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**APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES IN
UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION: A CASE STUDY OF
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

*(Paper Presented at a Workshop on Induction
Programme for Newly Appointed Deans, Heads of Departments/Sections/
Units of the University of Cape Coast, October 11-15, 1999)*

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses certain principles of management which, it is hoped, will guide newly-appointed personnel in management positions in carrying out their duties as leaders.

The functions involved in management including planning, organizing, supervising, directing, controlling, coordinating and budgeting are briefly discussed. Other important aspects which should receive the attention of deans and heads of departments, sections and units are discussed in rather detail. Such aspects include human and public relations, delegation of authority, communication, leadership styles and management of change.

Important aspects of human and public relations such as the need for the head to establish cordial relationships with people within and outside the organization are raised in the paper. The importance of delegation of authority, barriers to effective delegation, and other aspects of delegation are discussed. Issues raised on leadership styles point to the need to regard each style as a sound approach to

management and that the choice of style depends on the situation or problem at hand.

The need to plan for change in view of the technological development of the modern world receives attention.

Introduction

Management is a key aspect in any organization. The success or failure of any organization depends, to a large extent, on the degree of effectiveness of its management. Management takes place in three major spheres, namely, in business organizational setting, in political or semi-political situations and in institutional/educational setting. The title of this paper should have been Principles of Management since many of the principles are touched upon, but I prefer maintaining the topic as it is since the paper raises a lot of issues which are related to the

practical functioning of Deans, Heads of Department, Sections and Units at the University of Cape Coast

Some specially selected aspects of Principles of Management which directly relate to the work of the basic clientele of this paper are treated.

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In the paper, the word "head" has been used in a very generic sense in many cases to refer to the Dean, Head of a Department or Head of a Section or Unit.

Definitions of Management and Principles

The term management has been defined in diverse ways. Everard and Morris (1990) consider the term, in its broadest sense, as

- setting direction, objectives, aims, goals;
- planning how to make progress towards achievement of a goal;
- organizing available resources - men, money, materials and time - so that the achievement of a planned goal can be approached economically;

- controlling the process towards achievement of a planned goal;
- setting organizational standards and making efforts to improve upon them.

They state also that a manager is one who directs the work of others.

In a similar vein Barnard (1938) regards management as the "arts to accomplish concrete ends, effect results, produce situations, that would not come about without the deliberate efforts to secure them" (pp. 290-291). Follett, in Stoner (1978), defines the term in a simple way. She says management is "the art of getting things done through people" (p.7). This tells it all.

We may find it expedient to have a look at the meaning of principles. Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) states that "a principle is a generally accepted truth which is based on experience and the available information" (p.8).

Functions of Management

Management is carried out by managers who are heads or leaders in a broad sense. Heads of Departments and Deans of Faculties therefore carry out their functions in the same or at least similar way as managers of

public and private businesses and corporations do. They could therefore be referred to as managers. In performing their management role, managers carry out a number of functions which we need, at this juncture, to analyse in order to be abreast with some of the functions which Deans and Heads have to carry out. These functions include planning, organising, supervising, directing, controlling, co-ordinating and budgeting.

Planning. It is necessary for Deans and Heads, as managers, to plan for the development of their faculties and departments and to achieve efficiency. Planning, in this sense, involves setting goals or objectives for future development, prioritising these goals since they may be many and cannot all be achieved, mobilizing and allocating resources that will work towards achievement of the goals or objectives. They then have to identify strategies to be adopted to achieve the goals or objectives. The goal is to be achieved within a specified time-frame. Planning enhances achievement of efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency, in our sense, refers to using a given input to achieve maximum output within time. Akangbou(1987) defines educational efficiency as "the relationship between the outputs of the education system and the inputs used in producing such outputs" (p.90). In

the words of Owolabi (1998), "efficiency is the optimal relation between inputs and outputs. An activity is being performed efficiently if a given quantity of outputs is obtained with minimum inputs or if a given quantity of inputs is able to yield maximum outputs" (p.40). Effectiveness refers to achieving the required standard in performance. It is oriented to achievement of quality and sound objectives, that is, objectives desired to be achieved. Heads of educational institutions generally or heads of departments, as managers, should consider planning a serious function for the development of their institutions or a segment of an institution.

