The Future of the Professional and Organizational Movement in Education

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Colleagues and Friends:

Today I would like to share with you my thoughts about the future of the professional and organizational development movement in education. There is a good bit of humility involved in my doing this because some of you veterans in the area have served as role models for me in this field. Another concern is that those of you who are relative newcomers to this work may not be ready to deal with all this future speculation. The opinions are my own and are based on what I've read, on programs I've observed and heard about, and on the experiences of one who has very high aspirations but who has made most of the mistakes at least once.

Procedurally, I will describe the situation and the terminology that exists today. Then I will share some observations and predictions about the professional and organizational movement in general and about POD, and finally I will try to identify the national trend including a look at the Bionic faculty development leader.

The Situation and The Terminology Today

I'd like to begin my remarks today by looking at the profession in which all of us work. According to our name, we are a network of professional and organizational development workers. Most of the published literature, however, calls us faculty development workers. Center names around the country range a broad spectrum of titles -- some of which denote actual differences in philosophy and practice, and others which frankly were chosen to avoid what someone considered to be a negative or sensitive area on their own campus. As part of my preparation for SREB's book, Faculty Development Centers in Southern Universities, I did a survey on the names of centers like we work in and found that the three most commonly used titles are: Educational Development, Faculty Development, and Instructional Development in that order. The most frequently occurring single word in the title is development -- used in 24 percent of the titles, followed by education(al) - used in 12 percent, instruction(al) - used in 11 percent, and then resource(s), faculty, learning, and teaching in that order. Whatever is implied by the term and however unpleasant it may be to some, most centers perceived themselves to be involved in some sort of development, as the word development is used twice as often as any other titular word designation.

If you can go by center names, we are more likely to see ourselves in the business of improving instruction than of facilitating learning. Most centers or programs, however, opt to avoid the teaching or instruction versus learning issue entirely and simply refer to the overall issue as educational. More see themselves as providers of resources than services and only about 3 percent describe themselves as researchers. Whereas over 7 percent claim to serve faculty, only about 2 percent use the term staff.

My own term for the work we do is "faculty development", but when I use this term, I use it as an umbrella term and I do not mean to imply that any of us in this business of professional and organizational and instructional and personal growth should be excluded. As a matter of fact, I define faculty development as an attitude, a belief, a commitment -- not a position or a given set of activities. This commitment to assistance in the growth and development of our institutions and to all those who people them could then be propagated and/or implemented by and through a variety of internal or external titles or roles. Today we talk a lot about terms, about what we call ourselves or what others call us, but in the long run terminology may not matter that much. The terminology for what we do is still evolving, and in the process I believe we should take care not to exclude anyone's efforts who is working toward the same goals. Just as an aside, I wonder how many of us at one time or another has resented the fact that the term development has also been assigned to money raisers on our campuses.

Well, if the terminology is not clear, the situation we work in is more so. We may not always like the situation, but we seem to have less difficulty in knowing what that situation is. Of all the books and articles on faculty development to come across my desk this past year, the one by John Centra of the Educational Testing Service has been the most revealing. His 1976 book is called Faculty Development Practices in U.S. Colleges and Universities and for those of you who have not read it yet, I recommend it highly.

A letter was sent to the president of every college and university in the United States asking whether the institution had an organized program for faculty development and improving instruction. Sixty percent said they had programs.

Assuming that nonresponding institutions would less likely have programs, Centra estimates that perhaps half or slightly more than half of the postsecondary institutions in the United States currently provide some sort of program or set of development activities for faculty.

Each institution with a program was sent a questionnaire, and 72 percent of that group responded. The final sample included 93 doctoral granting universities, 315 four-year colleges, and 326 two-year colleges. Centra's report discusses the use and effectiveness of various development practices, the funding and organization of activities, and the types of development programs reported, but his discussion of which professors need the most help as opposed to which teachers are getting the most help from us really struck home with me.

Six broad descriptions of faculty members were listed in the questionnaire: younger faculty in their first years of teaching, faculty with over 15 or 20 years of teaching experience, nontenured faculty, tenured faculty, good teachers who want to get better, and faculty who really need to improve. The groups are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

Among the six types of faculty, Centra found that the most active participants were "good teachers who wanted to get better". Younger faculty in their first years of teaching were moderately involved in activities and older faculty -- those with over 15 or 20 years of teaching experience -- were only slightly active.
Since participation in most development activities is voluntary, these facts may not be especially surprising, but it is surprising that on many campuses teachers needing the most improvement were minimally involved. Seventy-eight percent of the colleges and universities indicated that a minority of the faculty really needing improvement were involved in development programs.

