organizational design with a strategic emphasis on big data and analytics which also entailed complicated lateral relationships involving new job specialties (Galbraith 2014b).

In their classic description of differentiation and integration Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argued that they must match an organization's environment. So, if your organization is in a complex environment it needs a number of specialized units that are tied together by complex integrating mechanisms (e.g., permanent committees). Further, and this is increasingly problematic in today's more top-down, centralized university, conflict resolution must take the form of confrontation rather than smoothing or edicting, so that the best ideas win out promoting survival in increasingly competitive market places. However, there is a fundamental disconnect-faculty advance in their careers through direct confrontation, the clash of ideas; on the other hand, administrators often advance through the slavish adoption of fads and fashions and following orders (Ginsberg 2011b).

As universities respond to stakeholder pressures and government mandates they are becoming ever more complex with many disparate units and goals. At universities with academic health centers there has been a movement to add a fourth leg to the traditional university triad of teaching, research, and service – patient care. Universities are also increasingly becoming cradle to grave institutions with the provision of services such as day care, k-12 education, continuing education, and, finally, housing senior alumni close to campus. The greater the number of programs, the more integration in terms of administrators are needed, the hierarchy grows. This all leads to a not so virtuous cycle associated with differentiation and integration which begets ever more layers of bureaucracy to integrate activities and increasingly complicated university politics reflecting the agency of individual actors.

Agency

The misalignment of incentives leads to extravagant increases in cost per student and a secular decline in quality (R.E. Martin 2011b, pp. viii).

Institutional perspectives have been criticized for being inattentive to power and self-interest, especially in periods of decline such as that characteristic of universities in recent decades (Covaleski and Dirsmith 1988). Unfortunately, innovations are often cynically manipulated by managers to achieve their personal ambitions, in the process wasting organizational resources and draining the energy and commitment of organizational members. Sagacious conformity is often required of university leaders who must understand changing fashions and government programs (J.W. Meyer and Rowan 1977). They follow a logic of interest rather than one of appropriateness (March 1994).

In the recent past administrative posts such as Deans have been filled by academics who fully intended to return to their faculty positions and thus were attuned to the classic research and teaching missions of the universities. In the contemporary university these posts are filled more and more by individuals who were never faculty and certainly do not intend to become faculty, they are pursuing administrative careers. As a result, they are likely to pursue goals which are not linked to traditional university missions (Ginsberg 2011b). These managers who move from institution to institution never have to live with the consequences of their actions which encourages the cynical appropriation of innovations as symbols which inevitably result in programs that increase bloat (J.D. Johnson 2018). Here we will review the major approaches that have been used to explain the role

of agency in increasing bloat: public choice theory, the Iron Law of Oligarchy, and interest.

Public Choice Theory

The dynamic hypothesis on bureaucracy associated with Gordon Tullock and public choice theory argues that the demand for services is a sum of private demand (e.g., stakeholders) and bureaucratic demands and that, further, increases in demand lead to increases in both the number and wages of bureaucrats (Niskanen 1987). Interestingly, in spite of their slavish adoption of nearly every major fad followed by business organizations (Birnbaum 2000) one that universities did not adopt was downsizing and streamlining management to make themselves more efficient and productive (R.E. Martin 2012; Friedman, Hampton, and Friedman 2014). Since functions like finance and human resources are not that much different for universities, and since a major contributor to increased costs is mid- and higher level administrators, one wonders why universities have not been more concerned with right sizing (R.E. Martin 2012). By and large, instead they have pursued a strategy of hiring temporary faculty and purging lower level staff (R.E. Martin 2012) as the strategies of choice for attempting to control costs.

While one would expect the overhead costs of administration would achieve economies of scale as enrollment increased and other revenue generating activities increased, something in effect argued by UK's Top Twenty plan (University of Kentucky December 2005), this has not happened at UK (J.D. Johnson 2018) nor at other institutions (R.E. Martin 2012). This suggests that universities have major agency problems among their top administers who appear to be protecting their own class at the costs of their institutions (R.E. Martin 2012). So, as in public choice theory, the self-interest of bureaucrats, often through their budget maximizing approaches, contributes to bloat (Niskanen 1994).

Iron Law of Oligarchy

Michaels' Iron Law of Oligarchy suggests that the structures of modern large scale organizations inevitably result in anti-democratic impulses by the managerial class (Mouzelis 1968). This class seeks to maintain its power even when its policies may be detrimental to the organization as a whole (Mouzelis 1968). While the original conception of Michaels focused on the evolution of democratic societies from their original commitments to development of a rule by an elite or oligarchy, it still has some applications