

Twenty Years of Officers in Residence

CIA in the Classroom

John Hollister Hedley

Harry Fitzwater was convinced that he knew a good idea when he saw one. And he regarded the State Department's Ambassador-in-Residence Program as a win-win-win idea: Having an ambassador spend a year between overseas assignments teaching in a university was good for the students and faculty, good for the ambassador, and good for the State Department as an institution. Believing that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Fitzwater, then the deputy director for administration at the Central Intelligence Agency, decided that the CIA could run its own version of the State Department program, albeit on a modest scale. His vision has flourished and the program, now in its 20th year, stands as a model for nurturing relations between intelligence and academia.

CIA's version of the State Department program has flourished.

First Steps

In an August 1985 memorandum to the CIA executive director and his counterparts heading the other Agency directorates, Fitzwater announced

an Officer-in-Residence (OIR) Program that would:

Assist Agency staff recruiting efforts by placing in selected schools experienced officers who can spot promising career candidates, can counsel students as to career opportunities, and can use their knowledge and experience to address questions or concerns students may have regarding the Agency.

Encourage the study and knowledge of the intelligence profession through participating in seminars, courses and research.

Afford senior officers a year or two to recharge their intellectual batteries in an academic setting by teaching in an area of academic or work-related expertise.

[1]

Fitzwater handpicked one of his senior managers, Harold “Hal” Bean, who was just completing four years as head of the CIA’s Office of Training and Education, to pioneer the program. In the fall of 1985, Bean occupied an office at Washington’s Georgetown University, famous for its School of Foreign Service. He recalls that Director of Central Intelligence William J. Casey—widely known for his free-wheeling advocacy of “actionable” intelligence and less well known for his interest in scholarship—endorsed the nascent OIR program.[2]

Bean brought a wealth of experience to Fitzwater’s experiment. His varied career had included overseas postings in France and Germany, service in the science and technology directorate as executive officer on the Glomar Explorer project, and assignment as chief of support for the Soviet-East European Division in the Directorate of Operations. In addition, he was personable, thoughtful about his new venture on campus, and eager to teach, do research, and meet students and faculty members.

Even so, the fall of 1985 was not a time when one could assume a tension-free beginning to a program that placed a serving CIA officer on a university campus. Faculty members, if not students, were well aware of the backdrop of Vietnam-era protests, the Watergate scandal, the Church Committee investigations of covert action operations, and—at that very time—the CIA’s acknowledged role in mining Nicaraguan harbors as part of the Reagan administration’s mounting support for the “contras” fighting to overthrow Nicaragua’s leftist Sandinista government.

The Importance of Not Being “Spooky”

A lesson learned at the outset of the OIR program was the importance of openness. Bean credits his acceptance by Georgetown faculty, students, and administration to his openness about who he was and why he was there: to teach and do research as a member of the academic “team.” The day he arrived on campus, Bean hung on the walls of his office an armload of framed CIA memorabilia and awards bearing the seal and name of the Agency, clearly indicating his affiliation. He is convinced that students and faculty appreciated the fact that he was not being “spooky.”

The lesson came the hard way to another pioneer, for the success of the first OIR on the east coast was immediately followed by a disaster on the west coast. Although records are lacking, anecdotal indicators suggest that George Chritton, the first operations officer to be an OIR, felt constrained in what he could or should say and how visible and communicative he should be when he went to the University of California at Santa Barbara in the fall of 1987. Whether or not his “no comments” and refusals to talk about subjects were excessive, he apparently felt that he had to minimize exposure and say very little. Anti-Agency demonstrators seized the opportunity to stage a protest that led to numerous arrests and the kind of flare-up that a host university and the Agency equally wish to avoid. Chritton’s arrival was handicapped by the fact that the administrator who had approved having an OIR at UC/Santa Barbara had left at the end of the previous academic year and been replaced by someone who knew nothing about it. Whether the OIR’s mission was not clear, the perception of a recruitment objective was not adequately addressed, or it was a case of bad chemistry, the fact is that Chritton’s arrival inspired suspicion rather than confidence. Chritton quickly left.