Organising. To organise has as its root the word **organ** which is a part of a system. It is the combined functioning of the various organs of the system that makes the system work effectively. To organise is to put together the various organs or parts, that is, resources to enable the system function. O'donnell and Weihrich (1980) observe that "the term implies a formalized intentional structure of roles or positions" (p.330). The Head of a Department or the Dean of a Faculty is said to organise his department or faculty effectively when he mobilizes and puts together the resources - lecturers, the non-teaching staff, students, funds and materials - at his disposal and

makes sure they are utilized to their full potential within a specified time-frame.

Supervising. Effective supervision is a key factor in goal achievement. To supervise is to rigorously find out that parts of a system are working according to plan. It is to ensure that every resource - man, money, material and time - is utilized to the benefit of the department. The head has to take note of and instil into his staff, the efficient use of money, materials and time. Funds must be utilized to achieve the highest possible returns. Staff time, particularly the time of the junior staff, must be monitored and effectively used. To ensure a more effective supervision, the **span of control**, that is, the optimum number of subordinates who have to respond to one superordinate, should be within a reasonable range. Some writers suggest the optimum number to be between five and eight. In academia, the span could be, in some cases, a little higher than eight without jeopardising effective supervision. This is because very close supervision of academic staff members is not always necessary. In a university setting where every lecturer is a specialist and the academic staff members are so disciplined that they are expected to work effectively at their own rate, it is hardly necessary for the head to strictly monitor the use of time and assiduous performance of such staff members. However,

occasional checking of how each lecturer is performing is expected of a serious head.

Directing. The head, as manager, has to direct the affairs of his organization. He has to initiate action and show the way activities should be carried out. The directing or controlling process, Stoner (1978) points out, "involves three elements: establishing standards of performance, measuring current performance and comparing it against the established standards, and taking action to correct any performance that does not meet those standards" (p.19). The head's directing activities are greatly brought to bear on his staff mostly at meetings. During a meeting, the head outlines or directs how he wants activities to be carried out. At other times, instead of calling meetings he may send out memos or other forms of information around staff members, directing, that is, indicating how he expects certain functions to be carried out.

Co-ordinating. The head has to co-ordinate the activities of his unit/section/department. That is, he has to see to the working togetherness of all the parts of the system. People have to carry out their functions when they are expected to do so. For instance, when a lecturer has to start a lecture at 7.30 a.m. and the officer who has to open the door has not done so, some function of the department

cannot proceed as planned. The lecture, in this sense, could be unduly delayed. The problem with co-ordination of activities in the university setting is that sometimes the human capital component of resources may be available but the required physical resources - particularly students' textbooks and some required equipment - may be found wanting. Given adequate resources Heads and Deans should endeavour to steer affairs towards effective functioning of their departments and faculties.

Monitoring and evaluation. These are closely linked terms of which heads should never lose sight. The head has to constantly monitor and evaluate the activities of his department. Monitoring involves following the functioning of the system so as to determine whether there are no deviations; to find out whether parts of the system are working as planned, that is, whether the achievement of departmental goal is on course and not a departure from what is expected. Evaluation involves examination of results likely to be achieved if the programme of activities of the department is followed as planned. In other words, if the programme is found as being followed but evaluation reveals that expected results are not likely to be achieved, it becomes necessary for the head to make adjustments in the planned programme towards achieving the required results. Both

monitoring and evaluation ensure successful achievement of the goals the department pursues. Monitoring reinforces effective supervision of the activities of the department.

Budgeting. The Head of Department has to prepare and submit annually to his Dean budget estimates covering the activities of the department. Budgeting entails identifying the work programme of the department for the ensuing year, setting out priorities, summarising the priorities and converting these activities, where applicable, into monetary terms. Budgeting covers the **personal emoluments** of the personnel of the department, including the salaries and allowances of the staff - both senior and junior - and costs in connection with the travelling programme of the members. It covers, in addition, the **administrative activities** of the department, such as costs of utilities, postal charges, office cleaning, office consumables, printing and publication and maintenance. These are activities required to equip, maintain and run the department to enable it perform its services. Thirdly budgeting covers such **service activities** as teaching, training and conferences costs, consultancies, materials and consumables, stationery, refreshments and entailments, and travelling and transport costs in respect of these service activities. Fourthly, budgeting covers **investment activities**, such as costs to be incurred in connection

with purchase of vehicles, library books, equipment, furniture and such other items that the department may require for its effective operation.

