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COLLEGE PUBLIC RELATIONS:

A STUDY OF THE WORK OF DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRESS
CARD
HERE

BY

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the requirements for

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FOR WORD

In my independent study, I set out to explore the work of directors of college relations. I interviewed: Gene Warren, Director of Public Affairs, Pembroke State University, N.C.; Russell Strong, Director of College Relations, St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, N.C.; Judith A. Plyler, Public Relations Coordinator, Richmond Technical Institute, Rockingham, N.C.; and Richard (Dick) Fraylick, Public Relations Officer, Robeson Technical Institute, Lumberton, N.C.

Even though each of them has a different title, each is responsible for the promoting of the school that he/she represents.

Russell Strong had this to say to students wanting to enter the profession of public relations: "A student should have journalistic leanings, a modicum of writing skill and curiosity about people---excitability---and the ability to deliver---essentially, a willingness to work with people."

COLLEGE PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK

Introduction

- I. Inspiring Client to Make News
- II. Prerequisites for Working in College Public Relations
 - A. Knowledge of Operation and Goals of Institution
 - B. Working knowledge of Local Media
 - C. Willingness to Work Long, Erratic Hours
- III. Tools of Trade
 - A. Press Releases
 - B. Press Conference (Direct Coverage)
 - C. Knowledge of Newswriting
 - D. Record Keeping
 - E. Speeches
- IV. Public Relations and the Media
 - A. The Importance of the Media
 - B. Handling Unfavorable Publicity

Conclusion

Thesis: Even though public relations workers employ journalistic methods in dispensing publicity, they must also have (1) knowledge of the operation and goals of the institution; (2) working knowledge of the local media; and (3) willingness to work long, erratic hours.

The promotion of colleges and technical institutes is essentially done with the aid of publicity. The best publicity is news, and those who produce or develop it must be reporters. Public relations personnel are reporters working for the news source. Therefore, publicity should be news, and the basic element of all news is fact. As a public relations man, or woman, his or her job is to dispense fact.

The basic job for the publicist is to report to publicity media--- newspapers, magazines, trade publications, the radio, or public gatherings ---interesting facts about the educational institution he represents. In many cases, therefore, the job of a public relations director will include inspiring and influencing his client to take action---to do things which make news. This responsibility is where the role of the public relations employee differs somewhat from the normal reporter. The public relations director serves as a reporter who plays a part in the development of news. For example, Gene Warren, Director of Public Affairs, Pembroke State University, is presently implementing the work on a TV documentary about the retiring Chancellor, Dr. English E. Jones.

Conducting a successful public relations program for colleges requires exhaustive knowledge of the institution the publicist represents. It is essential that the administrative heads appreciate the value of public relations. The public relations director must sell them before he can sell the public. If they fail to cooperate with the publicity representative, his job as a publicist becomes impossible to accomplish.

The nature of the duties requires that the public relations director

have a high place in the councils of the college or institution he represents. He must know everything that happens whether or not it is divulged to the public. The management must accept him as an adviser on all affairs of interest to the public. Gene Warren says, "I have administrative status, because I must be knowledgeable of all affairs pertaining to Pembroke State University." It is impossible for the publicist to run a consistently successful publicity program if he is working at cross-purposes with the administration.

Once the publicity representative has established himself as an important member of the college or institution, with his duties and responsibilities clearly understood and defined, the second half of his preliminary activity will begin. He must study the publicity media he intends to use. He must become acquainted with the representatives of these media, and he must acquaint himself with the techniques of media operation. This knowledge cannot be gained solely through practice. The publicist will become thoroughly at home in his job only after having operated as a public relations director for some time. On this subject Ramsberger advises:

The well informed public relations director will avoid establishing release dates which coincide with heavy advertising dates, because the paper will have limited space for news. A study of newspapers helps here. On days when papers are "thin" or have fewer than normal pages, the competition for news space is intensified. Consequently, unless the story is of unusual spot news interest, do not mark release on a "thin paper" day. ¹

A final factor to consider in building a knowledge of the local media is the character of the live news to be published on the date the public relations director wishes his story to be published. For example, sending out important news on the eve of an election would illustrate extremely bad timing.