That same year, however, James T. McInnis took a page from Bean’s book when he became an OIR at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas/Austin. In an interview with a campus newspaper, he made no bones about the contrast between his arrival and Chritton’s, telling his interviewer that “I’m not a spook. I come out of the Directorate of Administration . . . so [Chritton’s] kind of creeping in there [at Santa Barbara] clandestinely . . . was probably a mistake. He should have done it more openly and announced.”[3] McInnis noted how in his first week, through interviews with the student *Daily Texan* and the LBJ school publication, “we did some things right up front and kind of let them know that I’m here.” He paid attention to concerns about possible recruiting efforts and minced no words in going on record that “I’m not a

recruiter. What I'm doing here is educating people.”[4]

McInnis benefited from the unequivocal public backing of Max Sherman, dean of the LBJ School, who told the student newspaper, “There is nothing covert [about the OIR program] McInnis will be identified as a CIA agent, and he will be available to work with people. It's a very straightforward program People should understand how the CIA operates, because it is a major federal agency with a great deal of influence.”[5]

Also in fall of 1987, Noel Firth succeeded Bean at Georgetown; then, in the fall of 1988, Laurie Kurtzweg, an analyst of Soviet economics in the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence began teaching as an OIR in George Washington University's School of Public and International Affairs. Both followed the example of Bean and McInnis: They succeeded by being models of openness, welcoming campus newspaper interviews, and making clear that they were not on campus to recruit.

At George Washington, Kurtzweg's arrival sparked a lively exchange of editorial opinions and letters-to-the-editor in the campus newspaper. But even a student editorial writer critical of the Agency acknowledged that “Dr. Kurtzweg was forthright on her role with the CIA and the program itself. From what I have seen, Dr. Kurtzweg seems to be an excellent teacher and unquestionably an expert in her field.”[6] In addition to teaching a course on the political economy of Soviet reforms, Kurtzweg gave lectures in other courses and for campus groups, as OIRs are encouraged to do.

Sensitivity over Recruitment

A concern raised on virtually every campus—and a show-stopper for some would-be hosts—was the prospect that an officer would exploit access to students and faculty by spotting and assessing potential recruits. The reality that the pioneers faced on their campuses made clear that this was a highly sensitive issue. In fact, Fitzwater's internal memorandum launching the program did envision a recruitment role for OIRs—they could and should, *when asked*, “counsel students as to career opportunities” and “use their knowledge and experience to address questions or concerns students may have regarding the Agency,” as Fitzwater put it, but the

student would be the one to take the initiative.[7] Farther into his initial memorandum, Fitzwater reiterated that the OIR program would “assist Agency staff recruiting efforts,” but he put it into a benign perspective: “As pointed out above, it is our desire that in addition to teaching and engaging in research relevant to Agency interests these officers will serve as role models—prompting the students with whom they associate to consider a career in intelligence.”[8] Serving as a role model best describes what experience indicates to be as close as an OIR should come to recruitment. Assurances about this thus became the first order of business in the dialogue with prospective host universities and with students and faculty when an OIR arrived on campus.

The current Agency regulation governing the OIR program no longer even mentions recruitment as a goal. That subject is touched upon only by saying that the program “provides qualified Agency employees with the opportunity to further the mission of the Agency by . . . responding to questions students and faculty may have about the Agency and the intelligence profession.”[9] Memoranda of agreement exchanged with prospective host universities clearly state that, as a term of the assignment, “The OIR may respond freely to students’ questions about life as a professional intelligence officer. *OIR’s are expressly prohibited, however, from actively recruiting university students or any other individuals for professional employment with, or service to, the CIA.* Individuals expressing interest in a career at CIA will be referred to the Agency’s public Web site or to appropriate recruitment components for assistance.”[10]

In practice, university students— including those not enrolled in an OIR’s class—do seek out answers to questions about career possibilities and OIRs are expected to respond helpfully. As the author knows from his own OIR experience at Georgetown, administrators and other faculty will suggest that a student talk with the OIR, who is looked upon as the resident expert on a prospective intelligence career. The student “walk-ins” who seek out the OIR (often—certainly at Georgetown—already set on the idea of a career in foreign service) usually are curious about just what it is that one would or could do at the CIA.