The budget estimates from the different academic departments have to be submitted to the Dean who collates and summarises these estimates for their onward submission to the Finance Officer of the University. The submission of budget estimates from the other units/sections follows a similar pattern. It would be really helpful if Heads of Departments/Units/Sections could prepare and submit their annual budget estimates to the University's Finance Officer, through their appropriate Heads/Deans to enable the University determine, fairly closely, its total annual financial requirements and submit same for funding. A lot of departmental demands for supplies, equipment, etc. which are often not met may be due, in part, to our inability to prepare annual budget estimates for those items.

Other important aspects that should receive the head's attention include the following:

Human and public relation.

Heads of departments cannot single-handedly work to achieve the goals of their departments. The well known adage states "one tree cannot

be a forest." Heads need the co-operative efforts of the other members of the departments, both senior and junior. Efforts should be made to obtain the fullest potential of all staff members. They should be given the necessary motivation by the head. To achieve this, it is urgently important to know the behaviour, including the likes and dislikes, of each member of staff so as to enable the head to satisfy, as much as possible, the needs of his staff members. This aspect is important because the human factor could cause problems and failures to the department but it could also result in achievement of success in the department, depending on how carefully the head handles the people with whom he works.

The achievement of the goals of the department depends not only on the availability of financial and physical resources in the department but, perhaps more importantly, on the extent to which sound interpersonal relationships are firmly established in the department. These relationships include:

- the relations between the head and the senior members, senior staff and the junior staff of the department;
- the relations between the head and his dean;

- the relations established among the staff members through the initiative, motivating and persuasive direction of the head;
- the relations between the head and other heads and deans of the university;
- the relations between the head and the students of the department and
- the relations between the head and people outside the university employ who, in one way or another, may have some interactions with the head.

The head has to realize that what he does undoubtedly affects positively, or negatively, the behaviour and performance of those with whom he is working. In like manner, what others do could affect the head's performance. He therefore has to adopt strategies that will help motivate the people he works with so as to enable the department achieve success. He also has to behave in acceptable manners to people outside the university to bring good name to the department and the university at large.

The Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) suggests three stages through which sound interpersonal relationships could be established. The head of department could adopt this procedure to help him establish

sound interpersonal relations between him and others. These stages include:

The exploratory phase. This is the stage which involves the head's effort to find out clues and information which will help him to form opinions and impressions about the people with whom he works. This will help him to determine the likes and dislikes of his staff members

The consolidation phase. This phase states that the head should not have to depend on one or two impressions about people and draw conclusions on their behaviour. He will rather have to make observations of repeated behaviour patterns of people to enable him come to know them well and be able to determine "levels of frankness, openness, truthfulness, reliability, credibility and integrity of a person" (p.33).

The preservation phase. This is "the stage of mutual understanding based on trust and acceptance of each other's good and bad points, weaknesses and strengths" (p.33). At this stage the head has sufficiently studied the behaviour of his staff members, has known what they like and dislike, and so tries to do what will motivate them to contribute their maximum output to the growth and development of the department. In

this manner, it is not only the head who will be nice to his staff members, but they, in turn, will also be nice to him, the end result of which is establishment of sound inter-personal relationships which gives a good tone to the department.

Being nice to others does not mean the head should be loose and allow people to do whatever they like, be it detrimental or not to the department. The head does not only have to be fair but also firm in directing activities towards the achievement of departmental goals.

One would agree with Drucker (1970) when he states :

Warm feelings and pleasant words are meaningless, are indeed a false front for wretched attitudes if there is no achievement in what is, after all, a work-focused and task-focused relationship. On the other hand, an occasional rough word will not disturb a relationship that produces results and accomplishments for all concerned (pp. 65 - 66).

Delegation of Authority

As the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) puts it, "Delegation is a process by which managers, such as school heads, transfer part of their authority to subordinates, for the performance of certain tasks and

responsibilities" (p.39). Delegation of authority could be primary or secondary.