Public relations personnel have no control over the decision of the

editor who considers publishing their releases, no matter how important it may be for the institution to see a particular story in print. Therefore, it is to his advantage as a public relations director to become familiar with the publishing format of the local media.

Willingness to work long, erratic hours is of primary importance in public relations, because the total job, sometimes involves a 24-hour schedule. For example, Russell Strong, Director of College Relations, St. Andrews Presbyterian College says, "If St. Andrews was in a basketball tournament, I would have to be at the game that night (if the game was away) and if the job demands, back at St. Andrews the next day." The public relations director must make appointments and attend meetings whenever and wherever it is possible. Patience is of the essence. Just simply making an effort to get news concerning college affairs to the media involves to a great extent another waiting period.

In order to carry on an effective publicity program, the public relations director must master the tools of the trade. A primary tool in dispensing publicity is the press release. The average metro paper receives in the mail everyday more than 100 press releases concerning individuals and organizations. Therefore, in order for a press release to be effective, it must be newsworthy. Releases should be double-spaced, and sent to the city desk of the newspaper. They must be marked to indicate clearly the date on which the publicist wishes the story to appear. They must answer the questions, who, what, when, where, how and why in the first or lead paragraph. They must stick to the facts. They must be brief.

As a public relations director, the job is to inspire and cultivate interests in the school on the part of editors and reporters. Basically, this means that the publicist must develop within the college personalities

and events of real news interest. Then, through contact with the press, he must see that coverage of the school is regarded as a "must" by the editor. Russell Strong said, "I would use a press conference for something of importance, for example, the appointment of a new president."

When the organization has an announcement of real importance to make, the publicity representative makes preparations for a conference of administrative leaders and press representatives. His first step is to make certain that the spokesman for the school is well acquainted with the subject which he wishes to discuss. The next step is to reach a decision as to how many and which advisors to the spokesman are to be present at the conference. Seldom can one individual be prepared to answer any question which may arise concerning any of the many phases of the primary subject: To avoid embarrassment and insure expeditious handling of the conference, it is wise to have specialists on hand, who are qualified to answer in the name of the spokesman technical questions which may be asked by the reporters.

The third step for the public relations director is to prepare a handout for the press who will attend. As the name implies, the handout is a summary of the subject to be discussed which will be handed to the press at some point in the conference. It serves two purposes: it protects the spokesman against misquotation and misunderstanding of his statement; and, second, it is a convenience to the reporters covering the conference and expedites the proceeding by making copious notes unnecessary.

The public relations director must select the time and place of the conference. However, it will vary according to circumstances. An effort should be made to vary the time so that evening papers and morning papers get an equitable distribution of news breaks.

The final step is for the public relations director to notify the editors of local papers, and local representative of the wire news services of when, where and why the press conference is being held. Make certain that the conference is warranted. Make sure it begins on schedule. Hold it in a comfortable room with convenience for the media. Don't forget to notify correspondents, since they are the most likely means that your story will be published. And let the editors know where you can be reached for additional information.²

In order to insure that his press releases and direct coverages are effective methods in reaching the media, the publicist must have some knowledge of newswriting and reporting. The who, the what, the when, where, the how and why are the essentials of proper reporting and will be properly acknowledged by the media when used correctly.

"In order to record your progress properly, the public relations personnel should keep an accurate and detailed record of all the publicity material he or she prepares for the media to which it was sent," said Judith A. Plyler, Public Relations Coordinator, Richmond Technical Institute. She added, "You should also retain notes telling what use the media made of the material. A log showing details of work which cannot be learned from clips or releases may prove invaluable. Make a biographical sketch of leading members of your college or institution. You never know when one of them will fit prominently in the news, and you'll be receiving inquiries from the press."