Now, couple these findings with this one: Centra in a previous study used student ratings of the teaching effectiveness of a sample of almost 9,000 teachers from approximately 100 colleges in the United States and found that teachers in their first or second year of teaching received the lowest ratings. Teachers with three to 12 years of experience received the highest ratings, while those with more than 12 years dropped slightly in average student ratings of effectiveness.

These findings suggest that beginning teachers in particular and, to some extent, teachers in their middle or later years (that is, with over 12 years of experience) are groups that could particularly profit from teaching improvement activities. And yet these groups, -- the beginning teachers, the veteran teachers, and the teachers who most need to improve are the least likely to come for assistance.

Observations and Predictions

With today's situation in mind, I would now like to list some general observations and suggestions which will then lead to my predictions for the future of the faculty development movement and of POD.

I have five observations or suggestions:

Observation #1 concerns Centra's findings. With regard to instructional development, it seems imperative that we figure out ways to reach those teachers Centra's research says we are not now reaching. These faculty members need to be motivated to improve their teaching, and we need to find a way to motivate them.

Observation #2 Teaching assistants need to be included in our programs. In Dee Fink's article on TA's in Educational Horizons he notes that one faculty development director, when asked why faculty development has paid so little attention to the needs of TA's, answered: "Because we don't want to spend our money on people who are going to be someone else's faculty." Fink counters with the argument that universities are already spending their money on programs for people who go elsewhere, those enrolled in the various graduate programs, and further that TA's constitute a significant portion of the teaching faculty in most large universities with up to 20 to 50 percent of the courses in some universities being taught by TA's.

TA's may not now be full-time faculty but many of them will be, and a program of preservice education for them now is many times better than only providing them help after they have already learned inappropriate teaching behaviors. Which is just another way of saying that the prevention model has to be better than the therapeutic model. Further, as instructional development workers, our first loyalty should be a global one (that is, to improving instruction in general) rather than a specific or institutional loyalty (that is, improving instruction only for the full-time faculty on our own campus). If students' learning experiences are influenced by TA's (and we know they are), then we ought to be concerned with the TA's. Further, if our generation of instructional development workers does not get involved in preparing tomorrow's professorate, they will be no better off tomorrow than we are today.
Observation #3. If the movement we are all involved in is to survive, all of us must build into our organization an evaluation component. We must be able to document our own effectiveness or lack of it and then to act upon these findings. In the interim, however, we need to keep in mind that we haven't stopped teaching because we haven't found a perfect system for evaluating teaching either.

Observation #4. We need to look more objectively at what we are about -- which is to say, we need to examine scientifically, through research efforts, how learning takes place, and the relationship between methods of teaching and the learning that occurs as a result of it. Because the instructional process is one of our major areas of concern, we have a responsibility to continue to try to understand it scientifically.

Observation #5. In general, things that are given away are perceived as having no value. Free help is often seen as worthless. One's own investment in something is what makes it valuable to her! For example, if you try to give somebody something for nothing, they always are suspicious. From time to time people have gone out on the public streets and tried to give away money. They are always surprised (and maybe that's why such stories always make the evening news) when most people refuse to take the money, because they think there's a catch to it. It seems to run contrary to human nature to believe anyone gives anything away that has value.

For example, I know of a university counseling center that tried to give away its services and had few takers. Finally they made the students "pay for" services in some kind of "trade-out" situation. The student would do so many hours of typing, or serve as receptionist, or even sweep out the center in return for counseling services. The counseling center concluded that when people have to in some way "pay for" something, they place a higher value upon it and are therefore more likely to benefit from it.

My observation then is that it may be wise for us to consider various creative ways to get faculty members, departments, or colleges to pay for our services -- to invest something of themselves into it. For example, here is one suggestion: For those of you who provide direct services to an individual faculty member, consider setting up a contract with the professor that says you will provide whatever amount of time she needs in order to accomplish whatever it is she is working on -- improving her teaching skills, revising her course curriculum, or whatever. When your work is complete, however, her part of the contract is that she will help someone else in the same way you have helped her, or perhaps she could contract to write up and publish an account of her experiences. Each faculty member who is helped must then help someone else. This way we develop a whole cadre of instructional development workers on our own campus, and our own capacity to assist is continually multiplied.

