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CENTER FOR VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT
EXTERNAL EVALUATION
FINAL REPORT

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A Summary Description and Analysis of the
CVD Program and Its Outcomes

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Robert W. Miller
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report of the external evaluation of the Center for Volunteer Development (CVD) summarizes previously reported findings, presents new data, discusses CVD achievements and shortcomings, analyzes factors that influenced the CVD effort, and offers tentative conclusions concerning the CVD experience.

Background

In late 1979, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation authorized funding to establish the Center for Volunteer Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). Under terms of the funding agreement, the Foundation pledged to support a five-year CVD effort to assist and strengthen volunteerism in Virginia. The CVD was officially established in January of 1980 and program activities were initiated shortly thereafter.

In concept, the CVD effort was to be based on the effective employment of the considerable skills of the Virginia Tech Extension Division and the Tech faculty in general. A relatively small CVD staff, consisting of a director, associate director, assistant director, and three regional program specialists, would be responsible for recruiting, training (as necessary), and guiding the efforts of the Extension staff and faculty. In essence, the task was to adapt the Extension mission of Virginia Tech to the discharge of a new role-- support of the more effective application of volunteerism in Virginia.

The objectives proposed for the CVD emphasized the following activities:

- Complementing and supporting Virginia's existing volunteer assistance systems by accessing the resources of the faculty and Extension Division of Virginia Tech.
- Providing assistance to volunteer groups in Virginia by analyzing their problems and developing and delivering thorough answers to these problems.
- Identifying Virginia Tech faculty whose training and experience would be useful in solving problems of volunteerism and encouraging them to assist problem-solving efforts.

- Aiding and encouraging Virginia Tech faculty to prepare teaching units on volunteerism, develop curricula leading to certificates or degrees in volunteer management, and obtain funds for solving problems of volunteerism.
- Training at least one Virginia Tech Extension staff member in each of Extension's 108 local offices to access volunteers and volunteer organizations, receive questions from them, and provide answers either by themselves or by identifying and using local resources.
- Communicating with other postsecondary institutions in Virginia to inform them of the Center's work and encourage them to join in delivering assistance to the volunteering community.

Arrangements for an evaluation of the CVD effort were made in late 1980. An evaluation plan was developed shortly thereafter and implementation of the evaluation began in March 1981. The broad intent was to provide for an externally-based, independent assessment of the CVD concept, its programs, and impact. Specific purposes were to:

- 1) document the CVD experience, including program processes, achievements, and problems;
- 2) provide periodic feedback of evaluation findings to the CVD staff to help establish a basis for needed adjustments in CVD programming; and,
- 3) record and assess the impacts of the CVD on the Virginia Tech Extension Division, the Tech faculty, other postsecondary institutions, and volunteer organizations in Virginia.

The evaluation plan specified that data were to be collected at several points in time from selected groups and individuals involved in delivering the CVD program and/or in a position to influence it, and from program recipients and others who might be influenced by it. The chief methods of data collection were to be questionnaire and interview surveys augmented by retrieval of information from CVD records.

In fulfillment of this plan, 15 different questionnaire or interview surveys were administered, over the course of four years, to the following groups: Extension agents who agreed to cooperate with the CVD; Extension administrators; selected Virginia Tech faculty who had been involved in CVD

programming; a sample of Tech faculty who had expressed interest in assisting the CVD; a sample of Tech faculty who had not expressed interest in the CVD; selected Tech administrators; representatives of selected volunteer organizations that had requested CVD assistance; representatives of other postsecondary institutions that had substantial contact with the CVD; members of the CVD advisory council; and, CVD staff members.

CVD Program Activities and Outcomes

Evaluation findings, based on interview and questionnaire data, indicate that the CVD program resulted in the following accomplishments:

- A total of 135 Extension agents from all areas of Virginia were trained and involved in activities related to identifying and solving problems of local volunteer organizations. Agents used their own skills to help solve problems, sought help from local sources, and arranged for assistance from CVD campus staff, specialists, or faculty. In the process, the agents were brought into contact with new clients groups and many increased the professional skills they use to carry out other Extension programs.
- More than 100 Virginia Tech faculty members from a wide range of departments were involved in problem-solving activity, research, or instruction intended to strengthen volunteerism. Several hundred more provided other forms of support for the CVD program. Faculty members were generally well informed about the CVD and supported the concept of faculty involvement in programs to strengthen volunteerism.
- Problem-solving assistance was delivered to more than 600 volunteer organizations, many of which had not previously been clients of Virginia Tech Extension, with resulting concrete benefits to many of these organizations. Organizational representatives generally expressed satisfaction with the help received and many cited specific beneficial outcomes.
- Other postsecondary institutions were contacted and encouraged to become involved in activity supporting volunteerism. More than 20 institutions were involved in some manner.
- Conferences, publications, and other forms of information sharing related to volunteer development were made available to a wide range of volunteers, volunteer organizations, and others in a position to strengthen volunteerism.

- Increased awareness of the important role of the volunteering community, the needs of volunteers and volunteer organizations, and opportunities to help meet such needs was created among groups and individuals throughout Virginia.
- The development of information sharing and mutual problem-solving networks was fostered among volunteers, volunteer organization administrators, faculty of colleges and universities, government officials, and other influential citizens.

Problems and Future Challenges

The CVD faced a number of problems at its outset, including budgetary constraints within the Virginia Tech Extension Division, limited support among some Extension personnel, and the potential of rivalry with the Virginia Division of Volunteerism. Pressures for research and publication and the timing of requests for assistance apparently deterred some faculty from participation in CVD programs. While early CVD strategies may have compounded some of these problems, the quality of the CVD staff helped to surmount them.

Future challenges include continuing needs to develop: more wholehearted support among some Extension agents; new ways of attracting the interest of faculty members; and, more widespread understanding of the CVD capabilities among volunteer organizations, postsecondary institutions, public officials, and others.

Conclusions

Conclusions, based on evaluation findings, are as follows:

- 1) Volunteer organizations have a diversity of common as well as unique needs that can be met effectively with university assistance.
- 2) A land-grant university can successfully incorporate programs of assistance to the volunteering community into its Extension mission, resulting in heightened awareness and strengthening of volunteerism.
- 3) Extension agents will accept the volunteer community as a client group, and can learn to use the considerable local and campus-based skills and resources of Extension to deliver meaningful assistance to volunteer organizations.

- 4) University faculty members have knowledge relevant to strengthening volunteer organizations and, given time and the potential of appropriate return for effort given, will assist such organizations.
- 5) University Extension programming in support of volunteer organizations can activate a network of volunteers, organizational leaders, and university personnel, leading to valuable and difficult-to-achieve collaboration in pursuit of a more effective volunteering community.
- 6) Successful university programming in support of volunteerism requires much time and skill, a focus on common as well as unique problems of volunteer organizations, understanding of existing volunteer resources, consistent follow-up with clients, and continuing program monitoring and adjustment.
- 7) Success of university programs in support of volunteerism will be enhanced by early involvement of an effectively functioning volunteer advisory committee.
- 8) Effective management of a CVD-like program requires leadership and vision, clear staff role definitions, a staff and program structure that meets essential needs, visibility of the program, and exercise of care to minimize conflict with existing programs.
- 9) Success of a CVD-like program requires strong institutional support, including the active commitment of key administrators, avoidance of portraying the program as being temporary, appointment of a respected senior faculty member to head the program, and effective linkage to existing institutional structures.

INTRODUCTION

This is the final report of a four-year external evaluation of the Center for Volunteer Development (CVD). The report summarizes previously reported evaluation results, presents new findings, discusses apparent CVD achievements and shortcomings, analyzes factors that influenced the CVD effort, and offers tentative conclusions concerning the CVD experience.¹ The purpose of the report is to provide information to assist the decision making of the: CVD director, staff, and advisory council as they help to guide future programming for the volunteer community; various officials of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) as they chart the institution's future course in relation to volunteer development; officials of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation; and selected representatives of other institutions and organizations who may be considering programming in support of volunteerism. It is hoped that the report may also be of interest to representatives of the volunteer community and to voluntary action scholars.

BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

In late 1979, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation authorized funding to establish the Center for Volunteer Development at Virginia Tech. Under terms of the funding agreement, the Foundation pledged to support a five-year CVD effort to assist and strengthen volunteerism in Virginia. The CVD was officially established in January of 1980 and program activities were initiated shortly thereafter.

The CVD was created to help meet a variety of the needs of the growing number of volunteers and volunteer organizations in Virginia. Virginia Tech,

¹See CVD External Evaluation Reports 1-9 for a more complete presentation of previous evaluation findings. The reader may also contact the CVD for additional information.

a land-grant institution with statewide university Extension responsibilities, was perceived to be uniquely fitted to provide information and problem-solving assistance that would enhance the contribution of volunteer programs to the welfare of the citizens of the state. The premise was that the university could draw upon a rich and varied resource of faculty expertise to assist volunteers through its statewide network of Extension offices and agents. It was perceived, as well, that the CVD could assist the university to increase opportunities for its students to acquire greater knowledge of matters related to volunteerism through their coursework, and could serve as a catalyst for similar efforts to assist volunteerism among other postsecondary institutions in Virginia.

CVD Objectives

The objectives proposed for the CVD centered primarily on the following activities:

- Complementing and supporting Virginia's existing volunteer assistance systems by accessing the resources of the faculty and Extension Division of Virginia Tech.
- Providing assistance to volunteer groups in Virginia by analyzing their problems and developing and delivering thorough answers to these problems.
- Identifying Virginia Tech faculty whose training and experience would be useful in solving problems of volunteerism and encouraging them to assist problem-solving efforts.
- Aiding and encouraging Virginia Tech faculty to prepare teaching units on volunteerism, develop curricula leading to certificates or degrees in volunteer management, and obtain funds for solving problems of volunteerism.
- Training at least one Virginia Tech Extension staff member in each of Extension's 108 local offices to access volunteers and volunteer organizations, receive questions from them, and provide answers either by themselves or by identifying and using local resources.
- Communicating with other postsecondary institutions in Virginia to inform them of the Center's work and encourage them to join in delivering assistance to the volunteering community.

The CVD Program Concept

In concept, the CVD effort was to be based on the effective employment of the considerable skills of the Virginia Tech Extension Division and the Tech faculty in general. A relatively small CVD staff, consisting of a director, associate director, assistant director, and three regional program specialists, would be responsible for recruiting, training (as necessary), and guiding the employment of these resources. In essence, the task was to adapt the Extension mission of Virginia Tech to the discharge of a new role--support of the more effective application of volunteerism in Virginia.

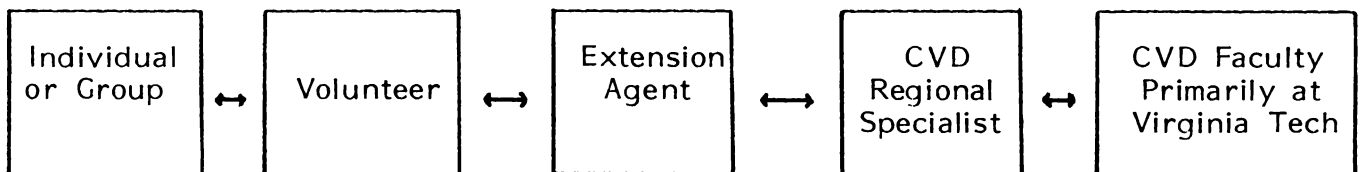
Cooperating Extension agents, based in communities throughout Virginia, were expected to establish contact with local volunteer organizations and/or organizations that use volunteers; help to diagnose problems that volunteer organizations may face; refer problems of volunteer organizations to the CVD for faculty assistance; use their own skills to help organizations solve problems or obtain problem-solving assistance from local sources; maintain contact with volunteer organizations; and, help organize workshops, conferences, or other educational programs relating to volunteerism, as appropriate.

Campus-based Tech faculty members representing a wide range of departments and disciplines would be asked to contribute their expertise to: assist in solving problems of volunteer organizations that could not be solved at the local level; participate as resource persons in conferences on volunteerism; develop and incorporate material on volunteerism into courses as appropriate; and, engage in research, materials preparation, or other creative activity in support of the development of volunteerism.

CVD staff members were to serve as the catalysts and organizers of this university effort. Specifically, the CVD staff would: recruit and link faculty to problem-solving efforts; provide training, information, and technical assist-

ance to Extension staff members; organize and focus informational resources in support of volunteer development statewide; provide assistance directly to volunteer organizations as required; and, encourage continuing commitment to volunteer development activities by establishing and maintaining communication with key individuals both on the Tech campus and throughout the state.

The major emphasis of this proposed effort centered on providing problem-solving assistance to volunteers and volunteer organizations in response to their requests. A model of this problem-solving process, involving representatives of volunteer agencies, Extension agents, CVD staff members, and Tech faculty members, was included in the CVD's 1980 Annual Report. The model was as follows:



This problem intake and response system was expected to be the cornerstone of the CVD program effort. Problems that could not be solved with the assistance of Extension agents at the local level would be referred to the CVD on the Virginia Tech campus. The problem would then be matched to faculty expertise as previously determined by the CVD staff, contact would be made with the faculty members, and the problem response would, in turn, be delivered, usually by the faculty member directly to the Extension agent or volunteer group. In some cases, the problem response could be handled by the CVD staff itself if special faculty expertise were not required.

The original CVD program concept evolved and expanded in new directions during the course of its five-year funding period. The growth of new program emphases occurred as unexpected problems were encountered and

promising programming alternatives emerged. Later sections of this report will more completely outline the total CVD program effort.

Evaluation Objectives and Procedures

Arrangements for an evaluation of the CVD effort were made in late 1980. An evaluation plan was developed shortly thereafter and implementation of the evaluation began in March 1981.

Commitment to an evaluation was included in the terms of the original CVD funding agreement. The broad intent was to provide for an externally-based, independent assessment of the CVD concept, its programs, and impact. Specific purposes were to:

- 1) document the CVD experience, including program processes, achievements, and problems;
- 2) provide periodic feedback of evaluation findings to the CVD staff to help establish a basis for needed adjustments in CVD programming; and,
- 3) record and assess the impacts of the CVD on the Virginia Tech Extension Division, the Tech faculty, other postsecondary institutions, and volunteer organizations in Virginia.

Collection of evaluation data began in 1981 and continued throughout the CVD funding period in accordance with a plan agreed upon by the evaluation team and the CVD staff. Details of the plan were developed with the aid of an evaluation advisory committee which provided continuing guidance for the evaluation throughout its four-year existence.²

The plan specified that data were to be collected from selected groups and individuals involved in delivering the CVD program and/or in a position to influence it, and from program recipients and others who might be influ-

²The evaluation was directed by Robert Miller, West Virginia University. The on-site evaluation coordinator during the first year and one-half of the evaluation was Anne Deaton. Constance Kriz served as on-site coordinator during the remainder of the evaluation. The evaluation advisory committee consisted of Samuel Leadley, private consultant; Sara Steele, University of Wisconsin; and, Jon Van Til, Rutgers University.

enced by it. Data were to be collected from most of these groups at more than one point in time. The chief methods of data collection were to be questionnaire and interview surveys augmented by retrieval of information from CVD records.

The purpose of collecting information from the same groups at more than one point in time was to allow for the documenting of changes within these groups, thus providing a basis for analyzing possible CVD impacts. Groups from which information was collected more than once included Extension administrators and cooperating Extension agents, samples of Virginia Tech faculty members and academic administrators, representatives of volunteer organizations that were the focus of CVD programming efforts, and CVD staff members. This data collection procedure also furnished a basis for making between-group comparisons of reactions to the CVD program.

