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The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1985

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

IN THREE OHIO LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

A qualitative study of the role of public relations in three prestige schools that compete for students on a national basis, with focus on presidents' perceptions

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Carol Ann Hall, B.A., M.A.

* * * *
The Ohio State University
1985

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Dedicated to
My beloved husband

Dr. William E. Hall

whose special understanding of the doctoral experience
enabled us to share these years with deep love
and whose support and encouragement
made the Ph.D. a dream come true
Acknowledgments

The completion of this dissertation leaves me indebted to my family and friends, and especially grateful...

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It has been an incredible experience. In their own special ways, they are a part of it.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

Nature and Background of the Study

The role of public relations in three Ohio liberal arts colleges is examined in this dissertation with particular focus on presidents' perceptions of the function.

While efforts to communicate and deal with opinion reach back to antiquity, the tools, degree of specialization, breadth of knowledge and effort seen today are relatively new (Cutlip & Center, 1978, p. 66). And although this country saw the beginnings of public relations in the American Revolution, it was not until the 20th century that public relations became a function within higher education. It is, therefore, a comparatively new profession.

While vast changes have occurred in the media since W. Emerson Reck wrote Public Relations: A Program for Colleges and Universities in 1946, the field of public relations has not changed substantially. Reck's book is as fresh and applicable today as when it was written nearly 40 years ago. It provides the historical basis and theory for this study,
and is used as the conceptual model of appropriate public relations function for higher education.

It should be noted that many statements within the literature refer to the professional in the field in the male gender. It is recognized that this is typical of literature of the particular era quoted, and no attempt is made to edit the material to ascribe to today's acceptance of both male and female in the role. Nor is it the intention that the literature be interpreted as particularly sexist, but rather that the male pronouns are used as universal, for either gender.

Chapter I sets the scene for the study, with background and justification of the focus. The first section provides the necessary definitions of publicity, public relations, marketing and image. The second section outlines a brief history; the third, the research methodology, and the fourth, the projected significance of outcome.

Section I: Definitions

Publicity, Public Relations and Marketing, along with Image, will be examined in this dissertation, so it is vital that the terms be defined.

PUBLICITY

Emphasizing that "publicity and public relations are not synonymous," Reck wrote in 1946:
Publicity is anything that serves to gain public attention for an individual or institution. Thus news stories and pictures, magazine articles, picture bulletins, radio programs, newsreels and sign boards—the principal publicity media at that time—are merely one means toward the end of improved public relations (p. 7).

On the other hand, "public relations is any situation, act or word that influences people," he said, explaining:

Failure to analyze the problems of students, arbitrary announcement of new policies, indifference to the activities and interests of the local community, continued neglect of safety hazards on campus and in buildings, and failure to employ courteous, intelligent persons on the central switchboard—any one of these may make for a college or university enemies whose influence will be felt in unexpected ways and places.

On the other hand, things regarded as routine, traditional or insignificant, such as cleanliness in the college buildings, promptness in answering letters, the friendliness displayed by students and campus employees, and the reduction of waste in the college kitchen, have influenced people not only to speak well of the institutions but also to give at least expected times five- or six-figure gifts for their support (Reck, 1946, p. 7).

He alluded to one concrete example:

Out in Parkville, Missouri, a middle-aged spinster and her companion drove onto the campus of Park College one autumn day. They sat in their car by the Administration Building viewing the Missouri River below and the state of Kansas beyond. Back and forth on the sidewalk in front of them students passed. The spinster liked the serious, yet wholesome and happy expressions on the faces of those students. She stopped several and asked them questions about the college.

The two ladies left. Twenty years later the spinster died. Her companion of that earlier day and an attorney visited the campus with her will. She had left a large and fertile Missouri farm and
several thousand dollars to the college. She had been on the campus only once—that day 20 years earlier—but she had been won to the college and its program by the impressions she had received on that day, and those impressions had decided her to leave her worldly goods to help perpetuate the institution's work (Reck, 1946, p. 7-8).

According to Reck, public relations can be defined as follows:

The sum total of all the impressions made by the institution itself and the various persons connected with it...The appearance, the action, the speech and the writings of every person associated with a college contribute toward the general impression of the institution, and any adverse opinion created, whether it be by the president, a student or the switchboard operator, may have far-reaching effects (Reck, 1946, p. 8).

Based on this definition, it is obvious that all institutions have public relations, whether or not there is a specific department devoted to it.

There was a time when colleges existed largely for a privileged few and college professors sat on thrones exalted by distance from students and public, but that time is past. Consequently, the only institution which does not have public relations is the one which has closed its doors. It must be added that that institution also had public relations once—and poor ones (Reck, 1946, p. 8).

But Stewart Harral said that some observers believe the term public relations is so vague and all-inclusive that it is virtually meaningless. It is simply a recognition of the necessity to make the acts and philosophies of one segment of society understandable to other segments (1942, p. 19). He continued:
Others are of the belief that public relations activities are concerned with ballyhoo, antics, tricks, and devices which seek to fool some of the people part of the time. This is an erroneous view, because the highest ethical standards of honesty, truth, and fairness must characterize every public relations enterprise. Likewise, public relations should not be used to cover up mistakes, avoid unpleasant publicity, and in other ways deceive those who are copartners in justifiable activities (Harral, 1942, p. 19-20).

This reputation was spawned by press agents, from whom "modern directors of public relations are lineal descendants" (Harral, p. 240).

Sometime in the latter part of the 19th century this cunning fellow popped up in show business...Coming as he did from the make-believe world, it was altogether natural that many of his stories and stunts were fantastic creations...With the advent of the motion picture industry, every film producer employed ballyhoo artists; but the late Ivy L. Lee, who jumped into the national spotlight with his work in behalf of some strike-beset miners in 1904, was the first of modern public relations consultants (Harral, p. 240-241).

(Lee is known within the profession as "The Father of Modern Public Relations.")

Harral defined public relations as simply relations with the public (p. 241). He quoted Harold L. Childs, editor of The Public Opinion Quarterly, who said:

Public relations may be defined as those aspects of our personal and corporate behavior which have a social rather than a purely private and personal significance (An Introduction to Public Opinion, 1940, p. 3, as quoted in Harral, p. 241).
MARKETING

Marketing, on the other hand, is defined as:

...the analysis, planning, and control of programs designed to bring about desired exchanges with designated markets...Very basically, a marketing effort involves planning to set marketing goals, identifying the publics or groups to whom we will appeal, doing research to learn their needs and preferences, developing a product, distribution planning, pricing and promotion (Kotler in Harper, 1979, p. 24-25).

Another definition of marketing for nonprofit organizations, written by a business professor, A. R. Kratchenberg, first appeared in the May 1972 issue of The Journal of Higher Education:

Marketing deals with the concept of uncovering specific needs, satisfying these needs by the development of appropriate goods and services, letting people know of their availability, and offering them at appropriate prices, at the right time and place (cited in Topor, 1983, p. 13).

IMAGE

Lastly, it is important to understand image. Kotler defines image as "the set of beliefs that a person or group holds of an object" (1980, p. 631). Robert Topor added:

It is important to realize that institutional images are really perceptions. These perceptions can vary from person to person. They can change over a period of time. Marketing people talk about image persistence, the idea that people frequently 'see' what they expect to see, rather than what really is. Often there may not be a close relationship between perception (image) and reality (Topor, 1983, p. 57).

And so it is that this dissertation deals with perceptions, eliminates press agentry from consideration,
recognizes that publicity is only a portion of a fully developed public relations program, acknowledges the part marketing plays in a modern institutional advancement program, and accepts the definition proposed by Reck:

The public relations of any college or university is the sum total of all the impressions made by the institution and by the various people connected with it (Reck, 1946, p. 201).

Section II: Brief Historical Perspective and Current Data

Although acknowledging college public relations efforts "of a sort did start as early as 1900 when a few institutions organized what they chose to call news bureaus," Reck stated, "too many of these news bureaus, however, were departmental rather than institutional, and in a majority of cases they worked without specific objectives or plan."

Stories about students, athletics and social life were easiest to get into the papers, and the news bureau director, often a part-time worker or a senior with a flair for writing, emphasized these almost to the exclusion of other materials. The objectives, policies and larger achievements of the colleges and universities at this time and for nearly three decades received little more than passing mention. As a consequence institutions of higher learning, to the average man, became synonymous with football fans, rah-rah boys and beauty queens (Reck, 1946, p. 2).

In 1928 Clyde M. Hill of Yale University wrote:

Not only has the public a right to information proving that the youth in the colleges are not wasting their time, but it is necessary for the salutary existence of the colleges themselves that it be furnished with such information (Hill, August 4, 1928, p.147, cited in
Reck, 1946, p. 3).

Writing almost 40 years ago, Reck said:

But the job ahead—the public relations job—has twin functions of interpretation. It must continue, as has the program of recent years, to interpret the institution to its publics. At the same time, and just as important, it must interpret these publics to the institution. In the final analysis, the success or failure of our colleges will depend, not upon what they think of their several publics, but upon what those publics think of our colleges (1946, p. 5).

The 1970s saw many changes in higher education, with resulting impact on the role of public relations:

Caught in recurring crises of confrontation, protest, distorted media images, and declining public confidences, colleges face public relations tasks unparalleled in the history of higher education.

The essentiality of the public relations function in higher education is no longer debated. The hard question asked by today’s college president is, “Can our public relations staff measure up to its assignment?” (Cutlip & Center, 1978, p. 552).

Douglas Steeples, provost of Ohio Wesleyan University, in an interview with The Columbus Dispatch, said that on the basis of a survey, it is estimated that 400 U.S. colleges will close their doors between now and 1995 (The Columbus Dispatch, February 26, 1984, p. C-1).

The demise especially of private colleges is based primarily on two things: lack of funds and loss in enrollment. Both are areas of concern within the role of public relations.

The primary role of the public relations person is to evaluate attitudes, trends and goals
of society and convince his client to act in line with the public interest. Finally, he must be an expert communicator.

This is largely due to the Holmes-Brandeis 'Marketplace' concept—that Americans test the worth of ideas and institutions in the marketplace of public opinion. It is also due to the fact that this marketplace is centered largely in the media of mass communication (newspapers, radio, television) where most people get information on which to base their opinions. Since these media are highly complex, it takes specialized communicators to utilize them. Such people, in today's world are called 'PR Practitioners' or bear euphonious titles designed to shield their identity from the small group who still considers 'promotion' either immodest or immoral.

Public relations, more than ever before, is an important and legitimate function of the business and academic worlds. It will become more important in the years ahead as institutions present their cases before the Court of Public Opinion (Greenberger, 1964, p. 1-2).

Sometimes seen as the "corporate conscience," public relations' definition depends upon interpretation of the role. James E. Grunig, University of Maryland, and Todd T. Hunt, Rutgers, prefaced their 1984 text:

We portray public relations as a positive force in society, a force that benefits publics at least as much as organizations that employ public relations professionals. We see public relations professionals as in-house activists—people who constantly strive to make their organizations responsible to the publics they affect. Most people who do not understand public relations see the practitioner as an apologist for an organization. We see the role in exactly the opposite way (p. vi).

M. Fredric Volkmann, director of public relations, Washington University in St. Louis, said:

I see public relations, if it's done in higher education, as a mirror that reflects what occurs in the dynamics of the university or
college setting. It is not a lens that can distort or enlarge. In fact, if it has to be a mirror that is anything but a flat one, it is a concave mirror, because it focuses down and narrows on something.

But it is a reflection, not a refraction or a distortion. And, I'm not suggesting that those two things ever occur, but I believe if you're going to be effective, you start that way. You don't impede or alter the character or nature of the institution. You owe it to the institution to determine what that character or nature or qualities are and then you find, depending upon the institution, the most effective ways to communicate that and you do that by determining who the most important audiences are (Volkmann interview, November 17, 1983).

It is essential to determine the institution's priorities, as well as what its mission and goals are. The role is not unknown to corporate public relations, but has probably not been as systematic as it should be in higher education (Volkmann interview, November 17, 1983).

It is to this end that this study is aimed: the perceptions of presidents, public relations personnel and those affected by PR, as to the role of public relations in three of Ohio's prestigious liberal arts institutions.

Role theory is applied as it relates to the institutional perceptions of the part played by public relations, much as Erving Goffman described it, comparing it to the unfolding of a play on a stage (Goffman, 1959, cited in Owens, 1981, p. 68). While role often is described in terms of individuals, however, the institutional expectations of role are intended here. Owens said:
The shaping of the institutional role, the development of a climate within the social system, and the very personality of the participants all dynamically interact with one another. Organizational behavior can be viewed as the product of this interaction (Owens, 1981, p. 76).

The president's role in public relations is an essential one.

By virtue of his position the president is the executive head of the public relations program. As such he furnishes creative leadership, leads in the formation of policies and builds procedures. It is the president's job to point out what should be done in public relations objectives, suggest means for accomplishing those goals, stimulate interest in the program, and then delegate the details to responsible staff members. At times he must appraise the results, and then perhaps suggest new techniques and procedures (Harral, 1942, p. 205).

Reck concluded that public relations must involve constant study of the numerous contacts which an institution makes "with a view toward perfecting the impressions resulting from those contacts."

It need be no secret that the objective of all public relations effort is improved understanding, increased appreciation, and the enlargement of that circle of friends who will speak and act for the institution (Reck, 1946, p. 9).

Vast changes in the media in the intervening years have not affected these objectives of public relations since Reck so stated them.

Walter Seifert, professor emeritus of public relations in the School of Journalism at The Ohio State University,
commenting on the development of public relations during his long career, said:

Back in the depressed 1930s I found strong need for communicators who could pinpoint public problems, suggest policy changes, persuade, promote, explain, educate, defend, tell and sell through all available media. Fifty years later the mission of public relations hasn't changed a bit (Northart, May 1984, p. 4).

Section III: Overview of Research Methodology

Public relations within the three Ohio private liberal arts colleges studied is a function affected to a great extent by presidents' perceptions, and their relationships with those responsible for planning and implementing the PR programs. Thus, the perceptions of the presidents are examined in relation to those of the personnel involved in the public relations office and those affected by PR.

Success of the public relations program in any college or university will depend to a large extent upon the relationships that exist between the president and the director. These relationships, based on mutual understanding born of respect, frankness and loyalty, should be constant and continuous. When such relationships exist, many problems will die aborning (Reck, 1946, p. 30).

The study utilizes the institutional typology from the Stanford Project on Academic Governance, developed in 1970 under a grant from the National Institute of Education as an adaptation of that used by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. The Stanford Typology divides institutions into categories of Private Multiversity, Public Multiversity, Elite Liberal Arts College, Public Comprehensive, Public
College, Private Liberal Arts College, Community College and Private Junior College. This study deals with the Elite Liberal Arts College, described as follows:

In American higher education there have always been some small private liberal arts colleges that are outstanding, with highly trained faculties and high-quality degree programs. Although they do not receive as much federal research money as the multiversities, they nevertheless are strong scholarship and research centers. Normally they are best known for high-quality bachelor's programs... (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1978, p. 60).

The best of the private institutions are thus distinguished from those remaining, offering at least a bachelor's degree, which fall into the category of Private Liberal Arts College in the Stanford Typology. There are more institutions in the category Private Liberal Arts College in this country than any other (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1978, p. 60).

The study focuses in depth on three Ohio Elite Liberal Arts Colleges chosen for the purposive sample: Denison University in Granville, Kenyon College in Gambier, and Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware. Denison, founded as a Baptist institution, and Kenyon, originally a college of the Protestant Episcopal Church, have severed their ties and are now both independent non-profit institutions, while Ohio Wesleyan remains a church-related institution, with ties to the Methodist Church.
"Denison University aspires to be a community of intellectual excellence and moral ideals," and "intends that its students educate themselves with the aid of a faculty devoted to teaching and engaged in advanced scholarship and research...to give them a broad knowledge of the major forms of intellectual activity and to assist them in attaining an integrated conception of their own intellectual, moral and religious life," in addition to the opportunity to gain proficiency in a single discipline (Viewbook: Denison 83-84).

Kenyon College purports to teach young men and women "to think critically, to question the world and their place in it, and to communicate with clarity and conviction," through its liberal arts curriculum, classical in its orientation (Kenyon: Educating leaders for 160 years).

Ohio Wesleyan points to "learning how to live," in its mission statement, stating, "We transmit institutional values through our strong commitments to excellence and equality, to independent thought, and to principles of self government." Ohio Wesleyan's viewbook acknowledges that in this ever-changing world, "the only certainty is the rapid obsolescence of narrow, technical training," adding that while such preparation might be out-of-date 20 years from now, or even 20 months hence, thinking will never be obsolete (Ohio Wesleyan 83/84).
The study involves in-depth interviews at these three prestige colleges. All are strictly undergraduate, offering 4- or 5-year baccalaureate degrees. Enrollments hover between 1,500 and 2,200 students. These particular colleges were chosen as prestige schools that compete on a national basis for students, are of similar size, and are located in Central Ohio.

Within the purposive sample, in-depth interviews were conducted with the presidents; directors of public relations, admissions, development and alumni; faculty members; students; alumni; prospective students and their parents, and representatives of the community, local newspaper editors and shop owners.

Additional background information was gleaned from documents, publications, speeches, etc., and interviews with recognized experts in the area of study, as well as personnel at a variety of institutions.

A pilot study involved visits at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind.; University of Kentucky and Transylvania University, both of Lexington, Ky.; Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.; The Ohio State University in Columbus, and interviews with noted public relations practitioners.

As Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen (1982) advised, the initial visits were treated as exploratory opportunities to assess what was feasible. The process enabled the researcher to set the parameters for the study.
to encompass like-universities, when it was originally thought that a variety of institutions would be included. It was found that the mind-set is very different in public-multiversities, for example, than in elite liberal arts colleges. In dealing with prospective students and parents, for example, the public multiversities are aiming at the masses, and are relatively unconcerned with recruitment, other than for minorities and merit scholars. The private liberal arts institutions, however, are recruiting the individual, and interested in recruitment, generally avoiding the "scatter-gun" approach.

While public relations persons in higher education can draw on information provided by professional organizations and Schools of Journalism, "mostly they learn at the knee of some guru," according to Volkmann (interview, November 17, 1983). Thus, auxiliary interviews supplement the primary focus on public relations at Denison, Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan University.

Following extensive interviews for thick description, trustworthiness was established through triangulation of method, using interviewing and document analysis, and credibility was tested by making "member checks" within the profession, "the only possibility of establishing the truth value of information obtained naturalistically" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 110-111).
The following research questions formed the core of the interviews (see Chapter III for extended discussion of methodology and complete questionnaire used in guided interviews):

1. What are the Presidents' perceptions of the role of Public Relations within their institutions?

2. What are the PR directors' perceptions of the role of Public Relations within their institutions?

3. What effect do those perceptions have on the PR director and others employed in PR capacities?

4. What effect do those perceptions have on the overall PR program?

5. What are the collective impressions of the effectiveness of their respective programs, as measured by: a) student recruitment, b) dollar volume of fund raising, from private, public and alumni sources, c) image of the institution as perceived by the Presidents, faculty, students, alumni, and citizens of the respective local communities, and by peers in parallel institutions?

Section IV: Projected Significance of Outcome

Two levels of significance are evident in the study, one local and one general. Significance locally will be in the extent that it contributes to a greater understanding of the role of public relations in three of Ohio's small private liberal arts institutions. Clarification of purpose, perceptions and interrelationships, combined with
an evaluation of the effectiveness, will contribute knowledge about university-level public relations.

General significance is seen as the study's contribution to knowledge about presidents' perceptions of public relations. Understanding what is operative and the relationships involved provides data that can be generalized, insofar as the three institutions represent a "slice of life" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 116).

The study increases the available knowledge in the field by focusing on three Ohio private liberal arts colleges, providing perspectives for viewing the role of public relations. Grounded theory emerges, "based on and verified by real-world data" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 102).

As the study succeeds in providing grounded theory, so it contributes to the field of public relations. And, in turn, it underscores the essentiality of public relations to the survival and success of institutions of higher education.

Stephen H. Ivens of the College Entrance Examination Board, writing for CASE Currents, quoted Lord Eric Ashby, distinguished British educator:

An institution must fulfill two conditions: It must be sufficiently stable to sustain the ideal which gave it birth and sufficiently responsive to remain relevant to the society that supports it.

"To this, I would add that it is the ability to communicate that insures both the stability and
responsiveness of your institution," Ivens said (1979, p. 10).

Everyone associated with the school is a school communicator. However, I would like to see someone in charge who is especially sensitive to communications. The public relations director might be the best coordinator. Too many schools use their public relations director only for news releases, walking around visitors, and answering inquiries. He or she comes in after policies are decided. I would like to see the public relations director sit in on the meetings of the top administration and give input that will be part of policy-making (Kotler, as quoted in Harper, 1979, p. 30).