So my five suggestions and observations are:

1. Continue to try to motivate those faculty members identified as poor instructors to avail themselves of instructional development services.

2. Whenever possible, include TA's as recipients of your services.

3. Evaluate your center's work.

4. Conduct research involving the nature of the teaching/learning process.

5. Consider alternatives to giving your services away free in order that these services will be perceived as having greater value.
I also have five predictions:

Prediction #1. I predict a greater utilization by universities of some form of the growth contract (as currently being used at Gordon College in Massachusetts and at Austin College in Texas). I make this prediction based upon the emphasis we are currently placing on individual growth and learning patterns for students. As professionals, we are continuing to emphasize individual instruction for students, and I predict we will soon move toward emphasizing individualized growth patterns for faculty members and administrators.

Prediction #2. I predict that greater emphasis will be placed upon instructional improvement efforts by the individual disciplinary professional associations. Glenn Linden, for example, describes in a recent article, a multi-institutional, multi-level faculty development program endorsed and supported by the American Historical Association. The project he describes, now in its third year, is centered at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, and has included one university, four community colleges, and several middle and high schools. According to Linden, "This has made it possible for many teachers at the various institutions to meet and discuss their common problems and to begin to find answers to these common problems. The result of these efforts is a model of cooperation and accomplishment that can be profitably studied by those interested in faculty development." Linden concludes that: "It is clear that cooperation between teachers at two- and four-year institutions, as well as elementary and secondary educators, is an absolute necessity in the years to come."

My own sense of academic sensitivities tells me that such activity on the part of the professional associations may eventually be an answer to one of the problems we all face -- which is the belief that people without training in a specific discipline cannot be as helpful to teachers within that discipline as people who do have training within it. Instructional development workers who work within and through the professional associations can help solve this problem. The involvement of the professional associations, however, may be a good news-bad news story. The good news is that the professional associations will always have subject matter credibility. The bad news is that advances made within one professional association will not necessarily be shared with the rest of the academic community unless organizations such as POD function as a liaison between them.

Prediction #3. I predict a closer liaison on the university campus between the people in faculty development and the people in continuing education. The two terms, after all, and in spite of all the confusion with terminology, really get at the same seed thought, which is that professionals need to continue their education throughout their professional lives -- that one's education does not stop at the point of graduation, or at the receipt of one's terminal degree. Terminal is really a poor word choice. They may be called terminal degrees, but there is of course no such thing as terminal education. Offices of continuing education were of course established to serve other populations -- when in reality universities seemed to totally ignore the fact that our own needs for continuing education were being ignored. Now, on most campuses, there is an office to serve the continuing education needs of faculty (and we call that office some version of faculty development) and there is an office to serve the continuing education needs of non-faculty (and we call that office Continuing Education). At some not too distant point, I predict that these offices may both benefit by sharing their strengths as they work toward a common goal.
In a 1976 article by Larry Trussell entitled "Continuing Professional Development for College of Business Administration Faculty" the author makes a case for calling all inservice growth for faculty "Continuing Professional Development". I am quoting Trussell now but I will be taking the liberty of omitting his designation of College of Business Administration Faculty and instead will repeat his remarks as appropriate to all faculty in higher education.

Trussell proposes that the term CPD (Continuing Professional Development) be adopted at the college and university level, and he defines it this way:

CPD includes any activities which improve the abilities of faculty so that the level of learning is improved and the total educational mission of the college can be achieved.

Trussell says that "it should become readily apparent that this definition will provide a new umbrella for many diverse activities which most colleges now support and encourage. Examples of such activities would be research, publications, professional program appearances, professional involvement, and sabbatical study programs. However, it is hoped that we might broaden this traditional classification to give greater recognition and support to other types of activities which also contribute to the improvement of one's professional ability. Examples here might include study in a complimentary discipline, attendance at professional meetings, and short courses and faculty internships in industry." He cites several advantages to placing these activities under the new umbrella of CPD. "First, it might gain increased acceptability from faculty and administrators as to the desirability of these activities.