An additional benefit of periodic data collection was that evaluation information could be made available to CVD administrators and staff members at frequent intervals during the project. This feedback of evaluation results was intended to aid in identifying program strengths and weaknesses and help in decisions concerning possibly needed program change.

The overall data collection design provided a basis for: documenting CVD program activities; assessing the success of CVD efforts to involve the Extension organization and Virginia Tech faculty members in programs of assistance to volunteerism; evaluating the impact of the CVD program on volunteer organizations; and, assessing the CVD's influence on efforts made by other postsecondary institutions to assist volunteer organizations. A listing of evaluation purposes and the data collection activities that were carried out to meet them follows:

Assessment of CVD Efforts to Involve the Extension Organization

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Questionnaire survey of 56 Extension agents who began cooperating with the CVD in 1980 and 1981. | May 1981 |
| Focus group interview with five Extension district chairpersons and individual interviews with nine state-level Extension administrators. | November 1981 and January 1982 |
| Questionnaire survey of Extension agents who began cooperating with the CVD in 1980 and 1981, plus 40 agents who began cooperating in 1982. | May and June 1982 |
| Questionnaire survey of all Extension agents (138) cooperating with the CVD (including those who began cooperation in 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983). | May through July 1983 |
| Focus group interview with six Extension district chairpersons, and individual interviews with seven state-level Extension administrators. | February and June 1984 |

Assessment of CVD Efforts to Involve the Virginia Tech Faculty

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Individual and focus group interviews with 13 Virginia Tech faculty members who had participated in CVD programming, eight deans and department chairpersons, and the university provost. | November 1981 through May 1982 |
| Questionnaire surveys of 153 Virginia Tech faculty members who had originally (1980) expressed interest in the CVD, and 75 faculty members who had <u>not</u> expressed interest. | September 1982 |
| Individual interviews with five academic deans and/or chairpersons and the associate provost. | February and June 1984 |
| Questionnaire survey of 77 Virginia Tech faculty CVD affiliates, associates, and fellows, and 104 Tech faculty members who had originally (1980) expressed interest in the CVD. | June and July 1984 |

Assessment of CVD Efforts to Assist Volunteer Organizations

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Questionnaire survey of 87 representatives of volunteer organizations that had received assistance from the CVD prior to June 1981. | August 1981 |
| Questionnaire survey of 291 organizations that had not received CVD assistance but used volunteers and were likely to be able to use CVD assistance in the future. | August 1981 |
| Interview survey (in collaboration with the CVD Advisory Council) of representatives of 58 volunteer organizations assisted by the CVD between July 1981 and March 1982. | July through September 1982 |

Questionnaire survey of representatives of 106 volunteer organizations assisted by the CVD between April 1982 and July 1983.

December 1983

Assessment of CVD Efforts to Involve Other Postsecondary Institutions

Interview survey (in collaboration with the CVD Advisory Council) of representatives of 27 postsecondary institutions contacted by the CVD concerning support of volunteerism by higher education.

September 1984

Documentation of CVD Program Activities

Review of files of CVD cases and programs.

Periodically

Assessment of CVD Goals, Program Processes, and Overall Progress

Discussions with CVD director, associate director, assistant director, and specialists.

Periodically

Questionnaire survey of CVD Advisory Council opinion.

November 1984

The questionnaire and interview surveys listed above were administered in accordance with standard methodological procedures. Sampling was used where indicated by requirements of efficiency. Thus, surveys were directed to all Extension agents who had agreed to cooperate with the CVD prior to the time of the surveys, all Extension district chairpersons and top-level state administrators, and all faculty members who held status as CVD affiliates, associates, and fellows; but to a sample of faculty mentioned in CVD case files as having participated in CVD programming, a sample of faculty who had expressed willingness to assist the CVD in its beginning stages, a sample of faculty listed in the Virginia Tech faculty directory, and a sample of deans and department heads. Sampling was also used for surveys of volunteer organizations and postsecondary institutions.

Questionnaires were distributed by mail except for those directed to the Extension agents, which were administered for the most part during training conferences, and a small number which were administered to faculty members

by telephone. Individual interviews were administered in interviewees' offices. Systematic follow-up procedures with nonrespondents were used in connection with the questionnaire surveys in order to achieve acceptable rates of return. Return rates ranged from a low of 60 to 70 percent for faculty and representatives of voluntary organizations to a high of 85 to 90 percent for Extension agents.³

A special feature of the evaluation was the mutually advantageous working relationship that developed between the evaluation team and the CVD Advisory Council. This relationship was initiated with the encouragement of the CVD director in the late summer of 1982. At that time, Advisory Council members seeking a better basis for assessing the effects of CVD programming, agreed to serve as interviewers for a planned evaluation survey of volunteer organizations that had sought and received CVD assistance. Using interview questions developed by the evaluation team in collaboration with a council representative, council members contacted and interviewed representatives of a sample of such organizations. Orientation to interviewing, facilitating arrangements, and data summary and analysis were the responsibility of the evaluation team. Results of the interviews provided valuable information for both the Advisory Council and the evaluation. A similar cooperative process was used to conduct interviews of representatives of postsecondary institutions in September 1984.

Periodic feedback of the results of the evaluation to the CVD director, staff, and specialists was a particularly important feature of the evaluation procedure. Reports of results were made both verbally and in writing throughout the four-year evaluation project. The purpose was to provide data and

³For a more complete description of methodology, see CVD External Evaluation Reports 1-9.

independent judgment concerning the strengths, weaknesses, and overall progress of CVD programming, thereby aiding the staff to assess the need for possible program adjustments. Nine formal written reports were submitted, while oral reports were made to the director several times each year. Spacing of the written reports was as follows: August and October 1981; March, November, and December 1982; January, May, and December 1983; and May 1984. In addition to providing feedback to the CVD staff, distribution of the written reports by the CVD director provided information on CVD progress to the CVD advisory council, the Kellogg Foundation, university officials, and other interested parties.

The May 1983 evaluation report, which constituted a project mid-course assessment, illustrates the feedback process. This special report was based on the results of a meeting of the evaluation advisory committee and evaluation team held in the fall of 1982 on the Virginia Tech campus. The agenda of the meeting included a review of previously collected evaluation data, discussions with CVD staff members, a focus group interview with a small number of selected Tech faculty members, and a general examination of CVD program strategy and progress to that time. Conclusions and recommendations developed during that meeting were instrumental in shaping the mid-course report and were, reportedly, of assistance to the CVD director and staff in subsequent program planning.

A limitation of the evaluation was that available time and resources necessitated that some aspects of the CVD program and the influences acting upon it could not be assessed in depth. Limited resources dictated heavy reliance on the use of mailed questionnaires for data collection. Although the cooperation of respondents was good, and satisfactory rates of questionnaire return were achieved, reliance on the questionnaire format tended to narrow

the scope of inquiry. From the perspective of the evaluation team, it would have been desirable, for example, to conduct personal interviews with unit Extension agents and volunteer and organizational representatives who were impacted by the CVD program. The consequence of not having conducted such interviews is that information about the CVD's impact on individuals, organizations, and communities is somewhat less detailed than would be ideal.

DESCRIPTION OF CVD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The summary of findings which follows provides an overview of major CVD program activities and outcomes. These activities have been separated into five categories for ease of discussion. The categories are: involving the Extension organization; involving the Virginia Tech faculty; delivering problem-solving assistance to volunteer organizations; contacting other post-secondary institutions; and, other miscellaneous program efforts. The presentation is preceded by a brief discussion of the needs of volunteers and volunteer organizations.

Needs of Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations

The CVD was established on the premise that volunteers and volunteer organizations have needs for assistance in developing, organizing, and managing resources and programs, and that Virginia Tech could effectively deliver such assistance. Evaluation data provide evidence that volunteer organizations in Virginia do have such needs.