More than thirty years earlier Reck recognized the desirability of cabinet status for the public relations director, and urged that the president appoint him to:

...a position in the administrative councils, which will indicate to the faculty and students that he is a person to be respected and consulted. If the director is to have a fair chance to do an over-all public relations job, he must be a member of the inner councils. Such membership will bring him into contact with many public relations problems soon after they arise and in many cases even before they arise. It will then be possible for the institution to receive maximum benefit from the director's understanding of public relations values and psychology. At the same time, such membership will reveal to the faculty the importance of the public relations director's position and pave the way not only for better cooperation but for consultations on faculty-related problems of a public relations nature (Reck, 1946, p. 32).

The literature bridges the gap of time. Although cabinet status is still being recommended, only one of the colleges studied, Ohio Wesleyan University, has so advanced its Public Relations Director, and at that, it was an action
taken only within the past 18 months. Little has changed, and it is believed the perceptions of presidents still affect the outcome of public relations programs within the institutions.

Examination of these perceptions and case studies of the three private liberal arts colleges results in an incisive study of the relationship between presidents' perceptions and the public relations programs.

The study, using qualitative methodology, will contribute to the scholarly knowledge in an understanding of the role of public relations and its meaning to an institution of higher education, and will be important to administrators seeking to comprehend the function of public relations for their colleges.
Chapter II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Development of the Profession

Historically, the practice of public relations in higher education dates to the turn of the century, with the University of Michigan leading the way with the establishment of its publicity office in 1897. Competition for funds and freshmen forced private colleges to institute similar programs. Yale University's PR and alumni office grew out of the Office of the Secretary in 1899, and in 1900 Harvard hired the Publicity Bureau, the nation's first PR firm, formed in Boston. Columbia, Chicago, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin followed the movement shortly thereafter (Cutlip & Center, 1982, p. 551).

Exact origins of the office within higher education are difficult to substantiate, however, as the literature on the subject provides conflicting historical notes.

Acknowledging that Harvard University published a President's annual report as early as 1825, Harral (1942) noted that Harvard created a separate publicity department in 1919, but quoted H. C. Hines and R. G. Jones (Public School Publicity, 1923, p. 13) as saying that "publicity
as a separate activity did not arrive until 1902, when the Case School of Applied Science and James Millikin University began the circulation of publicity material" (cited in Harral, 1942, p. 15).

Harral also noted that in an unpublished Master's thesis by John S. Walters, Louisiana State University (1941), the journalism graduate student found:

Both the University of Kansas and Southwestern University claim 1900 as the date of their publicity offices' origin. Primary aims in most instances were to get publicity, to advertise the college, to serve as a clearinghouse for news, and to keep the alumni and public informed of the doings of higher education. These bureaus were set up for such specialized purposes as training journalism students, directing food administration campaigns during World War I, sponsoring special campaign publicity, and sending out extension publicity (cited in Harral, 1942, p. 15).

Prior to the establishment of news bureaus, colleges and universities used a variety of catalogs, letters, reports of administrators and such to publicize themselves, attract students, interpret programs and to make individual and group contacts (Harral, 1942, p. 16).

Some institutions sent out framed campus views to adorn the walls of high school buildings. Clergymen of most churches have been powerful influences not only in recruiting students but in raising funds and participating in other public relations activities of denominational institutions. By the very nature of their positions, presidents and deans have always assumed large responsibilities in the interpretative programs. Long before the advent of movies, field representatives of some colleges used slides to illustrate phases of campus life. The custom of sending yearbooks to high school libraries is one of the oldest schemes in the
public relations program of higher education. For years the denominational magazine has been utilized by the church college as a medium of reporting news (Harral, 1942, p. 16-17).

Harral quoted the then-education editor of The New York Times, Benjamin Fine, whose study of the growth of college news bureaus in the United States indicated:

Only four were started between 1900 and 1909. From 1910 to 1919 an additional 13 were organized, and between 1920 and 1929 there were 53 others added to the list. One hundred and thirty-four were founded between 1930 and 1938. Large private institutions were the first to create news bureaus, public colleges were next, and the denominational ones were the last (Harral, 1942, p. 15-16).

And, according to Michael Radock, who for 20 years directed public relations for the University of Michigan, that institution was the first to employ a Vice President for University Relations, in 1931 (Radock interview, November 1982).

As classical education gave way to curricula responsive to the needs of the twentieth century, as the demand for extension grew, and as the need for money increased sharply, the college administrator turned, sooner or later, to the use of publicity and ultimately, to public relations (Cutlip & Center, 1979, p. 551).

In 1946, Reck said:

The term 'public relations' has come into extensive use during the past 10 years, yet there is still widespread misunderstanding of its principles among educators. In fact, only a handful among the 1,700 institutions of higher learning in the nation have on their campuses well-coordinated public relations departments (Reck, 1946, p. 2).
In the 1980s, it is conceded that public relations is an important function in the administration of the American college or university that may be defined by the institution.

**National Professional Associations**

Important in the history of public relations in higher education as a profession was the development of the professional associations.

For several years before the formation of the first professional organization, members of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism who were in charge of publicity for their respective institutions held committee meetings in conjunction with the teachers' annual sessions. As an outgrowth of these sessions the American Association of College News Bureaus (AACNB) was founded, April 6, 1917 in Chicago (Reck, September 1938, p. 6, cited in Harral, 1942, p. 17).

Theodore Thomas Frankenberg, a Columbus, Ohio, journalist, is said to have "fathered the movement from which modern-day college relations has evolved," as the founder of AACNB. That organization became the American College Publicity Association (ACPA) in 1930, and in 1946 the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA) (Reck, 1976, p. 1).
At the start of the 1970s, this association had a membership of 1,244 institutions and some 3,650 men and women, professionals responsible for their institutions' public relations, financial support and development programs. The institutional membership had nearly trebled since 1939-40, reflecting the growth in this field over the years (Cutlip & Center, 1982, p. 551-552).

The first call for merger came in 1959, when Donald Smith, then president of the American Alumni Council, said:

The efforts and expenditures of the American Alumni Council and the American College Public Relations Association in serving programs of institutional advancement must be coordinated (Cutlip & Center, 1978, p. 551-552).

The two groups negotiated from time to time until 1973, when a joint study committee was formed. The merger became effective in January 1975, with President Alice L. Beeman as the first woman to head a national public relations organization (Cutlip & Center, 1978, p. 551-552). The new organization was named Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), representing all the professional specializations in college and university advancement--alumni administration, fund raising, public relations, government relations, public information, and publications.

Wrote Beeman in the foreword to The Changing World of College Relations: History and Philosophy:

A half-century ago, the starting point was a realization of the value to a college or university of an occasional newspaper item concerning educational programs. Today, virtually
all colleges and universities have well-organized and effective programs of institutional advancement, making use of the techniques and technologies of communications and of the ever-growing body of knowledge provided by research in the social sciences (Reck, 1976, p. xi).

CASE boasts a 1985 membership of approximately 10,100 individuals, with around 1,900 colleges, universities, and two-year colleges (interview with Claudia Perry, CASE, April 26, 1985).

Justification

In the past few years the public relations officer has literally moved from the boiler room to the board room (Radock in Lesly, 1983, p. 313).

Declining enrollments and continuing financial crises mean colleges and universities are keenly aware of the need for "funds, friends, and freshmen," according to the development director at Denison University.

Thomas E. Benner, visiting professor at Teachers College of Columbia University, told the AACNB 1930 assembly:

Progress in the development of a college or university is dependent in the end on the nature of the institution's public relations. This implies a continuous process of adjustment between the institution and the public opinion of its constituency.

Programs have been undertaken in the field of higher education whose certain failure might easily have been predicted by a good public relations officer, thoroughly familiar with the nature of public opinion in the constituency from which support was necessary. On the other hand,
important projects have been postponed or abandoned because of an uninformed or misinformed public opinion whose hostility needed only suitable exposure to the facts to become converted into enthusiastic support—as any capable public relations officer would have seen.

Benner recognized that the job of interpretation is a 'two-way street:'

...the success of a public relations officer cannot be measured in terms of the number of times per week that the name of his institution appears in the public press or in terms of the number of column inches of news space secured per month...His success will be measured by the extent to which he is able to build up in the minds of his constituency a true picture of the institution he serves and the degree of accuracy with which he is able to judge what programs a constituency can be brought to support when placed in possession of the facts. This requires the authority and the facilities for using all those devices which will contribute to creating a public opinion ever more closely in accord with reality, for preventing those mistakes which so often create opinions contrary to the facts, and for constantly interpreting and reinterpreting to the institution the needs and desires of the constituency to which it is responsible (Reck, 1976, p. 33).

Benner concluded that the measure of success should be the "'healthy advancement of the social usefulness'" of the institution "'through better understanding of and by its constituency'" (Reck, 1976, p. 33).

Fundamentally, the assignment of the educational public relations person is to explain change occurring in and coming from the college or university and to advise the other leaders of the effect and perceptions of their actions.

A major responsibility of the public relations officer is to convey to the public or publics the nature of the institution so it is not undermined because of ignorance, so it is supported because of understanding. A university, to continue to meet its responsibilities for
education, research, and service, must have resources and freedom.

The public relations departments must try to help educate the public to understand, to appreciate, to tolerate, and to defend the vital necessity of freedom for the student to learn and for the scholar to search for the truth without restriction.

It is the business of the public relations counselor to be aware of the vulnerability and the opportunity of the university in the circumstances of the time. More public attention is being focused on education for a number of reasons, among them the age composition of the nation's population, the large percentage of youth seeking college and graduate education, and the consequent demands of education on financial resources.

What is happening in and about and because of, or lack of, education is now more important to more people, whether the issue is admission standards, efficiency, financial needs, inter-institutional cooperation, teaching and vs. research, service, and the many tangential responsibilities of higher education (Radock in Lesly, 1983, p. 316).

While some within the academic community have cast a jaundiced eye at public relations, feeling that it is not scholarly, in recent years the necessity for public relations in higher education has become widely acknowledged.

Edward H. Litchfield, chancellor, University of Pittsburgh, explaining to a national conference of educational public relations officers the reasons for academia's 'instinctive reaction' against public relations, said:

...the atmosphere of public relations is uncongenial to the typical academic person, and for some very fundamental reasons: In the first place, academic people are accustomed to having people come to them, not going to people. The
student comes to us, the problem comes to us. Ours is not an outgoing kind of reaction to take the product, to take the story, to take the service to the people, to the public. In this sense public relations people are almost diametrically opposed to us, and we’re inclined to be analysts and inclined to be concerned about detail. You’re concerned about broad impacts. You see things in general terms, as you should; we tend to see them in highly particularistic terms, as indeed we should. Again, we look on things—every problem, every subject—with reservation; you look at it with enthusiasm and from a positive point of view. So once again in discharging your function in a positive sort of way, it’s almost inevitable that the academic people feel a little uncomfortable.

Again, we’re not comfortable with the media of public relations. The press conference is not in our blood. It’s something that the typical academic person shies away from. Promotional literature seems a little unscholarly, and the biographical sketch in a national magazine suggests something less than appropriate academic humility (Radock in Lesly, 1983, p. 316).

But great strides have been made in the general acceptance of public relations on the campus, and its worth is being demonstrated wherever it is competently practiced (Cutlip & Center, 1982, p. 557).

Radock agreed that:

...functions broadly categorized under the term public relations are sometimes given a more acceptable name such as university relations, public affairs, information services, planning and development, assistant to the president, news and publications service, public information, and similar labels (Radock in Lesly, 1983, p. 316).

Indeed, a rose by any other name would smell the same!

However, one university president observed:

The importance of an informed public opinion about the individual institution and higher education in general is now quite widely accepted
among educators. The hostility toward the lay adviser has disappeared; the resentment of the journalistic interpretation of science is nearly gone; the isolation of the academic community is no longer celebrated as a major virtue (Cutlip & Center, 1982, p. 557).

President Fujio Matsuda of the University of Hawaii recognized that there is "no quick solution to improve the university's communication and image." Speaking to the UH Foundation, the private fund raising organization for the institution, he said:

No executive can expect to maintain indefinitely an ideal balance among all the desires and needs of the university's multiple constituencies. Misunderstanding, confusion, disagreement and even conflict are inevitable. They cannot be eliminated. They can be minimized both in frequency and intensity, however, by clear statements of policy, by programs that are consistent with policy, strong leadership, appropriate and visible channels for suggestions and complaints, and by a well-organized and implemented communications program that will assure the university's constituencies that we are a well-managed and essential community asset worthy of support (Honolulu Advertiser, June 17, 1982, p. A-9).

As James Russell Lowell said: "The pressure of public opinion is like the atmosphere. You can't see it, but all the same it is 16 pounds to the square inch" (cited in Schoenfeld, 1954, p. 166).

Indicative alike of this growing emphasis on the perspective of the public was this sentiment by the Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions when it voted as favoring increased emphasis on public relations and public information programs for higher education to the end that the public may be fully and properly informed on the objectives, programs, and accomplishments of higher education

"'And,' the Association might have added, 'to the end that institutions of higher education can be fully and properly informed on the needs and aspirations of the public.' For public relations broadly conceived is a two-way street," as Benner had stated in 1930 (Schoenfeld, 1954, p. 170).

In summary as justification of the PR function, Greenberger said:

Public relations, more than ever before, is an important and legitimate function of the business and academic worlds. It will become more important in the years ahead as institutions present their cases before the Court of Public Opinion (Greenberger, 1973, p. 2).

Presidents and Public Relations

It is generally agreed throughout the literature, dating from the 1940s to the present, that the president is the institution's chief public relations officer. The PR person is the facilitator.

J. L. Fisher, writing for CASE Currents (October, 1980, pp. 14-17), discussed "Great Expectations: What the President Expects of the PR Director and What You Should Expect in Return." As presidential expectations, he listed:

+ Extraordinary competence.
+ Loyalty to the institutional mission as defined by [the] president. Under my assumption, there is no such thing as a PR officer who places loyalty to the institution over loyalty to the president unless, of course, he or she resigns.
+ Knowledge of [the] president.
+ Sensitivity...The president doesn’t want to be caught off guard.
+ New ideas.
+ Contingency plans.
+ Knowledge of higher education. Public relations officers should be educators before they are public relations officers...[with] a good general knowledge of higher education.
+ Effective, efficient managers.
+ Partisanship. [The] public relations office is not neutral and should not pretend to be. It is an office of the institution and under the authority of [the] president.
+ Work...The public relations officer who is most appreciated by the president works long and hard, including weekends and holidays when necessary. [He or she] should appear omnipresent to [the] president.

On the other hand, Fisher said the public relations officer should expect the following things from the president:

+ Respect. No officer of a college or institution is more respected by an astute president than a good public relations officer.
+ Defense and support. All presidents who are effective leaders are also sometimes assertive and controversial. This means that [the PR person] will be tested frequently under pressure and, at times, will need and get the president’s support and defense on and off campus.
+ Reward. Good performance should be suitably rewarded, financially and otherwise.
+ Status. An effective PR officer...should be involved officially or unofficially in significant decision making...fully informed about virtually all important college affairs, and play a role in shaping not only the goals of [the] college public relations program but also the goals of [the] college.
Richard P. Bailey, president of Hamline University, in an article entitled "Building the President’s Image," (Techniques, April 1971, p. 13-15, as cited in Reck, 1976, p. 386-387), listed "The president’s seven needs:"

1. The president needs loving criticism. He comes to the campus as a paragon of pedagogical profundity. As the image tarnishes from inauguration to resignation it is the development [or public relations] officer who must keep him informed of the developing dullness. The process may even be slowed by alert and timely criticism...

2. The president needs loyal opposition as well as support...A president can always gain face-to-face agreement from favor seekers who cluster at his elbow. He needs disagreement to sharpen his decision, to clarify his dreams, and to solidify his plans. It is when a bouncing process of ideas against the obstacles of cost, tradition, and personalities takes place that progress is possible...

3. The president needs dedicated espionage...It is essential that irritating molehills be reported on the horizon before they build up to threatening mountains to be climbed. It must never be assumed that the president knows what is going on. The chances are great that he doesn’t...

4. The president needs irresponsible disinterest...When the development [or public relations] officer becomes protective and overly solicitous the impact of the president is blunted and softened. The president must be used and on occasion, abused. No one can stand between him and his responsibility to the institution.

5. The president needs institutional patriotism. The criticism he needs (lovingly bestowed) does not extend to the institution he serves...
6. The president needs compassionate understanding. His assignment is exacting and difficult but he does have a life of his own with its little dreams and small successes. That secret life should be respected, protected, and never entered without knocking...

7. The president needs charitable forgiveness...The president should be convinced that no matter how grave his goof there is one office which will try to understand; will offer charity; will extend forgiveness... (Reck, 1976, p. 387).

Reck, believing that public relations is essential to institutions of higher education, quoted Harold Schellenger, who served as president of ACPRA in 1946-47, on the need for concentrating attention on the broader aspects of public relations. Addressing college presidents, Schellenger said:

You can't get along without public relations. They are as inevitable as the proverbial death and taxes. As long as you and your institution exist, you will have public relations. It's just a matter of what kind of public relations your university enjoys—good, bad, or indifferent...

After all, Mr. President, public relations is a term almost synonymous with human relations, and so long as you are dealing with people and are dependent upon them for your patronage and support they certainly will have some kind of opinion of your college or university!...

In all...public relations activities the president bears a major responsibility. More than he realizes, the institution bears his imprint... He may have a public relations director on his staff, but that director will have no great success if the president doesn't accept personal leadership of the public relations program, by precept and example. There are too many institutions in which the major job of the public relations director or the director of publicity is to make the administration appear to be a friendly, public-minded one when in reality it is
no such thing!

Some day some university president will set up a thoroughgoing public relations program and see that it is carried out to the smallest detail. When that Messiah comes along, he will not only put his own institution on the map— he will help to answer many of the criticisms now heaped upon higher education generally, and he will point the way to a new and happier relationship between the universities and the publics from which they stem (Schellenger, June 1943, p. 14-17, as cited in Reck, 1976, p. 108).

Administrators have learned from bitter experience that more of their time and attention must be given to their public relations programs, said Harral.

An indifference toward supporting publics means indifference in public reactions (Harral, 1942, p. 263).

And Schoenfeld, writing in 1954, said:

Wherever you find an outstanding college administrator you will find a man who is deeply conscious of the varied voices speaking to him their special versions of each campus function and policy. In short, the successful campus administrator is an expert in internal and external public relations in the best sense of the terms (p. 4-5).

The interdependence of the president and public relations officer has been noted throughout the literature.

At a conference held at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, February 27-March 1, 1958, with its theme "Higher Education—Its Advancement and Support," it was agreed that "public relations, alumni relations and fund raising should be the areas of primary responsibility for the coordinating officer" (Reck, 1976, p. 238 & 248).
Attended by 70 participants, including 13 college presidents, professionals in public relations and fund-raising, management consultants and industrial leaders, plus 30 members from the leadership ranks of ACPRA and American Alumni Council, the Greenbrier assembly, in summary:

...expressed belief that the man likely to be most competent for the post of coordinating officer would be one who 'has a real commitment to education and to his institution, a thorough knowledge of the institution, a grasp of the techniques of his profession...confidence in himself, and self respect.' It is necessary not only that he think of himself as an educator, but that the executives above him see him as something more than a technician with narrow, mechanical assignments or, as the Greenbrier keynote speaker put it, as something more than a professional soldier (Porter, 1958, cited in Reck, 1976, p. 249).

The Greenbrier conferees had agreed that a public relations program should have four objectives:

1. to assist in establishing the institution's proper image in the public mind, and increasing public awareness of the image;

2. to help the institution to earn understanding, support, and sympathy;

3. to improve communication within the institution, and between the institution and the community it serves; and

4. to assist in developing good students, a strong teaching staff, and high academic standards (Reck, 1976, p. 249).

Realizing that the phrase 'image of the institution' might be misunderstood, that it might imply that the PR
person's job was to create a "shining fiction," the Greenbrier participants agreed that the public relations person must provide assistance, not practice manipulation, and that "effective communication must be a two-way process" (Reck, 1976, p. 249).

To achieve effective media relations, James L. Fisher, in his book, Power of the Presidency, advised presidents:

First, hire a good public affairs professional. To the astute president, this person is as important as the chief academic officer. In an emergency, the public affairs officer (sometimes called public relations officer or public information officer) is the president's single most important conduit to the public on and off campus (1984, p. 148).

This modern advice is not unlike that given almost 40 years ago by Reck in his prescient chapter, "The President and the Public Relations Job":

Success of the public relations program in any college or university will depend to a large extent upon the relationships that exist between the president and the director (1946, p. 30).

And, it is the premise for this study that the president's perceptions directly affect the role of public relations within the institution.

In order to fulfill its potential, it is recognized throughout the literature that the public relations officer must have status within the institution "on a par with university deans or vice presidents, and should report directly to the president...so that in times of crises
public relations officers can act with dispatch" (Kobre, 1974, p. 420).

The director’s value as a liaison representative also is based on the newsmen’s recognition that the director deals directly with the president, and is close to presidential deliberations and thinking. To gain the confidence of faculty members, likewise, the director must have high status in the institution, receiving a salary equal to other vice presidents or deans (Kobre, 1974, p. 420).