Models of press releases from St. Andrews College follow. A copy of helpful guidelines which have been provided by Richmond Technical Institute are also included:

NEWS

ST. ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE Laurinburg, N.C. 28352

910/276-2066

Russell A. Strong

13 April 1979

ABCEGI

EVANS 'CALLS' ST. ANDREWS TO NEW LEADERSHIP

LAURINBURG, NC - "St. Andrews Presbyterian College, by conscious design and deliberate action, should be to the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, what North Carolina State University is to the agricultural life and practice in the state," Dr. John B. Evans of Decatur, GA, told more than a hundred persons attending a symposium on church related higher education Wednesday.

The symposium came about as the major concluding event of a yearlong search for the relationship between St. Andrews and the church, begun last fall when Dr. Douglas Hix opened the question at the fall convocation of the college. Dr. Hix, a former faculty member, is pastor of the Laurinburg Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Evans proposed that the college undertake a four-year exploration of its relationship to the Presbyterians of North Carolina (numbering 166,000 people in 665 churches), and outlined some of the church's expectations of St. Andrews:

- 1) That St. Andrews be, in fact, a pace setter in liberal arts education, that it be innovative and show considerable initiative;

- 2) That St. Andrews embody in all aspects of its life serious commitment to the Christian faith;

more

SYMPOSIUM - 2

3) That St. Andrews devote its major energies and resources to enabling students to become literate human beings, equipped to assist in fashioning a more just and humane society, and

4) That St. Andrews be an intellectual resource for the life and mission of the church.

Then Dr. Evans, who is a native of Laurinburg and who has held several high offices within the Presbyterian Church, US, became more specific in what he thought St. Andrews ought to do:

1) That the expertise of particular members of the community be identified to the Synod of North Carolina and to Presbyterians, so that they may be used for policy development and mission implementation;

2) That twice each year St. Andrews provide a continuing education opportunity for lay and professional leaders of the church;

3) That in 1981, St. Andrews offer a major colloquium for church leaders, focusing on crucial issues in society, to help the church get a better grasp on where it is, where it is heading and where it ought to go.

But, it was not a one-sided discussion, and Dr. Evans said that in turn St. Andrews should expect from the church regular financial support, support for capital campaigns, and open guidance and support in seeking special capital and deferred gifts; encouragement and support for students to attend St. Andrews; qualified persons to service as trustees; periodic requests for assistance for human resources and facilities; and the prayers of the people.

After a lengthy panel reaction to his remarks, Dr. Evans was followed to the podium by Dr. Robert R. Parsonage of the National Council of Churches, and author of a recent book on church related higher education.

more

Dr. Parsonage credited church related colleges of all faiths in America with providing considerable impetus for development of education and of a social consciousness in America since the opening of Harvard College in 1638.

He said the development of a federally-backed Peace Academy was an outgrowth of this kind of concern.

Parsonage said that America's church-related colleges had always been on the frontier, that they were often leaders in westward development, but that now church related colleges ought to lead against new frontiers:

1) To start a resistance movement against all churches that shrivel the human spirit, that they need to challenge the narrow rationalism of much of higher education;

2) they need to challenge vocationalism, because students need to explore "What will I do with my life?" as well as "How shall I earn a living?"

3) He added that it is the responsibility of church related colleges to take religion seriously in all of its dimensions.

He then criticized the value neutrality that is so prevalent today, saying that this involves an acceptance of whatever values are in vogue at the moment.

"It is weak," he added, "because there is not commitment."

And from the American scene, Dr. Parsonage said there is an even greater need today for colleges and student to explore the issues of global interdependence.

After each speech a panel discussed the concerns expressed,
more

SYMPOSIUM - 4

and during the afternoon panel discussions were held on a variety of subjects connected to the central theme.

Dr. Evans expressed the idea that Presbyterians created colleges within the church for the good of the larger society, while Dr. Parsonage followed that church-related colleges today can make significant contributions towards the transformation and renewal of our culture.

The Rev. Frank Covington, college pastor, and members of the College Christian Council handled much of the planning and logistics for the symposium.

