

The Department of Epidemiology

Annual Conference - 1974

Quail Roost

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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MEMORANDUM

TO: FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF

FROM: Michel A. Ibrahim

DATE: April 29, 1974

RE: Quail Roost Retreat

The Quail Roost Retreat will be held June 17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Maps will be posted a few days before the 17th. Please arrange your own transportation.

Your responses are condensed to four areas which will make the agenda for the meeting. Several students and faculty have agreed to take responsibility for asking the relevant questions on each topic. The person whose name is underlined is requested to convene the group one or more times before the Retreat, and to lead the discussions at the meeting. All other faculty and students are encouraged to contact any member of the group with their input.

The staff members are invited to work with any group of their choosing or form their own group under VI Krall's guidance.

AGENDA

- 9:00 - 9:45 Steering Committee Report on Curriculum Development.
B. Kaplan, E. Wagner, Ruth Ann Yauger.
- 9:45 - 10:30 Advanced Course.
S. Haynes, W. Lednar, Al Tyroler.
- 10:30 - 10:45 Coffee Break
- 10:45 - 11:30 Field Training and Community-related Programs.
S. Gehlbach, M. Daly, C. Slome.
- 11:30 - 12:15 Career Opportunities for Epidemiologists.
M. Forman, M. Ibrahim, A. Stark, Al Tyroler.
- 12:15 - 1:00 Open Discussion.
- 1:00 - 4:00 Lunch
Social

Staff Session

MAI:td

Steering Committee Report on Curriculum Development

Bert Kaplan presented three key questions that were formulated by the Steering Committee concerning curriculum development:

- 1) What are the skills and creativity required of the modern epidemiologist?
- 2) What are the differences between the competencies expected from and achieved by students in the masters and those in the doctoral programs?
- 3) What special problems of academic excellence are posed by the fact that the Ph.D. in epidemiology is not cumulative to other fields except to medicine?

Four core areas of expertise were suggested as required skills of epidemiologists:

- 1) Epidemiologic methods
- 2) Biostatistical tools
- 3) Behavioral science, and
- 4) Biomedical science.

Admission policies require competency in at least one, if not more, of the four areas (Epid., Bios., Biomedical, Behavioral), and the other areas must be developed in the course of graduate school programs.

Faculty discussion centered around whether or not it's useful to consider the three competency areas of biomedical science, behavioral science and statistics united and amalgamated with the Epidemiologic Method. Naturally, this produced discussion of whether or not there is THE epidemiologic method based on the definition of epidemiology as the distribution of health and disease in populations. This definition separates epidemiology from other

sciences that utilize a population base, such as economics, demography, biostatistics. Perhaps it would be more reasonable to consider the uniting force as the Epidemiologic Approach which encompasses the synthesis of methods used in epidemiology and biostatistics combined with the scientific method.

In the discussion of how to achieve cumulative experience for students (particularly non MD's), two distance pathways, applied or investigative, were suggested. The investigative track would offer the MPH and/or the Dr. PH. A third possibility, a combination of the two tracks, was also suggested. The Steering Committee has discussed this issue in greater detail, but no formal recommendation was reached (see the Steering Committee Report 1974).

Another major theme of the discussion related to curriculum was the issue of teaching epidemiologic method versus epidemiologic content. Several students favored the idea of teaching substantive courses such as the epidemiology of the leading causes of death in the USA. However, there appeared to be more support among both faculty and students for courses in which substantive materials are used as a vehicle for teaching the epidemiologic approach.

The consensus of the group was to encourage the Steering Committee to continue to look into curriculum matters for the purpose of defining the above concerns, and making specific proposals.

Advanced Methods Course

Wayne Lednar chaired the discussion of the advanced methods course and began his presentation with a progress report which was distributed to all present. This report included the course requirements, the course outline, and the class schedule for the Fall semester.