Further clarifying the position, Reck said:

If the director is to have the job of correlating and integrating all work related to public relations, his title should be vice president, director of public relations, or assistant to the president, and his office should be as near that of the president as possible. This juxtaposition will increase his prestige among all employees and constituents of the institution and at the same time make easier the frequent contacts between the two men (1946, p. 31).

But there is some disagreement within the literature on this score. Schoenfeld said it is "frequently unwise for a university to designate a vice president for public relations in name," for the following reasons:

1. Announced public relations executives in publicly supported agencies are, rightly or wrongly, extremely vulnerable to taxpayer or donor criticism;

2. Faculty members are, again rightly or wrongly, instinctively averse to academic institutions dignifying public relations with an executive berth; and

3. Since everyone in a university is more or less involved in public relations, there is a real danger in suggesting that the responsibility for public relations can formally be centralized in any other office than that of
the president himself (1954, p. 173).

Doubting the validity of this reasoning, Louis M. Lyons, long-time newspaperman and curator of Nieman Fellowships at Harvard (1942), agreed with Reck, however:

[The public relations officer] must be a major executive of the institution, of the grade of vice president or at least assistant to the president and high in the councils of the administrative officers...Any president who desires that his university shall serve a larger usefulness in the community should see to it as one of the bases of policy that a really first-rate mind fills the public relations chair, and that he be given a key place in the administration (Reck, 1976, p. 107-108).

Urging that the broad approach to public relations be used, Reck admonished:

In case the new director is to confine himself to the dissemination of publicity through newspapers, magazines, radio, bulletins and the other agencies available, his title should be director of publicity. A man who is charged with publicity work only should not be burdened with the title of director of public relations. He should not have to take the blame for public relations mistakes unless he has the privilege of giving advice that might avert, alleviate or eliminate them (1946, p. 31).

And, while Reck recommended faculty status, he underscored the need for a position in the administrative council, a step taken by one of the institutions in this study only a little more than a year ago.

Reck quoted one president who responded to his 1937 survey, the late Dr. R. A. Kent of the University of Louisville, who listed five principles pertaining to the relationships between the president and the public relations
1. Matters of public relations should be centralized under the administration of a director of public relations.

2. The director of public relations should have a close official connection with the president—in our case he is the assistant to the president.

3. He should be given aid sufficient to allow him ample time for planning the broad phases of public relations.

4. His salary should be ample to attract and hold a man who has desirable personal traits as well as academic training.

5. He should be the confidential adviser to the president on matters of policy which may result in favorable or unfavorable attitudes on the part of the constituency of the institution.

All of these suggestions are dependent upon the quality of the person employed as director of public relations. He should be selected with as much care as is used in the selection of a dean (Reck, 1946, p. 35-36).

Reck called these five principles “as important today as they were in 1937,” in his book published in 1946 (p. 35). And it should be noted that they have stood the test of nearly a half century.

Hamline University President Bailey described the ideal development or public relations person:

He understands the collegiate community and is at home with faculty members as remote from his interests as is Physical Education from Physics. At meetings with trustees he contributes but makes no attempt to dominate. He has children of his own who can keep him flexible...He writes and speaks well, of course, but more important he...
works long and odd hours. His office is the friendliest place on the campus where one can always find a hot cup of coffee...He understands and loves me. I keep him humble (Bailey, April 1971, quoted in Reck, 1976, p. 387).

Publicity, Public Relations & Marketing

Two stonecutters were working on the reconstruction of St. Paul's in London when Sir Christopher Wren asked each what he was doing. The first replied, 'I am cutting stone.' The second answered, 'I am building a cathedral' (Topor, 1983, p. v).

Creative public relations people see the potentialities and act on behalf of the institution, communicating the accurate image based on reality, facilitating understanding and support.

But 'publicity' is not enough in today's institutions of higher education, and it is doubtful that it ever was.

In 1954, Clarence A. Schoenfeld wrote:

Mere publicity is like reputation—what you are thought to be; but real public relations is like character—what you really are. Public relations is deeds, not words (p. 3).

The essence of the public relations task for American educators he believed to be:

1. Improved public relations is needed as never before if...schools are to continue to merit and receive adequate support.

2. Public relations correctly conceived is no bag of publicity tricks; it is inextricably linked with sound administration in all its aspects.
3. Public relations is not the job of a single individual; every contact between the university and its constituency is an episode in the complex flow of institutional relationships (Schoenfeld, 1954, p. 3).

Owen C. Elder, Jr., assistant dean for administration at the School of Community and Allied Health Resources of the University of Alabama, writing in the College and University Journal (May 1974, p. 30-32), said:

A clear distinction must be made between the limited function of publicity and the very broad function of public relations in the minds of presidents, public relations officers, and faculty.

Public relations in institutions of higher education must include more than publicity...There must also be some mechanism whereby the institution can 'listen' to its publics...Genuine communication requires 'participation' of all elements of the public...There is a vital need in colleges and universities for the kind of communication that brings about between the institution and its publics a shared understanding of shared purpose...(cited in Reck, 1976, p. 425).

Instead of limiting the function to publicity, modern public relations programs within many institutions of higher education are broadening their scope to include marketing.

Philip Kotler, the Harold T. Martin Professor of Marketing in Northwestern University's Graduate School of Management, said:

The best public relations people are becoming increasingly market-oriented and are interested not only in communication but in what is needed and being offered.

Higher education is on the defensive right now. It must convince young people and their parents that it is a 'good,' that they should want
it, that they will benefit by it, and that they should support it.

Higher education is a business. It has to justify its existence through good deeds and not just through hallowed words (Harper, 1979, p. 30).

Describing the marketing approach to higher education, Topor said:

Institutional marketing plans should begin with market research. Surveys of target audiences help to create plans to market admissions, development and alumni affairs, and other activities (1983, p. 13).

The contemporary marketing approach allows an institution to research, plan, and deliver coordinated programs based on strategies that are designed to create the greatest impact and recognition (p. 16).

Recruitment - The PR Concern

In an era when education experts are warning colleges and universities of "potential problems resulting from a decrease in the number of 18-year-olds, apprehension about high tuition and other costs, and society's lowering value on a liberal arts education," (Evans & Berman, 1982, p. 4) university public relations is focusing on image and student recruitment as never before with a marketing orientation.

Institutions of higher education are aware that the years of rapid growth in enrollment are past. High school graduates will have decreased in number by almost 20 percent between 1980 and 1985 (Evans & Berman, p. 630-631), so new markets are being sought and marketing is being used more aggressively by universities.

Between 1957 and 1977 the number of births declined from 4.3 million to approximately 3.1 million per year. That means that the current volume of births is only about 72 per cent of its previous level. This represents a reduction of 1.2 million potential students per year. And, even though there are signs that the number of births has begun to stabilize, the overall decline of potential students that has already occurred extends over a 20-year period (cited in O'Brien, 1979, p. 19).

Daniel A. DiBiasio cautioned that "projections and forecasts are hypothetical and temporal" (1982, p. 15), quoting economist Howard Bowen, who said:

Some economists, after taking into account their view of the job market for college graduates, are predicting enrollment declines of as much as 40 per cent. They may be right...my point is only that such a drop in enrollment is not preordained (quoted in Arnold, 1980, p. 23, cited in Di Biasio, 1982, p. 15).

DiBiasio added, "Projected declines rarely apply equally to all sectors and to all types of institutions" (1982, p. 15).

Kotler said:

Low enrollment is not the only reason for needing marketing. A college with adequate enrollment ought to be concerned with the reasons why it is getting students, why it is successful, and whether the reasons for its success will continue.

I am concerned that the situation could reverse itself. Quite suddenly, the president could find out that not enough work had been done to develop a long-term market for the college. He or she should try to learn now what the college's
position is in the market-place and where its present students are coming from. Otherwise, the future could throw a curve at the college (Harper, 1979, p. 24).

Universities are actively pursuing traditional students, in light of the predicted student population decline.

In 1973 public institutions spent $113 per new student on admissions. This rose to $195 per student in 1978. During 1979, 900 schools purchased direct-mailing lists of prospective students from the Educational Testing Service (the organization that administers college-board examinations); the number of schools purchasing lists in 1971 was only 125 (Evans & Berman, 1982, p. 631-632).

And this expansion of marketing efforts is not confined to "poor- or average-quality institutions. For example, in 1979 Barnard College in New York spent $61,000 for mailings and posters and $15,000 for an 18-minute slide presentation." The Barnard campaign netted 17.4 per cent more applications in 1979 than they had received in 1978 (Evans & Berman, 1982, p. 632).

The marketing orientation is impacting what university public relations offices do and how they are staffed, with a focus on the concern for recruitment.

Thaddeus Bonus, vice president for university relations at Indiana University from 1977 to 1980, set two objectives for PR in June, 1979:

1. To improve public attitudes toward higher education which includes the value of education to the individual and the commerce value to the State; and
2. To maintain adequate enrollments (Bonus, 1979).

But this is not new! In 1851, a Minnesota newspaper, lobbying for the development of a state university, declared that "not a single youth of either sex should be permitted to leave the territory to acquire an education for want" of a suitable institution in that state (Rudolph, 1962, p. 51). This was the sentiment throughout the 19th century until in 1894 the President of Indiana University, "pointing with horror at the 385 sons and daughters of Indiana studying outside the state," besieged the state legislature:

Give us the money to make a great institution of learning and Indiana will not only save the greater part of one-half million dollars spent by Indianans elsewhere but she will bring the sons and daughters of other states to spend a half-million more (Rudolph, 1962, p. 52).

Today, a typical student at a private college is valued at "anywhere between $35-$45,000 by the time they graduate in revenue," said one director of university relations at a private midwestern university. The problem of recruitment is very real for all universities, more keenly felt now because of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old pool. While many like The Ohio State University can still claim to be attracting the numbers, admissions officials readily admit that quality of students is down. Both quality and quantity must be forthcoming for universities to survive.

The most important part of any school is its student body. It is for the students alone that a
university exists. Their quality raises or lowers the University's reputation. A major public relations function of any academic institution is therefore to recruit the best young minds available. It is a truism that the better the raw material, the better the finished product. Colleges must make every effort to convince promising students that it is to their benefit to attend [that] school. Again, the public relations function plays a key role (Greenberger, 1964, p. 5).

The process is a long-range one for public relations at a university. Because of the complexity of the university, public relations is not an easy job. Recruitment of potential students is not neatly categorized or pigeon-holed in one area of the university's administration. The recruitment effort is affected by everything and everyone that IS the university. Public relations efforts often overlap—from recruiting students to conducting a public information campaign in support of the university's budget to hosting special events, such as the celebration of the university's 100th anniversary.

The trend toward market research and a marketing orientation is an important development in university public relations. According to Walter K. Lindenmann, formerly director of university relations at Hofstra and now vice president for attitude research at Hill & Knowlton, Inc., a public relations counseling firm:

Market research is the essential first step toward improving communications for student recruitment.

The reason is obvious. If you don't know your market—the prospective students—how can you
talk to them in language they will understand?

Without research, he said, one cannot be certain that attractive college viewbooks and recruitment materials are communicating (Lindenmann, 1979, p. 34).

All publications, speeches, news releases, etc., that are issued through the university public relations offices are building-blocks in creating the appropriate image of the institution and long-range recruitment efforts. And that's a role of university relations in the media. That role was never more important than it is today, as universities struggle to keep their enrollments in a decreasing population.

**Image**

Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are.—Emerson (Harral, 1942, p. 1).

While it is vital that the public relations personnel be aware of the image of the institution, it is also important to recognize that they cannot create the desired image to suit the powers that be.

Edwin M. Crawford, who served as Vice President of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University from 1975 until 1982, told the Faculty Senate (March 11, 1979):

The Office of Public Affairs cannot manufacture quality educational programs with catchy phrases or press releases. We cannot portray excellence in research or any other area
if excellence does not exist. The quality must be real if we are to have stories of substance to report which will help build public understanding and win support.

Schoenfeld, at the time chairman of the department of journalism at the University of Wisconsin, presented the same theory in the July, 1954, issue of *College Public Relations Quarterly* (p. 10), "Teaching IS Public Relations," when he wrote:

Unfortunately, some presidents and professors continue to overlook the fact that it is performance, and not publicity, which will determine the long-run well-being of higher education. They expect some mysterious magic of advertising to produce the funds and freshmen necessary to academic solvency. It is up to us to hammer home a sounder point of view.

Basic to acceptable academic performance is superior teaching. A university's public relations program begins in the classroom. The professor himself is the university's key public relations man. Nothing is so calculated to separate, in countless bold and subtle ways, the university from its most precious publics—the undergraduate, his parents, and his friends—as poor teaching. Nothing, on the other hand, is more effective in the recruitment of promising students and the fostering of loyal alumni than excellent undergraduate instruction (July 1954, p. 10, as cited in Reck, 1976, p. 206).

And even earlier, the point was made by Harral:

Quality isn't something that can be promoted into an institution. It must be there. If it isn't there, the finest public relations program in the world won't act as a substitute (Harral, 1942, p. 264).

As Schoenfeld said:

The public simply will not respond in a sustained fashion to an appeal that talks about the frosting and ignores the cake. To John Q. Citizen, a university is a place where he sends
his son or daughter to get an undergraduate education, and in the long run he is willing to support only the institution which, by both practice and preaching, demonstrates that the freshman is in the center of things and not relegated to a corner by a parade of white mice and 'top brass' banquets. Public relations men are now realizing that they are not selling soap after all, that they are selling Education, with a capital 'E,' that a fancy wrapper will not make up for a second-rate product, and that the best gadget the university ever produced is nothing more or less than a satisfied Freddy Frosh or Betty Coed.

What a university is and does will always speak louder than what it says. If a college pays more money for halfbacks than it does for scholars, no amount of press releases can counteract the fact. The university's voice is a composite of many acts. Public relations is synonymous with broad-gauged administration, and every administrator is 'in the act' (Schoenfeld, 1954, p. 179 & 235).

But then, too, every employee, every student, every graduate of the institution is 'in the act' in public relations. And every individual or item identified with the institution contributes to or detracts from the desired image.

In his book, Marketing Higher Education, Topor listed the following items that may add to client perception of the institution:

...employees, employees' dress, staff, the way phones are answered, stationery, business cards, newsletters, annual reports, publications, direct mail, posters, news articles, feature articles, logo, products (curricular programs), extracurricular activities (athletic events), physical facilities, vehicles, signs, exhibits (1983, p. 89).
The image or institutional identity is a key element in the college.

It separates, identifies, or positions one organization from competitive groups. Identity is a statement of who and what you are. It contributes to the way people see your institution (Topor, 1983, p. 89).

Believing that creativity is essential in public relations endeavors, Topor added:

Creative people, working together, are critical to an institution's future. The products they produce can be instrumental in communicating the positive, accurate, honest image that an institution needs to establish its marketing position (Topor, 1983, p. 90).

Defining institutional image, Topor said:

An organizational image is the aggregate or sum of perceptions, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and feelings that people have about the organization. Some marketing specialists maintain that image is more important than reality (1983, p. 55).

Acknowledging the importance of perceptions, Professor David Garvin of the Harvard Business School said:

An institution's actual quality is often less important than its prestige, or reputation for quality...Perceptions are critical, for quality and prestige do not always move hand-in-hand (quoted in Topor, 1983, p. 55).

Certainly administrators, faculty and staff should be concerned about the institution's image for three reasons, according to Topor:

1. They need to know how their institution is perceived in relation to competing institutions.
2. They need to know how they are perceived by their various audiences—students, alumni, potential donors, and so on.

3. They need to monitor any change in image perception over a period of time (1983, p. 55).

While images may vary considerably from individual to individual, often perceptions find overlapping agreement.

The importance of the role of public relations in the image of the institution was emphasized by Robert C. Dro, community relations director at Indiana University, when he asked rhetorically:

Monetarily, what is a good image of Indiana University worth? Conversely, what would be the cost to the University if our programs were being organized and promoted incorrectly or not at all? (I.U. Position Description, August 28, 1977, p. 2).

The answer is obvious.
Chapter III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology was employed to study the role of public relations in three elite liberal arts colleges using the constant comparative method of developing theory, involving on-site visitations and interviews for thick description.

The qualitative research method was chosen because of its five features:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument;

2. Qualitative research is descriptive;

3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products;

4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively;

5. 'Meaning' is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called participant perspectives...which illuminate the inner dynamics of situations—dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 27-29).

Qualitative research is described as:

...an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics.
The data collected has been termed 'soft,' that is, rich in description of people, places and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. ...[researchers] tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time. The best known representatives of qualitative research and those that most embody the characteristics [of it] are participant observation and in-depth interviewing (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 2).

The pilot study involved on site visitations and extensive interviews with public relations and admissions personnel at Indiana University, Bloomington; University of Kentucky and Transylvania University, both in Lexington; The Ohio State University, Columbus, and Washington University in St. Louis. Additional supplementary interviews were conducted with personnel from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

The pilot study enabled the researcher to set the parameters for the study to encompass like-universities, within a geographical area that made intensive study possible. Using the Stanford Typology, developed in 1970 under a grant from the National Institute of Education through a major study, The Stanford Project on Academic Governance (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1978, p. 59-61), the research focused on three Elite Liberal Arts Colleges with similar enrollment (See Chapter I for description of Stanford Typology).
The three Ohio institutions in this study, Denison University in Granville, Kenyon College in Gambier, and Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, are Elite Liberal Arts Colleges, because they compete nationally for students and maintain a strong reputation in the hierarchy of educational institutions. They were selected based on recognized quality of program, expertise within the institutions and proximity. The exclusion of institutions in other categories is deemed appropriate because of the difference in mind-set apparent in the pilot study.

Following extensive interviews on site for thick description, trustworthiness was established, to meet the tests of rigor, through structural corroboration: triangulation and cross-examination (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 106-107). Credibility was tested through "member checks" with professionals in the field (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 110-111).

Additional information for support was gleaned from documents, publications, speeches, and supplementary interviews with recognized experts in the area of study, as well as personnel at a variety of institutions.

Since the field of public relations, focus of this research, is a function of journalism, it is appropriate that the methodology utilize naturalistic inquiry. Naturalistic inquiry is compared to investigative reporting,
from the point of view of educational evaluation, as Guba and Lincoln (1981) wove the thread of similarities and differences throughout their book.

Educational evaluation, Guba and Lincoln pointed out, can utilize the naturalistic or rationalistic paradigm, and if the former is chosen, it may involve qualitative or quantitative methodology. (The naturalistic is often misconceived as a methodology, which it is not, they emphasized. It is a paradigm, within which researchers operate in the qualitative or quantitative mode.)

...A naturalistic paradigm, relying on field study as a fundamental technique, ...views truth as ineluctable, that is, as ultimately inescapable. Sufficient immersion in and experience with a phenomenological field yields inevitable conclusions about what is important, dynamic, and pervasive in that field (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 55).

In theory, investigative reporting is the only journalistic instrument by which one can examine the issues of society in depth, while the theoretical basis of educational evaluation is that it is useful in assessing the merit and worth of an educational entity. Both educational evaluation and investigative reporting depend on the methodology of the investigator as the instrument, using primarily interviewing, observation and document analysis. (Both take place in the naturalistic setting and can involve qualitative and quantitative study.)
They differ in purpose, as the reporter attempts to uncover malfeasance and deceit in the interest of the public, while the researcher seeks to study merit or worth within an educational setting.

They also differ in secrecy. The reporter must often operate undercover, while the researcher operates as a public figure.

While both utilize documents and records, the reporter deals with those of the past, while the researcher may generate de novo documents, such as test scores.

Although both seek balance in their research, the reporter is looking for warrantability and verifiability as judgment factors. The researcher is seeking validity. The reporter has switched from objectivity to seeking fairness, which Guba and Lincoln recommended would be appropriate for those in naturalistic inquiry.

The process of investigation is also dissimilar, in that the reporter has built-in check-points throughout his/her inquiry, allowing for evaluation and adjustment, or the aborting of the project. (See next page for "Go/No Go" on chart, Figure 1, Williams, 1978, p. 14.) Guba believed that this is a shortcoming of the researcher within educational evaluation, as many projects that should be aborted are not, and many are weak in their outcomes as a result. These check-points, therefore, were utilized in the
research for this dissertation.

A study of the chart of 'reconstructed logic' of the investigative reporter (Figure 1) will show that both reporters and researchers are parallel in their stages of conception and feasibility, but that the key interview, which is essentially the final data gathering step for the reporter may be done at any time in naturalistic inquiry (Guba in Smith, 1981, p. 67-86).

Figure 1: The Reconstructed Logic of Investigative Journalism (Williams, 1978, pp. 14-15.)

Laws of libel affect the reporter, and they should be considered by the researcher as well. While there rarely would be such a case within the educational setting, it is a
possibility of which the researcher should be aware.

The whole issue surrounding attribution is essential in consideration of this research. While 35 states have Shield Laws that protect reporters from divulging the identity of sources when doing so might jeopardize the personal safety or job welfare of that source, the attributed news account is strongly preferred by most journalists and readers.

The journalistic approach insists on attribution, for credibility of sources. When a reporter must protect the source, using instead the phrase, "a high placed official," credibility suffers.