"Although we can easily defend research and publications as being desirable in and of themselves, this new classification would seem to provide greater identification on 'why' they are desirable. It might also provide recognition of how other activities besides research and publications can be a vital force in increasing the professional competence of faculty. This should help to overcome the defensive attitude of some faculty regarding their lack of research and publication productivity and create a greater 'esprit de corps' among all faculty, i.e., as long as everyone satisfies the CPD requirement there should be no 'class structure' as to how the requirement is satisfied."

Trussell lists the following arguments for making the CPD program mandatory, which may be the most heretical statements he makes:

"1. A mandatory program is the only way to stimulate improvement since we have had what is, in essence, a voluntary program for years without stimulating progress toward realization of our full potential.

"2. Making the program mandatory is not a threat to all faculty -- only that minority who are doing little or nothing to maintain and expand their knowledge.

"3. College professors by and large 'think' they are doing a great job and if left to their own initiatives would not undertake an improvement program which would result in the realization of their potential.

"4. Work done by members of most other professions (physicians, lawyers, architects) is more susceptible to surveillance. Perhaps the time has come for us to declare ourselves as a true 'profession' and to admit the difficulty attached to maintaining and improving our professional abilities.
"5. The tenure system prohibits the market system from taking care of the problem.

"6. Since nothing is more perishable than knowledge, our public is entitled to some assurance that we possess not just the knowledge needed to enter the profession -- i.e., a graduate degree, but also sufficient current knowledge to prevent obsolescence in this age of expanding knowledge.

"7. Administrative problems are difficult, but not impossible to overcome.

"8. The advantages of this new 'umbrella' referred to earlier can be achieved only if the program is made mandatory."

I recommend this article to you for your professional reading and for your consideration.

Prediction #4. I predict a much stronger working relationship between the offices of institutional research and planning and the offices of faculty or instructional or organizational development. I not only predict this relationship, but I very firmly believe that we will ultimately not be successful in our mission unless these two arms of higher education begin to cooperate and to collaborate. Without collecting and analyzing data -- we do not proceed in a scientific manner. Offices of IR collect data. We need what they collect, and we should also be prepared to identify to them data that we need that IR does not normally collect. Colleges and universities need both offices, but, both would operate more meaningfully with the support and involvement of the other.

Bob Diamond at Syracuse describes this type of working partnership in A Comprehensive Approach to Institutional Development edited by Bergquist and Shoemaker. In describing the Syracuse Center for Instructional Development which Diamond heads, he tells of a built-in research component which "investigates the institutionwide impact of academic programs and procedures that may affect student learning, attitudes, and behaviors. ... the research unit aims at collecting data that will be generalizable to larger institutional populations, for example, in such areas as student-faculty interaction, student perceptions of the academic program, the quality of the institutional learning environment, and student achievement, change, and attrition. An additional concern ... is the identification of the kinds of students who perform best in different instructional modes. The findings of the research unit provide a basis for setting center priorities and are used throughout the university in policy decisions."

Institutional research and planning should not exist in isolation without institutional and organizational development. In last month's Research Currents published by AAHE, Richardson, Gardner, and Pierce state: "Institutions today are confronted with a clear mandate for change. The issue is no less than survival for some and the retention of vitality for others." These authors see institutional planning to be the answer to this need. They also cite an Ohio Board of Regents publication which says that broad-based institutional planning is a phenomena of the 70's.

I found that to be particularly interesting as I am quoted in the SREB publication Faculty Development Centers in Southern Universities as saying: "The faculty development movement is a phenomenon of the 1970's."

Well, perhaps both are phenomena of the 70's, and if so -- all the more reason for these two movements to parallel one another. The one (research and planning) seems to be a natural precursor of the other (development).
Prediction #5. Finally, I predict that eventually students, faculty, administrators, and in some cases staff will all to some extent be moving under the umbrella served by these offices or centers now called "faculty development" -- particularly in small colleges or in professional schools.

A colleague of mine in Texas who works in the area of health education will soon become the director of a single unit that serves three populations -- faculty, administrators, and students. In an attempt to integrate the developmental needs of everyone at this rather small professional college, they have come to the conclusion that their needs are not all that different. True -- some of the specific activities that serve students would differ from the activities that serve faculty, but all in all -- their discipline is the same, and many of their needs are also the same. By having one office attempt to analyze their needs and to speak comprehensively to them, they feel both economy and efficiency will have been accomplished.