Information about volunteer organizations' needs for assistance is contained in two types of data. The first type consists of responses to a question about needs included in 1981 questionnaire surveys directed to: 1) organizations that had requested CVD assistance before June 1981; and 2) organizations that used volunteers and might have needs for assistance in the

future. The second type of data consists of records of requests for assistance from the CVD and/or its affiliated Extension agents and faculty members made by volunteer organizations in the period from 1980 through 1984. These requests provide evidence of both the existence as well as the nature of these organizations' needs.

Both types of data revealed that organizational representatives were aware of problems for which their organizations could use assistance. Problems most frequently identified were recruiting, training, retaining, and effectively managing volunteers. Among requests for CVD assistance made by organizations included in the 1981 questionnaire surveys, approximately 40 percent fell into these categories. Other problems commonly identified in the requests included the planning or development of programs, the development of organizational structures, and the management of organizational processes. Other requests centered on specific types of technical assistance needed to deal with a wide range of additional problems. Responses to the question about needs included in the 1981 surveys varied in only minor detail from these findings, with the chief difference being that public relations and fund raising also ranked high among problems identified.

The existence of needs for assistance among volunteer organizations, many of which operate on limited budgets with little or no staffing, would seem to be obvious. As indicated above, the requests received by the CVD, as well as the survey data, confirm the presumption of need.

Involving the Extension Organization

The CVD concept originally envisioned that the university's Extension agents, based in communities throughout Virginia, would play a central role in delivering problem-solving assistance to volunteer organizations. The agents were seen as persons who could readily contact local organizations and

lend assistance in various ways to resolve problems they might face. A task of the CVD was to provide the agents with needed training, reference materials, and back-up support. Successful accomplishment of this task was vital because, for many agents, cooperation with the CVD required adapting to new responsibilities involving a broadened range of local contacts, including non-traditional client groups.

The establishment of cooperative relationships between the CVD and agents located in all areas of the state was accomplished in four phases. The first phase, which occurred in 1980, included the training and development of working relationships with 28 agents who had expressed willingness to be involved in the CVD program. Additional agents were phased into CVD work in 1981, 1982, and 1983 in accordance with a prearranged plan for program expansion, until all of Virginia's local Extension offices (108) had at least one Extension agent cooperating with the CVD. Overall, a total of 135 agents were involved.

Questions that the evaluation sought to answer about the CVD's efforts to involve Extension in activities supporting the volunteering community were the following:

- To what extent did the cooperating Extension agents carry out the CVD program as planned?
- What was the impact of CVD involvement on the cooperating Extension agents' job performance and skills?
- Did cooperating Extension agents and Extension administrators support the CVD concept?
- What was the cooperating agents' assessment of the support received from the CVD?
- What were the agents' judgments about the effectiveness of the CVD program?
- Were there obstacles to Extension's acceptance of the CVD program?

The agents' responses to survey questions indicated that on the whole they did make efforts to carry out the CVD program: new contacts were made with volunteer organizations; problems were identified; and, problem-solving processes were initiated. The actual amount of professional time that cooperating agents reported spending in efforts to contact and assist volunteer groups varied over time and between agents, with somewhat more time being reported spent early in the life of the CVD. In 1982 and 1983, agents reported on the average spending slightly less than 10 percent of their time on CVD related activity. At least some of that time was reported spent on contacting volunteer organizations with which the agents had not previously worked. In 1982, for example, the agents reported on the average that they had made four or five new contacts in the preceding 12 months, while in 1983 they reported making approximately three new contacts in a corresponding period of time. Based on these findings, it seems reasonable to project that during the CVD's first five years, Extension was brought into contact with well over 600 new client organizations.

An indication of the amount of problem-solving activity generated by these contacts is gained from the results of the 1983 agent survey which revealed that of the total number of organizations contacted in the previous 12 months, 126 requested problem-solving assistance. Of these 126 problems, approximately one-third were reported by the agents to have been resolved by using only local resources, while the remainder were referred to the CVD or resolved by using a combination of CVD and local resources.

The results of the agent surveys also indicated that involvement in the CVD program tended to draw cooperating agents into new experiences such as identifying, diagnosing, and helping to resolve organizational problems. Furthermore, agents in general reported that CVD involvement increased the

professional skills they used to carry out other Extension programs. The results of the 1982 agent survey are illustrative (see Table I). Agents who joined the program later in the life of the CVD were, however, less likely to report as great a degree of increase in skills.

Table I

Agents' Ratings of the Extent to Which Involvement
in Programs of the CVD has Increased the Professional
Skills They Use to Carry Out Other Programs

In Percent
N=49

| <u>Extent of Increase</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Very Great Extent | 8 |
| Great Extent | 27 |
| Moderate Extent | 41 |
| Slight Extent | 22 |
| No Extent | 2 |

Cooperating agents as well as Extension administrators indicated, by and large, that they understood and supported the concept of extending university resources in support of volunteer organizations. Substantial percentages (40 to 50 percent) of the agents consistently reported that they understood the role of the CVD to a "great" extent and believed that the CVD fit the mission of Extension to a "great" or "very great" extent. Almost all remaining agents reported similar understanding and belief to "some" extent. A large majority of agents also expressed belief that the CVD would strengthen the programming efforts of Extension to "some" extent or to a "great" extent. However, there was also some tendency for the agents to express their support for the CVD in more modest terms with the passage of time.

Approximately 40 percent of the agents in all surveys estimated that the responses of Tech faculty and CVD staff had been "very useful" or "extremely useful" to organizations that had requested assistance. An additional 40-45 percent estimated that the responses had been "useful." Specific aspects of these responses were also given high ratings. A very large majority of the agents (approximately 90 percent in all surveys) consistently indicated as well that they believed that "some," "most," or "all" of the organizations that had received problem assistance would again seek help if it were needed.

In all three evaluation surveys, the cooperating agents' ratings of CVD orientation training, in-service training, and specialist assistance was overwhelmingly positive. The agents' 1982 ratings of assistance received from CVD program specialists were typical (see Table II).

Table II

Agents' Ratings of Assistance Received
from CVD Program Specialists

In Percent
N=49

| <u>Rating of Assistance</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Extremely Helpful | 43 |
| Very Helpful | 37 |
| Moderately Helpful | 18 |
| Little Help | 2 |
| No Help | 0 |

The picture that emerges from the data suggests that the CVD achieved a substantial degree of success in involving Extension in programs of assistance for volunteer organizations. Difficulties were encountered, however, and substantial challenges remain. Among these are the following: the amount of agent time being put into CVD-related work is generally less than originally anticipated (some ostensibly cooperating agents are putting little or no pro-

fessional time into CVD related programming); support for the CVD's concept of Extension programming for the volunteering community is not unanimous among either Extension agents or administrators; and needs for training, support, and encouragement of Extension personnel continue. An analysis of the positive and negative factors that influenced the CVD's efforts to involve Extension in support of volunteerism will be presented in a subsequent section of this report.

Involving the Virginia Tech Faculty

The CVD concept of responding to the needs of volunteers and volunteer organizations placed heavy reliance on the role of the Virginia Tech faculty. Major aspects of that role included: lending knowledge and skill to the solution of problems of specific volunteer organizations; incorporating material on volunteerism into selected academic courses; engaging in research or other scholarly activity related to volunteerism as need or opportunity indicated; and, other activity such as conference participation and materials preparation.