An article in The Chronicle of Higher Education (April 18, 1984, p. 1) was headlined: "Scholars enjoy the same protection as journalists." A graduate student at New York University at Stony Brook had kept a journal while working in a restaurant as part of his research for his dissertation involving the American restaurant. The restaurant subsequently had a fire, and there was some question as to its source. The Grand Jury subpoenaed the graduate student and his journal. He testified fully, refusing, however, to produce his journal. The Judge quashed the subpoena on the basis that it was not necessary for the Grand Jury to see the journal. The article stated that while this was based on scholars having the same privilege as journalists in protecting their sources, this might not be true if the case were to go to trial. At that point, they surmised, the
attorneys may need to have the journal produced for the defense.

Guba warned that knowing that their notes might be subject to subpoena should enable researchers to protect their notes accordingly. Granting anonymity to sources is not absolute.

The Freedom of Information Act guarantees access to public documents and records for the journalist, which also would apply to researchers. However, there is a double-whammy to this one, because the FOI Act guarantees that records created by a public body or public funding may be open for examination, which could include the notes compiled by the researcher. Again, Guba warned that naturalistic inquirers keep this in mind as they construct their notes accordingly.

The issue of anonymity vs. attribution is important to the researcher. While it is usual for educational researchers to disguise the identity of research sites, giving pseudonyms to people and places, it is apparent to the researcher that in a journalistic frame, such as this, the identity is helpful to the outcome. In this dissertation attribution will be used judiciously. The three schools, Denison, Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan, are prestigious, and what was discovered through research is more credible when attributed to them, than if the schools
were merely identified as X, Y and Z, or "three midwestern institutions." Likewise, the presidents are well-known in higher education, and their perceptions, when attributed to them, enhance the research by identifying the sources. The reader can judge the merit of the research, based on the perceptions of these specific institutions and their leaders.

The researcher assumes that there will be cooperation within the setting, and that his/her sources generally will be willing to talk. The reporter does not assume this type of cooperation, as normally s/he is looking into something that will result in the accusation or revelation of mismanagement or commission of a crime. The reporter expects to be lied to, anticipates deceit and is on guard that s/he not be duped.

Within the settings of this study, cooperation prevailed. Entry was not a problem, as only one of 35 potential interviewees declined to meet with the researcher. (His reason was that only the admissions director could supply the information he believed was sought. As an assistant, he expressed reluctance, and the interview was not pursued. It was a peripheral interview, not necessary to the research, or a more assertive stand would have been taken by the researcher.)

The approach for the research was friendly, not adversarial, as there was no cause for suspecting negative
information would be forthcoming. The researcher took a professional approach to the entry process, presenting the topic to be discussed and professional credentials, and seeking a formal appointment. Interview appointments were made for times convenient to the interviewees, and at the location suiting their needs. All but one were interviewed in their offices (one faculty representative chose to meet away from campus, for convenience of scheduling). Cooperation within the three institutions was given willingly, as interviewees expressed an interest in the topic and the forthcoming resultant dissertation. The interviewees, unbeknownst to each other, expressed pleasure that their institution had been selected for the study, and willingly gave their time.

Thus, the cooperative model of interviewing (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 179) was utilized. The original set of questions was constructed for and tested in the first interview. The questions were found to elicit the desired data for the dissertation, and were refined to suit the position or individual expertise of the interviewee as the study progressed. The journalism background of the researcher was instrumental in the study, insofar as the interviewing techniques employed.

The complete list of questions for the guided interview follows:
1. What is your perception of the role of public relations within your institution? (This was clarified with a definition of public relations in the broad sense.)

2. What is your relationship to the public relations (public affairs and/or university relations) office at this institution?

3. What is your relationship to the president? What do you see as his perceptions of the role of public relations within this institution? (Presidents were asked about their relationship with the public relations administrator.)

4. Do you consider yourself and/or your office 'recipient' or 'participant' in the university's public relations?

5. Would you classify your role as an 'initiator' or 'cooperator' for programs of public relations nature?

6. In what situations do you consult with the public relations professionals on the institution's staff? Or do you operate autonomously? Independently? (Public relations directors were asked if and when they consulted with others.)

7. What public relations role do you play at this institution?

8. What are your impressions of the effectiveness of public relations in regard to:
   a. Student recruitment?
   b. Dollar volume of fund raising from private, public, alumni or other sources?
   c. Image of the institution (as you perceive it?...as perceived by alumni?...students--both current and prospective?)
d. Parallel institutions, such as (named the other two institutions in this study) and their images?

9. In light of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old population what public relations needs do you have to maintain adequate enrollments?

10. What percentage of your job would you classify as public relations work? Do you have a public relations person on your staff? If you were hiring, would public relations skills be considered important (using the broad definition of public relations)?

(The following questions were posed to presidents only:)

11. In which of the top administrative positions is it most important to have a friend—someone you can trust?

12. Were you apprehensive about taking over as president and having to work through a public relations director who had served your predecessor?

13. Do you confine your role to setting objectives and leave specifics to your public relations professionals?

Other questions evolved during the guided interviews and were pursued by the researcher. For example, when a public relations director said he considered the Admissions office his office's primary client, the Admissions Director and President were asked if this were their perception also, and if so, who had determined that this area receive priority consideration?

The interviews were highly productive, and information was willingly provided. The researcher began by giving a brief introduction by way of background and establishing
rapport with the interviewee. This was followed by informal
discussion of the topic so that a clear map was drawn for
the interview. Questions flowed smoothly from one to
another, and a conversational tone was maintained throughout
the interview. All participants willingly granted
permission for the researcher to tape the interviews, after
it was explained that this procedure would insure accuracy
of quotes. The tape recorder permitted the researcher to
capture the exact phrasing and tone, while notes were taken
to supplement the data with observation. Debriefing was
done on the tape recorder following the interviews, which
assisted the researcher in noting observations and
practicing reflexivity.

Rarely does the researcher need to deal with a
reluctant or belligerent interviewee, but if s/he does, it
is suggested by Guba (Guba in Smith, 1981, p. 74) that s/he
use the techniques of the investigative reporter. Having
two reporters, one playing the "good guy", and the other
playing the hard line or "bad guy", can sometimes open up
the key interview, for example. The interviewee is often
cought off guard by the question asked when it is least
expected. The reporter sometimes also employs silence,
effective in making the interviewee talk, or the technique
of putting his/her pencil aside and just listening without
taking notes. The reporter then reconstructs the interview
as soon as s/he can after leaving the setting.
There was no necessity for the adversary role within this study; however, silence was often employed, as well as the latter technique of just listening without taking notes. Because the interviewees often became oblivious to the tape recorder as the interview progressed, the technique of putting pencil aside and just listening was utilized effectively.

Files and indexes kept by the reporter are also useful as a technique for the researcher. The reporter develops files on each of the "actors" within the situation, profiles, documents, etc. S/he also keeps a chronology, noting the occurrences that might later plug a hole. These files are carefully cross-referenced, and summarized for ease in use. Guba recommended that researchers follow the pattern of the reporters in this system (Guba in Smith, 1981, p. 82).

The journalist sets "minimum goals" and "maximum goals" for the investigative report, which might range from substantiating mismanagement to unearthing a crime. The editors know what "minimum" outcome can be expected, and if the "maximum" develops, as Guba said, "that's a windfall profit!" The researcher does not set these minimum-maximum goals, and is often guilty of over-selling his study. Guba suggested that researchers follow the reporters' practice in this way of predicting the outcome that can be expected. This was kept in mind as the research developed (Guba in
Smith, 1981, p. 82).

The preparation of the final report is radically different for the investigative reporter and the researcher. The reporter works with graphic artists, photographers and editors to "package" the investigative piece, using sidebar stories as needed, graphs, etc. The reporter and editor follow the advice of Keith McKnight and Andy Alexander of the Dayton Journal Herald who say that the primary question is "Who gives a damn?" The meaning to the public is assessed, and the audience determined (Williams, 1978, p. 21 & 32).

The researcher, on the other hand, often writes as if s/he were writing for other researchers, "to fit some kind of reconstructed logic of what the evaluation process entails, or to meet the model of scientific reporting, rather than to communicate to some audience a description and judgment of an entity in which they have a stake" (Guba in Smith, 1981, p. 84).

As with the journalists' approach, there is definite concern for the audience of this dissertation, however. It is believed that this study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of public relations, and that it will be ultimately useful to presidents and public relations directors, and others concerned with institutional advancement. Those wishing to establish a public relations
office, or to rejuvenate an existing program, will find insight into the functions, and clarification of the interrelationships existing within higher education which are influenced and affected by public relations.

Guba concluded that there are enough similarities and dissimilarities to qualify investigative reporting as a "Metaphor for Educational Evaluation." The researcher and reporter can learn from each other (Guba in Smith, 1981, p. 85). Thus, the style and techniques of the journalistic approach are combined with the rigor and methodology of the educational researcher to produce a dissertation that is not only acceptable in the realm of education, but useful to the reader involved or touched by public relations in higher education.

The journalist values the direct quote, which allows the subject of the interview to speak for himself. Bogdan and Biklen endorsed the value of this approach to reporting data, when they said:

Whenever you can, quote people rather than summarize what they say...strive to make the subject's own words bountiful. Quote your subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 85).

Thus, the reporting of data in this dissertation relies heavily on direct quotes, which results in thick description and understanding. The richness of the data is not diluted by paraphrasing the interviewees' responses.
As data is gathered, Guba urged researchers to "practice reflexivity" to guard against bias. In practicing reflexivity the researcher reflects on his/her own perceptions, prejudices, biases and/or point of view throughout the study (Guba, *Educational Communications & Technology*, Spring 1981, p. 87).

While it is difficult, it is not impossible to guard against bias. The researcher's awareness of his/her own perspective before entering a study is important. Changes s/he notes through introspection throughout the study should be recorded in a journal on a daily basis. This can also be accomplished through peer debriefing.

Reinharz (1979) and Wax (1971) urge that researchers note the changes that occur on site and in the investigator. Rarely do researchers include this self-realization in their final report on the study, leaving that to another time and place (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 148).

The same things that hinder communication are blocks to researchers: filters, misinformation, selective perception, misinterpretation, and the fact that one can be duped or lied to by a source. Guarding against these stumbling blocks, and minimizing the effect of bias, begins with the researcher's awareness. Practicing reflexivity allows him/her to be aware of his/her own prejudices, and to assess those changes throughout the process of inquiry. Such
self-realization will allow the researcher to acknowledge growth and assess his/her development as a person, a professional and a scientist (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 148).

Reflexivity was practiced through journal notes and taped debriefings throughout the data gathering and analysis process, as deemed appropriate by qualitative researchers.

Data collection and analysis go hand-in-hand, utilizing the constant comparative method.

Analysis and data collection occurred in a pulsating fashion—first the interview, then the analysis and theory development, another interview, and then more analysis, and so on—until the research is completed. In most forms of case studies, the emerging themes guide data collection, but formal analysis and theory development does not occur until after the data collection is near completion.

The constant comparative method is a research design for multi-data sources, which is like analytic induction in that the formal analysis begins early in the study and is nearly completed by the end of data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 68).

Bogdan and Biklen advised researchers to use the following steps in the constant comparative method of developing theory:

1. Begin collecting data.

2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus.

3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.
4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.

5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.


While these steps can easily be listed, they occur simultaneously, and although complicated are "an important way of controlling the scope of data collecting and making multiple-site studies theoretically relevant" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 70).
Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Three elite liberal arts colleges in Ohio constitute the universe for the study. In-depth interviews at Denison, Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan University, with initial focus on Presidents' perceptions, provide insight into the perceived role of public relations, and the reality as the role affects a variety of internal and external publics.

Denison University

To provide preachers and teachers for the frontier, the Ohio Baptist Education Society opened The Granville Literary and Theological Institution on December 13, 1831, with 20 young male students. By the end of the first 11-week term, enrollment had tripled, indicative of the interest in education. In 1854 the school was moved to its present location on the hill overlooking the town of Granville, and renamed Denison University, in honor of William S. Denison, a generous benefactor from Muskingum County, Ohio.

Women began attending classes at Denison in the 1870s from the Young Ladies Institute, which had been established in 1859. The Institute was renamed Shepardson College in 1886, and became a part of Denison University in 1900. In
1927, the two were consolidated under one board of trustees.

The trustees chose the term 'university' to mean that Denison would offer several different courses of study, to include a new scientific curriculum leading to a bachelor of science degree, which had been established earlier by some eastern colleges. Graduate courses leading to a master's degree were included in the curriculum for awhile, but by the late 1920s, Denison University had chosen to become strictly an undergraduate institution.

Denison University has a current enrollment around 2,100, from more than 40 states and 23 foreign countries, 163 faculty men and women, with 18,000 alumni. In day-to-day operations it utilizes approximately 250 of its 1,000-acre holdings (The Inauguration of Andrew Gabriel De Rocco, October 12, 1984).

President

Following the resignation and subsequent death of Denison's beloved President, Dr. Robert C. Good, the university inaugurated its 17th President, a research physicist, scholar, university educator and administrator, Dr. Andrew Gabriel De Rocco.

A member of the Presidential Search Committee described De Rocco as the epitome of the Liberal Arts Renaissance man:
He came to us from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where his title had been Dean of the Faculty. He's a chemical physicist by training, and his most well-known research has been done in DNA and RNA engineering—genetic engineering. He plays squash, he's an avid clarinet player, he collects art deco clocks, he has a particular affinity for Burmese art, and he's widely read. He's sort of debonnair, distinguished in appearance and also very energetic.

In his Columbus Day inaugural address, "An Unfinished Voyage," De Rocco said:

The voyage of Christopher Columbus is symbolically the American voyage. There are ever new worlds to explore, old ones to honor. We Americans have one foot variously in the soils of Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America...while the other seeks the stars (Denison magazine, December, 1984, p. 3).

The new President, interviewed three months after his arrival, just two weeks after inauguration, said he considered two Vice Presidents--Finance and University Relations, and the Provost to be the three most responsible officers of the institution. As to whom within the top administrative posts he felt it was most important to have as a friend, De Rocco said:

I think it's absolutely essential to trust [those] three people. I don't have to be friends. And I'm not sure that a President can have a friend in the administration. I don't even think it's desirable.

To a lesser degree, but equally important, I would have to feel a high degree of confidence in whomever brought us our students, the Admissions person.
The President gives priority to the financial and faculty concerns of the university, and sees Public Relations as a well-developed, smoothly functioning program to facilitate both.

Commenting on his perceptions of the role of public relations, De Rocco said:

There are several constituencies that have to be addressed—clearly alumni, with vital interest in the welfare of the institution, who are constantly asked to contribute to it. Those of us who must sink or swim on our own merits and cannot reach into the public till for support have to create an environment for our alumni and for other benefactors and friends of the institution, which is favorable to their continuing support and a part of that depends on our being candid and straightforward in representations of our accomplishments as well as our needs.

PR, in terms of making publications available to them and being available to them on alumni circuits and development tours, which Presidents do repeatedly, is a vital part of the whole process. So it's [PR] inevitably central for that constituency.

Acknowledging that other schools within the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) are a constituency within the state in sympathy as well as competition for resources and students, De Rocco said:

...a President, as well as members of the senior staff, need to be on close and amiable terms with their counterparts. That's a form of PR which simply cultivates a sense of well-being that people operating in the same arena must share in order to be professional and otherwise compatible with one another, and that extends beyond President-to-President. It's Provost-to-Provost and other officers of the institution as well as faculty.
Other constituencies of public relations concern, he said, include the state legislature.

...what we do in the outside world through the press and personal appearances...creates a climate of mind within the citizens of the State of Ohio that allows them to perceive the importance of diversity within higher education...We're not asking the public to support by reaching into their pockets—but we are asking that they understand such differentials exist and need to be acknowledged.

Pointing to still another constituency, town and gown, De Rocco said:

Thanks to my predecessor's heroic efforts, a sense of distance that had existed under his predecessor was more than overcome...indeed, overcome so much so that my home is less a private home than a facility.

De Rocco summarized his perceptions of the role of public relations at Denison University:

Public relations or some form of putting one's best foot forward is an indispensable part of the life of colleges such as this to overcome whatever mistaken impressions might exist in the community at large about what kind of institution we are, about what sort of role we play in the life of the larger community of liberal arts colleges.

The President considers his role a cooperative one in the area of public relations, because:

When the delegation of responsibility is to someone as able as the Vice President of University Resources and Public Affairs, it leaves me to feel a high degree of confidence in what they attempt to create. But I have no hesitancy whatsoever in making suggestions about what we ought to do, people we ought to be in touch with, alternative ways of orchestrating arrangements or
how things are done.

New to the presidency, De Rocco acknowledged that he had only upon occasion asked the public relations personnel what mechanisms they would employ to disseminate information that had come to his attention, but that had not been a traditional part of the way they had publicized Denison. One public relations concern he voiced is that the faculty receive recognition beyond the walls of the university.

I'm acutely sensitive to the issue of making certain faculty members here whose research and scholarly careers have achieved notable success receive not only widespread internal acknowledgement, but insuring we make clear to all sorts of constituencies on the outside that little liberal arts colleges are not automatically repositories of teachers with no interest in research.

I would measure the research and professional competence of those persons here in chemistry, biology, etc. individual by individual in putting their credentials side by side with people at research universities. Acknowledging that emphasis on teaching takes time away from research, the false dichotomy is one I'm interested in overcoming.

Agreeing that presidents are the spokespersons for the institutions, De Rocco said:

It is one of my tasks to be a quasi-public figure, to accept invitations from the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and other institutions.

To this end, a breakfast for 150 area business and professional leaders was scheduled. The new President discussed the university's interest in the community, and what the community's interest in Denison ought to be,
inviting their participation in areas of mutual interest.

He considers it an essential part of his job to speak for the university and to speak for it with a degree of accuracy and enthusiasm that befits the quality of the institution. He acknowledged he does not know yet what percentage of his job is public relations, noting that it would probably vary from year to year, depending upon the priorities:

This year virtually every constituency wants to find out who this new person is and calibrate against that person. A great deal of my time this year will be spent with external constituents, but I take that not to be a prevailing habit. If it is, I'm going to introduce a law to the legislature declaring days to have 30 hours and I'm going to use the other six for that!

The primary client for public relations, according to Denison's Public Affairs Director, is the Admissions Office. Commenting on the relationship of student recruitment and public relations as a function of the university, De Rocco said:

Students rely on a set of myths promulgated by students and on advice and guidance of secondary school counselors. Some prep schools are automatically feeder schools for certain institutions.

The "set of myths" may or may not fit the accurate image the university wants to communicate, and may be counterproductive to the recruitment process.
De Rocco believes a university needs to make itself clearly known to the network of secondary school guidance counselors so that they have an accurate, up-to-date, testable impression of that institution.

The danger lies to some degree in the fact that perceptions are usually out of date by several years—three to five. If you’re not as good as you were, it takes three to five years for them to catch up to that fact. If you’re a lot better than they thought you were, it takes three to five years again for that idea to calibrate against the reality of your situation.

One of the jobs of an effective PR office, and certainly the President on the stump, De Rocco said, is to get through to the central figures in that network and acquaint them with the character of the institution.

And if that person [the President] is someone who by his or her character conveys a certain sense of the character of the institution, if the character of the person and institution have some elements in common, then the representation of the school as reflected in the behavior of the individual tends to become the external impression. If the President is a person who’s lively, active, interesting, interested, resourceful, adept on his or her feet, in command of facts about the institution, genuinely optimistic about its promise, that gets through. On the other hand if the President seems diffident or uncertain, or hesitant, that gets through. If there is a contemptible level of arrogance about the institution’s worth, a sort of hauteur which is cold and unyielding, that gets through. And if an institution is desperate and is trying everything it can to attract attention, that, too, gets through.

So the President needs to be able to balance what an institution is about. My sense of it, coming out of an Anglican institution, is the point is always proved. To me, that means you
speak honestly and accurately for the institution; you speak with fidelity to its purpose, and to truth; you don’t say things you cannot in any sense justify, and yet you never yield on the conviction of the worth of the institution.

The President supported the news function of the public relations office, believing that ignorance among constituents can be damaging and that the university needs to deal with negative news, not attempt a cover-up:

Bad news always gets out. If you have trouble with the fraternity system, that’ll get out. If you have trouble with academic standards, that will get out. You can be confident there will always be a network supplying the evidence that inhibits giving. You need to be sure you’re not going to be overwhelmed by it. You’ve got to create the positive image and be willing to talk frankly about whatever it is that is on the liability side of the ledger. I think I see a clear association between the prospects for giving and the image of the institution as conveyed by the President.

But what of the image of Denison? "Party School" and "Rich Kids’ College" are two prevailing images found repeatedly throughout the interviews for this research. Although it might be apocryphal, one staff member reported that when a popular guide to colleges noted the abundance of BMWs on campus, former President Good went out to the parking lot to count them. President De Rocco said that the "Rich Kids" image is false, because of those students who were admitted and who applied on time for financial aid:

No one was denied financial aid. That’s an unfortunate public perception, but it won’t be when I’m done.
The President, however, looks at the academic side for his view of Denison:

The image has changed to some extent. That change is at the margin, not the core.

