

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

*Members of
Planning
Group*
TO: Ralph Smuckler, Chief Advisor

DATE: December 15, 1958

FROM: J. E. Griffin, Chief, Administrative Services Division

SUBJECT: Job Specifications and Descriptions

On several occasions, I have taken the opportunity to mention verbally, my concern at the lack of position descriptions and job specifications within MSUG. Perhaps I have failed to properly set forth the benefits to the organization or possibly because of factors unknown to me, the timing has been inopportune. Academically and philosophically, no administrator can disagree with the desirability of knowing what is and what should be performed by each member of his staff. Within the same frame of reference, no one can argue the desirability of placing the properly qualified individual into a position for which he is suited and which calls for his particular talents in the organizational structure. Even the structure of the organization may well depend upon accurate specifications and descriptions of the functions necessary to overall performance. Actually, the effective administrator must be secure in this knowledge if he is to delegate confidently, determine policy wisely, recruit intelligently and train his staff properly.

Over the next few months as MSUG is gradually reducing in staff numbers, and as we again carefully examine program objectives, we should give exacting consideration to the problem of job specification and description. It is most difficult, if not altogether impossible, to effectively program without this knowledge. It is flatly impossible to recruit replacements intelligently without this knowledge; this truth is compounded when actual recruiting is done in East Lansing and the program is operated in Saigon. For example, just what does a "Municipal Police Specialist" do in Saigon? What percentage of his time is spent in conferring with his counterparts? What reports does he write? What authority has he? Does he lecture? Does he compose training materials? Does he travel? Is his physical health important? Does he do actual physical police work as a part of his job? What kinds of experience in his past will help to insure success on this job? What formal education should he have? Does he meet the highest level GVN public? Is a language proficiency necessary? Desirable? The foregoing examples merely scratch the surface of what needs to be known and specified before we can function effectively.

It is proposed that you approve the following recommendations and give unqualified support to the findings.

1. Effective January 5, 1959, Mr. Dale L. Rose be assigned part time as needed, to assist in the auditing of all American staff positions contemplated for, and continuing into the next contract period. This assignment is estimated to be of 6 weeks duration.

2. That the writer and Mr. Rose be given full authority to interview all American staff personnel, make a complete job audit of all American staff positions and, subject to the approval of the Chief Advisor, formalize position descriptions and specifications for all MSUG positions.

3. Upon completion of the foregoing, all future recruiting and replacement of MSUG staff will be predicated upon the position descriptions and specifications currently valid.

4. If in the course of our study it becomes apparent that adjustments or re-assignments are indicated, these will be considered carefully. If jobs are to be abolished, down graded or, re-assigned, this will occur at the termination of the incumbent's assignment. (Desk audits are generally viewed with alarm by some employees, but if proper human relations and proper introduction to the study are observed, there needs to be no cause for alarm.)

In conclusion, at risk of being misunderstood, your attention is invited to two facts considered to be of prime essence:

1. It is absolutely incumbent upon MSUG, in its role as technical advisor to the GVN in Public Administration, to have its own house in order administratively. Only in this way can we hope to be significant in our mission.

2. We simply must be cognizant of the fact that we are here to perform a series of specific missions and that successful accomplishment is dependent upon an effective structure. That this structure may vary markedly from the classical university academic structure and organization must be accepted. Administrative effectiveness should supersede all other considerations if Michigan State University is to leave a lasting and favorable impact in the Republic of Vietnam.