As a matter of fact a number of centers represented here today already have components that serve students directly -- such as learning centers or laboratories. Staff too is being served by some of the centers represented here, particularly those that serve community colleges. Senior institutions will not as likely include staff, but they are likely to include students and administrators along with our current target population which is faculty.

I also predict that in the near future there will be more emphasis within traditional offices of faculty development on service to academic administrators. This move is both logical and overdue. Administrators are, after all, faculty members originally -- and in most cases, ultimately. Administration is often, as we all know, merely a kind of leave of absence from the classroom to which the faculty member will some day return.

So, my five predictions are:

1. A greater tendency toward the use of growth contracts for faculty and administrators as a logical extension of individualized learning and growth for students.

2. More emphasis upon instructional development by the individual professional disciplinary associations.

3. A closer liaison between faculty development and continuing education.

4. A closer liaison between institutional research and planning and faculty development.

5. A widening of the development umbrella to permit the inclusion of additional constituencies -- such as administrators, staff, and students.

While I'm considering the future of the whole field of professional and organizational development, let me in passing comment on the future of POD by sharing with you some precautions I feel we must take.

POD is still small and responsive to its members and to the needs of the time. We can, in my opinion, be an important catalyst for change within higher education.

We also could, of course, become just like some of the organizations or institutions it seeks to help -- which is to say, bureaucratic, political, fragmented -- and forgetful of its original mission.

Let's not become that.
Another precaution has to do with our own development as people and as professionals. I really believe that we must model the behaviors we want our colleagues to exhibit if we are to maintain credibility with them. Specifically I refer to our own potential failure to continue to grow and develop professionally. We ought not to become so busy that we neglect our own careers. Peddlers' children may go without shoes, but POD members ought to continue to grow and develop as competent, motivated professionals.

Finally, I think we need to guard against becoming too inward-looking. POD must be accountable to the needs of its individual members; we recognize that. But if the movement is to survive, we need to also become accountable to higher education. We must develop clear open lines of communication to the law makers and policy makers which are the boards of trustees, legislators, administrators, the professorate, students, and yes, even the general public. POD's service to its membership must complement, not supersede its accountability responsibilities to higher education.

The National Trend

In looking back over the history of areas of emphasis in higher education, I see indications of a consistent movement from emphasis upon the student to emphasis upon the institution. Although none of these areas is discrete, the first all-pervasive area of interest was the student, and next the faculty, and next the administration, and finally the institution itself. But within each of these there seems to be an A part and a B part. The A part is usually evaluation, and the B part, development or assistance. As educators, we seem to buy into the lockstep of evaluating something first, and only then assisting in its development. The way we identify the topic being emphasized in higher education is in terms of funding, the generation of research, the number of books and articles published, the incidence of centers and offices established, and the number of regional and national conferences devoted to the topic. Putting all those pieces together, it's like the emphasis in higher education has taken this path:

- evaluating students
- developing students
- evaluating faculty
- developing faculty
- evaluating administrators
- developing administrators
- evaluating institutions
- developing institutions

Higher education's emphasis always seems to evolve from individual to societal, in an academic sense. Of course it is presumed that such transitions would not preclude, but would instead include all previous areas of emphasis. If we use the symbolism of a pendulum, the optimistic interpretation, therefore, would be that with a full pendulum swing from evaluating students to emphasis upon the development of entire institutions, that we have achieved the ultimate professional and organizational development. A more pessimistic interpretation would be that every step away from the student is a step in the wrong direction or that higher education has moved from emphasis upon the product (the students) to emphasis upon the milieu wherein the producers of the product work.

I think there are two plausible interpretations if we continue with the pendulum imagery. One is that once a pendulum has swung the full length of its journey, it will swing back again to its point of origin -- the student. Another interpretation
of this apparent progression of emphasis would be to say that the pendulum only needs to swing its course once. This would tend to give equal emphasis to all locations swung through. In this case, service people (researchers and evaluators, developers and growth facilitators) could all now look at the entire swing path available (from student, through faculty, through administrator, to the entire institution). Then each of us could point to the place or places on the continuum where we could do the most good, where our particular interests and talents could best fit. Each of us then could freely choose the area of assistance we want to provide, and all the areas would be "in vogue" for us to choose from. If this interpretation should actually come true, then funding agencies would have to fund the entire continuum rather than only the area where the pendulum happened to be at the time, and faculty development, for example, would always be a fundable emphasis.