My knowledge of Denison caused me to believe it was one of a handful of premier liberal arts schools, really first rate. I think the faculty is probably a little stronger than I had thought. I discovered a sensibility and ambience that is incredibly more supportive than I had anticipated. I haven't found at least yet a kind of rancor, quarrelsomeness, crankiness, in the faculty, that I sense at other liberal arts institutions I've had occasion to be associated with. I also think an institution needs to be reminded from time to time just how good it is.

The President considers the relative isolation of Denison a contributing factor to this view:

One of the liabilities of being in a relatively isolated community is that you spend more time talking to one another than you would if you were in the northeast corridor. My faculty at Trinity could get to Yale in no time at all, or could go down the river in 20 minutes to Wesleyan, so they had colleagues off campus that they could use as benchmarks for their own worth and interest. Here the only obvious alternative would be to go to OSU.

His images of the other two universities in this study were, by De Rocco's own description, clearly superficial, due to his lack of tenure in the area and acquaintance with Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan University.

Of the two institutions, Kenyon is by far the better known in the east, so I'm looking at it from the perspective of someone sitting at an eastern institution. It probably has something to do with the long-term legacy of Kenyon Review, which established in the minds of those interested in cultural life of this country a conviction about that as a place that took itself seriously and took work its people did seriously.
It was also well known in the east, and well known generally, I guess, that Ohio Wesleyan University had had a couple of rather bad years. It had not succeeded in getting its class; its school size had fallen from something slightly larger than current Denison size to about 1500 now. And it was widely expected that David Warren's responsibility was in some sense to salvage what had become a precarious situation and that he had to try to find a way of getting it back again to a point where it was seen as a resourceful and viable institution.

As the new President of Denison, De Rocco inherited the image perceived by others, as well as a staff of public relations persons who had served the previous administration. However, working with that staff was not a problem for him:

We hit it off very well early on, and I was confident with them. When I was interviewed here and met with the entire staff [of URPA], I asked several questions of what I thought might be things we'd want to do were I to come, and they were smiling and I was delighted, because some of the things that I would have invited them to do, they had anticipated doing on their own. And they couldn't have known that, and I couldn't have known that, and so I think we formed a good sense of association right along.

I recognize that there is nothing about my presidency that would attempt to be a mirror image of or clone. I don't think I was asked to come here to do the things Bob [former President Good] did.

Vice President, University Resources and Public Affairs

Prior to President Good's administration, there had not been active and integrated programs of public relations. Good instituted the position of Vice President of University Resources and Public Affairs (URPA) to cover public relations, alumni and development functions.
When interviewed, the Vice President of URPA said:

Our organization has been effective, and has merited the confidence of the new President. We took the initiative. We already have prepared for him a plan for next year, which obviously includes a central focus on the transition and introduction of this presidency, particularly among external constituents, and the fund raising plan as well as the platform in public relations. So there’s reason for him to take some heart in the fact that we don’t sit back and wait to be asked. It’s initiative on our part. I almost think sometimes it’s better to do the wrong thing than to do nothing.

The vulnerability of the position of Director or Vice President for university relations is legendary. Often new presidents want their own public relations person as their right arm, as they seek to establish their administration. The Vice President said:

That depends on the kind of place and the kind of staff you have. Frequently it’s been a house-cleaning that is needed. College presidents probably know less about our part of the business and are less able to make judgments. It is probably easier to make judgments about deans and provosts and academic personnel. Maybe it’s because we’re all a little insecure in this field. I kind of like the notion of being held to task, and I think sometimes a firing or a gentle easing-out is as beneficial for the easee as the easor. Some people get routinized and have the same experience each year for 20 years.

The Vice President defines public relations very broadly, believing that the tone is set at the top, and that it is not exclusively the responsibility of the PR office.

And the broad definition of public relations does apply to Denison’s operation, which has been expanded from what
was once an emphasis on the news bureau to the professional public relations program it is today.

The Vice President sees the new President as interested, particularly in some of the new technology and what that may mean to the public relations operation, observing that he's a scientist and would naturally take that view.

If I may comment on college presidents in general—they probably have a little more confidence in what they see as public relations than they ought to have or maybe confidence is not the word. I think that they perhaps feel that public relations can accomplish things in terms of what is important to the outside public and what will sell.

Everybody who reads The New York Times is not really wanting to know about what we did at our little science seminar, even though it was terribly exciting for this campus and very important to the academic program. I think there is enormously over-rated import given to mention in The New York Times or mention in Time magazine. I think if that is consistent and sustained as some institutions are able to make it—they have the staff and the story and dedication—then it can be very important.

We were on the TODAY show a couple of years ago with our Homestead, which is a unique program. It didn't do very much, but it made us feel good. I don't think it helped increase our admissions, the number or quality of students applying here. Nor did it raise a penny. And those are the two things I have to worry most about as far as goals for the operation. But sometimes it is important to feel good about yourselves.

And I think Ohio Wesleyan University might be the classic example right now of that. They've hired a high-priced PR firm—and I think you frequently have to hire, to place your stories if you are a small organization as we are, especially in the midwest. With Hill & Knowlton and the type of president who can go on the TODAY show, they are a lot more self-confident right now.
They've had some bad years, and if that does help them have a better self-image, then it can be terribly important. I really don't think it did very much for programs, because it's a one-shot deal.

In operating a broad-based public relations program, the Vice President admits it is difficult to do a good job on the bread-and-butter kinds of things that are going on, such as the home town releases for students who matriculate or are honored.

One of the best ways to support the administrative program is probably that awful routine job of getting those releases out. We also send a copy to the parents, letting them know we've made the release. That's another stroke. Our parents' program in development is phenomenal. We out-raise most of the major institutions in the country. This makes them feel good about the place...it takes that name and we hope because of the quality of student, makes some kind of statement.

To her office, recruitment and development are the top priorities.

Ironically, although the Vice President sees the function of her office as vital, she plays down its importance because of the tendency of the university to become too dependent on publications, in particular, and to see the PR function as the centerpiece of the Admissions program.

There's no substitute for person-to-person contact. There was too much—perhaps because of the computer—dealing with people in large groups instead of doing what we're calling today the 'marketing' kind of activity. Anytime there was a
problem, they would want to throw a publication together. So we were caught in the middle in two ways. On one hand we simply don't have the staff to accomplish that increasing kind of expectation. Second, we don't think it's the best way to do the job and we worried there isn't an over-all communications plan in the Admissions area. That plan would include everything from letters that go out to telephones. When you say communications to them, they think publications.

Acknowledging the need for a focus on recruitment, the Vice President gave priority to the needs of the Admissions Office. In this era of population decline, it is an established fact that universities must have a plan to attract students.

Admissions did receive priority. We made the hard decision and ceased publication of our alumni magazine for six months in order to make it possible to do the job for Admissions. There was no choice, since there was no opportunity for additional staff, and no budget. We're pretty well balanced now, however.

The admissions office just doesn't understand what we do; they don't understand the publications process and time involved. They are going full blast, threatened to death by what they see out there, and that's very understandable. They think some publications are good, more are better and many more are much better. It's a matter of getting it all into focus, and I think we've just about been able to do that. We've tried very hard to bring more of a PR-Marketing focus to Admissions and I think they are beginning to move in that direction.

The Vice President related what is happening in Admissions to what happened in Development eight years ago.

For a lot of reasons, the Admissions office now has to more than 'admit and deny' admissions. They really have to recruit. When I came to this area [of Development] we were collecting, but we really weren't raising funds and there's an enormous difference in those two postures. The
same thing is occurring in Admissions across the country. Admissions offices used to be very haughty.

One of our problems was alumni who'd say, 'I won't give you a penny, because you didn't admit my son or daughter,' but at the time, students with such enormous ability were available. Today those sons or daughters are students we'd die for!

The Vice President believes there is an important interrelationship between Development and college relations.

One without the other won't get far. A wonderful PR program will not raise money unless there is a well-organized Development program to take advantage of that good PR role and what it's accomplished. Terribly effective fund raising will be limited if in fact the underlying communications programs of the institution are not being accomplished and accomplished well. It's a hand-and-glove kind of relationship there.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the university are the concern of URPA as it seeks to communicate the image of Denison.

I do not think that image or anything else can be created for very long or sustained by blue smoke and mirrors, as we say.

We are trying to do more about what are our perceived strengths and weaknesses and we do design our program to a certain extent around that. One of our perceived weaknesses, so to speak, in the prospective student market is our faculty. And the fact of the matter is we have a very strong faculty, but obviously we aren't projecting that or doing it effectively. I would really match our faculty against almost any institution of our kind. They are highly accomplished, very creative, devoted—quality faculty. We are working very hard to get that message out and to underline it over and over again. We are trying very hard to promote the accomplishments of our faculty.
And this goal matches very well the one set by the new President. So, the top down, bottom up reality is a match in this area. What the new President wants to accomplish is also the goal perceived by those experienced in goal-setting for the public relations function.

In other areas of image projection and clarification, the Vice President sees the function as one of translating and explaining the institution to its external audiences. It might vary from audience to audience, but there should be no contradiction. The emphasis may change, but there must be consistency of image conveyed.

The image of Denison? Projected or perceived? The perception I think is we are quite a 'Party School.' We surely don't in any deliberate way try to project that. I've had kids in two other schools. In Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan I see very little difference between the social life, what my daughter at OWU had to contend with and enjoyed, and what we have here. But it's a matter of our having gotten a reputation at some point, because we tended to attract a certain class of students who are socially accomplished when they arrive here and they perhaps tend to project a little more sophisticated image. There is a lot of partying, but there's a whole lot going on at every institution—more than probably there ought to be.

Commenting on the projected image of Ohio Wesleyan, where her daughter is a junior, she said:

It got out of control, became kind of wild as they began to attract a very much less able student body and that exacerbated the whole thing. Then they began not to attract a student body. It only takes a year or two for that to have a dramatic effect. I think they are moving back up
In contrast, the image Kenyon projects is one of isolation and serious academics.

Kenyon was too isolated, too small, too sexist, and far more traditional than either Denison or Ohio Wesleyan University. They haven't outgrown the old boy image, and I think that has put them in very good stead. There's a certain stuffiness about Kenyon that is attractive. I think they have a kind of tweedy image that appeals a great deal to a lot of students. As far as the traditional program, I don't think they bank on any cutting edge kinds of things. They've decided where their centers of excellence are, and promoted them from what I can see, or as I would interpret it, and that's done very well for them.

In head to head competition, they get the more serious students. Maybe 'serious' is the wrong word. Probably we get kids who have a little more interest in innovation, who perhaps have interest in balanced college life.

Everything the Vice President of URPA does she considers public relations in a way, whether it is a management function, dealing with staff, motivating staff, communicating, keeping the place moving or communicating externally or with other parts of the institution, she said.

The inauguration was a public relations function to a great extent.

The inauguration should have six months' lead time. With luck we'll have two and a half months. I worry that we might not be able to do as much as the President expects, in terms of coverage. When talking PR to a President, they see it more in terms of New York Times, CBS and clippings and the 6 o'clock news. We see it differently. I suspect the world is not holding its breath until the inauguration of our President.

That's why my job is PR 100%. When I'm dealing with him, I have to understand that is probably the most important pinnacle he will
achieve in his life. It is a terribly important occasion for him, very meaningful, and we must treat it seriously.

While she did not expect it to get the attention Ohio State University would receive, she hoped realistically that for its size, it would capture press attention at least in Central Ohio.

And while the celebrative occasion of an inauguration might not make national headlines, she said, the media need to be informed. It is her belief that whether in times good news, or in times of crisis, said there is no substitute for truth.

It's nice occasionally if you can put it in words that can soften, and occasionally you can do that. But we are very straightforward. It's a problem of getting in on the take-off, as the Public Affairs Director likes to say, not just the crash landing.

People don't think to call when there's a real crisis. Generally the Dean of Students' office is involved in a crisis, because most of them do involve students. They get caught up in handling it, and forget to let us know. We're working hard to try to bridge that. It's improving.

Public Affairs Director

The Public Affairs Director views his office as a service arm of the institution, an institutional resource aimed at supporting the advancement of Denison in targeted areas. For example, he cited:

Admissions people want to get a certain number of students with certain qualifications. We use whatever market research is available in helping them devise publications and communication strategies. We try to do the same for Development
people: identify their audience, measure efforts in terms of effectiveness.

The public relations role in the development of the Denison image is viewed by the Director as long range. He senses that image as:

...a high quality institution that probably has more social exuberance than other places. I don't think our day-to-day work can either plus or minus the image. That image is already out there. We are trying to put more emphasis on improving it in the academic areas, to show that this is a more rigorous place than its reputation for exuberance might show. Work hard, play hard. That's the most active kind of self-description I've heard from Denison students and faculty.

The Public Affairs Director is well aware that his office involves interaction with the hierarchy and that its reach must extend to every department. His concern is that it be done right and that public relations not be a tag to be put on loosely identified goals by poorly qualified people.

What is his relationship to the President?

Ideally, the PR function needs to be in as direct a line with the President as he is comfortable with, and that becomes a matter of personal administrative style. It's fairly informal in a place like Denison. I would expect both to receive calls from and to place calls to the President on any matter that I felt professionally obligated to alert him to. I would expect to respond to requests on any matters he felt we should be involved in. We don't have a chain of command thing with the Vice President.

While the Vice President is a member of the President's cabinet, the Public Affairs Director is not, a situation that has, upon occasion, impeded his efforts.
We do have problems from time to time with other cabinet types who don't understand that we have an institutional need to know before things go public. We had an unfortunate couple of incidents, one on and one off campus, that involved student deaths. These provided the best, or worst, examples of the need for a spokesman who could put forth an accurate and responsible institutional statement as to what had occurred.

The Director's responsibilities include strengthening the institution's relations with both external and internal audiences, from prospective donor to prospective student, from the oldest alumnus to the newest faculty addition in an unending series of events that punctuate each day's schedule.

The extent of his involvement in public relations he described as, "I don't do sports. I don't do windows." While many universities have sports information offices, Denison has just a part-time staff member who reports to the Athletic Director.

At the beginning of the 1984-85 academic year, the Public Affairs office was heavily involved with the introduction of the new President, encouraging, according to the Director, proactive question and answer sessions rather than "speech and boredom." These were frequently preceded by meetings with key volunteers or donors and followed by media roundtables, all designed to introduce the President to the various publics with whom he would have to deal in his new position.
In addition to specific responsibilities, staff members spend considerable time as communications consultants. Borrowing a client-agency set-up from the business world, the staff provides counseling services to in-house agencies for everything from publications and audio-visual presentations to invitations and reply cards.

Its most prestigious publication is Viewbook: Denison, primarily used as a recruitment tool. Its appearance is a reflection of the quality of the institution and an introduction to expectations for prospective students and their parents.

The Denison viewbook contains a gatefold aerial photo of the campus adorned in autumn's array of color. The campus on the hill overlooking the quaint town of Granville does have visual appeal and Denison capitalizes on that. As the Director said:

After viewing our foldout, a friend accused me of getting the campus from central casting. That's pretty accurate. This color photo of the campus has helped, I'm sure, to sway decisions.

His perception of the importance of the campus setting was confirmed by a prospective student and his parents. The high school senior noted that most viewbooks he had seen gave only a piecemeal version of a campus, while the Denison viewbook showed the entire campus through the aerial photograph that made it easier to envision and comprehend the university setting.
The fact of "fit" between educational setting and students is considered important and dealt with realistically by public relations personnel. As expressed by the Director:

We recognize that basically Denison is a very busy place. There are a lot of things going on...outside performers, guest speakers...it's just amazing. That combined with the level of social activities and rigorous classroom opportunities means a student has to do a pretty good job of balancing. Granville may be a sleepy town, but Denison never sleeps, I'm sure. We recognize that's both a plus and a minus—we don't deny it.

In addition to the viewbook, the Public Affairs office oversees production of 43 publications a year. The addition of unplanned brochures frequently means production of an average of one publication per week. Staffing and scheduling are serious problems. And the Public Affairs Director agrees with the Vice President that publications are too often seen as the magic solution to problems.

The old saw goes, 'Got a problem? Get a publication!' It doesn't make any difference what it is, or why it is. Just got to get something out. That kind of knee jerk, fire containment kind of operating philosophy has been resisted by people in this office.

Admissions is clearly the priority client right now. In fact, the Public Affairs Director has recommended the addition of a communications and marketing specialist to the Admissions staff.

Also important to recruiting and to the Denison image is the home town news release recognizing student academic
and extra-curricular participation. According to the Director:

That's one of those things that continues to be a headache and is not nearly to the state of refinement it should be, given the tools available on this campus.

A solution he offered would be the use of computer technology to produce 'personalized' home town releases. Information about students, faculty, staff and alumni would be fed into an integrated data base that could match media interest to individual achievement.

The Director places importance on the home town releases that recognize achievement.

When someone does well--makes the Dean's list or Phi Beta Kappa—we do well to tell their neighbors about it, and in so doing we don't do a disservice to Denison. We see to it that parents know we've sent the release, and encourage them to break the editor's legs if he doesn't run the story!

In addition to news releases, the office sends out background fact sheets to the media, as well as what he calls "recycled campus clips," articles about Denison clipped from publications that are then called to the attention of the media.

Excluding the sesquicentennial campaign, a campus-wide fund raising effort, the Director sees no direct relation to the Development office.

It's the long term institutional PR that encourages people to give money or to seek admission. I do see us as being a scapegoat for people who don't want to give money. 'I didn't
get the magazine...’ or ‘They spelled Aunt Betty’s name wrong...’

Internal communications, specifically faculty recognition, will receive top priority in the immediate future. This concern pervades the University from the President’s office on down the line. The problem, as viewed by the Public Affairs Director, is:

There’s a lot more going on in terms of scholarly activity at this place than we get credit for, which is a constant concern of faculty. It turns out to be a legitimate concern in terms of market research which shows the Denison image is ‘Party School.’ In some way this apparently gives the impression that faculty aren’t as rigorous or as qualified as their colleagues in other schools. I think we can fairly say that is inaccurate.

However, there are other dimensions to the internal communication problem:

There are serious morale problems for junior faculty in a place like Denison, especially those who are the gypsy scholar types or untenured. Basically, this is a small town and a small college, and if you’re single, it can be a little tougher for you. If you are single and a woman, it can be even more difficult.

An internal newsletter has been proposed to address such concerns, to let people know what others in the community are doing, and, hopefully, to foster some interaction, according to the Director.

I’m trying to get the Dean of the College to take the responsibility for the start of the newsletter. We would design the format and handle production so that it isn’t a major nightmare. It could be a model for other quasi-internal audiences, a parents’ newsletter, for example. The Development people think we need one.
Another reason for increased attention to the information needs of the internal audience is that if they do not have clear and correct information, they may contribute to the dissemination of misinformation.

The other two colleges in the study are familiar to the Denison Public Affairs Director.

I think people feel we are right in between the two. Kenyon seems to get more in cross-applications than we do, but we beat Ohio Wesleyan. I don’t really know enough about either one to characterize them. I do think the timing for their [OWU’s] ‘Quest for Quality’ was just terribly ill-advised. And how does one tell one’s alumni, especially recent alumni, that we now want ‘better than you guys’? I think you’d just alienate a lot of your support base, and I think they’ve done it.

Director, Career Planning/Professional School Advising

One cabinet level administrator interviewed believes that public relations has matured in the last eight years.

When I arrived at Denison public relations was a one-person office, not officially connected with development as it is now with University Resources and Public Affairs all one. It was a low key office. He was a great writer, knew a little photography, but media was not really his bag necessarily. It was a very low-key office. They did all the room reservations for all the events, and they publicized special speakers and that sort of thing, but that was it.

She described the current Public Affairs Director as "very much an integrator" in his approach, as he includes others from throughout the campus who "ought to be included in public relations." He has taken an approach, she said, "where it’s not simply the ‘powers that be,’"—development,
admissions and PR— "it's all of us who make up the community. That seems to be a theme of the things he wants to do." In regard to the formerly Baptist-affiliated university's image as a "Party School," she said:

The town was dry til '74, and the college was dry til about '75— no alcohol allowed at all. There has been card playing and dancing since the 1890s, but no alcohol. It simply was something that had to change, and it did. And I think it was probably for the positive. I think we're turning out more students who know how to drink responsibly now than we did before. On a Friday night, I think I might take that whole statement back! But for the most part, I think we are turning out more responsible drinkers— fewer who are sneaking it, fewer who are abusing it. Some people would disagree with me.

I think 'Party School'— that's the image, but I think it's way off. I think it was definitely true when I arrived here in '77. And as I've talked with friends from my husband's class, which was 1973, it doesn't sound like they did anything but party. But I think Bob Good and the people who worked with him have changed the image of the college— or changed the reality. I don't know if the image has caught up yet.

And the image of the "Rich Kids School"— or often labelled "Preppy" image, she said:

I think Bob Good strengthened the faculty, and I think he has liberated the college in terms of its formerly homogeneous way. Evidence is that instead of 10% of our students on financial aid, now it's a third. Instead of more prep school, more private high school than public high school, we're exactly the reverse. We have more young untenured faculty members, more women on the faculty.

