Identifying group roles

The first major group role identified by Cragan and Wright was Task Leader. Cragan and Wright defined Task Leader as " a mature person who has good problem-solving ability and has had training in leadership skills". (p. 191) This role was present. For example, at the first meeting, Harry broke the silence by suggesting that they take turns and introduce themselves. At the third meeting, Harry was absent and Felicia assumed the role of Task Leader. The second major group role identified by Cragan and Wright was Social-Emotional Leader.

Cragan and Wright defined Social-Emotional Leader as a likeable person with good people skills. (p. 191) This role was present. For example, during the second meeting, Felicia diffuses the tension caused by Juan's comment toward Bill's idea. During the third meeting, Felicia smoothes over Donna's remarks about Bill being late. At the fourth meeting, Angela fills the role of Social-Emotional Leader by calming down Harry's attitude about selecting another topic. Felicia again balances the seventh meeting when she suggested that Sue might have legitimate reasons for being absent.

The third major group role identified by Cragan and Wright was Tension Releaser. Cragan and Wright defined Tension Releaser as a person who " has the ability to be funny but also is aware of the sensibilities of the group in given work assignments". (p. 192) Cragan and Wright also suggested that the " tension releaser is always on call to break up debilitating interpersonal tension in the group and to smooth over those awkward moments at first meetings". (p. 192) This role was present.

For example, at the first meeting, Juan suggested that they call themselves the chain gang. Juan was also sensitive to Sue's family situation. In the second meeting, Juan breaks the ice by commenting that there was a missing link in the chain gang. At the third meeting, Felicia plays the role of Tension Releaser by making light of Donna's remark about Bill being late. Then in the seventh meeting, Juan suggests that they dress up a doll, put it in a chair, and call it Sue. The fourth major group role identified by Cragan and Wright was Information Provider.

Cragan and Wright defined Information Provider as " one of the most shared roles in small groups". (p. 192) Cragan and Wright also states that the Information Provider " has research skills that exceed the group's norms and sometimes has expert knowledge of the discussion topic". (p. 192) This role was present. For example, during the third meeting, Bill had information about the new basketball arena and also played on the basketball team, thus allowing him to specialize in this area.

Even though the basketball arena idea was rejected, Bill provided information about the chosen idea of them being the only university that doesn't allow tailgating parties. The fifth major group role identified by Cragan and Wright was Central Negative. Cragan and Wright defined Central Negative as a person who " is usually not pleased with what is going on". (p. 193) The Central Negative is a person who is " evaluating ideas, making agendas, and instigating conflict". (p. 193) This role was present.

For example, during the first meeting, Harry makes a negative remark about choosing a name for their group. In conclusion of evaluating the college

classroom group, it was evident that all five of Cragan and Wright's major group roles were present. The professor allowed the group 3 weeks to prepare a 45 minute panel discussion. The group successfully sorted out everyone's responsibilities and presented a well-balanced discussion in which they received an " A" for their grade. This underscores the old adage that " some of us are not as smart as all of us".