NEWS

ST. ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE Laurinburg, N.C. 28352

919/276-2066

Russell A. Strong

13 April 1979

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CASSETTE LECTURE
SERIES FEATURES
ST. ANDREWS' JOYNER

LAURINBURG, NC - Two segments in a 58-cassette series on American Folklore feature Dr. Charles Joyner, professor of history and folklore at St. Andrews Presbyterian College.

Prepared under the direction of two faculty members at the University of Pennsylvania, the entire series introduces the great range and variety of American folklore.

Dr. Joyner gives one of the introductory lectures, "Folklore and History," and then gives one in a set dealing with the lore of "institutions," entitled "Slavery in Folklore."

Prof. Joyner holds doctorates in both history and folklore, and has lectured and written extensively on slavery, with a special emphasis on South Carolina. Next year he will be a visiting professor both in history and in folklore at the University of South Carolina.

PREPARED FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITERS AT RICHMOND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

GUIDELINES FOR TYPING NEWS RELEASES

Newspaper editors are a cranky lot. Therefore, the public relations office tries to make things as easy for them as possible (i.e. give them very little editing to do). This necessitates great care in following the idiosyncracies of newspaper style (as well as spelling words correctly, because editors loath having to look up things in the dictionary.

Newspaper style in general is based on eliminating as much punctuation and capitalization as possible, plus abbreviating wherever feasible. Thus, punctuation and capitalization for newspapers is quite different often from business and academic writing.

Following are a few of the more common rules for newspaper style. They are offered so that you can easier understand these peculiarities and so that you can catch my mistakes too!

1. Titles are capitalized when preceding the name, but are not capitalized when following the name. (EXAMPLE: President Joseph H. Nanney. Joseph H. Nanney, president of Richmond Technical Insittute.)
2. The last comma in a series is omitted. (EXAMPLE: sailing ships, sealing wax, cabbages and kings.)
3. Except in special circumstances, dates are NOT used when referring to a date within the week during which the story is published. When referring to a date within the YEAR the

- story is published, the year date is NOT used. (EXAMPLE Sept. 15 NOT Sept. 15, 1972). Except under special circumstances, the day of the week and the date are not used together. (EXAMPLE: Friday, Sept. 15 is NOT used.) However, there will be occasions when the copy will say: Friday (Sept. 15) -- this is information for the editor and should be written exactly that way with the date in parenthesis. The month is always abbreviated (except for those which have no common abbreviation).
4. The name "Richmond Technical Institute" is written out in full first time it appears in the story. After that the name will appear in some abbreviated form such as: RTI, Richmond Tech, etc. It should never be spelled out in full except for the first time it appears in the story. Unless specified, the period will NOT be used between letters.
 5. In quotations, punctuation marks are ALWAYS inside the quote marks. (EXAMPLE: "The time has come," the Walrus said.) In a lengthy quote, quotation marks are used at the beginning of each paragraph.
 6. Long lists of names should be paragraphed about every five or six names with each paragraph ending in a semi-colon (;), until the end of the list when a period is appropriate.
 7. All news releases should be double spaced. If the story runs longer than one page, type (more) at the bottom of the page and -2- at the top of the next page.
 8. Upon occasion, two news releases on the same story will be written: one for newspapers and one for radio. In this instance, the radio news release should be triple-spaced and written in capital letters throughout. This format should

NEVER be followed with newspaper releases.

9. Copy from my typewriter is sloppy. Therefore, the following proofreaders marks will commonly appear:

Cabbages	means take out
Cabbages ^{and} kings	means insert
cabbages	means lower case
<u>CABBAGES</u>	means lower case
<u>cabbages</u>	means capitalize
cab bages	means close up space
cabbages and	means space
¶ cabbages and	means paragraph
no ¶ cabbages	means no paragraph
(1) or (N.C.)	means spell out (i.e. One or North Carolina)
(one) or (January)	means use numeral or abbreviate (1 or Jan.)