Interested students have solicited interested faculty, and the result has been a formal course with emphasis on second-level methods. The following four areas of methodology were identified:

- 1) Research design
- 2) Measurement
- 3) Analysis
- 4) Interpretation

Several concerns to the structure and the content of the course were raised. They are enumerated below along with suggestions offered:

- 1) The large number of participating faculty (teaching only one or two sessions) could produce a "cafeteria style" course with serious loss of continuity. However, it was suggested that the coordinator of the course should be responsible for unifying lectures and relating one to the other.
- 2) The possibility of an instructor who may elect to lecture for three hours rather than a continuation of lecture-discussion. While it may be difficult to restrict the presentation of a lectures to one and one half hours, leaving the remaining one and one half hours for discussion.
- 3) From the course outline it did not appear that the course would be substantially different from Epid. 160. Several faculty members

did outline an advanced area of methodology for case-controlled studies, cross-sectional studies and cohort studies. These presentations were convincing arguments that there is indeed additional methodology to be taught beyond the 160 level.

- 4) Faculty attendance was also considered to be a problem since this might inhibit discussion on the part of the students. It was suggested that if faculty did attend, they should not use this course as a forum to discuss their own interests. Student interests should come first.

The final recommendations were made to give the students a hearty vote of thanks for a job well done and to try the course on an experimental basis as originally intended. Post course evaluation will determine any necessary changes.

Field Training and Community Related Programs

Cecil Slome began the discussion by reminding the group that Wednesdays have been designated "Field Training Days" in the School of Public Health. It was stated that field training could be of great benefit to students, particularly those who have not had such practice, for it does add "real life" experience to academic learning. Thus, the student is prepared more broadly for the practice of epidemiology. The practice experience should bring into sharper focus the epidemiological problems of public health, medical and health services; problems involved in data collection; compromises in epidemiological methods which have to be made; and consultative skills.

One of the major disadvantages raised was that the experience may be useless if it is required of all students regardless of learning needs and background. It was also pointed out that in order for field training to be a valuable learning experience, a large amount of faculty input will be required. Some of the ideas suggested for field training were:

- 1) Working in an apprenticeship role with a faculty member on an epidemiologic problem;
- 2) Working with a faculty member involved as consultant to a research project (the need for consultative skills was emphasized and this would help prepare the student for this type of role);
- 3) Working with a faculty member on any one of the many requests for technical assistance received by the school each year.

The general consensus about field experience was that it should be optional and related to the students' learning needs and interests. It was felt that a departmental task force should be established to make recommendations and establish guidelines.

Career Opportunities for Epidemiologists

Michelle Forman presented data on background and type of employment of Epidemiology Alumni since 1959 (See Exhibit 1). Similar analysis of current Epidemiology students as of June 1974, was presented (Exhibit 2). Admission statistics for fall '74 is given in Exhibit 3. It was also reported that trends over the last 15 years indicate that proportionately more students are younger, are coming directly from undergraduate school with little or no work experience in the health area, and are entering from non-health fields than those of 15 years ago.

While these trends have implications in the structure of the educational program, it does not appear to have affected the job market. It appears that non-MD epidemiologists have an adequate number of job possibilities as evidenced by the jobs currently posted in the department. Of the 33 jobs posted, only 13 of them specify an MD degree as a requirement (See Exhibit 4). It was also pointed out that the title of epidemiologist is now given to non-physicians in federal government jobs (previously reserved for physicians).

Michel Ibrahim then presented the results of a survey of the current enrollment in the epidemiology departments in 14 schools of public health in the United States who responded to the questionnaire. This survey revealed that:

- 1) The 14 schools can accommodate 346 epidemiology students; only 248 students were currently enrolled.
- 2) 30.6 percent of the students in both masters and doctoral programs were physicians.
- 3) 37.5 percent were on fellowships; 62.5 percent provided their own support.

- 4) The number of job requests received at each school varied from 5-50. Assuming that many of these requests were duplicates, it was still felt that a minimum of 30 requests for jobs could not be accomodated at present (all graduates are employed).

The conclusion drawn from the survey was that the current supply of epidemiologists falls short of the demand. This is even more so since the NHLI is asking for 70-80 epidemiologists to work on the large scale collaborative trials which would, theoretically, absorb about one-third of the current graduates.

Michel Ibrahim distributed flow charts of the organizational structure of the National Institutes of Health (Exhibit 5), and the World Health Organization (Exhibit 6).

