Section II: Promoting Adaptability in Higher Education

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The current decade has been a period of reduced resources, tight competition for students, uneven demand for faculty from various specialties, and a more stable and mature professoriate. Colleges and universities are searching for models and programs to enable them to turn threatening conditions into opportunities for change and progress. The resistance to change is sometimes strong, and new perspectives and ideas can be helpful in breaking the log jam of resistance. The four papers in this section present perspectives that can be valuable in promoting individual and organizational vigor. Each perspective has roots in human development or organizational development disciplines; each proposes attitudes and knowledge common to many faculty development efforts; and each offers the possibility of making a difference to individuals and groups.

Claude Mathis explores the meaning of the human resource development concept as a basis for understanding the need for faculty development. Differences in the human resource development model as it is applied in education versus business and industry are described. Focal agenda for faculty development are suggested, and these are interpreted as enabling institutions to alter the threats of the 1980's into opportunities for beneficial change.

Lynn Mortensen begins by reviewing the literature on the views faculty hold about their careers. She then reports the results of a study of the congruences between the faculty member's career stage and the
needs he/she expressed for using an instructional consultant. Some patterns emerged, and Mortensen draws some promising implications based on her work. For example, she suggests that, "Faculty at all stages have needs related to teaching, but these may not be the primary focus of their attention until later stages in their career."

Ron Smith argues that we are often unable to produce the consequences we intend because our perspective or theory about how to accomplish this is inconsistent with how we actually behave. Using Argyris' theory of action model, Smith describes a type of workshop he has offered to help faculty and faculty development specialists broaden their perspectives on solving problems. He explains how Argyris' theory and the workshop provide a basis for change in a person's perspective and suggests how this benefits an organization.

Lastly, Susanne and David Whitcomb suggest that a broader view of humane concerns is needed within many organizations and appropriate for colleges and universities. Using the case of woman's issues, they argue that narrowly conceived human issues may lead to polarization and adversarial postures. In the process the human needs are not met, and the organization performs below its potential. Supported by evidence from other studies, they present a provocative view that more similarities exist among professional men and women than is commonly thought to have been the case. They propose that the academy capitalize on similarities and move toward a collaboration between men and women rather than a confrontation; the collaboration would find its strength in human needs, not in single group needs. They close by suggesting strategies that can be helpful in achieving an effective professional collaboration among the genders.

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