Some students also raise concerns about getting into the CIA—none handled more deftly than a situation the late Floyd Paseman encountered as OIR at Marquette University. A student came to his office and, after some hemming and hawing, said he was worried about taking a polygraph test, which he understood the CIA required as part of the hiring process. Paseman kindly assured him that the Agency understood we were all

young once, that growing up sometimes involved doing things we would not want our parents to know about, and that the Agency accepted this as part of what makes us individuals. As long as he was truthful and not hiding something serious, such as a felony, he would not be ruled out. Turning red, the student told Paseman he was under probation after being caught streaking naked across the basketball court during one of Marquette's games. Managing not to laugh aloud, Paseman assured him that, unless he had been a frequent streaker, this alone was not likely to disqualify him!^[11]

Teaching Intelligence

During the program's early years, OIRs taught intelligence-related courses based on their expertise. In Bean's first semester at Georgetown, for example, he taught a graduate course on management problems in foreign affairs, including those common to Intelligence Community organizations. Noting Bean's research for Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy on the effect of terrorism on diplomacy, Dean Peter Krogh asked him to offer an undergraduate course on the subject. So Bean also taught "Diplomacy and Terrorism," and published a booklet on the subject. At Texas, McInnis offered a course on Mexico and also taught about international terrorism. Kurtzweg taught Soviet economics; Firth offered "Analysis and Forecasting for International Affairs"; and other OIRs lectured on government and politics in the Middle East or Latin America.

Two especially hospitable academic settings—Boston University and Georgetown—made possible the first running of courses devoted strictly to intelligence. When Arthur Hulnick arrived in Boston in 1989, a survey course on intelligence already was being offered by a professor who was a navy reservist Hulnick knew and had helped with suggestions about the course. "Why don't you teach it?" Hulnick was asked, "You're the expert."^[12] Hulnick agreed and began for Boston University what would become perhaps the best curriculum of intelligence courses in the United States. At Georgetown, in the spring of 1994, I taught a course purely on intelligence, entitled "CIA and the Changing Role of US Intelligence."

By the end of its first decade, the OIR program's focus on all campuses was on teaching intelligence, a substantive mission transcending the

teaching of related subjects, plus guest lectures, student conferences, and the like. Teaching about intelligence was facilitated by the arrival of several reputable books that could be adopted as texts or assigned as required reading in what had previously been a slim selection.[13]

Newly selected OIRs are given an opportunity to develop a syllabus on their own for the intelligence course they will teach. They receive no script or “party line,” although resources are available through the CIA’s Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI).[14] New and continuing OIR’s attend an early summer seminar on the teaching of intelligence taught by former OIRs. This facilitates the sharing of lessons learned about adjusting to academe. The seminar’s focus is substantive but not prescriptive. Potential textbook choices and related books are discussed. Practical questions—such as how to craft a syllabus; how much reading to expect of students; and how to go about assigning papers, giving tests, organizing lectures, and doing research—are answered. Although a household move absorbs time and energy over the summer, most OIRs find time to read, utilize reference materials, and prepare for the fall semester.

Each course must be academically sound, enrich the university’s curriculum, and pass muster with the university department hosting the OIR. Generally, OIRs are expected to survey the structure, functions, and challenges of national intelligence, including collection, analysis, support to policy, and issues of accountability, politicization, oversight, and ethics. Their focus is not on tradecraft, but on the way the intelligence process works and the issues and challenges it involves. Their value-added is the insiders’ perspective.

OIRs may offer additional courses as appropriate to their career backgrounds and the universities’ requirements. They are encouraged to participate fully in the academic life of the university, doing research and writing and participating in informal seminars and workshops. But the core mission is to provide a window into the CIA that will help illuminate for students and the broader university community the role of intelligence in US foreign policy and national security and its place in a free society.