By the way, if I may venture to identify where we are on that pendulum swing today, I would say it is somewhere between administrator evaluation and administrative development. I think it's important as we plan for the future of our own careers that we not be unaware of the changing areas of emphasis -- as I predict that the pendulum will continue to swing.

Bionic Faculty Development Workers

The final thought I bring to you today is from an unpublished paper by H.J. Zoffer, Dean of the Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh. His paper is called "The Bionic Faculty Person," and his thesis is that in order to test our values and our priorities, it may be helpful to construct from scratch a Bionic faculty person. His design of the Bionic professor is fully described in terms of attitudes, aptitudes, teaching ability, research ability, community service capacities, personal characteristics, cognitive skill abilities, and even sensitivities. Zoffer says: "Perhaps it would be helpful to determine toward what ends we are seeking faculty development. Perhaps it would be helpful to sit back and question what we would do if we could build a faculty person limb by limb, brain cell by brain cell, and attitude by attitude. What are we really seeking?"

"Does development mean improved teaching as measured on student rating scales? Does it mean several more journal articles per year? Does it mean an increase in the number of committees served on or the number of papers delivered at professional meetings? Does it mean an increase in national visibility, a decrease in 'orneryness', the emergence of a previously lacking sense of perspective or sense of humor, or what?"

"A rule of thumb in this business . . . is that faculty people can only be developed who want to be developed and toward goals they agree with and see in their best interests. My only plea is that faculty should and must, if they are to be successful, demand to be developed and insist on the time for developing as an absolute perquisite of their very being. Development is a growth process, and if there is any profession which demands growth as an essential ingredient for success, it is the professorate."

My own humanistic tendencies were a bit ruffled as I thought and worried about cutting everyone from the same cookie cutter. But then I thought again; what Zoffer is really saying about faculty development is that we need to know in advance what we're trying to do. The old adage that you probably won't get where you're going unless you know where you're going is true with regard to faculty development too.

It's time to decide what we really want -- in an individual teacher, in an administrator -- and yes -- even in a particular institution. All Bionic teachers need not look alike -- but Dean Zoffer is telling it straight: we'd better think through
things before we botch them. Any group of service-oriented, caring people should stop and ask themselves -- where indeed are we going? Knowing our destination may seem obvious, but I am convinced more of us would get there if we knew.

As an aside, maybe we need to build the Bionic Faculty Developer complete with caring attitude, scholarly behavior, the ability to model what we expect from others, the ability to relate nondefensively with the press, and a strong resistance to becoming either pompous or discouraged.

David Ost (Center for Professional Development, The California State University and Colleges System) in an article entitled "A Plea for Personal Development" shares the following anecdote:

"Peter was busily searching about on his hands and knees in a spot of dirt in the sun. 'What are you doing, Peter?' asked Paul who was walking by. 'My key ... my key ... I've lost my house key,' replied Peter without looking up from his search. 'Let me help,' said Paul. 'Where do you think you lost it?'

"'Over there in that long grass under the tree,' was Peter's response as he pointed to the shaded area. 'Then, why are you looking here in this dirt?' asked Paul. Peter answered, 'Because the light is better and there is no grass to hide the key!'"

In his article, Ost gave his faculty development moral. With appreciation to him for the original analogy, let me now give mine:

We seem to be focusing on the well-lit uncluttered areas that won't get us into trouble. But the "key is lost," and we are in trouble. As professionals in an important evolving field, we should be adventuresome enough to get into the grass and even into the dark and look for answers. Conduct research that has previously seemed too difficult to conduct. Find a way to reach those who really need your help. Wade into evaluation and stay until it's done. Address the tough questions; seek the illusive answers.

As faculty development leaders "we have come a long way baby", but we still don't have the key. Have the courage to look for the design of the Bionic Faculty Developer, even in academe's dark unexplored places.
References


Zoffer, H.J., "The Bionic Faculty Person," Dean of Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh, unpublished paper.