Primary delegation. I consider as primary delegation a situation where the head has to perform some task or function himself but which, for a number of reasons, he cannot perform. He will have, in such a situation, to delegate his authority to his subordinate to undertake the performance of the task on his behalf. For example, the head may have to attend a meeting of Heads of Departments, convened by the Dean. The head, at the same time, is scheduled to meet with the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cape Coast Guest House, Tesano, Accra, for a discussion on some important departmental issues. The head, in such a situation, may have to honour personally his meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and ask a member of staff, usually the next most senior member, to attend the meeting of Heads of Departments. In another situation, the head may be invited by the Planning Committee to give a briefing on the activities of the department for the ensuing year. The head, at the time for the talk, may be extremely busy, trying to complete for immediate submission the budget estimates of the department. The head may, in such a situation, delegate his authority to a staff member to give the briefing on his behalf. These are examples of real

- delegate his authority to another member of staff who is officially not a signatory to the accounts of the department to sign any financial document, including vouchers and cheques.
- In matters relating to direct communication of departmental policy issues with the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Minister of Education and other such high level officers, the head should not delegate his authority to his subordinates.
- Authority can be delegated but not responsibility. No officer can delegate his responsibility. This means that if the head asks a subordinate to perform a function on his behalf the head still bears the primary responsibility or irresponsibility. Should any query arise out of the performance of the function it is the head who would be held responsible, at least in the first instance, even if it becomes necessary for the delegatee to explain certain issues.

Barriers to effective delegation. It is necessary to discuss certain issues which could act as barriers to effective delegation of authority. That is, for a number of reasons or in a number of situations, the head may feel reluctant to delegate his

authority to his subordinates, particularly in what has been termed in this paper as primary delegation. Such situations include the following:

- Where the head is doubtful of the competence of the delegatee. The head has to be certain the subordinate is capable of performing the task in question before the head considers him as an effective delegatee.
- Where the head feels it will take too long a time to brief the subordinate on the task the subordinate is to perform.
- Where the head will not like to reveal certain administrative secrets to the delegatee, that is, where the head has something to hide. This is not a positive approach, anyway.
- Where the head is not prepared to take any risks since he may fear the subordinate may let him down, not on grounds of incompetence but on those of lack of faith in the subordinate's credibility.
- In a situation where the subordinate may perform the task very well, probably much better than the head would have performed. In such a situation, the head may feel his security

might be threatened to make his subordinate undertake the assignment. Many heads refuse to delegate their authority for such a reason but this approach is not a healthy behaviour.

Communication

One important means of creating and maintaining effective working relationship in a department, unit or section of a university is through adoption of appropriate means of communication. Stoner (1978) states that, "managers do not manage in isolation; they can carry out their management functions only by interacting with and communicating with others" (p.466). He defines communication as "the process by which people attempt to share meaning via the transmission of symbolic messages" (p.467). Savage talks of communication as "an exceedingly complex process in which people, behaviour, and objects transmit information, ideas, and attitudes" (in Riches and Morgan (eds.), 1989, p.104). There are many types of communication, the most commonly used in an office being through speech, the written word and body language, also termed as non-verbal form of communication. The head of a department, unit or section or the dean has to adopt the type of communication which may be appropriate for a particular occasion.

The flow of information in the department through appropriate means of communication is such an important aspect that heads have to fully encourage it. It helps members of the department, unit or section to know what is going on in the department, unit or section; what plans the head has for his staff members regarding the development of important aspects or changes in the University to which the head has had access. Such information may reach the head through his attendance at university-based meetings like the Academic Board Meeting. The head could circulate information to staff members through many means, such as :

- Writing memos on an issue to staff members
- Circulating minutes to members to whom the minutes have relevance
- Photo-copying short pieces of information, which the head may receive, to his staff members
- Calling an emergency meeting for the information or discussion of an important issue demanding immediate attention
- Disseminating information received to members of staff

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individually or in groups as they make their appearance to the department; that is, where formal meeting may not be necessary or convenient.