Selecting OIRs

Determining who becomes an OIR is a process that evolved unevenly

following Fitzwater's initial informal appeal to his fellow deputy directors to offer candidates. From the beginning, OIRs have been dependent on their home component to pay their salaries, in absentia, and to cover related expenses, such as for books, travel, and household moves. Because of this decentralized funding, in the early years selection essentially was left to the home components. From time to time this doubtless involved irregular and informal arrangements struck between individual officers, their home office or directorate, and an interested host institution— perhaps one where the would-be OIR had a friend on the faculty. Once on campus, the OIRs' academic involvement in the early years of the program varied widely. One spent his time pursuing a master's degree in computational linguistics while acting as a teaching assistant in the mathematics department. Others have taught physical geology, electrical engineering, and psychology.[15]

After the program's first decade, an audit by the CIA Inspector General concluded that the program was "overdue for an Agency regulation to ensure standardization in the program's operation and administration of individual OIR assignments." It called for CSI to play a more active role in defining the mission of the OIRs and selecting host institutions, in part to discourage use of the program to accommodate employees' personal preferences.[16]

As a result, since the mid-1990s, the OIR selection process has been more centrally handled, although funding remains decentralized. CSI meets with component administrative officers in October each year to review a timeline for the process and the list of universities seeking OIRs. The program is advertised during the fall, including through internal media and routine vacancy notices. The job description notes that a Ph.D., while highly desirable, is not mandatory, but applicants must have a master's degree, broad experience in intelligence, research capabilities, and strong interpersonal skills. Prior teaching experience is an advantage. Interested officers must supply supporting documentation along with their application.

The application packages go to the candidate's home component, which determines the maximum number of OIR positions it is prepared to fund. Applicants are screened, and the names of those approved for assignment —if selected—are forwarded to CSI for final review. CSI then performs its own evaluations of the candidates, which include interviews, and matches its choices to the number of positions each component will fund. Successful nominees are notified early in the new year. Matching

candidates to universities takes into account the preferences of both the individuals and the universities, a process that sometimes involves campus visits, arranged by CSI. The goal is to confirm assignments by March, so that the new OIRs can bring their current assignments to a close in time for the annual CSI seminar in June for those heading out to campuses the following fall.

Choosing Universities

There is no rigid formula for selecting host universities, but CSI—through campus visits, phone calls, and correspondence with universities seeking OIRs—looks for a strong academic foundation in fields related to intelligence, whether international studies, public policy, political science, or history. Ideally, CSI seeks programs near the “take-off” stage with respect to intelligence studies, where the presence of an OIR could make a major difference. Students at Washington, DC-area universities typically have innumerable opportunities to be exposed to intelligence studies and already have a virtual conveyer belt of guest lecturers and current or retired CIA officers as adjunct faculty. The program’s aim is to extend the program well beyond Washington’s capital beltway. And, to spread the impact of limited resources farther, CSI prefers not to focus year after year on the same universities.

The OIR program has remained small, with rarely as many as a dozen officers in place in a given year. More universities seek OIRs than there are officers to fill them. For the fall of 2005, 10 universities were listed as potential host institutions, but only three were chosen by successful OIR applicants: Georgetown (the only university to have continuous representation), The University of Miami, and the University of Georgia. The three new OIRs join seven others completing their tours—at Arizona, Georgia Tech, Indiana, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Kentucky, MIT, and Texas A&M—bringing the total number of officers currently in the field to 10. Even though the scope of the program remains modest after two decades, 100 CIA officers have been posted to 51 institutions as widely scattered as Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Oklahoma, Virginia, Dartmouth, and Southern California.[17]