Speaking in public on matters concerning the college or institution, and on subjects of community interest is another essential part of public relations personnel. Ramsberger says:

For whenever you are identified as a member of your organization, what you say and what you do will be remembered by the audience as a policy of your organization. The safeguards you must employ are education and control. You must educate yourself to have a wholesome respect for your responsibility when appearing at public gatherings in behalf of your organization. You must also institute a reasonable, but stringent control over your appearance and the channel into which you direct your public speaking.³

For example, Mary Morgan, newly appointed public relations coordinator at Richmond Technical Institute says, "Public relations personnel make speeches at public relations seminars, and at public gatherings of community interest." She added, "I prepare the information for my speech ahead of time, and dress in a business manner, preferably a tailored suit. I approach the audience in a fairly casual manner, but my approach is largely dependent upon the audience."

The second step in the public speaking program is to consult with the administrative heads and develop a broad policy as to subject matter to be discussed. The publicist makes public comment on phases of organizational activity with which he is thoroughly familiar, and in which he plays a direct part. It would be embarrassing to the college and the publicist to undertake a statement on matters on which he has no sufficient knowledge.

Aside from the elementary details of when, where, and why the speaking date is to be arranged, the publicity representative should find out what the overall tenor of the meeting is to be, what other speakers will appear, his chronological position as a college representative on the agenda. He should also determine as nearly as possible how many people are to be in the audience and the character of the audience.

For radio speeches, the publicist must prepare his remarks beforehand in written form. Radio copy consists of short, simple statements. After the script is written, it must be carefully timed to fit the period allotted. For example, Judith Plyler has an eight-minute radio format entitled, "RTI TODAY," in which she informs the Richmond county area of the news at Richmond Technical Institute. "'RTI TODAY' is used as a recruiting method," she says.

Most people have difficulty saying certain words and word combinations, therefore, it is important to make certain to read the script aloud before going on the air. This review will help to eliminate troublesome words, and the possibility of becoming excited or upset and ruining the effect of the remarks. The script should be devoid of any handwritten notations, editors' marks, or other irregularities which may lead to uncertainty or confusion during the broadcast reading. It should also be type-written, preferably in large type, and double-spaced. However, the following radio script by Judith Plyler does not use large type throughout:

ox file
February

FEBRUARY 9, 1979

RICHMOND TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE RADIO
PROGRAM: NO. 2

"THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT RTI"

Eight students from RTI attended the North Carolina Comprehensive Community College Student Government Association Conference. The conference was held in Raleigh last week and hosted approximately 350 students from 47 of the 57 community colleges throughout the state.

RTI student government officers and President and Mrs. Ken Melvin had as their guest during the Thursday night banquet, Senator Bob Jordan. Speaker for the banquet was North Carolina Lieutenant Governor Jimmy Greene. One of the other highlights of the conference was meeting Larry Blake half an hour after he had been named the new North Carolina Community College President.

RTI students attended leadership workshops and seminars on such platform issues as the name change for technical institutions, education for the handicapped, public instruction pay scale and veterans benefits. SGA officers also spoke with senators and representatives from the North Carolina Legislature on these policies.

Governor James B. Hunt has proclaimed the week of February 11-17 as North Carolina Vocational Education Week. Across the state and in

Richmond County, this means that there will be special events to observe vocational education. On Wednesday, February 14, at Richmond Senior High School, the District Distributive Education Contest will be held. Then on Thursday at noon, two Advisory Councils will meet at the Senior High School to view the localized film, "The Story of Vocational Education in Richmond County."

Now, you're probably wondering how you can see this film. Well, Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. in RTI's auditorium, the film will be shown to the public.

One segment of every class in the vocational education program was filmed. This includes classes at Hamlet Junior High, Rockingham Junior High, Ellerbe Junior High, Rohanen Junior High, Richmond Senior High School and Richmond Technical Institute.

Parents have the chance to see their children in this documentary program and both parents and the community have the opportunity to share in the planning of next year's program and to respond to the classes now in progress. Everyone who was filmed is invited to come out to RTI on Thursday evening, February 15 at 7:30 p.m. and bring a friend to see "The Story of Vocational Education in Richmond County."