Does this mean playing down the snob appeal?

A little bit. I don't know if we've successfully done that, because we continue to want to draw that pool who can pay. I think we're a college that's been in such transition that we
have sort of a schizophrenic way of looking at ourselves. We still need the upper-class person who can pay; we still want the students who are brilliant, who have been given lots of opportunities in their lives, who have been to Europe three summers. And to make this a better place for everybody to learn, we want the inner-city person; we want more minorities; we want more international students and in a larger society sometimes it's diametrically opposed.

The schizophrenia she mentioned is evident in the viewbook:

I went to high school classes with the Director of Admissions, and I ran a confidential focus group critiquing our publication.

We are trying in what we say and what we show in pictures--trying to show ourselves as a very cosmopolitan place. In other words, if you see a black student every three or four pages, that isn't truly representative of the number of black students here. But what has continued to maintain our wealthy image is the quality of the publication...the colored pictures, the quality paper, the subtle elegance--the casual class. So it's in those things that we can see a sort of two-fold view of ourselves...a schizophrenic way that we portray what we are.

At Denison we're sort of like adolescents--we're going through a confused state about who we are.

**Development Officers**

One development officer sees the financial aid picture a bit differently.

Only about one third of our students get financial aid. This is very low. It's more like 50-60% at most private liberal arts colleges. I think the statistics bear out they come from wealthier families than the average liberal arts institution. It's just my impression, but probably they come from better-heeled families than Kenyon.
The role of public relations at Denison is perceived by the development staff member to be one of playing on the public's interest in a quality institution, as producing something that is valuable to them.

My perception of a public relations office is the mouthpiece of the institution...The image-maker of the institution to the outside world.

The perception of that development staff member is that public relations' effectiveness is much more direct and measurable in student recruitment than in dollar volume of fund raising.

The image projected by the university is really determined by the cleverness and creativity to a large extent of the editor of the publications who helps set the image of the institution and helps get the message across to the prospective students. The role is terribly important and I would think that their impact, or their effectiveness, is quite high in student recruitment.

In fund raising it's a little more subtle, because so much of what we do in major gift fund raising is personal. And that comes across through the President, through my contacts, through all of us, all of the special events, alumni relations program, so that the PR office is not the singular image builder it is in student recruitment.

The role of public relations is one of communicating image and enhancing efforts of the Admissions office, as well as development and alumni. URPA is well integrated, he said.

A part of that mouthpiece is to set a favorable environment for fund raising. We're all
involved in presenting a public relations image. There is a client relationship between the PR office and all of us.

The Admissions program does receive the top priority, he said:

We like to pat ourselves on the back and stroke our egos, but we have to be honest. Tuition covers about 75-80% of the cost. That's still our biggest fund raiser. For every student you don't have, you lose $7,000. Ohio Wesleyan is a perfect example of what happens. And it's not just this year. You're down a few students, you evaluate, but if you find yourself going into some kind of a nose dive, you might find yourselves four or five years later wondering what hit you. So, I'm not saying that the priority going to Admissions was wrong.

In development, it's not just the publications that matter. It's also the personalities, the timing, the cultivations and what have you. PR is important, but it's just one of many more approaches to the publics, and it's more subtle. We can't measure what the impact will be of only having two alumni magazines issued, other than responses from people saying, 'Hey, what happened? Did you take me off your mailing list?'

You've got to keep momentum going. You've got to keep the institution in front of even your alumni. The past year, however, communication with our alumni has been there, and of course, the focus has been on Bob Good. He was a beloved President--by all. If we can start back on track now, we probably haven't lost [momentum in fund raising].

The development officer believes that the alumni see Denison as an institution of which they can be proud:

...that it has actually entered the 20th century, but still has some of the traditions of the past. Now, that image with the alumni is only partially determined by the PR office. I think that the biggest image builder with our alumni is the quality and strength of the President, and so you have the President setting the image.
So, how the day-to-day events are handled by the PR office determines the image, and if it's a negative image, you'll see a more immediate effect on budgets. Reputation takes years to build and months to destroy.

The development officer said that the "Party School" image is not all negative.

The kids who have come to Denison had parties ever since they were able to. Rules were changed so they wouldn't get kicked out if they had a party. I think we have just within the last five or six years accepted the fact that kids come here and have a good time, or as Bob Good would say to alumni, 'Sometimes they have a better time than this President would like them to have.'

Those involved in development efforts are immersed in public relations.

In the broadest sense of the words, I spend all my time on PR. I'm trying to instill in the person or persons I'm dealing with that this institution is an on going concern with a bright future and has a great many positive characteristics, but that it needs their support, and we'd like to see how we can bring together the donor's interest with Denison's needs to make a mutually satisfying marriage of money and education. I think we've done quite well.

Recognizing that image building is an important part of the public relations function, the development officer compared his perceptions of the images of Kenyon and Denison:

Kenyon has made a conscious effort to maintain the liberal arts in the Anglican sense of the word. From what I know about Kenyon, it is a much stiffer, stodgier and old-fashioned institution than Denison. Denison is much more modern and free-wheeling on academic programing, in social life, and in terms of the general student body. Our student body is more social
animal, so to speak, and I don’t want to say our students are less intellectually oriented, although my guess is Kenyon might profile a little better than we would. I have a feeling the student body might be from different backgrounds. Their students might come from a more intellectually oriented family background than Denison’s. Our students come from professional families.

The curricula is different. I think Kenyon’s reflects the tendency, of, again, the Anglican background...Courses tend to be less varied, more in the classical tradition, less selection.

With a daughter currently considering a variety of colleges, he spoke as a parent, as well as a member of the Denison staff:

She came home from a college fair with a Kenyon catalog. Just the appearance of the place and the atmosphere tends to be more organized...The atmosphere here is more of a freedom to get involved or not to get involved, to criticize or not criticize, and I sense it’s not quite that way at Kenyon.

The development staff member sees a contrast between Ohio Wesleyan and Denison, too:

I think that Ohio Wesleyan University over the past 20 years has gone perhaps a bit further away from the pure liberal arts. They have a nursing program, for example. And I think they have attracted students from more middle-income to lower-income. It had always been bigger than Denison. They have twice the alumni. We have 18,000. They have 36-37,000 alumni.

My impression is Ohio Wesleyan from a pure academic measure is probably not on a par with Denison and Kenyon. Denison and Kenyon are very competitive. Of any ten students where there is cross application, it’s going to be at best five and five. There will probably be times when Kenyon will get six and Denison will get four, whereas when there is head-to-head competition with Ohio Wesleyan, we’ll get nine of ten.
He believes that the settings contribute to perceived images of the three colleges. Ohio Wesleyan in Delaware is perceived as urban, while the more isolated campuses of Kenyon and Denison are viewed as institutions in that small liberal arts tradition.

The image problem currently of concern to the development officer involves fraternity housing.

The biggest problem we have right now is with the tenements, the houses. At one time, 90% to 95% of our student body was associated with a Greek organization, and those houses are now 30 to 40 years old. And just the normal course of kids living in them will lead to deterioration. The alumni got irritated with the frat houses back in the late '60s and early '70s and so they haven't had that alumni leadership...about a 90% drop dramatically to under 40%, if I remember correctly, so that the numbers were not there to help finance it. And then one of the characteristics of students in the late '70s and early '80s was—it seemed to all of us, anyway—an unusual streak of destructiveness, just unexplicable. Their attitudes toward the alumni members have changed, but they haven't done much about showing them they are ready to take some positive steps. They'd better start shaping up or something will happen. Colby College kicked them all off and that was followed shortly by Amherst. So, when I deal with that issue I have to say that is our biggest single problem. We feel that progress is being made, but it's coming slowly. We don't want to barge in and eliminate the experiences that we feel were valuable, the leadership traits that were gained by running an organization, and this is a team effort, but one of the most important elements is still missing, and that's alumni involvement. That is in fact a vital thing. Too many alumni like to blame: 'Why aren't you doing something?' I get tired of some people who say, 'I walked into that place in '68,
and it was the biggest pigpen we've ever seen, and I turned around and haven't been back since. Why don't you do something about it?' I have very little patience with that kind of thing. I feel we're working with them--where are you? You haven't been back since 1968. So, it's frustrating, but it's terribly rewarding at times.

A second development person shared those feelings, believing the role of public relations to be:

Externally...to make sure we get students and the money we need to remain a college with a reason to be. Internally, I guess I have to say certainly one of the most important, if not the most important role of PR would be to develop a sense of shared purpose so everyone knows what those objectives are.

Each of the fund raising areas within Denison relies on public relations, he said. Both the outgoing and incoming presidents recognize the importance of public relations for certifying credibility and building constituency, getting more students and money:

The buzz words are Friends, Funds and Freshmen!

He acknowledged the need for public relations expertise in foundation and corporate fund raising, noting that without a strong credible image their success would be limited. He said that all of the fund raising centers within Development work with public relations. There is a recognition that they function as a team.

We each have primary responsibilities, but no one ever does any of his work totally alone. That wouldn't be possible. I think that's one of the things that has characterized Denison, administration-wise, throughout the whole
administration. I sense that's been true for some time now. Where we don't, that's where we fall down. I would sense that's probably true for all small colleges.

When a corporate grant is received, a written report is given to the Director of Public Affairs, and the development person meets with him to discuss how best to utilize that information, how to make the information available both externally and internally. It is clear, he said, that this increases public understanding of the strength of Denison, and enhances student recruiting, as it increases credibility for Denison.

I have had several conversations during the past four or five months with the Public Affairs Director about trying to develop various emphases about qualities of Denison that we would like to communicate to the public in advance of things we'd like to do [in fund raising]. So when we go ask the XYZ Foundation program for a grant for the sciences, they'll say, 'Oh, Denison. Yes, they are very good in that area.'

His impressions of Denison were fostered afar when he lived in Virginia and North Carolina.

My image of Denison is a very positive one, but that's because I work here. I came from the southeast, and the image there of Denison was a very strong academic school, but there wasn't a whole lot of knowledge about DU.

Actually, I think in North Carolina, Kenyon is better known than Denison, because of the Kenyon Review, and probably for no other reason. Oberlin was better known than Denison, at least four years ago, in that area, among the well-educated, because of its more academic, intellectual reputation and because of the music program.
The "Party School" image is not at all accurate, he said.

Relatively speaking, yes, there is a lot of partying at Denison, but there's a lot of partying elsewhere. I think it is largely student generated, because they think it is a desirable quality. It's a neat thing to say you go to a 'Party School.' That's partly why that reputation developed. From what I can gather, a lot of the reports that have been appearing in the last few years [various college guides] have been relying on hearsay and student interviews to get their information.

His image of Ohio Wesleyan is similar to Denison, but that OWU is not quite as strong academically right now.

But I don't have a basis for that at all. It's a college that obviously got some management problems. I think that's obvious from the results they've been getting and the publicity.

Denison needs to establish recognition and desirability in light of recruitment, he said, communicating its strong points, strong faculty, tremendous intellectual diversity, cultural diversity, and the opportunity to work closely with faculty on a more personal basis than at a larger institution.

Echoing the thoughts of the new President that emphasis needs to be placed on promotion of faculty strength, the development official said:

I think we'd be more effective if the faculty and URPA felt that the faculty as a group were a primary client, because we do have a strong faculty. There are indications that parents are being more and more of influence in choice of college, strictly for financial reasons, and
parents look at faculty. However, one group of students we are trying to attract—the upper academic echelon—also would be influenced by that. One of our goals is to try to increase the public understanding of the strength of our faculty. That would support my efforts as well.

As to what percentage of his work is public relations, the development person said:

I guess if we were trying to break that down in percentages, and talk about whatever pure public relations work might be, in a broad sense I'd say 99%—or really 100%. That's what we're about: we communicate.

Alumni Office Staff Member

The Alumni office staff member who chaired the Presidential Search Committee, when asked to examine her perceptions of the role of public relations at Denison, said:

My perception is that we're accountable to the world for the things we do. We're proud of our university, its leadership, its scholarship, its faculty, and hopefully, its student body. As I try to present that to the 18,000+ alumni, I'm anxious to present a rounded picture, but an honest picture, and hopefully it can be honest because it's excellent.

Seeing her role as 100% PR, she said:

I suspect that the role of public affairs is not in the Public Affairs Director's office, it's in everyone's office. Everything we do, clearly, is the public affairs of this place. The better job we do selling its total program, the less problem we have as we face the disappointments or the difficult times.

And, it is not always just a matter of what gets into the newspapers, but how the university is perceived by assorted publics, that adds up to public affairs, she said.
Those perceptions depend upon the constituency:

Even within the alumni, I think we would have to categorize it into some different perceptual backgrounds. I think that the pre-World War II alumni probably have deep affection for the place. They remember things with great fondness. They are proud of the education they received. I think they are less flexible about the changes that have come into their world. There is a middle ground generation of the '50s who also remember things with fondness, and while they don't like some of the changes, they are probably a little more flexible, because their children are college age. The younger alumni have yet to be involved with strong ties. They are starting careers and families, and they have in some sense less time to be tied to the school. I think their feeling is positive, but not as often translated into action.

General public thinks of it as a pretty place. There are certain publics that think of it as a 'Party School,' which is an image we constantly try to change.

In her opinion, the President will be a sensitive spokesperson for these constituencies.

The new President is a man of very broad and far-ranging interests. He is very verbal. He's sort of a Renaissance kind of person...a very sensitive person. I think he will relate well to all of us. He will instinctively know, and be receptive to learning about those constituencies. My sense is he will handle it very well. We'll have a presidential tour. We're hoping to take him to a lot of cities this first year. It certainly gives alumni a chance to see that the baton is passed. The Goods were enormously loved and have done an absolutely marvelous job. It was difficult as far as the search was concerned not to try to replicate Bob, which of course you can't do, but you have to look for the best person as perceived by the committee and realize there are different challenges and different times. Dr. De Rocco will bring a new strength and a new direction. He is a scientist, which is a little different. He is single, which is a little different. We need to reassure our constituencies that are uneasy about all that. He will perhaps win everyone. Bob Good leaves a strong legacy.
How marvelous to leave that kind of heritage.

Active alumni contribute to their alma mater in a variety of ways. When they are fully informed and involved, they are more apt to send their children or to speak highly to friends' children of the institution, she said. That's informal recruiting and public relations in the broadest sense.

A lot of what we do here has a real direct public affairs aspect as I represent Denison to these people. I'm the one person often that they see that is in fact part of the school.

The nice thing about this building [headquarters of URFAP] and all the functions it represents is I think everyone senses very much that it is a team effort. The bottom line is the support of the school in all ways. I think the Vice President generates that kind of cooperative spirit. People feel good about what they do. If you do care and believe in the place, it makes it even better.

She alluded to the excellence of publications produced by the Public Affairs office when discussing the fund raising function:

For the sesquicentennial campaign, the printed materials were an enormously major effort. I'm sure they were a very good and useful tool to that campaign which was so successful. Lately, because of allocation of scarce resources, the admissions effort has had the greater need, perhaps, for the publications part of PR and has produced some truly spectacular pieces that I'm sure are effective in their work. But the result has been we haven't had as many magazines, and that will have an effect on our alumni. They miss it. That's our lifeline to our alumni. Now they've been able to hire an additional staff person, so I hope that was a short term problem. Ultimately, I'm sure you cannot approach your alumni for money without having a balance of information and on-site events, and not all live
in cities where you are having events. Not having the magazine can be detrimental. Hopefully it hasn't been detrimental yet, and we're partially forgiven by the unusual circumstances of this last year. Bob Good was ill, and as the chair of the search, I wrote to the alumni body as a whole, so there was some communication. I suspect we were probably forgiven for that year.

She recognizes that the ideal public affairs program is probably non-existent, and that not everyone within the University is aware of the role of public relations.

There are parts of the University that don't share our perception of the Public Affairs Director's responsibility to speak at times for the university. I think we have a way to go to have everybody with that same sense.

Alumnus and Alumna

A '58 graduate of Denison, former Newark resident, said that Denison is viewed as a "Rich Kids School" by the blue collar town, and that residents resent the bar-hopping, with kids piling into cars to go drinking in Newark. On the positive side, he said:

They do have a steady stream of noted speakers, plays, etc., which are well received. The more educated in Newark value Denison.

While he was the editor, he said, there was a good working relationship with the public relations people, but he declared emphatically:

There was control to a degree. Sometimes it was difficult to work with when students were in trouble or there was a negative aspect. They could be uncooperative then. There was a series of burglaries in Granville that was perhaps linked to a Denison student. We'd try to pry it out, but it was nearly impossible. There was a rape, and they'd clam up.
He reported that they did set up receptions to meet noted speakers with not just news representatives or VIPs, but a variety of people.

I did get a hostile rebuff from Denison. In 1972 the University had just gone through a liberal kick. I got involved with other alumni when they threw ROTC off campus, and wore out my welcome. I had a dual role as media representative and alumnus.

His image is of a very good small liberal arts school, well-known, in the second tier.

— not Ivy League—but Oberlin, Kenyon and Denison are liberal arts schools that make up a second row behind the very best.

His wife, a 1964 graduate of Denison, said it was partly the public relations effort that made her decide to go to school in Granville.

My parents wanted me to go to a good school. The President of an important company in Hartford where I lived contacted me and took an interest. That really was what set it in my mind. That was PR! I was impressed and my father was, too, that someone THAT important in the community would want to talk to a high school senior!

She echoed her husband's reflection of the period of disfavor:

We went through a period when our name was mud. No, I'm not satisfied with the communication. We hear from them for the pledge each year. We've become popular in the last few months, because we have a son who is a senior in high school. Each of our children, they send birthday cards every year—a Denison postcard—to all the kids. They had our son down as a potential senior for his 1967 birthday, but he was born on the last day of '67, so we wrote to tell
them. They were sending him all the papers. They sent him a catalog. That has made an impression on him.

Her image is that Ohio Wesleyan is quieter, more serious than Denison, not quite as socially oriented, but not more academic.

At Denison when we were there, most kids pledged. Denison represents a snob school. I didn’t go to be a snob, but it had that reputation. Kenyon was all male at the time—in the outer fringes, somewhere between Antioch and Harvard.

Admissions Director

The priority placed on Admissions Office needs falls naturally into the current era, when schools are concerned about the future enrollments. The cooperation between the two departments, Admissions and Public Relations, is essential to success. The Public Affairs Director reported:

A lot of work is done the way they’ve always done it. But there definitely is a transition going on in direct contact marketing.

The difference the Public Affairs Director observed between being an Admissions Office and a recruiting office is acknowledged by the Admissions Director in the transition that is on-going at Denison. The Director of Admissions said his perceptions of the role of public relations at Denison are:

Broadly speaking, [PR is] very important. It operates on several fronts: Office of the President, Office of University Resources and Public Affairs, Admissions Office, faculty, and students. Any institution has to have good public
relations, in order to enhance its prestige, its public perception of the institution, its people. One has to be competitive in the marketplace and public relations, it seems to me, will go a long way toward enhancing or substantiating that position in the marketplace...whether it is extolling or documenting new procedures and accomplishments which will be done in computer science or trying to explain a tragedy on campus or to articulate the reason for a capital campaign or inaugurating a new president.

More than ever before, the Admissions Director finds it essential to work with the Public Affairs office. The Admissions Director said:

We're in the public relations business, winning students. At least from an Admissions point of view, that narrow spectrum is pretty much a public relations situation in terms of staff that you hire, how you train them.

The Admissions Director said that the tour guides and receptionist are the most important people in the office in terms of public relations. They are judged by prospective students and parents of prospects, and convey or fail to convey a welcoming atmosphere. And there is keen competition in terms of publications. Colleges would sometimes in the past cycle a publication every two years to save money. Now virtually the turnover is every year and there is a plethora of outside firms in design to do fancy brochures on every subject.

Every Admissions Office has a catalog, of course, then there is the profile—Distinctly Denison—we order about 60,000 of those. The audience we're dealing with is very public relations and visually TV oriented and we respond
to that. There is a financial aid brochure, early decision brochure, honors brochure, People with Purpose minority recruiting brochure, and five or six departmental brochures. We have for the time being put a clamp on additional departmental brochures, because they are just overloaded over there...when you factor in the smaller ones, we're just very dependent on them [Public Affairs office].

Essentially I would say that public relations office over there is to some degree neglecting their own shop—the alumni magazine, which they had to curtail in order to take care of our shop.

This year the Admissions office agreed to make only minor revisions in publications, not changing any colored pictures, and only changing two black and white photographs in the viewbook. It is a compromise arrangement within which both Admissions and Public Affairs can live.

Other contact between Colwell House (headquarters of URPA) and the Admissions Office involves the alumni office personnel. Monthly meetings allow them to discuss common matters. The Denison Alumni Recruiting Team is headed by an Admissions Office staff person. All in all, there is overlap and integration of purpose between the two offices.

Said the Admissions Director:

I consider myself a participant in the university public relations, because I'm part of it. I suppose you could say one really has to be both a recipient and a participant. We actively participate through the dozen or so marketing admissions plans.