Faculty Hurdles

Although student response to OIRs in recent years has been invariably positive, overcoming faculty skeptics—and nervous department chairmen anxious about adverse faculty reaction— continues to be a common challenge. Negative faculty attitudes, which usually involve a small minority, tend to arise from major misconceptions and misplaced concerns. A classic example is the experience of Brian Gilley, who arrived as the first OIR at Duke University only to discover that, although he was welcome to teach courses in the Department of Economics—his field—the Department of Political Science and Public Policy balked at offering an undergraduate survey course on intelligence on the grounds that “Duke students wouldn’t like a course like that.”[18] Biding his time, Gilley proceeded to teach intelligence-related graduate courses on macroeconomic modeling and senior seminars dealing with economic growth and development theory as applied to Eastern Europe and East Asia. Student reviews were outstanding—the response was so effusive that, for Gilley’s second year, the economics and political science department chairmen found that they were able, after all, to accommodate Gilley’s teaching in both departments. The result was an intelligence course that was so oversubscribed that another section was added. And the chairmen of both departments appealed to the CIA to allow Gilley to stay another year in order to give the maximum number of Duke undergraduates the opportunity to take the intelligence course.

More recently, Robert Vickers arrived as the first OIR at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the invitation of the Security Studies Program, only to discover dissenting voices in the Political Science Department, questioning his lack of university teaching experience. (Although some universities want OIRs with Ph.Ds and teaching experience, most recognize—as did MIT’s Security Studies Program—that a senior CIA officer can bring unique experience to the classroom that is an acceptable substitute.) In Vickers’s case, a team-teaching arrangement was worked out. Security Studies Program Director Harvey M. Sapolsky explained that “it was difficult to gain agreement within the Political Science Department to allow Bob to teach,” and the team approach—involving Sapolsky, a political science professor, and Vickers—“was a way to break down the opposition.”[19]

As is usually the case, the classroom experience alone did not carry the

day. Due to space shortages, Vickers had his office in the political science building rather than with the Security Studies Program. “This turned out to be fortuitous,” Sapolsky explained, “because Bob is very outgoing and soon had many friends where the opposition was based. He was very open in answering questions and participated constructively in many seminars.”[20] Vickers now is offering his own undergraduate course. “Although recruiting is not his mission,” Sapolsky added, “I think the courses and his enthusiastic presence will be a big plus for those considering an intelligence career. It was, after all, on the students’ initiative that we sought out having an officer-in-residence.”[21]

Gauging Success

Individually and almost invariably, former OIRs declare their time on campus to have been among their most satisfying Agency assignments. Paseman, for example, described it as “one of the most rewarding and productive” postings of his 35-year career, noting that “the thirst for information about the CIA and intelligence is enormous.”[22] Judging from student responses to OIRs—both in enrollment numbers and in course evaluations—and appeals from deans and department heads to extend an OIR or ensure a replacement, universities highly value the program as well.

Several OIR alumni have gone on to teach as adjunct faculty members—the author, for one. Hal Bean taught as an adjunct at Georgetown for 13 years after his OIR tour. George Fidas continues as a prized adjunct faculty member after serving as OIR at George Washington University, as does Lee Strickland at the University of Maryland, and as did Robert Pringle for several years at the University of Kentucky. James Olson retired to become a full-time faculty member at Texas A&M, where he had served as an OIR. Michael Turner chose teaching over the CIA for a full-time career, leaving the Agency after an OIR assignment; he now occupies an endowed chair as professor of international relations at Alliant International University in San Diego, where he also teaches at the University of San Diego.

No former OIR has gone farther with a serious academic experience, however, than Arthur Hulnick. Becoming a full-time faculty member was “the last thing I had in mind,” Hulnick insists, when he went to Boston University in the fall of 1989. He expected to spend two years as an OIR

and then move to a job in recruiting. When the person he hoped to succeed did not leave after two years, Hulnick stayed on in Boston.

As luck would have it, the recruiting office closed at the end of that year, at which time Hulnick's home office advised him that his slot was needed at headquarters and he should either come back or retire. By then he had hit full stride, teaching four courses—a graduate seminar, history of intelligence, a comparative treatment of foreign intelligence and security systems, and intelligence in a democratic society—and loving it. With 35 years of service, he retired in place and never looked back. Since then, Boston University has appointed him a full-time associate professor and he teaches seven intelligence courses a year.[23]

Looking Ahead

Students entering universities in the fall of 2005 were born after the OIR program began. Although few will have served in the military, the threat of global terrorism has heightened interest in the field of national security. This interest is widely manifest in college curricula, as universities throughout the country are adding or seeking to add intelligence courses.