The increased use of epidemiologists in the large scale NHLI collaborative studies, other federal agencies, WHO, and of course local and state health agencies, universities, etc., would lead to the conclusion that current students will have a wide and varied choice of job opportunities. The fact that, with very few exceptions, all our alumni (121 in the past 15 years) are working in a professional capacity appropriate to their degree in epidemiology should also be encouraging.

EXHIBIT 1

EPID ALUMNI 1959 - June 1974

By Degree and Background

EPID degree	Undergraduate training non-health	Health professionals	TOTAL
MPH	16	61*	77
MSPH	4	2	6
MS	0	2	2
Dr. PH	2	7	9
TOTAL	30	91	121

* 44 were M.D.s (72%)

EPID ALUMNI 1959 - June 1974

By Background and Current Employment

	Non-health undergraduate training	Health professionals	TOTAL
Univ. connected	10	32	42
Nat'l Agencies (incl. military)	5	13	18
State & Local Agencies	3	13	16
Other:	6	9	15
Med Student			
private practice			
private industry			
Return to Foreign Country	0	11	11
Unknown	6	13	19
TOTAL	30	91	121

EXHIBIT 2

CURRENT EPID STUDENTS - June 1974

By Background and Degree Sought

Epid Degree	Non-health undergraduate training	Health professionals	TOTAL
MPH	5	9	14
MSPH	1	0	1
MS	1	0	1
Dr. PH	2	4	6
Ph.D.	10	13	23
TOTAL	19	26	45

EXHIBIT 3

ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

FALL 1974

Total Number of Applicants -	80
Total Number of Applicants(1973)-	69
Total Number of Applicants Accepted or Placed on a Waiting List	31

Applicants

Male	54
Female	26
Minority	3
Foreign	6
North Carolina Residents	9
Non-Residents	71

Breakdown of Incoming StudentsMasters

8

Background

Ph.D. (Genetics)	- 1
M.D.	- 4
D.V.M.	- 1
B.S. (Nursing)	- 1
B.A. (Government)	- 1

Program Entering

Health Services Research	- 2
Environmental Epid	- 5
Alcohol Studies	- 1

Doctoral

9

Background

M.P.H. (Epid)	- 1	M.A. (Anth)	- 1
M.S. (Epid)	- 1		
M.A. (Soc Work)	- 1		
M.S. (Biostat)	- 1		
M.P.H. (Envr Hlth)	- 1		
M.A. (Planning)	- 1		

Program Entering

Alcohol & Soc Epid	- 1
Alcohol Studies	- 1
Envir Epid	- 3
Pop Epid	- 2
Health Ser Res	- 2

EXHIBIT 4

JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR EPIDEMIOLOGISTS

A. Institution or agency

1. 8 with health departments or agencies
2. 13 with universities or medical schools
3. 6 with government agencies
4. 4 with institutes or private companies

B. Requirements for employment

1. 3 MD
2. 9 MD with MPH
3. 1 MD with Ph.D.
4. 3 MPH
5. 8 Ph.D.
6. 9 unspecified

C. Type of work

1. 13 research
2. 5 research and teaching
3. 2 teaching
4. 5 administrative
5. 5 other
6. 1 consultant