And, we're evaluated by the people who come here for interviews, come for tours, are here for overnights, visitation programs, see us on school visits, and by the counselors who come here in groups three times a year, or by the alumni who interview the students, by outreach in terms of
Fall preview programs, about Denison in the field, January receptions for prospects...so it is really a full-blown public relations program, and tied to marketing. We are the recipient, it seems to me, conversely of the college's general public relations efforts: the capital campaign, a very visible president (Dr. Good), various gatherings of alumni, the articulation of faculty accomplishments, high profile we have, success of our athletic teams, recognition of our alumni accomplishments. We are now proactive in those roles; we are more recipient basking in the glow.

With more than 2,000 interviews on campus and 5,000 visitors to the Admissions office, the Director considers himself an initiator of public relations:

I'm the director of the symphony, and the various players are initiators also, and implement their particular responsibilities. The marketing-admissions plan is how we sort of formulate the whole program throughout the year and carry it out--win the class strategies, formal presentations for secondary schools. We all speak with the same voice. I think it is important that the admissions office is consistent with the programs in public relations of the university and not be divergent. It's important for the Admissions Office to be knowledgable about what the university is discussing: students rights and responsibilities, social life on campus, death, a gift to the university of a million dollars. And I'm pulled into that orbit by my participation in senior staff, and I in turn pass those notes and comments and perceptions on to the admissions staff so that we are of one voice, essentially.

Evidence points to the integration of public relations functions throughout the university, with special focus on the day-to-day cooperation between Admissions and URPA, especially keen now that the university is sensitive to the needs of recruitment. Said the Admissions Director:
I'm in charge of the shop. With the President, the office is charged with recruiting the freshmen class. But we must depend on the entire university to do it. We deal with students who are tour guides; interviewers, who are hosts and hostesses for the visitation program, college nights and our Ambassadors program; and with the faculty who write letters [to prospects], participate in visitation programs, talk with students, and with the career planning office, so to a great degree one can say the business of recruiting the freshmen class is the entire responsibility of the university. And in the greatest sense of that definition, the Admissions office is charged with leading the charge!

The Admissions Director considers his post mostly a management function now:

I am essentially the chief planner for the office and the staff are the implementers of the plan. What's changed the admissions business in 10 years is that it is getting so complex now, the Director is no longer the doer, as in old times--10 to 15 years ago. Essentially he's the manager, and it is more important many times to be back here managing, seeing that marketing admissions plans are carried out than it is to spend five or six weeks of visiting secondary schools.

The Director of Admissions said that public relations efforts have been effective in recruitment:

We have been successful in recruiting our classes. We have driven the applicant pool from 2,100 to 3,010 over a seven-year period. We've recruited the incoming class every year...met the minimum standards in terms of numbers, and not every college in the GLCA has done that by a long shot! Our publications have dramatically improved, professionals in the office have dramatically improved, and I think we are quite effective in our PR program. Those are not laurels to rest on. We've got to go out and do it better next time around. Marketing is my forte.
The Admissions Director’s perception of the communicated or perceived image matches that of others:

There are some complex image problems we haven’t solved. One is the social image— that of a 'Party School'—play-hard-work-hard syndrome. We have probably a finer faculty than we have a student body—maybe lots of institutions would say that. I’m not sure, but it’s accurate here. I think our faculty could ask more of our students than they do. There’s less pressure here than at Williams or Bowdoin or [Connecticut] Wesleyan for our students to go for broke academically. Or a Carleton or Oberlin or Hamilton. Or Kenyon, yes, they are more academically intense. Now, I think our curriculum, on the other hand, is far superior to Kenyon’s in terms of innovations, core courses, January term. Kenyon’s very historical meat and potatoes. Kenyon has a more academic image than Denison. We have attempted to work with the concept Distinctly Denison as a way to try to hammer out a place in the market. We are respected. We are perhaps not well academically defined, somewhat better socially defined, socially acceptable. Our sports teams are good, alumni loyal, publications are clearly competitive. One is treated well here. I think our academic cutting edge needs to be sharpened. I have every confidence the new President will sharpen it. That’s not putting us down. I would say Denison is respected as a solid academic institution, but the academic cutting edge is a little bit sharper at some of the competition— Kenyon— not so true of Ohio Wesleyan. But they’ve had their problems in the past getting Freshmen.

Image is closely related to the collegiate hierarchy, which the Admissions Director described:

The pecking order in terms of overlap in-state would be Oberlin pushes Kenyon around, Kenyon pushes Denison around, Denison pushes [Ohio] Wesleyan around. We fish in similar waters, such as Ohio, the affluent suburbs and North East.
While once Ohio Wesleyan was more competitive in cross-applications, in recent years this has not been the case. The Denison Admissions Director surmised:

Ohio Wesleyan has been through—not image problems, but when an institution appears to be fluctuating or has a down year or comes up with policies that perhaps are out of sync with previous policies, at least in the private school counselor market there is a tendency to hold back, not refer so many students there, and I think in terms of academics, Ohio Wesleyan is still very strong, very strong faculty. They essentially made their decisions to tighten up in terms of admissions decisions a year or two ago, which was commendable when the applicant pool had already started down—so you threw in the decision to tighten up and that affected the yield and that resulted in their not filling their class and that can become rather publicly known if you miss by more than 5% or 10%. There are in-house morale problems. They've lost some senior administrators and made some tough decisions on the faculty. I have confidence they will bounce back, weather the storm, and certainly it is to our advantage for them to be strong, not weak.

Both Ohio Wesleyan and Denison have new Presidents this year. At the time of the interview with the Admissions Director, De Rocco had not arrived at Denison, but Ohio Wesleyan's new chief executive had been on board for several months. The Admissions Director recognized that Ohio Wesleyan would need the public relations acumen of the chosen leader, Dr. David Warren, noting:

The question is can he fight the fires. He's going to have a hard road.

Of the new Denison President, he said:

He's a superb speaker, very articulate, very quick on his feet, and I think he also would be excellent as a spokesperson for the University.
He'll be perhaps a little less process and a bit more academic in his focus, but he is very knowledgeable of the total gamut of public relations responsibilities of the university because of his current responsibilities [Dean of Faculty at Trinity College].

Tied as they are to the 18-year-old pool, the university is concerned about the predicted decline:

Yes, it's a new pool every year, and a declining pool. We didn't feel the decline this year. We don't know whether we've stirred the pot a little more broadly, or whether we're doing a better job than somebody else.

The Admissions Director recognizes the importance of image to marketing efforts in recruitment:

Obviously, Denison has a good image. Or perhaps one might say we have a very attractive picture frame, but perhaps the picture is less well defined than we'd like. I think every institution would recognize that.

I guess what has thrown us all off stride this year is that applications at virtually all competitive colleges went up.

The Admissions Director added that no one quite knows yet why applications went up at the top 100 colleges. With the predicted demise of 400 small private colleges by the year 2000, the concern is real:

It's a case probably that you could say that the stronger will get stronger, weaker will get weaker. You have to respond. We're all doing about the same thing. The question would be how long you do it, how much money and talent you're going to put into it.

Although the Public Affairs Director calls Admissions the primary client, giving priority to those needs, the
Admissions Director prefers to think of his office as the major client.

They probably put out more publications in conjunction with our office than that office does on their own, at least in terms of significant public usage publications.

Part of the problem in that office has been the matter of servicing the Admissions office, vs. taking care of the alumni. The Vice President probably would argue that they have slighted their treatment of alumni. In recent years, that is a major concern.

The determination of priorities, giving emphasis to Admissions as a primary or major client for the Public Affairs office, was an agreement hammered out with President Good, the Vice President and some push from the management consultant hired to work with Admissions, and strong support from the Admissions Director, he said.

We just made the decision to stay in house for our publications rather than going to a publications firm. This year has been a trying time for that office [University Resources and Public Affairs], in terms of PR, Bob Good’s health announcement, all the fanfare of his departure, recognition and awards, television, death of a student on campus, later on the death of a student in the canoe incident on the Licking River, search for a new president, the announcement of a new president, gearing up for the annual fund, in which we reached the goal—exceeded slightly, pursuit of new gifts and monies to the institution, negotiation of contracts to enhance our computer abilities...all of these things were going on, too, so I guess that’s how I would clarify it. There is an awful lot going on in-house over there. Probably we are the primary client in terms of publications.

The image of Denison confronted in the Admissions Office is that of the unaffordable or "Rich Kids School": 
There's not much we can do about the fact Miami (Ohio) costs half as much as we do. In that sense net cost to the family, in the state institutions, is an area where we really cannot compete very successfully for the family that has to pay the full freight to Denison. For the $75,000 income family, assuming a standard rate of indebtedness, standard mortgage, there is no need. For the needy family, Denison and Miami, essentially the family out of pocket expenses are even-steven, because of financial aid.

The Financial Aid brochure features a chart that indicates an income range of $25,000-29,999 resulted in the average parent contribution of $2,293, the average award being $8,044 and average grant $5,673. For purposes of the chart, using the Class of '87, 23 applied, 22 qualified as needing aid, and 21 were offered aid.

In the $35,000-39,999 income range, the average parent contribution was $4,317, with 30 applying, and 29 qualifying for need and being offered aid. In the $50,000+ income, the average parent contribution was $5,845, with 23 of the 47 applicants for aid being classified as having need, and 22 offered aid. (The average parent contribution does not include the standard $700 student summer savings expectation. Also, the difference between those who qualified as having need and those offered aid was a reflection of those who filed for financial aid well after the April 1 deadline, when funds were expended. Only five students so qualified and were denied aid due to the deadline.)
In contrast, 16 applicants with family income below $10,000 were granted aid that resulted in an average parent contribution of $306, and 20 applicants with family income between $10,000 and $14,999 had average parent contributions of $679. Although financial aid is directly related to income, family size, assets, etc. are also considered.

The financial aid program makes Denison affordable to families with middle-income ranges, and equalizes the tuition that might be required for other universities that are normally believed to be the economical choices.

The financial aid brochure includes description of an array of options, from grants and scholarships to educational loans and campus employment. However, it is recognized that many students never consider Denison as an option, because of its well-known price-tag. High school counselors play an important part in steering students toward an institution, and the Admission Director recognizes that the financial aid program has not been widely broadcast at Denison:

Counselors just knee-jerk and say, 'You're low income, thus you go to OSU.' We need to hit that better and more effectively. Some places know it. Minorities know it as a group. Ohioans are aware of it.

And you have a problem, also, of how families are choosing to spend their expendable income. Vacation quality, we're talking about expenditures of life—quality of life style, social style, a boat, a car, trip to Europe, and probably it's fair to say in the midwest, that given the temper
of the times, the economy, that parents are a bit less willing to make the sacrifice that perhaps their parents did, or make the sacrifice that generally speaking northeast families are willing to make. There's a greater tradition of private education in the northeast. There's a greater tradition of state supported or land grant education in the midwest. And the person who makes $39,000 doesn't consider himself 'needy'—doesn't know he's very needy and isn't going to have to pay very much here. We haven't done the job yet. We haven't done the public relations sufficiently well, it's probably fair to say, but no other college has.

The difference in cost between Denison, Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan is negligible, he said. Kenyon costs $600 more, Ohio Wesleyan is $200 less. The quality or the perceived quality of the institution, if it's private, essentially is overridden by the prestige of the public perception of the institution.

People will pay $15,000 to send a child to Harvard because it's Harvard, though the quality of education at Harvard undergraduate probably might be inferior to what you might get at Bowdoin, at Denison, or at Kenyon. Harvard is a superb match for the bright independent student, but no way is Harvard as an institution in my opinion as supportive as the smaller institutions are, in terms of access to faculty, making connections and getting recognition for leadership roles, and asking for help and getting it.

The Admissions Director pointed out that the difference in institutions comparable to Denison amounts to about $1,000 so families will select institutions based on prestige, pecking order, and proximity, but not price.
The Admissions Director believes students are not particularly perceptive in deciding if a university has a better department of Psychology, for example, than a university somewhere else:

When you talk about small liberal arts colleges, what we offer in Psychology is about what other institutions offer. There are particular strengths, because of particular faculty, and instructive tradition. Our curricula by and large overlap each other, with obvious exceptions.

There are limitations in coming up with departmental brochures to advance departments. I would put more emphasis on faculty outreach, faculty making contacts with prospects and applicants and parents, faculty attending outreach programs. I think that's a more significant way to affect admissions outcome, than shall we say trying to move a department like Dance here from good solid recognition up to national attention, given the kind of institution we are.

Public image is of less concern to the Admissions Director, because he believes it is difficult to affect change in that area:

We probably have moved away from a position of being a little less concerned about what our public image is, because we truly cannot affect it in many cases. To move a college relatively speaking up the prestige or pecking order ladder is a very slow process, and it is historical timing for people as anything else, or location...We really couldn't reposition the college in a short period of time.

The Admissions Director uses a number of "P's" to describe influences on college decisions:

1. Prestige, which is very much public relations image; very elusive kind of situation;
2. Pecking order: In terms of institutions, private schools give the northeasterners a refined art form: Harvard’s better than Yale, Yale’s better than Brown, but not really, because Brown’s more popular, and you have to work harder at Yale, but the kids have these very subtle gradations of refinement in terms of evaluating schools. They’re image conscious. And they really do put schools [in order] and give you a level of priorities in terms of institutions.

3. Proximity: There is a growing tendency to attend a college close to home.

4. Price: Not necessarily a factor when you are looking at private institutions.

5. Program: Again, a wash factor if you’re looking at most private institutions other than shall we say Business Administration or a more exotic major like Cinema.

6. Personal touch: That’s the whole business of public relations—how well you do the job, how well you contact, how well you follow up.

I maintain that you must win probably at least four of those ‘P’s’ in order to get a student. And that some of them really aren’t important...That if a kid’s looking at private colleges, price is not a factor, because financially they essentially all cost the same. Program is not a factor. If a kid wants history, Kenyon and Denison have history. Personal touch can vary by public relations. Prestige is an elusive thing, and already sort of established. Pecking order is already established. Yes, we could do a better job on personal touch than somebody else. Proximity...if the kid wants to stay home and he lives in Massachusetts, no matter how good you are, you can’t move Denison across the Alleghenies! So, if a student chooses you or doesn’t choose you for location, you can’t do very much about location. You really can’t.

Market research is being used to identify factors that can be influenced through the use of public relations in
Admissions work, however:

What we are perceiving now is that we can through continued research, and analyzing this research, draw some conclusions about where we want to compete for students, and get ourselves more going head-to-head with Kenyon and the other institutions, so we are competing for students in those same areas as our prime competition are competing for students. Now we may still continue to lose to Kenyon and Miami, but we are fishing in waters that are going to produce candidates for us, and we're going to win our fair share.

There is no reason, the Admissions Director said, to recruit in the southwest, for example, where Denison is not known, and where students have little desire to leave, and parents are transplants from state institutions.

For kids from Dallas, Texas, or Arizona, New Mexico, Southern California, an awful lot of those kids—they've got a superb state system out there in California, so it's not viable for us. We go out and touch a few bases, but as a source of applicants for the future, it's very limited. It's much more important for us to do a better job in Ohio than Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan, Oberlin and some of those places.

We've moved to a position where we are going to put ourselves in terms of public relations and image or competition in situations where we are going against our known competition in terms of overlap studies, because we know we will get a share of that market, even though it's a lesser one than Kenyon's going to get. That's been a major shift, I would say.

So the intertwining of public relations with the recruitment effort is acknowledged by the Admissions Director. His job, he said, is managerial, while his office is more public relations oriented.

I interface with the planning, long-range planning, implementation of the marketing admissions plans. I input my experience of 17
years in the publications, the win-the-class strategies. Yes, I interview, but I interview less. Yes, I travel, but I travel less. Yes, I'm probably in terms of public presentation in the secondary schools the most experienced, but not necessarily the best. You know, I'm 50 years old, so age gives you something once in awhile, but it's probably fair to say some of the staff members are more appealing to the students.

I would say probably more than half my job is public relations. We have a public relations person on the staff. The whole staff is involved in public relations. We have the Denison Alumni Recruiting Teams, the student visitation programs, student services for prospective students, tour guides, hosts and hostesses, international recruiting. PR skills are very important in terms of hiring for the Admissions Office.

**Prospect and Parent**

A prospective student and his father were impressed with Denison when they attended a play three years ago. And when they attended the College Fair they picked up literature about Denison, and then the student talked to a representative who came to the high school. The father and son visited the campus and spent the morning listening to introductory speeches and descriptions of Denison programs.

The father described the visit:

There were two or three classes on Admissions, financial aid, and they told us we could go over to the Admissions Building and plug the information we had about us into a computer to see where we'd come out, so we did that. Of course, he was interested in the athletic program, so we went over there. We already had tickets to the football game that they gave us. We did go down to the athletic facility on our own and asked a couple of people questions. My son said he was interested in the football program, and they immediately went back and got the head football coach, who was preparing for a game a half hour later, but he came out to shake hands.
The high price tag had a slightly negative effect, the father said, but he intends to have his son apply at two private and two state schools, to see what the financial comparison is.

Their initial impression was that Denison was "an Ivy League type school." During their campus visit, they listened to a student panel discussion and felt:

...that was about as enlightening as anything we saw there. Students have a tendency to tell the truth and not to be professional promoters, and they spent some time discussing their images, 'Party School'--and their drinking privileges.

Neither the prospective student nor the parent had a clear image of either Kenyon or Ohio Wesleyan. Said the parent:

I've never been to Ohio Wesleyan, outside of going to the observatory. My best friend went to Kenyon his first year, and he was my roommate at Ohio State, so I got some very definite impressions, but that was some time ago.

While surveying the various publications colleges distribute, the student reported he looked for what kind of activities they have outside the classroom. The father said:

The books are impressive. There are several very similar to Denison's. By seeing colored photographs of the campus environment in a well done brochure you can compare things that aren't in one-page letters. As a matter of fact, in going through the brochures, this was probably the only one--well, maybe one other--that showed a campus plan and photograph of their whole campus, which I was impressed by. A lot of others, you
just have to get your impressions from the individual photographs. You have no overall concept of the school.

The student reported he received more information at the end of his junior year after taking the ACT than during his senior year.

I'm just trying to find the right college that offers all the things I'm looking for.

But the father added:

I'd like to have him at a small school, but money will be a factor. Living in Ohio most of my life, I got the impression they were all pretty much the same, and you'd really have to look at them. The difference between Ohio Wesleyan, Kenyon, Denison, Ohio Northern, Wittenberg, Heidelberg, Miami—all seem to be in the same grouping and you'd really have to research them out. You can't do that to all the schools, so we just happened to be impressed by Denison and OWU.

Faculty Member

A faculty member who has taught at Denison several years said she had little knowledge of that University when she applied for the job. She was familiar with small liberal arts schools, the problems, advantages, and disadvantages. She said:

One of the things that struck me besides the beauty of the setting was the way in which they recruited. Faculty are very much involved in recruitment. They give departments print-outs and faculty and students participate in calling prospects and asking if they have questions, inviting them to come to classes. Students feel comfortable knowing a faculty member when they come in.

The summer before, they go through a general orientation program, and can bring their families. Faculty members talk about Denison and students help orient them, walking them through their
freshman year to help with registration, etc.

One of the things that Denison does that is liked by some faculty and despised by others is they assign faculty members advisees and then they host a dinner.

The faculty representative agreed with the Public Affairs Director that it is somewhat difficult for a young faculty member, especially a woman, to live in Granville. She moved to a suburb of nearby Columbus to have a larger community and a life of her own. She added, however, that there is a controversy in some departments that virtually mandate that their faculty live in Granville.

Probably 75% live ‘on campus’ or in Granville. If you came with a spouse or family, it’s easier, but as a single person, it’s extremely difficult. They have some faculty housing, but after the first year it’s by lottery, and if you win, you stay, and if you don’t, you move. You almost live in a fish bowl. You never go home. Your next door neighbor works with you, generally, and you live across the mall area from the President and it’s kind of like ‘Good night, Bob, Good night, Nancy, Good night, Andy,’ so it’s rough, but at least they don’t have a policy like Kenyon that you have to live within ten miles of the campus.

Town and gown relations are not very pleasant, according to the faculty member, with students having more problems than faculty. She surmised this is because faculty tend to integrate themselves in the community more rapidly.

When she decided to join the faculty at Denison, she was overwhelmed by the amount of information they provided, which meant that when she came for her interview she could ask specific questions. As part of faculty recruitment,
they arranged for her to visit with other faculty not only within the specific department, but also from other areas.

The thing that really influenced me most was they set up a meeting with senior majors, and I had a chance to ask them questions and they could ask me. That kind of public relations work influenced me in terms of making my decision, and seems typical of the kinds of things that continue there.

Her initial impression encompassed the frequently listed "Preppy School" image.

I went back and said, 'Everybody looks the same. They dress the same, they act the same. The 'Preppy Image'--yes. Several faculty I visited with said, 'It's a problem of motivation sometimes. It has a reputation in terms of a 'Party School,' but if you can motivate them, these are students who have all kinds of opportunities that you can utilize.' And I find that particularly true, especially in terms of internships. There is all kinds of support for internships. In January term I make a point of almost including that in any student’s experience. Some of these internship opportunities come through alumni, some through student connections.

