Application by Candidates

Individuals interested in unit positions may receive information about available openings through any of the three cooperators. A clear statement of salary limitations may not be made available to candidates because of the differing levels of information among the cooperators. Presumably, fully informed individuals would not apply if the salary level did not meet their expectations. Even the federal position announcement creates a problem for applicants not used to federal recruitment procedures. Assistant leader positions are often advertised as slash graded (GS 11/12), which means to the federal establishment that the entrance is to be at the 11 level and that later promotion to the 12 level is possible or that more highly qualified individuals may be hired at the 12 level. Applicants often presume that either grade is available through negotiation, and many believe the salary can be set at any level (grade and step) of the salary range of the two grades.

The selection of new staff for a unit is the most important decision for the program. Adherence to the prescribed procedures, involvement of all cooperators, and full agreement with the selection by all cooperators are indispensable.

Flexibility is Effective

Complications occasionally arise because each cooperator has different operating styles, procedures, administrative requirements, and objectives. Differences include travel regulations, business hours, holiday schedules, bookkeeping requirements, staff performance expectations, accounting regulations, equipment acquisition procedures, inventory reporting, use-of-vehicle regulations, program reporting, and a host of others. These differences may also provide operational flexibility and efficiency to the programs of a unit. They may also provide management opportunities for program managers and unit personnel.

Areas for Program Improvement

Areas that may need attention to make the Cooperative Units Program even stronger usually relate to differences in cooperator policies or cooperator expectations. Unrealistic expectations by cooperators are a prominent concern. Constant communication is needed to make all cooperators aware of the multiple demands on unit personnel and on support services for optimal operation of units.

Multiple Demands of Cooperators

The development of the Research Work Order (RWO; Appendix F) process that allowed federal government entities to fund research studies at the cooperating universities increased Service demands on the units. The university and the researchers benefit from additional funding for research through the Research Work Orders. However, administrative capabilities of