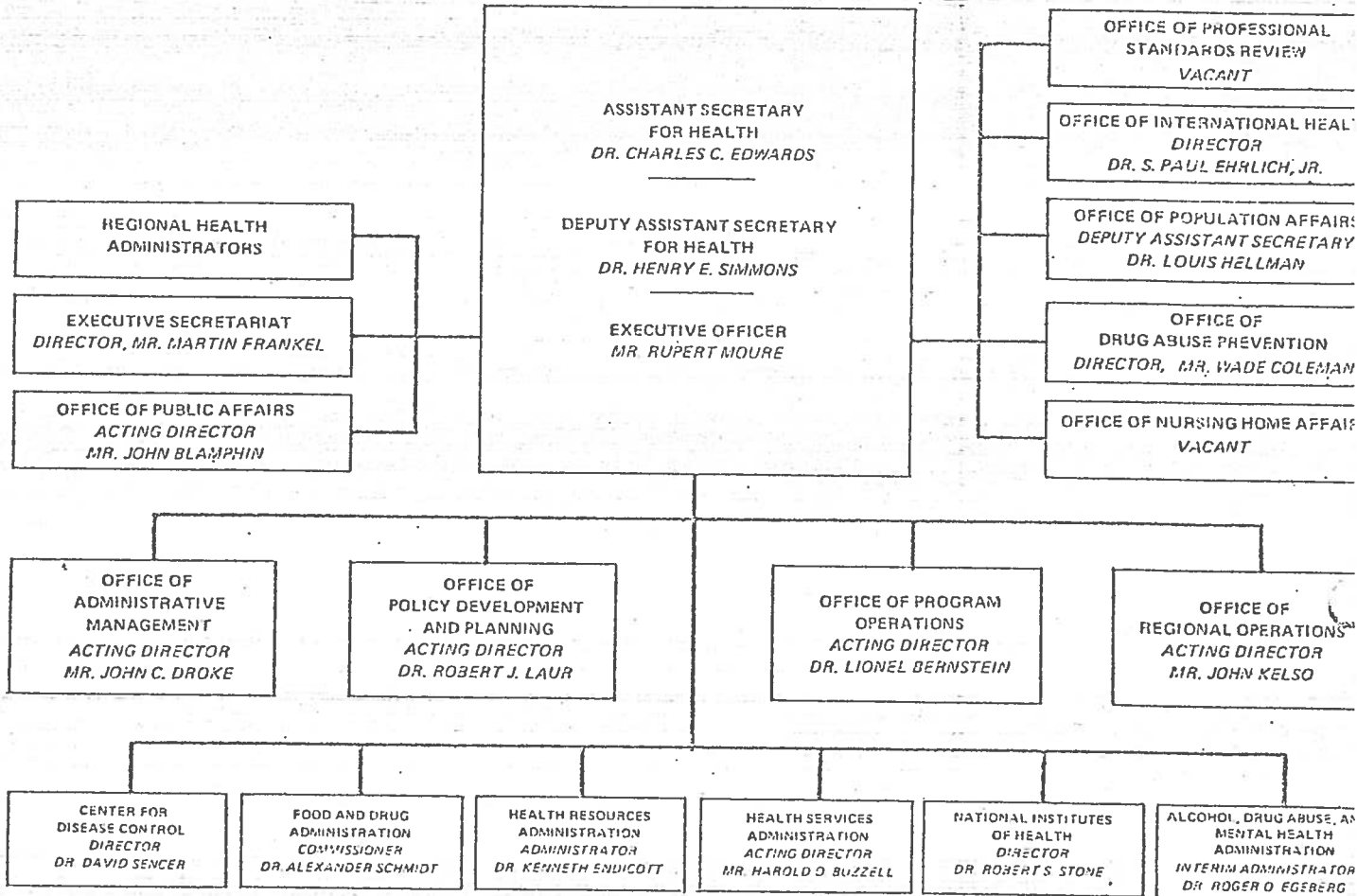
EXHIBIT 5

PHS Organization

CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

HRA NEWS has received a number of inquiries about the organization of health programs in the reorganized Public Health Service. We are glad to print in this issue an organizational chart which will perhaps illustrate more clearly the new relationships of health programs in HEW.