Faculty members were viewed as having a wide range of expertise relevant to supporting and strengthening volunteerism. Furthermore, it was perceived that Virginia Tech's commitment to university Extension programming would support the concept of faculty involvement. It was recognized as well, however, that enlisting faculty cooperation would require vigorous efforts to inform, interest and recruit faculty members, and provide suitable recognition for their involvement. Measures taken in pursuit of these ends included: a campus-wide survey of Tech faculty members' interest and expertise related to volunteerism; contact of individual faculty members by the CVD staff; meetings between CVD staff members and faculty groups; round table discussions of volunteerism with faculty groups; establishment of faculty "CVD Fellow," "CVD Associate," and "CVD Affiliate" status; and, distribution of CVD newsletters and other periodic communications to faculty members.

The evaluation task was to assess the extent to which these measures succeeded in involving faculty members in activities intended to strengthen volunteer organizations. CVD records indicated that close to 100 Virginia Tech faculty and staff members were involved in the CVD's efforts to assist volunteer organizations in the solution of particular problems. Many more were involved in research, instruction, conference participation, and other activities related to volunteer development. Considering all forms of faculty support and involvement, the records show that more than 400 faculty members from a broad range of Virginia Tech departments and colleges were involved in some way in assisting the CVD during the program's first five years. Many of these faculty members, including those with Extension appointments, voluntarily contributed time to such efforts in addition to the time spent on their normal job responsibilities.

Results of the 1984 survey of 77 CVD faculty Affiliates, Associates, and Fellows provide more detailed information about the nature of faculty involvement. Among 49 faculty members who responded to the survey (over half of whom did not have Extension appointments), the most prevalent CVD-related activity was "assisting volunteer organizations in response to a request for help." (Seventy-eight percent of the respondents reported this activity.) Other activities reported by moderate percentages of the respondents were "incorporating material on volunteerism into graduate or undergraduate courses" and "promoting interest in volunteerism among faculty colleagues" (see Table III).

Table III

CVD Faculty Affiliates, Associates, and Fellows Reporting Participation in Various Volunteer Development Activities

In Percent
N=49

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|---|----------------|
| Development and/or delivery of assistance to volunteers or volunteer organizations in response to a request | 78 |
| Helping to promote interest in volunteerism among faculty colleagues | 53 |
| Incorporation of materials on volunteerism into graduate or undergraduate courses | 41 |
| Involving students in activities aimed at serving volunteers/volunteerism | 39 |
| Delivery of papers or presentations at conferences/workshops on volunteerism | 35 |
| Conducting research related to volunteerism | 20 |
| Authoring or co-authoring papers for/with the CVD | 12 |
| Development of a curriculum in volunteerism/volunteer management | 12 |
| Reviewing CVD publications before publication | 10 |

Departments represented among the faculty who incorporated volunteerism into some aspect of their courses included diverse disciplines such as education, English, and architecture. In addition to incorporating material on volunteerism into existing courses, four new courses dealing specifically with volunteerism were developed. These four courses, comprising a cognate field in adult education and a minor field in human resources, family and child development, are: Foundations of Volunteerism; Volunteer System Management; Issues in Volunteerism; and, Voluntary Association and the Community.

Evaluation findings revealed broad support among the faculty for the CVD concept of faculty member involvement in the support of volunteerism. The results of the 1982 survey of faculty members who had not expressed interest in the CVD program, as well as the results of the 1982 and 1984 surveys of faculty members who had expressed interest, revealed that the vast majority of the survey respondents were willing to assist the CVD if asked. The vast majority also expressed explicit endorsement of the concept of extending the expertise of Virginia Tech faculty members to assist volunteer organizations in Virginia.

Survey results also indicated that a large majority of faculty members who had expressed interest in the CVD considered themselves "moderately" to "well informed" about the CVD's general mission, program activity, and faculty involvement. A smaller majority indicated knowledge of program accomplishments. These findings suggest that the CVD was generally successful in efforts to inform faculty members and gain their support for the CVD mission.

Although the CVD was successful in attracting faculty members into a range of activities supporting volunteerism, the number and diversity of faculty members involved in solving problems of specific volunteer organization was perhaps less than anticipated in the original CVD proposal. This circumstance can be attributed to: inherent problems of attracting non-Extension faculty to contribute time to Extension activity; and some communication gaps between the CVD and faculty.

Delivering Assistance to Volunteer Organizations

The major emphasis of the CVD program centered on the delivery of problem-solving assistance to volunteers and volunteer organizations.⁴ CVD

⁴A model of the problem-solving process is presented on page 4.

records indicated that from the inception of the program in 1980 through 1984, approximately 615 problem-solving contacts were made with volunteer organizations. The vast majority of these contacts led to the delivery of some type of assistance ranging from the simple mailing of informational pamphlets or reference material to individually tailored problem solutions based on many hours of Extension agent, CVD staff, and faculty effort.

The more complex problem solutions usually required face-to-face meetings between organizational representatives, CVD staff, and faculty members and, at times, on-site participation of staff and/or faculty in specific activities such as educational programs. Of 453 cases listed in CVD files as being officially "closed," faculty member assistance was involved in 85 cases, and a combination of CVD specialist and/or administrator, or Extension agent assistance in the remainder. Many of the cases involved the assistance of more than one of these categories of individuals.

The evaluation sought to answer the following questions about these problem-solving efforts:

- What types of organizations were reached?
- What was the nature of the assistance requested?
- What methods were used to deliver assistance?
- Were representatives of volunteer organizations satisfied with the assistance?
- What were the results of the assistance?

The findings of the 1981, 1982, and 1983 surveys of a total of 251 organizations that had received CVD assistance were consistent in indicating that organizations served by the CVD represented a wide range of types and purposes. Social service agencies were by far the most common among these organizations, with community action agencies, local governments, and school

systems also being strongly represented. Among other organizations included were church groups, youth agencies, libraries, citizen coalitions, recreation departments, service clubs, and more. Approximately 40 percent of the organizations served rural areas (cities or towns with populations of 30,000 or less), 35 percent rural and urban areas, and the remainder either urban areas or the entire state. The annual budgets of these organizations ranged from less than \$1,000 to more than \$50,000. Data on the budgets of the organizations responding to the 1983 survey were typical (see Table IV).

Table IV

Approximate Size of Annual Budgets of
Organizations Responding to the 1983 Survey

N=65

| <u>Budget Size</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Less than \$1,000 | 10 | 15 |
| \$1,000 to \$4,999 | 7 | 11 |
| \$5,000 to \$9,999 | 6 | 9 |
| \$10,000 to \$19,999 | 6 | 9 |
| \$20,000 to \$49,999 | 11 | 17 |
| <u>\$50,000 or more</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>39</u> |
| Total | 65 | 100 |

These findings suggest that the CVD program did reach organizations of the type originally envisioned. Many of these organizations operated on limited budgets, served rural areas, and could have been expected to have needs for assistance.

The most common requests were for assistance in solving problems related to: the recruitment, organization, training, and effective use of volunteers; the planning and development of programs; and the development or modification of organizational structures and processes. The types of assistance requested were described in an earlier discussion of the needs of volunteer organizations.

In all but a very small percentage of cases, initial contact between Virginia Tech and the organizations in need was made, as planned, through a local Extension agent. In more than half of the cases, responses to the organizations involved a personal visit from an Extension agent, CVD specialist, or faculty member. In the remainder of cases, responses were made by telephone calls, letters, and other written material. Organizations were generally satisfied with the promptness with which responses were delivered, although dissatisfaction with promptness was expressed in some instances, especially in the early life of the project.

The role of the CVD campus-based staff and regional specialists was critically important to the effective delivery of problem-solving assistance. The staff and specialists served not only as coordinators of the process, linking requests for assistance to available faculty resources, but as resource persons in their own right. In their resource role, the staff and specialists evaluated requests, identified needed resource material, and worked directly with Extension agents and organizations in the solution of problems. Direct assistance provided by the staff and specialists was cited by some organizational representatives as being especially helpful. Technical assistance, advice, and general support that the specialists provided to the Extension agents were also vital to the effectiveness of the CVD's problem-solving mission.