Our spotlight this week is on Scott Davies. Scott is a first year mechanical technology student here at RTI.

*Scott, would you mind telling us a little something about yourself?

"Well, I'm originally from Fayetteville, North Carolina and I discovered Richmond Technical Institute while I was attending another university. I saw the curriculum for mechanical technology and decided to come down here and investigate it."

* So, you now live in the Richmond County area?

"Yes, I do."

* Why did you decide to come from Fayetteville to Richmond Tech?

"Well, because the curriculum here is more practical and more applied. They have a lot of labs and the machine shops are good and it's just a more practical education."

* Well, what about the assistance from instructors or from staff members or...

"Well, the assistance that I've got here and why I've been here is been exceptional. Because if I had any problems concerning either grades or just problems in classes or anything else, the instructor's just been more than happy to help me out."

* O.K. What are your plans following graduation? What will you be qualified, what types of jobs will you be qualified to look for?

"Well, mainly the mechanical technology curriculum prepares you to work in industry, in factories, in drawing and design, production, also, qualifies you to later go into your own business because you have the back fields in design and drawing."

* You're a first year student in mechanical technology curriculum. What types of things are you doing right now in this quarter that will prepare you for after graduation?

"Well, right now, I think the main thing that'll really help out is the machine processing course I'm taking. And also, the drafting courses which are real helpful and also, the physics which gives me a good math background."

*How do you feel the job market for mechanical technology students looks?

"Well, at the present time, the market looks real good. I talked to Ms. Honeycutt a few weeks ago and she said that the market now is exceptionally good because the cost of living here in North Carolina is lower than the rest of the country and firms are looking for sites in North Carolina to build factories."

*Scott, how do you plan to get started in the field?

"Well, about the time of about the fifth quarter, I'll start getting in touch with Ms. Honeycutt who will begin to give me brochures and information on business and firms here in North Carolina because Ms. Honeycutt is the Job Placement Officer here. She shows us how to present ourselves to the interviewers, to write resumes and which will better prepare me for the job market."

Thank-you Scott. This has been Judith Plyler with this week's look at Richmond Technical Institute.

Program No. 2; 2/9/79; 5:53

Richmond Technical Institute Radio Program; aired each ~~Friday~~ ^{MONDAY} between noon and 12:30p.m. ^{AT 3:55 pm.} on WAYN; recorded at RTI by Audio-Visual Technician Walter Crowe and assistant Joe Sumpter; anchored by Judith Plyler;

Newspapers, aside from the other media, are the most widely used outlet for college publicity. The profession of public relations exists today because newspapers cannot possibly cover all of the people and organizations whose activities make news. The public relations director fills the gap which newspapers, and radio cannot fill, because it is impossible for them to be represented everywhere at all times.

The public relations director, may provide information to editors in one of two ways. One way is to prepare a press release, (illustrated earlier). The other method is by personal contact with working reporters.

Dick Fraylick, Public Relations Officer, Robeson Technical Institute says, "Personal contact with newspapermen will be a major part of your activity. If that contact is made in an intelligent, fair, co-operative manner, your success in using newspapers and any other form of media is assured. If your media relations are unsatisfactory, your entire program will be hopelessly crippled."

The publicist must remember that the newsman is a representative of a powerful force in the community. Through his paper, or broadcast, he represents the people the educational institution is dependent upon for good-will and support. The newsman should be treated with the respect due his responsible position.

When a publicity representative answers questions asked by a newsperson, he should always remember that he is not the reporter's only source of information. A resourceful reporter will usually interview others to obtain verification and supplementary information from the press. It is equally futile and may prove disastrous to your future in public relations to distort the facts or to lie to a reporter. During his working career,

every publicity producer is questioned about matters which his college or institution does not wish to be made public. The wise public relations director tells the truth no matter how much it hurts. He is perfectly within his rights, however, to give certain facts as being "off-the-record" or not for publication. He must use this "off-the-record" judiciously, and only when circumstances justify its use. He knows that the average news media is not in the business of scandalmongering. He knows his truthful report will usually be handled as sympathetically as is consistent with honest newswriting.