Intelligence is arguably more important and a more complicated subject to teach than at any time in the history of the OIR program. The relatively few CIA officers who will next take up this unique assignment, no matter how scattered and small in number, will constitute a continuing commitment and a relatively inexpensive investment in encouraging understanding and further study in the field of intelligence. Hal Bean says one of the things that is most rewarding for him is that, two decades after his time at Georgetown, he sees people at CIA today, not whom he recruited, but who were “tuned in” by the exposure he made possible.[24]

As of this writing, at least a dozen universities are hoping to host a CIA OIR when the program begins its third decade in the fall of 2006. CIA's experience with its OIR program can serve as a model to share with its partner organizations as they explore ways to broaden the Intelligence Community's future academic outreach.

Footnotes

[1] Harry E. Fitzwater (Deputy Director for Administration) memorandum, "The Officer-in-Residence Program at Colleges and Universities," 6 August 1985, DD/A Registry 85-2054/6.

[2] Interview with Harold Bean, 23 June 2005, Herndon, VA.

[3] *Images*, University of Texas campus newspaper, 29 April 1988: 9–10.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Daily Texan*, 2 November 1987: 1.

[6] Chris McGinn, "The CIA on campus: The debate is far from over," *GW Hatchet*, 6 October 1988: 5.

[7] Fitzwater.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Agency Regulation 20-57, "Officer in Residence Program," 3 November 1997.

[10] Memorandum of Understanding, "The Officer-in-Residence Program," unpublished document of the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence, September 2005. Italics appear in the original.

[11] Floyd Paseman, *A Spy's Journey: A CIA Memoir* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), 210.

[12] Arthur Hulnick, telephone conversation with the author, 6 August 2005.

[13] A useful basic text was Berkowitz and Goodman's *Strategic Intelligence for American National Security* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1989). Supplementing that was Abram Shulsky's *Silent Warfare*, 2nd ed., (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1993). Then, Loch Johnson updated his *America's Secret Power: The CIA in a Democratic Society* (Oxford, UK: University Press, 1989) with *Secret Agencies: US Intelligence in a Hostile World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). British authors helped considerably, with Christopher Andrew's brilliant *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*

(New York: Harper Collins, 1995), followed by Michael Herman's *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Oxford, UK: University Press, 1996).

[14]The Center for the Study of Intelligence is a small research unit that promotes broader understanding of the history of intelligence and lessons learned from its practice. In addition to overseeing the OIR program, it incorporates the CIA history staff; publishes the quarterly journal, *Studies in Intelligence*; and manages the CIA Exhibit Center. The Center runs conferences and sponsors the writing of intelligence monographs.

[15]"Report of Audit: Administration of the Intelligence Officer-in-Residence Program," Office of Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency, 12 March 1996, 4–6.

[16]*Ibid.*, 12.

[17]Certain of the officers who served in earlier years would no longer be considered to be in OIR positions, which now require teaching intelligence at a full-fledged university. The Federal Executive Institute, for example—a training enterprise of the Office of Personnel Management—and the Joint Military Intelligence College—a Defense Intelligence Agency training organization—would not qualify for OIR assignments as once was the case. OIRs also are no longer assigned to the military academies because of the specialized kind of educational experience they provide to groom military officers.

[18]Brian Gilley, e-mail to the author, 19 August 2003, and conversation with the author in McLean, VA, 10 August 2005.

[19]Letter from Harvey M. Sapolsky to Paul M. Johnson, Director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence, 20 June 2005, quoted with the writer's permission.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]Paseman, 213.

[23]Telephone interview with the author, 6 August 2005. Hulnick also has written two books, *Fixing the Spy Machine: Preparing American Intelligence for the Twenty-First Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999) and *Keeping Us Safe: Secret Intelligence and Homeland Security* (Praeger, 2004).

[24]Bean interview.

John Hollister Hedley has served more than three decades with the CIA and helps oversee the Officer-in-Residence Program.

The views, opinions and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government.