The organizational representatives' ratings of the Extension agents' understanding of their problems were overwhelmingly positive, as were their ratings of specific aspects of the responses received. The results of the 1983 survey are illustrative (see Table V).

Table V

Respondents' Ratings of Specific Aspects of the
Responses Received to Requests for Assistance
1983 Survey
(By Percentage of Respondents)

| <u>Aspect of Response</u> | <u>Very Good</u> | <u>Good</u> | <u>Satisfactory</u> | <u>Poor</u> | <u>Very Poor</u> | <u>Total Percent</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Clarity (N=60) | 58 | 30 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 100 |
| Timeliness (N=59) | 54 | 31 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 100 |
| Completeness (N=60) | 42 | 33 | 17 | 5 | 3 | 100 |
| Relevance to Problem (N=57) | 49 | 30 | 16 | 3 | 2 | 100 |
| Ease of Application (N=52) | 38 | 35 | 19 | 6 | 2 | 100 |

General satisfaction with the overall response was also high, especially as reflected in the 1982 and 1983 surveys in which 75 percent of the organizational representatives rated the responses received as being either "extremely satisfactory" or "very satisfactory." Further indication of satisfaction with help received is revealed in the overwhelming percentages of respondents in all three organizational surveys (77 percent to 92 percent) who indicated they would again seek assistance from the CVD if it were needed.

The results of all three surveys indicated that the assistance provided to volunteer organizations had helped in specific ways. Approximately three-quarters of all survey respondents reported that their organizations had been helped. Examples of beneficial outcomes were cited by many respondents. A representative sampling of these examples is as follows:

- The training session helped persons who were new at organizing and working with groups.
- The advisory committee was organized: committee work was coordinated.
- Motivation was provided for self and others.
- We formed a VAC within six months of the help received.
- A sample grant proposal was written that we used as a model.

- The volunteers were helped to understand their roles.
- We were able to complete a budget and a grant proposal.
- We were able to organize volunteers and get the most from their services.

To the extent that organizations which responded to the three evaluation surveys are representative of those contacted and served through the CVD effort, it seems clear that a significant degree of assistance was provided to a wide range of voluntary organizations throughout Virginia. It is reasonable to assume that this assistance has resulted in significant strengthening of the volunteering community. Such strengthening is likely to have occurred both through the direct impact of problems being solved, as well as through the more indirect benefit provided by the realization among voluntary organizations that they had a valuable new source of assistance that could be relied upon.

Contacting and Involving Other Postsecondary Institutions

In recognition of the limits of the resources that Virginia Tech alone could contribute to assisting volunteer organizations, an objective of the CVD was to attract the involvement of other postsecondary institutions in support of volunteerism. Accordingly, a systematic effort to interest Virginia's postsecondary institutions in programming that would strengthen volunteerism was begun by the CVD staff in 1982. CVD specialists and administrators contacted representatives of other institutions throughout the state and arranged individual discussions to explore the needs and opportunities for postsecondary programs in support of the volunteering community. Discussions of this topic were also held with institutional representatives in group settings. Contacts with approximately 80 public or private four-year colleges, community colleges, and universities were made in this manner.

The evaluation focused on: whether other postsecondary institutions did become involved in programs supporting volunteerism; the nature of the involvement; and, whether the CVD had influenced the involvement. Information bearing on these matters was collected in the fall of 1984 with the assistance of members of the CVD's advisory council. Representatives of a sample of 27 institutions, purposively selected because they were known to have had the most substantial contact with the CVD, were asked to participate in an interview survey. Interviews with 21 of these representatives were subsequently completed by council members.

The results of these interviews indicated that the 21 institutions were involved in a variety of activities related to volunteerism, ranging from the mere receipt of information to participation in problem-solving activity and the teaching of special courses. The nature of the involvement reported is shown in Table VI. Among all institutions reporting activities, a total of 55 faculty/staff members and 60 students were estimated to be involved.

Significantly, of 13 institutional representatives who were able to indicate when their institutions first became involved in volunteerism-related activity, one reported that involvement began in 1982 and nine reported that it began in 1983 or 1984. These beginnings coincide with the CVD's efforts to stimulate interest in involvement. Eight of the representatives who reported that their institutions were involved indicated that: specific benefits had resulted; the institution planned to be involved in such activities in the future; steps had been taken to encourage future involvement; and their institutions' involvement had been influenced by contact with the CVD. Ten of the representatives indicated that they supported their institutions' involvement in programs related to volunteerism to a "great" or "very great" extent, and 13 representatives said they would be interested in more contact with the CVD in the future.

Table VI

The Nature of Other Postsecondary Institutions'
Involvement in Activities Related to Volunteerism

N= 21

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>Number of Institutions</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Received explanation of the CVD's role | 12 | 57 |
| Received materials from CVD | 9 | 43 |
| Studied ways to become involved in volunteerism | 7 | 33 |
| Organized a response to a local problem of volunteerism | 4 | 19 |
| Assisted in responding to a problem of volunteerism | 5 | 24 |
| Participated/hosted conference/workshop on volunteerism | 4 | 19 |
| Developed volunteer-related curriculum | 3 | 14 |
| Taught volunteerism-related courses | 2 | 10 |
| Established student volunteer programs | 1 | 5 |

These findings suggest that the CVD effort has resulted in a modest increase of interest and involvement in programs supporting volunteerism among other postsecondary institutions. Although the data are not definitive, it is apparent that a minimum of eight or ten institutions have started programs and others are interested. Many additional institutions have been contacted, some of which will almost surely become involved in time.

In effect, a process has been started which, if properly nurtured, promises to make additional resources of postsecondary education available for support of volunteerism. The findings also suggest, however, that progress

may be slow. It is apparent that even among institutions that have had substantial contact with the CVD, many have no strong inclination to become involved. Such lack of interest would seem related to institutional problems associated with Extension activity, such as limited resources, conflicting priorities, and resistant educational philosophies.

Other CVD Activities

In addition to its principal thrusts of extending problem-solving assistance to volunteer organizations, encouraging the establishment of courses and curricula in subjects related to volunteerism, and seeking the participation of other postsecondary institutions in these activities, the CVD has responded to volunteer needs in other ways. The elements of CVD program activities have been expanded, modified, and redirected over the first five years of CVD existence. In essence, CVD programming has been an evolving effort that has reacted to problems and responded to opportunities as they emerged. In this sense, the CVD approach has been experimental, in keeping with the spirit of its mission.

New and/or modified program activities that emerged over the course of the CVD's existence include the following:

- With encouragement from the CVD staff, Cooperative Extension agents assumed responsibility for handling more problems of volunteer organizations on their own.
- A program of mini-grants was begun to encourage faculty research on volunteerism.
- A series of round-table discussions on topics related to volunteerism was begun among the Virginia Tech faculty.
- Encouragement, sponsorship, and/or support were given to national, state, and local conferences on volunteerism, including special purpose workshops at the local level for representatives of volunteer organizations sharing problems in common.
- Additional grants in support of activities related to volunteerism were obtained.

- A substantial collection of written material on volunteerism was collected, organized, maintained, and made available to scholars and other interested individuals working in support of volunteerism.
- A program of internships was established to support volunteers as well as students interested in working on projects to strengthen the volunteering community.
- Opportunities were provided for Extension agents to acquire knowledge and skills specifically related to the effective use of volunteers in their traditional programs.

The new grants, the conferences, and the internship program are perhaps particularly worthy of note. Grants to the CVD, in addition to the basic support of the Kellogg Foundation, totalled \$167,398 from January 1980 to December 1984. Granting agencies included, among others: C&P Telephone; the Virginia Education Association; and, ES/USDA. These grants supported a variety of activity such as preparation of educational materials and conference participation for volunteer teams.