Communication should not be a one-way traffic affair where only the head sends information to members of staff. The head should encourage the flow of information from staff members to him and across the department, from one member to another. It is necessary to point out that the head should encourage the flow of healthy information, the type of information that will help build and develop the department. Pieces of information couched in deformatory reports on members of staff should not be encouraged to be disseminated in the department. Dissemination of such pieces of information is likely to result in creating rancor, hatred, misunderstanding and bitter feeling among staff members which could bring about disunity in the department and retard progress and development.

Leadership Styles

Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments/Units/Sections as leaders, do adopt different leadership styles. Leadership styles concern the way and manner the Head or Dean takes decisions or issues out instructions to his staff members. There are many styles of leadership

but they tend to be summarised into three basic types which are autocratic style, democratic style and laissez-faire style. All three of them are necessary styles to be adopted by a leader but the adoption of one style or another depends on the situation, occasion or the level of officers/workers with whom the head works.

Autocratic style of leadership. This is the type where the head does not have to consult other members of staff before he takes a decision. That is, the situation may be such that it is not really necessary to obtain the views of other members on the issue before the head arrives at a decision or takes an action. For example, suppose the Vice-Chancellor writes to Heads of Departments to submit the names, educational qualifications, ranks and salary levels of all the members of each department, the head of a particular department does not have to call a meeting to take any decision on the issue, neither does he have to consult members for these particulars. He can readily submit the information required by resorting to appropriate files. In a similar situation, if the head detects certain weakness in the performance of the junior staff of his department and designs an in-service training programme for them, he may develop the programme without consulting the junior staff with regard to the content of the training programme. In such a situation, the

head is much better able to determine the needs assessment of the junior staff than the junior staff themselves. This type of leadership is so called because since the head takes an action or decision without consulting other members, it gives the connotation of the leader being autocratic. However, when appropriately used, its adoption is just legitimate. On the other hand, when it is necessary for the head to consult other members on an issue but he fails to do so and takes a unilateral action on the issue and only informs his member, the head is not adopting this style of leadership appropriately. He is then being a real autocrat and his action, if it becomes a normal behaviour, may not be accepted in an academic department.

It must be pointed out that some heads, particularly some managers of private enterprises, could be as ruthless in their leadership positions as may deserve their being called authoritarian leaders. In some cases, the enterprise may be owned by the manager - a sole-proprietor type of business organization - and the manager may resort to issuing directions and commands to his subordinates without necessarily consulting them. It is about such heads or leaders that Adesina (1990) writes "The main characteristics of the authoritarian leader are ruthlessness, selfishness,

wickedness, agreed, love of power, and desire to be flattered" (p.149).

Democratic style of leadership. This is adopted in a situation where the head necessarily has to obtain the opinions of his staff members before he takes a decision. In such a situation, taking a decision or implementing an action is not an issue which the head on his own can readily accomplish. The issue has to be discussed, probably at a meeting, formal or informal, and the head will require the advice, suggestions and contributions of his staff members on the issue. For example, suppose the University Hospital Administration writes to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), through the Vice-Chancellor or the Registrar, requesting the Institute to organize a six-week workshop on some aspects of Management for the senior Nursing Sisters of the University Hospital. In a situation like this, it would be wrong for the head to submit an immediate response to the Hospital Administration through the Vice-Chancellor or the Registrar, informing them that the Institute would be able to undertake the assignment. This is an issue that requires the co-operative decision of the senior members of the Institute. A formal or an informal meeting would have to be organized for a discussion on the issue and

consensus decision arrived at on the issue before the head would write to the Vice-Chancellor or the Registrar, informing him of the willingness of the Institute to undertake the assignment, assuming the consensus decision was a positive one.

In situations like the one described above, the right approach to decision-making should, in academic departments, necessarily be consultative. Should the head take a unilateral decision on an issue that requires the co-operative decision of members of the department, the head would hardly obtain the co-operation of his staff members.

The characteristic approach to taking a decision on an aspect that requires the consultative views of staff members gives the name democratic to such a style of leadership. It does not mean the head will have to consult his staff members on every issue. In situations like the examples raised under autocratic style, the democratic leader would proceed to taking a decision or implementing an action without necessarily consulting his staff members. The analysis makes it clear that the same academic head could be acting as an authoritarian or authoritarian leader at one time and a democratic leader at another time, depending on the nature of the issue he has to handle. It would be a misconception to regard a democratic leader in academia as one who

constantly shifts "the responsibilities of leadership from himself to the group", or one who is "the disappearing leader who depends on the group for initiatives and solutions" (Adesina, 1990, p.150). If he were so, he would not be the right calibre for leadership in academia.