Although the public relations director cannot entirely eliminate the possibility of unfavorable publicity occurring, he can minimize that probability by exercising constant vigilance over the affairs of his college or institution.

Russell Strong, Director of College Relations, St. Andrews Presbyterian College, was confronted with unfavorable publicity when a handicapped student drowned in the college pool. Strong said, "You must be given the authority by your group to point out and demand corrections or malfunctions. It's a matter of maintaining prestige. You must present the facts so clearly and effectively that the lasting impression in the minds of interested individuals is favorable to the school."

Sensational charges against college personnel or the institution itself, though it is completely refuted, remains in the minds of observers long after the true facts of rebuttal are forgotten. This is so because those who present the rebuttal seldom give their presentation the impact which characterized the initial charge. A college publicity representative must find ways to dramatize a rebuttal.

Three things are important in countering an unfavorable piece of publicity. The first important ingredient is fact. Though the attacker

may use half-truths, innuendo, and inaccuracy in his statements, the publicity representative must stick to fact in his reply, and he will be taking a long step toward winning the battle.

Accuracy is also essential. A respected public relations director may be sure that if the bad publicity was given prominence by the newspapers, the answer to it will be prominently displayed. It will also be carefully analyzed by the detractors in the hope that it can be discredited. If it proves inaccurate, and the publicist is obliged to correct it publicly, he may cause a great deal of harm by creating the impression that official statements by his college or open to question.

The third basic ingredient is speed. Any delay on the part of the publicist in stating his side of an issue may well be interpreted by many observers as a sign that the original publicity was factual enough to make him and his college reluctant to reply. Therefore, as soon as unfavorable publicity is received by the college, the publicist must mobilize facilities to provide a factual, accurate, and speedy answer. In answering, it is wise to treat the matter as routinely as possible. Avoid using the name of the individual to whom the original story was attributed. The publicist does not wish to get the entire organization into controversy with a single person. In the material, merely direct the facts to the general public, not one individual.

The method the publicist uses to disseminate facts of his rebuttal will depend largely upon the circumstances. He may prepare a simple statement and have it delivered to the newspapers. If the situation is serious enough, and if the newspapers have treated it as a front-page matter, call a press conference. But never call one unnecessarily. No

matter how the publicist disseminates the rebuttal, he must make sure that all media in the area have an equal opportunity to print the news. It would certainly be unfortunate to add to institutional woes by angering editors through discriminatory release of the material he wants published. Also, the publicist wants the material to reach the public through every possible medium. He must exercise restraint in writing rebuttals.

If the unfavorable publicity is true, the publicist has only one course of action---to admit to the truth. Before he releases his guilty plea, however, he must extract from the governors of his college or institution a solemn promise to correct the unfavorable publicity within a specified time. His admission of truth will be coupled with an announcement that definite action has been agreed upon, and will be completed by a certain date. Unfortunate as the bad publicity may be, willingness to admit it honestly and to take corrective action immediately will mitigate to a large degree the unfavorable impression given the public.

In concluding, the public relations director, unlike the reporter, has a definite responsibility to the college or institution he represents. In promoting his school he is afforded the status of an administrative official. For an effective publicity program, he employs: (1) knowledge of the operation and goals of the institution; (2) working knowledge of the local media; and (3) willingness to work long, erratic hours. In addition, he must urge his client to make news.

The public relations director must master the tools of his trade. He must respect the media and the public to which he reports his school affairs; therefore, his reports must be factual.

The publicist must also live up to a high code of ethics. In promoting his college or institution, he must refrain from unfavorable publicity, but

if the publicity is warranted, the publicist must admit the mistakes of his college, and make a positive effort to rectify the problem.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jack Ramsberger, How to Make Publicity Work, p. 42.
2. Ibid., p. 48.
3. Ibid., p. 72.

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