Noteworthy conference activity included regional conferences on school volunteers, a statewide hospice conference, and a national conference on philosophical issues in volunteerism. Through January 1984, student interns had numbered six and volunteer interns 19. Achievements of these interns are impressive. Completed student intern projects included, among others, a handbook on volunteer programs in mental health services and a media handbook for volunteers. Among volunteer interns' achievements, the following are particularly noteworthy: completion of a handbook on effective utilization of Head Start volunteers, intended for nation-wide usage; design and conduct of a survey on how various voluntary associations utilize their past presidents; preparation of a paper on volunteers in schools for the handicapped; planning of an eight-course program leading to a career studies certificate in volunteer administration; preparation of a paper on credit courses in volunteer administration in community colleges; and, preparation of CVD publications on "Why Volunteer?" and "The Developmental Process of Voluntary Associations."

It can be expected that Virginia Tech's programming in support of the volunteering community will continue to evolve in new directions in the future in response to emerging volunteer needs, experience gained with current programming, and new challenges that will be faced.

Summary of CVD Program Achievements

The evaluation findings presented herein indicate that significant achievements have been made by the CVD in pursuit of its objectives. Among these are:

- The training and involvement of Extension agents from all areas of Virginia in activities related to identifying and solving problems of local volunteer organizations.
- The involvement of a wide range of Virginia Tech faculty members in Extension activity, research, and instruction intended to strengthen volunteerism.
- The delivery of problem-solving assistance to a large number of volunteer organizations, many of which had not previously been clients of Virginia Tech Extension, with resulting concrete benefits to many of these organizations.
- The involvement of other postsecondary institutions in activity supporting volunteerism.
- The sponsorship of conferences, publications, and other forms of information sharing that have reached a wide range of volunteers, volunteer organizations, and others in a position to strengthen volunteerism.

Additional findings based on the results of interviews with Extension and university administrators, Virginia Tech faculty members, and CVD staff members, as well as the results of the surveys of Extension agents and volunteer organizations, suggest that these achievements have led to further outcomes. These are:

- An increase in awareness among a wide range of groups and individuals of the important role of the volunteering community, the needs of volunteers and volunteer organizations, and the opportunities to help meet such needs.
- The fostering of networks leading to information sharing and mutual problem-solving among volunteers, volunteer organization administrators, faculty of colleges and universities, government officials, and other influential citizens.

This increase in awareness and networking among volunteers, administrators, college and university faculty, and others, combined with the increased involvement of faculty and Extension staff in specific problem-solving activity, has seemingly created a promising basis for continued future strengthening of volunteerism in Virginia.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM PROCESS

Efforts of the CVD staff to establish and conduct a program that would serve the needs of the volunteering community were subjected to the influence of several unexpected external occurrences. Numerous specific problems were also encountered in the process of implementing the various CVD program thrusts. The results of interviews held with Extension administrators, university administrators, Tech faculty, and CVD administrators and staff members were particularly valuable in identifying these occurrences and problems. The results of these interviews, and the evaluators' judgments which they shaped, provide the basis for the following discussion.

Factors that Influenced the CVD Effort

From its outset, the CVD program faced a web of troublesome circumstances created by difficult economic times. As a result of an economic decline that coincided with the beginning of the program, funding for Virginia's state-supported system of higher education was placed under constraint and the state's legislature began an intensive review of educational programming. As one interviewee put it, "the CVD's greatest difficulties were created by the timing of its establishment." The economic constraints created at least two unanticipated consequences with which the CVD was forced to deal: 1) competition for scarce resources within Virginia Tech's Extension Division; and 2) specific legislative guidelines for Extension programming which raised questions in the minds of some Extension personnel

concerning the priority of CVD-related work. Especially in the early years of CVD programming, these circumstances probably served to weaken support for the CVD among some Extension administrators and make more difficult the achievement of Extension involvement.

Another circumstance the CVD faced was the potential for rivalry with Virginia's Division of Volunteerism. Because of this potential, difficulties were created for the CVD in its early stages by the lack of a publicly recognized agreement concerning the relationship and responsibilities of the CVD and the Division of Volunteerism. The consequence was confusion in some localities, including local Extension offices, concerning which agency should be approached for assistance in dealing with various problems of volunteer organizations. A memorandum of understanding between the CVD and the Division of Volunteerism, executed in the latter stages of the CVD's initial funding period, has presumably alleviated a measure of this difficulty.

These broad influencing factors led, in turn, to specific problems that hampered the CVD's programming thrusts. These problems, which are described below, combined to create an institutional environment that was not always hospitable to CVD aims and activities.

Problems and Challenges

The CVD's efforts to involve both Extension and the Virginia Tech faculty in activities supporting volunteerism were faced with several problems, for the most part not of CVD making. With respect to the effort to involve Extension, obstacles existed almost from the start. As mentioned above, CVD programming began at a time of budget austerity for Extension. Spending constraints had already forced Extension staff reductions. The Extension organization was also in flux as a result of reorganization of its administrative structure, which involved shifts in lines of authority and responsibility. It was during this period that the CVD was impelled to press its claims for a

portion of Extension agents' professional time in pursuit of its aims to serve volunteer organizations, many of which were "non-traditional" clients for Extension programs.

Faced with the customary expectations of traditional clients, as well as shrinking staff resources, some Extension administrators and agents perceived a conflict between CVD programming and their customary program activity. The perception was bolstered by an initial strong CVD emphasis on serving "non-traditional" clients. This emphasis was seen as unwillingness to use any CVD resources to support Extension programming for traditional clients. In addition to these obstacles, some Extension personnel believed that CVD goals lacked clarity, while others believed the CVD role overlapped that of the state's Division of Volunteerism.

At the same time, there was strong support throughout the Extension organization for the concept of providing assistance to the volunteering community. Furthermore, the initial group of cooperating Extension agents, which began CVD-related programming in 1980, was made up of agents with considerable experience in volunteerism and interest in being involved. CVD administrators were also well acquainted with Extension and were aware of some of the difficulties that existed.

Nevertheless, a sizeable minority of agents were apparently not convinced of the value of CVD-related programming. For example, data indicate that approximately 25 percent of the Extension agents designated as cooperating with the CVD made no contacts with volunteer organizations, and were not involved in problem-solving efforts on behalf of volunteerism, in the 12 months preceding the 1983 agent survey. Moreover, a substantial percentage of agents expressed uncertainty as to whether the CVD program was effective in addressing the problem-solving needs of organizations in their localities. In

essence, some Extension agents appeared to be cooperating grudgingly with the CVD and making only minimal efforts on its behalf. It is apparent that there is a continuing need for training and encouragement of Extension agents to maintain, as well as extend, the involvement that has been achieved.

CVD efforts to involve the Tech faculty in Extension activities also faced problems. Even though the faculty, by-and-large, supported the concept of extending Virginia Tech's resources to assist the volunteering community, other job pressures were apparently an obstacle to the actual involvement of some faculty members. A prime example is the importance placed on faculty members' records of research and publications in the awarding of rank and tenure. This was an especially troublesome obstacle among younger, untenured faculty since time spent on "service" to volunteer organizations was given little weight by promotion committees.

The timing of requests for faculty assistance posed another problem, especially when such requests came during busy times, such as the beginning of a term or at exam periods. Although a problem of timing is understandable, volunteer organizations that requested assistance were, for the most part, not agreeable to waiting for responses. Still another obstacle was the perception of some faculty members that responding to specific problems of individual organizations did not sufficiently call upon their most highly developed abilities, which lay in the areas of conceptualization and research.

Increasing Virginia Tech faculty involvement remains a challenge. Findings indicate that a large number of faculty with relevant expertise remain interested in assisting the volunteering community but have not been involved to date. Although it is unlikely that relevant tasks can be found for all who are interested, additional means of creating, maintaining, and channeling faculty interests in support of CVD aims are needed.