Laissez-faire style of leadership. This is the situation where the Head of Department/Unit/Section allows members, particularly the senior members, a great amount of latitude to pursue their lines of interest or carry on their normal duties without much direction or interference from the head. This is so because the head has confidence in the members and trusts they will carry out their duties satisfactorily without much direction or supervision.

In the University environment, for instance, academic heads exercise the least amount of supervision over their academic staff members. The members are specialists in their domains, competent in the performance of their duties and are assumed to be disciplined. The heads do little or nothing by way of directing or supervising what the members should do. For these reasons, *laissez faire* style of leadership is most appropriate in the University setting, while it is also adopted to a limited extent by heads of other levels of educational institutions, for example, in polytechnic institutions, secondary schools and teacher training colleges.

Here also, the style takes its name from the sort of *laissez-faire* nature that characterises the supervision and direction of the head over his academic staff members.

Adopting *laissez-faire* style does not mean the head should allow staff members to pursue their own line of action even when they are doing what is definitely wrong. The head should not allow things to go on rocks. The Head of a Department or the Dean of a Faculty would not be an effective leader should he be contented with the situation where "things should be left to sort themselves out" (Adesina, 1990, p.150). If by allowing members of staff to pursue their own lines of action will not enable the department or faculty to achieve the planned goal; the head would come out to direct affairs to make sure the department or faculty is working towards achievement of expected results. The *laissez-faire* leader would be demonstrating the democratic or autocratic style as well when the situation demands his behaving so. In academic environment, we should not conceive the idea that "the *laissez-faire* leader prefers no action to ensure peace to any action at all" (Adesina, 1990, p.150).

Each of the three leadership styles is sound and its adoption should be positively pursued. The *laissez-faire* approach should not be conceived as a weak leadership style where the

head does not care about what happens to the organization. On the contrary, it is a style that could be adopted to achieve a high degree of merit. The selection of one style or another depends on the organizational environment and the nature of the issue at stake.

Management of Change

In our world of rapid change, brought about by technological development, there is always the need to anticipate change and plan for it. Change can be described as transfer from old to new or transformation of old form to new form or displacement from one place to another or substitution of one item with another (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993, p.56).

Since old attitudes die hard, change is not easy to come by. It must be planned and it needs patience and perseverance, tact and the eagerness to forge ahead. It also requires the co-operative efforts of all and sundry.

Without change, there could be no development. Heads therefore have to plan ahead and put one step forward each day towards that sort of change that will bring about innovation and development. If we continue to remain in a status quo, we may be overtaken by events, by the strong wind of change that is blowing all over the world. As Drucker (1970) points out "the most

common cause of executive failure is inability or unwillingness to change with the demands of a new position" (p.59). Heads need to plan for effective change in their administrative and academic programmes.

Conclusion

The topic *Principles of Management* is a broad one and only a few aspects of it could be raised in a paper of this nature. The issues treated in the paper are some of those issues which have direct relationship with the functioning of Deans, Heads of Departments and other Heads in a University setting. These issues are, however, generic in nature and could probably satisfy the management needs of heads in other organizations.

In carrying out his management duties, the head has to bear in mind that of all the resources at his disposal, the human resource occupies a central position in all affairs. It is the human capital which is the active resource in all deliberations towards achievement of organizational goals. As Harbison (1973) points out, it is human beings, who manipulate physical resources and form them into finished goods, build organizations, be they social, economic or political, and who plan and implement development programmes in organizations (p.3).

The head has to make sure he motivates the people with whom he works and accords them the reward they deserve. This is particularly important in a University setting where headship rotates among the more senior members of the departments. The head, sooner or later, may become like any other member of the department rather than head, and would like to be treated with a high degree of cordiality. However, the head must not overlook any weaknesses or lapses which he may observe among some members of the department, specialists and competent as they might be. The issues raised in the paper are meant to guide the head to exercise firm and effective management while relating cordially to the human factor in his organization.

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