FRANK C. CARLUCCI
UNDER SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE



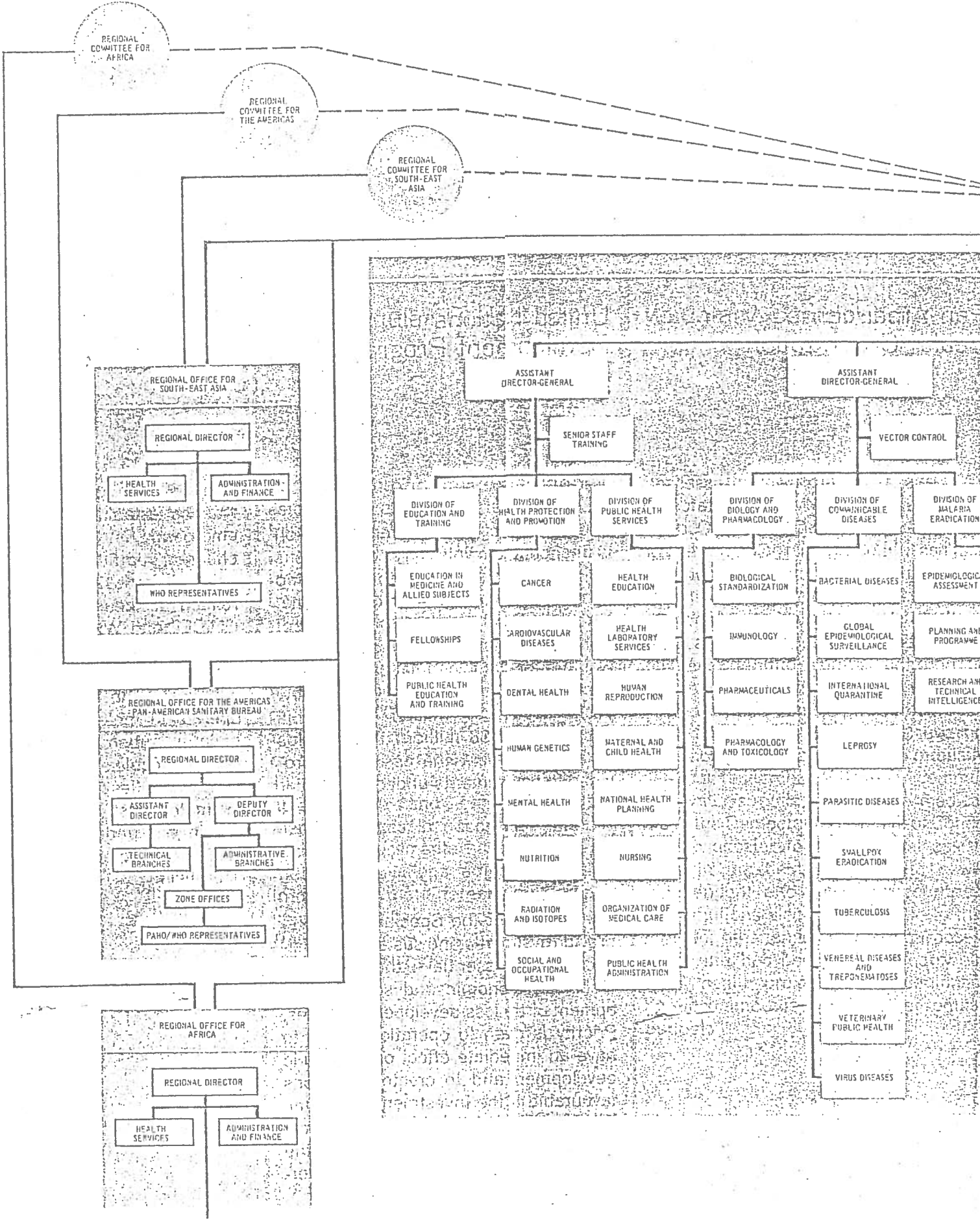
OVER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
HEALTH RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20852

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
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HEW 396



EXHIBIT 6



Quail Roost Agenda - Staff

June 17, 1974

I. Telephones

- A. Possibility of new system for the department
- B. Difficulties encountered by secretaries because of failure of professors to keep them informed of whereabouts
- C. Listing toll calls - date and place called most important

II. Job Satisfaction

III. Responsibility

IV. Personal experiences with the Personnel Department

V. North Carolina State Employees' Association

VI. Space

- A. How staff would like to have space allocated in new building
- B. Provision of staff lounge

VII. Relationships Between Professors and Staff (secretaries)

- A. Types of responses to memos and requests
- B. Suggestions for improvement

I. Telephones:

We discussed the problems associated with the way the phones are answered. At present, Rooms 222 and 207 both take turns one month at a time. This situation of not having one person only to answer phones creates problems for secretaries alone in the office when it is their turn to answer. A number of secretaries said they had been unable to leave their office when their professor (s) wanted to see them because they were alone when answering the phones. We have found, too, that although the Work Study students help out, there is not enough coverage by them to insure secretaries relief in phone answering.