The delivery of assistance to volunteer organizations also encountered problems: not all efforts resulted in positive outcomes and not all organizations were satisfied. Some volunteer organizations were not well informed about the CVD's program and others lacked understanding of the limits of a university's Extension role. Some organizational representatives criticized faculty assistance as being impractical and ineffectual. Continuing efforts will be needed to forge broadened links with the volunteering community and to deliver well-conceived assistance as appropriate.

Obstacles such as these may have been compounded at times by CVD strategies which understandably had to proceed largely by trial and error. Some strategies identified by the interviewees as being problematic were: an approach to involving Extension agents that was apparently perceived by some as "top down" and arbitrary, especially concerning the time to be spent on CVD activity; insufficient emphasis early in the project on assistance in support of Extension's programs for traditional audiences; inconsistent feedback to involved faculty of the results of their efforts to assist volunteer organizations; emphasis on reaction to organizational problems, with limited attention to faculty members' inclination to want to anticipate problems in order to create generalized solutions; and, absence of a structured follow-up procedure with organizations that had been provided assistance.

Other limiting factors that contributed to CVD problems were: the very broad aims of the CVD program which in some respects could be considered too ambitious; the relatively limited full-time CVD staff resources; and, the degree of institutional and individual change that was required in the short span of five years.

It is clear that despite the obstacles that were encountered the CVD has achieved much success. The success can be attributed to important strengths

which the program possessed. The strengths are outlined in the following section.

Program Strengths

Clearly, one of the important strengths of the CVD has been the quality of its staff. Although relatively small in size, and despite a moderate degree of turnover, the staff perhaps achieved more than could have been reasonably expected. Hard work, competency, and dedication to the CVD mission typified the staff effort. In essence, staff members believed strongly in what they were doing and gave fully of themselves in the process of trying to make the CVD concept "work." The CVD was also fortunate in having an administrator with a clear vision of what could be accomplished, as well as the ability to articulate that vision in a manner that fostered staff commitment. The flexibility of CVD administrators and staff in being willing to modify program strategies in the face of unanticipated obstacles was also an important factor in CVD achievements.

It is important to note that the CVD staff served in more than an administrative and coordinating capacity. CVD staff members also filled a vital role as experts in a wide range of matters related to volunteerism, including the development, maintenance, and effective operation of volunteer organizations and programs. The effective discharge of the role of "specialist in volunteerism" was an indispensable aspect of CVD programming.

Another strength of the program lay in the apparent existence of a reservoir of faculty interest and good will toward this type of project. This interest was reflected in the development of a cadre of faculty members who gave freely of their time and ability to support CVD programming. The commitment and energetic pursuit of CVD objectives by a large number of Extension agents was an equally important strength.

Finally, a strength of the program also resided in the voluntary sector's need for assistance and its ability to take advantage of such assistance when provided.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations which follow have their basis in the findings summarized in the preceding pages as well as in the judgments of the evaluation team, the evaluation advisory committee, and the CVD Advisory Council. The judgements of the evaluators and the evaluation advisory committee were crystallized in the late fall of 1984 during a review of previously collected data and discussions with the CVD staff and specialists. Judgments of the advisory council were elicited with the aid of a brief questionnaire distributed in November 1984. The specific conclusions that will be listed represent a synthesis and distillation of the judgments collected by these means. The focus is on assessment of the overall success of the CVD effort, principles demonstrated or learned, and/or implications that can be drawn. The conclusions are:

- 1) Volunteer organizations have a diversity of common as well as unique needs that can be met effectively with university assistance.
- 2) A land-grant university can successfully incorporate programs of assistance to the volunteering community into its Extension mission, resulting in heightened awareness and strengthening of volunteerism;
- 3) Extension agents will accept the volunteer community as a client group, and can learn to use the considerable local and campus-based skills and resources of Extension to deliver meaningful assistance to volunteer organizations.
- 4) University faculty members have knowledge relevant to strengthening volunteer organizations and, given time and the potential of appropriate return for effort given, will assist such organizations;

- 5) University Extension programming in support of volunteer organizations can activate a network of volunteers, organizational leaders, and university personnel leading to valuable and difficult-to-achieve collaboration in pursuit of a more effective volunteering community.
- 6) Successful university programming in support of volunteerism requires much time and skill, a focus on common as well as unique problems of volunteer organizations, understanding of existing volunteer resources, consistent follow up with clients, and continuing program monitoring and adjustment;
- 7) Success of university programs in support of volunteerism will be enhanced by early involvement of an effectively functioning volunteer advisory committee;
- 8) Effective management of a CVD-like program requires leadership and vision, clear staff role definitions, a staff and program structure that meets essential needs, visibility of the program, and exercise of care to minimize conflict with existing programs;
- 9) Success of a CVD-like program requires strong institutional support including the active commitment of key administrators, avoidance of portraying the program as being temporary, appointment of a respected senior faculty member to head the program, and effective linkage to existing institutional structures.

A major recommendation is that it would be appropriate at this juncture of the CVD program to reflect upon future programming strategies in the light of past experience. A milestone has been reached with the successful conclusion of the initial five-year period of CVD funding. The task for the future will be to consolidate and extend the progress that has been made. As suggested at various points in this document, beginnings have been made. The challenge is to insure that these beginnings evolve into strong and lasting commitments with increased beneficial results to the volunteering community. More faculty members need to be involved in new ways, the Extension organization needs to be more fully convinced of the value and appropriateness of the effort, and more postsecondary institutions need to participate. To achieve these results will almost certainly require program modifications and innovations. A specific suggestion is that intensive planning for the future is

needed. The planning process might appropriately include staff retreats, advisory council-staff deliberations, and other specific efforts to stimulate creative thinking. A clear opportunity exists to generate even more meaningful programming of lasting benefit to the volunteering community and ultimately to the citizens of Virginia.

Additional recommendations can be offered for other institutions that may wish to begin similar volunteer development programs. With respect to involving the Extension organization, there needs to be a firm and visible commitment on the part of top Extension administrators. At the same time, support for the program must be created from the bottom-up. This is likely to require careful program building that allows ample opportunity for suggestions from all levels of the organizations. Presenting volunteer development as a complement or extension of what Extension agents are already doing may be helpful, as may providing for potential spin-off benefits to more traditional programs. Threats that may be posed to existing program resources should be minimized, if possible.

The task of involving university faculty members in volunteer development can focus on tapping a range of faculty motives and interests. The CVD experience suggests there is a substantial degree of willingness among faculty members to be involved. This can derive from interest in: learning from practical, real-world situations; providing opportunities for student experience and learning; developing opportunities for research, being of service to the public; or other similar interests. Faculty members do not respond to the notion that they have an obligation to be involved in Extension or service activity. The implication is that a volunteer development program needs to be structured so as to encourage and build upon the expression of a wide range of faculty interests. This requires creating options for faculty

involvement that serve the different needs of faculty members, as well as volunteer organizations. However, even under the best circumstances, only some faculty will become intensely involved. Thus, initially, it is likely to be necessary to develop a relatively small cadre of interested, highly involved faculty members rather than build more tenuous relations with a larger number. Faculty members with Extension appointments are obviously good candidates, but others without formal ties to Extension can also be involved and should be sought out.

While faculty involvement is important in the CVD model of volunteer development, the role of the volunteer development specialist is also critical. Successful programming for the volunteering community requires a solid base of knowledge of volunteerism and its associated challenges. Thus, it is vital to involve a specialist or specialists who can provide program development leadership as well as delivery of program content directly to clients as required. The leadership and support that a capable specialist can provide is especially vital if Extension agents are to be included in programming.

Finally, new programs of volunteer development need to begin with realistic expectations. Objectives should be carefully set in relation to available resources; potential client groups should be helped to understand the limits of Extension programming; and, Extension agents should appreciate the constraints that influence the availability of faculty assistance. Building a successful program is likely to require a carefully planned, sustained effort over considerable time. The commitment should be to the long-term development of a program that is of meaningful assistance to the volunteering community, as well as sustainable with available university resources.