Suggestions for relieving the situation included having two people responsible to be in office at all times to cover phones and to divide the time daily between Rooms 207 and 222, which was thought highly unsatisfactory. As usual, we came back to the idea of the PBX System with one person answering the phones. This had previously been discussed with a phone company representative by Vi, Deva and Dr. Ibrahim.

One major problem in answering the phones is that frequently the professors leave their office and do not tell us they will be gone or when they will return. It is not so important for us to know where each person can be reached, but all of us at some time have received rude or abusive comments when we have explained that the person, "is out and we don't know when he'll be in or if he'll return to the office today." Some secretaries praised their professors on this point saying that these particular people made a point of letting them know they'll be gone and for how long. This makes it easier on

us, although we do realize that having the secretaries in only two locations does make communication difficulties at times.

II. Job Satisfaction:

We discussed the idea of being able to raise one's position, especially within the department. We would like to see available positions advertised (and this has been implemented by Personnel), and more importantly we would like to see people already in the department upgraded when deserved. In this regard, new grants can give the staff a chance to apply for a new position.

III. Responsibility - Faculty and Staff:

We would like to point out that we could do a better job ourselves if our work were more evenly spaced, although we realize this is not always possible. Some faculty make it a practice to ask for something to be done immediately, an hour before it is needed, and in some cases, have given even less time. While this cannot be avoided on occasion, doing this habitually does cause all of us problems because frequently the secretary must ask for someone to help her, taking another person away from something that may be important also.

An age old problem we have is that students sometimes ask for secretaries help, which we are not allowed to give. Usually we face this every fall, but some students persist in requesting someone to do something throughout the year. We feel that faculty members can help by not encouraging their students to seek secretarial help and especially by not volunteering secretarial help to students.

A great deal of bad feelings have been caused by students not being able to see particular faculty members and all this ill will is vented

on the secretary. Several people are left notes by those who want to see them, reminded by their secretaries and still do not make any effort to make an appointment. This problem is most acute with those professors who insist on making their own appointments. We want to alleviate this situation and are willing to help, but we need cooperation on all sides - faculty, staff and students.

IV. Personnel:

We have discussed our own special problems in dealing with Personnel so many times among ourselves that nothing of note was discussed here.

V. N. C. State Employees Association:

Violet Krall, our departmental representative, told us about the association. It has a person who lobbies in the legislature for various benefits received by staff and faculty alike. It is to the advantage of both to join. It was the association who brought about the 7.5 percent increase in salaries this year for the staff and presently it is lobbying for faculty members to receive total costs of trips, rather than airfare and \$25/day subsistence. If any member has a complaint, it will be heard at their meeting and looked into. We should all consider this organization and look into it.

VI. Space:

As was mentioned earlier, it would be much more convenient if the staff of each professor were to be located near the professor, not down the hall. The suggestion of suites of offices has been put forth to the Space Committee, which would be the best solution for the new building. Dr. Ibrahim's office is an example of how this would work.

The staff would also like to see the addition of a lounge for staff only. This would preclude situations of persistent females

following secretaries into the ladies room to make appointments with faculty.

VII. Relationships Between Professors and Staff:

There was some discussion that some members of the faculty are simply not aware of the qualifications and background of the people working for them. Some secretaries said that their particular professors made a point of getting to know them, discussed their education, etc., and treated them with respect. Secretaries treated in this manner felt better about their work than those who felt as though their professor had no idea if they had even been to college and were not interested in them as people. In this same vein, some of our students at times have demeaned the secretaries and have insulted them without cause. We try to bring this to the attention of Dr. Ibrahim (or Dr. Cassel) or a faculty member with whom the student works, to see if the situation can be rectified.

Although we may have been a bit severe on the faculty just above, it was agreed that on the whole our faculty is very supportive and appreciative. Also, we feel all have a spirit of cooperation and communication generated by both the faculty and staff that most departments do not have.