While she did leave her interview experience with an impression of Denison as a "Party School" and "Preppy School," she still sees those images as accurate after five years on the faculty. She sees more diversity in the faculty.

I resent having to motivate students past what I think I should have to do. I resent the fact there is openness to accepting social aspects of Denison and allowing that sometimes to dominate. I think the faculty has been very outspoken to that in the last couple of years. I'm encouraged by De Rocco's attitude toward student behavior, that we simply aren't going to accept it, we won't tolerate it. It's taken too much faculty time at faculty meetings to discuss
what goes on in fraternity houses.

I think it makes it hard, frankly, in terms of attracting students to Denison who go to Kenyon because of these image perceptions.

As to Kenyon's image, she sees it as "a little stuffy:"

I don't think necessarily the faculty is that much stronger. I think the reputation precedes it, and I think that it makes it easier in some ways for them to attract students who are the scholars. I talked to a high school senior from Mt. Vernon, and she said, 'No, I don't want to go to Kenyon. I want to come to Denison.' Partly, she wants to get further from home, but she also said she likes the image of Denison better, and she's not a student who is necessarily attracted to the Denison social scene. That's encouraging.

Having compared course offerings, the faculty member sees Denison as stronger than Kenyon.

The approach to liberal arts in general at Kenyon is much more archaic. My perception is that OWU, while a good school, they aren't able to attract the students, and it may be a weakness of public relations. Denison has been able to overcome that much easier than other schools have. We've attempted to get a more heterogeneous group of students.

She said faculty-staff communication is good, citing a junior faculty morale report on the problems of women, junior faculty, etc. She also noted that the Public Affairs office is able to get good coverage of campus events. But negative news was another matter, she said.

There's a big attempt to hush things up at Denison, to make them not public. It's kind of coordinated. It comes through the administration, generally between the Dean of Student Life and the President's office and PR. I also know—I guess it was in '81—that '20/20' wanted to come on campus, and Bob Good said at that point that they
wouldn't be welcome. I know that raised a lot of controversy among faculty that that should be mandated, as such, that they would not be welcome. According to Good's explanation, it had more to do with a program on hazing and fraternity systems and things like that, so there's some concern about that.

The faculty member said that this management of the news is done, she believes, to protect the image.

Then, the third example, The New York Times Fiske guide, said something about the number of BMWs on campus. President Good actually went out and counted the BMWs and wrote a piece for The Newark Advocate and, I think, The Columbus Dispatch. I don't think he managed to buy up all the copies of it [Fiske's book], however.

Faculty are concerned about image, because they want to attract good students.

One of the things I think Denison does poorly in regard to town-gown relationship is they like to isolate themselves, handle things through their own judicial system, if possible. There's a security system. Town police can't come on campus. One of the things about the perception of the '20/20' thing was that we'd be ruled like a kind of a monarchy. I don't think it was a monarchy. I would say that Good was ideal in working with the faculty, and the only thing I'd perceive was uncomfortableness, presiding over faculty meetings, and the attempt to manage news that went out. Yet, I think faculty members were concerned about what kind of news would go out.

De Rocco is much more a hard-liner than Good. I think his expectations of faculty and student performance are so great he will simply get rid of those who don't work within the system.

Student

A student who doesn't belong to a fraternity said he doesn't encounter the "Party School" image, but rather sees the image as:
...an above average institution of higher learning that strives to promote a healthy sense of self and academic achievement for its students.

The "Party School" image he sees as taking place on fraternity row and with the sororities.

I’ve been to quite a few parties at Denison, and they are very wild parties...something you’d have to go to to get the full picture of what goes on. But I think that is bred by the fact that Denison is not seen as challenging to a great many students. Academically, they don’t feel the pressure. They just feel like, if we all get a 70 grade, then it’s curved and we’ll all get good grades.

His image of Ohio Wesleyan comes from news clips he has seen on television.

I see it as being maybe more ‘jacket and tie’—but just about the same as Denison. They’ve gotten a lot of press and that’s where I’ve gotten a lot of my information.

His image of Kenyon is that it is a small college, much like Denison.

Denison is more elite. I consider Denison right below the Ivy Leagues.

As for the "Preppy" image, he said:

It’s ‘Preppy’ in dress—a lot of people get the LL Bean catalogs and buy mail order stuff like that. A lot of them come from prep schools on the east coast where that is the norm. There’s a lot of high fashion, too. I love dressing up.

The student gave the east coast perspective, when he said:

The east has its own way of doing things. It’s swifter. People walk fast. I showed up for my first appointment here ten minutes early, and
she was 15 minutes late and she took it in stride. The biggest adjustment is location, and just how you respond to it as an individual student is important.

He observed that the Public Affairs Director is trying to enhance and build on the University's reputation. As for the effectiveness of the literature in student recruiting, however:

It is effective, but it gets to the point students receive so many pieces from so many schools, that they are all saying the same thing. A well planned literature can be more helpful than just getting a brochure or form letter.

He had not even visited the campus when he applied at Denison, and from afar, his perception was:

It had to be a good school. Its price tag told me that. It was probably more 'Preppy' than other places...a good healthy place to be that cared about its students. I saw the grad placement record and saw they had a great deal of serious students. I did find my school more challenging, but maybe that's because I was prepared extremely well.

Socially, when I came here I knew basically the student body make-up and I expected to be facing some challenges. I think I was more open minded. It didn't matter. I was coming here for one thing, and that was to get my education. And I'd find a place to fit in somewhere. I'd mind my own business and have a job.

Since coming to the campus last year, he has found it to be a healthy environment for students between ages 18 and 22.

Most seem to come from loving families on the east coast or in Ohio...some blue collar...mostly Republican. Conservative. It's a place where you can look at it from your own perspective, and I can make this any type of experience I want to make it. No one is putting pressure on you to
grow up or anything. You can find inspiration from the library, or from the coed environment. People are genuinely nice here.

Newspaper Editor

The editor of The Newark Advocate has been in the area less than two years, but has dealt with colleges in Pennsylvania prior to moving to Ohio. His perceptions, although perhaps admittedly shaded by previous experience, are that in public relations, Denison officials are very cautious.

There seems to be somewhat of a distrust of the media— from the university’s standpoint. I think there’s a general impression that ‘first we’d better sit back and take a good look at how this is going to affect our image in the community and also our chances of recruitment, etc., etc.’

This is particularly true in what we’d call crime stories. We find out elsewhere. We don’t find out from the University. Once we have some knowledge of it from elsewhere, they’ll usually answer our questions. We don’t get any regular police reports or crime reports from campus security. We’d like to. I’ve heard the Granville police have the same problem. They take care of that type of thing internally. That’s what we’re told. So you have to bounce back between local authorities and University authorities till finally you pin it down a couple of days later. Very slow. This is typical of smaller private colleges, but not the large state universities. If it’s a bad message about the institution, it doesn’t get out.

He recounted the trouble the newspaper had getting information on the death of a fraternity member recently, adding that the University was reluctant to talk, and surmising that “maybe they just didn’t know what happened.”
The editor noted that the public relations people are involved directly with recruiting.

That's part of their job. Media slide shows—going out and making presentations. I think that certainly affects their judgment on certain things. 'How will this affect our recruitment if they find out local frats are maiming and killing people in their joviality?' Again, I'm surmising. By saying anything, they are certainly coloring that information. Of course, I can always use the argument that not saying anything always leads the rumors to get worse than what the facts actually are.

The image of Denison, he said, is good. There is one image in Granville, and another in Newark, he added, noting that there are not very close ties to Newark.

The campus itself is not an integral part of the Newark community (which is about 10 miles from the campus). It's more of an elitist college—that's the way they are perceived. A 'Rich Kids College'—basically for students from out of town, although there are a number of very prominent people in this town who graduated from Denison. The President of the largest bank is a DU graduate. It's perceived here that most of the people come from Cleveland. I don't know why, but I've heard that on several occasions. Maybe that's something they should work on. I don't have any on my staff at the moment. It's perceived to be 'Preppy' compared to OSU-Newark.

They go to a few watering holes around here, but other than that their presence is not really felt in this community. It's a large enough community where 2,000 students—the few that do come shopping downtown are probably noted, but actually there are more students at OSU-Newark, which is the largest Ohio State campus outside Franklin County. Granville shops feel their impact a lot more than we do.

The image in Granville, he said, is that it is a major force in the community—most live in town or right outside
He reported that contact with his sports staff have been very positive.

They've hired someone who has good rapport with our sports staff. We get calls. In last night's paper there must be four different sports items on DU sports, so there is good give and take there. I can't say we've always had that. It depends on who they have.

As to normal day-to-day releases, he said, contact is good. The education beat reporter has contact with the Public Affairs Director, and he is available when they have questions, but is not seen as aggressive in seeking help.

We get a call when something is dangerous, but otherwise we get things in the mail. The news releases are professional.

The editor saw President Good as having knowledge of how the media served the community.

The way they handled his reason for leaving was a textbook case of how to get bad news across and do it in a very dignified manner. All the doors were open and it came out that way. He was a very unusual individual. The fact he was leaving and had cancer—we were contacted before it was announced and given all the facts. The Public Affairs Director contacted us and we did cover his speech to students. We had an advanced copy of the text and had a photographer there.

He termed the Public Affairs office "very helpful" when it comes to arranging interviews with visiting dignitaries and covering campus events.

There is no antagonism between PR and the newspaper, other than regarding negative news, which is handled internally. Overall, I would give them a better rating than some of the other colleges I've been associated with.
The editor said his prescription for the ideal public relations operation would be making things of criminal or less than positive nature more readily available to the press. Fact sheets help, and personal contact always builds up a spirit of mutual confidence.

Mondays are particularly heavy mail days, so they are competing. Local is considered a priority. If it's phoned in or someone actually comes in personally and drops it off, it has much more meaning as far as our being able to ask 'What do you actually mean?' There's an answer and a face there.

The press release at least tells the writer or editor what the PR person perceives as most important. We may not always agree—but there might be a good reason why that person felt that way, especially if that rapport is built up. There has to be some respect between the two.

If, over a period of years, the beat reporter perceives any negative things will be buried at the bottom, he said, they're going to start reading bottom up!

I'm not sure what our image is to Denison...If we're perceived as just one of several newspapers, or not. Our penetration is 80% of the Granville homes, but Columbus papers are read, too, with head-to-head competition on Sundays. We just started a Sunday paper a year ago.

Community Resident

A journalism teacher who has observed both The Newark Advocate and the Denison Public Affairs operation said that while Newark and Granville almost connect, Denison is like an island atop the hill in Granville.

The Newark newspaper doesn't deal much at all with Denison. It will cover speakers, but as far as keeping up with Denison activities, it doesn't
seem to occur. I don’t know why. I think that Newark thinks Granville and Denison—they lump those two together—have this elitist image of themselves.

Within Granville, Denison has a good academic image. It does not have a good social image. Granville used to be dry. Now you can buy alcohol, but can’t go and drink, except at the two Inns. Since Granville used to be dry, that caused a lot of the problems, because the kids from Denison would come to Newark, get drunk and go back to Granville. There were lots of traffic accidents and lots of deaths, and it gave Denison a bad image.

If Denison gets any publicity in Newark as far as the student goes, it’s usually negative publicity. When the boy was killed, you heard lots about Denison then, but it was all bad.

The new President has received some publicity, she said, but the newspaper doesn’t cover the Denison calendar or activities.

It’s just isolated up on the hill. The new President has some ideas about that. He’s going to try to erase the ‘Party School’ image that is very prevalent on the east coast. Lots of people come to Denison for that. The ‘Preppy’ image is also very strong. Actually, Denison is not one of the most expensive colleges in Ohio, but Denison likes to think it is. It really isn’t. But they behave as if it’s a very elite school and students are generally from the east. There are some local kids, some Newark, some Granville, who go to school there. High School kids copy their dress, and a few every year get on scholarships—music scholarships. As far as academics, you don’t hear much about that. The average person in this area doesn’t know if it’s hard to survive Denison or not. We don’t know what’s going on up there.

The resident of the Granville area who works in Newark said she believes the Newark newspaper tends to ignore Denison.

There is like an ocean between Granville and Newark. Denison kids come to Newark to shop, some
from Newark may go to Denison for a speaker. But as far as any other activities at Denison go, they are really kept well within the walls of Denison. Denison does lots of different things. They have plays, and some people do go to those, because they are advertised through their own means. The Newark newspaper just does not seem to care or choose to investigate what's up there.

If you lived in Newark and read The Advocate, you'd never know what was going on at Denison. Not at all, and that's really a shame. They don't cover DU sports very much...once in awhile, but not very much. They just don't cover Denison.

Lisa Birnbach’s College Book

While faculty, administrators and others have expressed concern over a variety of media and college guide books, one in particular that raised the ire of Denisonians was the recently released Lisa Birnbach’s College Book, published by Ballentine, and written by the author of the already famous Preppy Handbook. As one of only eight colleges in Ohio chosen for the book, the University is misrepresented as "Denison College," and the Public Affairs office has underlined other pithy abuses of journalistic license. (The other colleges from Ohio are Antioch, Case Western Reserve, Kent State, Kenyon, Miami, Oberlin, and Ohio State). The college reviewer, according to The Newark Advocate, "puts on her cleats and leaves a deep and correspondingly painful impression about the University."

Administrators were concerned about the book's negative impact on prospective freshmen. And as one staff member concluded:
Let's face it. All of us are spending megabucks on marketing and this sort of thing hurts a marketing approach. But, at least Denison made the book. A lot of other colleges didn't.

The official University response, which came from the Public Affairs Director, was:

The book is not a serious piece, so it doesn't merit serious comment.

The Newark Advocate column quoted one Denison official as saying colleges, many of which are fighting for survival, need good reviews, but books like Birnbach's "freeze a college in time," and in Denison's case, add to the stereotyped "Country Club" image that is difficult to change (The Newark Advocate, October 20, 1984).

But according to Howard Means, who writes for The Orlando Sentinel, in an article in The Columbus Dispatch (September 30, 1984), the Denison officials need not worry.

Lisa Birnbach's College Book is a book so riddled with inaccuracies, so filled with wrongheaded practices that it might very well stand as a symbol of everything that colleges exist to combat.

After listing instances where information was blatantly incorrect, and checking research procedures with the publisher, the columnist concluded:

'I read it in a book' used to mean something; it used to carry a stamp of authority. If you read it in this book, don't believe it.
Shop Owner

A local shop owner said she takes it all as one big joke.

I have caps imprinted "Denison University Country Club," and "Denison University Yacht Club." You know, I think we have a terrific sense of humor. It's not a negative image. Our students grades are very good, and to enroll here I guess the requirements are quite high. They used to be. I think the idea for the yacht club was mine. I don't know who came up with the country club. I laugh...I think they have a pond up there, so the yacht club! They are sold, and they create a lot of comment.

The shop owner said that some customers are parents and prospective students who are looking at Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan and Denison.

They always say Denison is the most beautiful and it is, and the village also.

She said town and gown relationships are very good, and attributes 75% of her business to students.

Over the years, I haven't had any problems at all...the few I have had I can count on one hand in 25 years. Normally they are very gracious. We go out of our way to try to do things for them, because I realize my business is the students and that's it.

There was an agreement between the merchants and the University when it was founded that they would try to maintain a town and gown relationship always. They felt that students shopping downtown, instead of at the bookstore, [would help the town-gown relationships], so the bookstore has never carried much, mainly books. I think they carry one little basic shirt, but everything else is downtown. It was a formal agreement, a very old one, to my knowledge, and I know it was very unusual. The forefathers or whoever set this up felt that town and gown relationship was
important.

Her image of Denison is one of a very good small college, with "Preppy" an accurate description:

I think for a small college, possibly Denison is more well-known over the US than any other college of its size. I found in my travel that if I mention two things, Denison University and the Granville Inn, they know where these two focal points are.

I think 'Preppy' does go here. It used to be tremendously so...all 'Preppy.' Just 'Preppy' and that was it.

The University provides merchants with a bulletin, a schedule for all events on campus, which helps them prepare for increased traffic.

Town and gown relations are very good, from my viewpoint. I've heard complaints from others, but I haven't any complaints. No problems. If the University feels as good about me as I feel about them...On the whole, I think we have a very good relationship.
Chapter V

Kenyon College

To meet the need for clergymen for Ohio's Episcopal church, The Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church came into being. Bishop Philander Chase journeyed to England in 1823 "to enlist prayerful support for his vision and to solicit funds from English bishops and missionary societies" (Cable-Wells, 1984, p. 19), returning a year later with pledges for about $30,000. The school was incorporated December 29, 1824, with no other purpose than the education of ministers (Smythe, 1924, p. 40). Chase envisioned collegiate instruction in all branches of learning, and singlehandedly added the name "and Kenyon College," honoring Lord Kenyon, the institution's leading benefactor (Cable-Wells, 1984, p. 21).

The institution saw its beginnings in buildings on the Bishop's farm in Worthington, a site considered temporary, as the Bishop wanted to remove his students from the influences of cities and villages, where there were "persons who find it in their interest or malicious pleasure to seduce young men from their studies into vice and dissipation" (Kenyon College Student Handbook, 1983-84, p. 22).
He moved his College in 1828 to Gambier Hill, "a retreat of virtue from the Vices of the World."

While the students and faculty lived in crude, temporary buildings just north of the present Chapel, workmen were constructing the huge stone walls of Old Kenyon, the first example of Collegiate Gothic architecture in America. So massive was this structure and so commanding its site that local inhabitants, many of whom had fought the British in the War of 1812, began to suspect that English money was building a fortress for the King.

In 1968, Bexley Hall, the theological seminary, was moved to Rochester, N.Y. to join the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and in 1969, women were admitted as Coordinate College students. It was not until 1972 that Kenyon officially became a coeducational college (Kenyon College Student Handbook, 1983-84, p. 24).

Since its founding over 150 years ago Kenyon College has firmly believed in the value of a liberal education. The emphasis of its curriculum has not been on applied technical studies, but on the humanistic "understanding of man, his nature and his place" (Kenyon College Student Handbook, 1983-84, p. 24).

President

The architectural heritage of Kenyon, Ohio's oldest private college, was recognized by the inclusion of the Kenyon College Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, as Philip Harding Jordan, Jr. assumed the presidency. The College continued its building program, adding Bolton Theater in 1978, and inaugurating
Kenyon Festival Theater as an appropriate outgrowth in 1980. In 1979, The Kenyon Review, the one thing most people associate with the College, was revived, following a lapse of nine years (Kenyon College Student Handbook, 1983-84, p. 24).

The 600-acre campus in the New England style village of Gambier has a faculty of 116, and 1400 students from 40 states and 15 foreign countries.

In his tenth year as President of Kenyon, Jordan reflects on public relations as having both an internal and external mission.

I think there is an internal PR mission, as well as an external one, and the internal mission is to help the members of the staff and community here—The Kenyon community—to understand and support the larger mission of the College and to see developments each year in relation to the forward movement of that larger mission, so that people can see themselves as contributing to a whole enterprise...their own role, whatever that may be, in the context of that larger enterprise.

The external one, of course, is involved in communicating authentic information about the College in a way that produces a positive perception of Kenyon by varied constituencies...the good old nostalgist, the alumni, who are very much wedded to the College of their day, but want to see Kenyon advance, but want to see that all the values that they revered are somehow preserved amidst all the change. At the same time, they are very proud when the institution gets a new building, progresses and accomplishes things. To the extent that Kenyon has a positive image, the alumni’s loyalty to the place tends to be reinforced, because of that pride. Then, there are the current parents and families, who, of course, would like to be able to have the College where their child is attending well-regarded in their communities and thought of as a prestigious, positive place. Their own
private perceptions are reinforced by what the neighbor thinks.

Then there are those constituencies we look to for future admissions and financial support. We want to begin from a strong base: first of all of acquaintance with Kenyon, and second, a positive perception.

President Jordan believes the effort to communicate with these constituencies is essential to the College:

The PR effort or public information effort is central to the College, and to marketing in the broad sense, which, of course, is a term everybody uses today.

Describing his interpretation of "Marketing," the President said:

It can have a wide range of meanings. What I mean by marketing is first of all the ability to describe in authentic and compelling terms the distinctiveness of the institution and its programs.

The President, who is a history professor, takes the business person's point of view in marketing:

Another feature of marketing as I see it is to in many ways do what commercial firms do. That is, through presentation of the distinctive features of the College, create a kind of positive attitude toward the institution wherein people associate the name with quality.

In our case, it would be that, and not a bargain. Another place might say that's a terrific value...look what you're getting for so little expense. The great bargain...OSU...you get a good education in a large scale setting for a very good price. Here you get a good education in a smaller highly personal setting for a somewhat higher price. We, therefore, need authentically to describe what the quality is that justifies the price, or what you get for your money, since it is an expensive college, particularly for this region. So the marketing has to be related to the description in a very attractive way of a quality that's offered for the cost, and that is not
simply in terms of the immediate experience, but the lifelong value of the education.

Believing in the value of the news release as the focus of public relations, he said that comes down to stories about people.

People aren't interested in reading about the super new program in X. That's not very memorable anyhow, and no newspaper or television station or magazine writer is interested in a terrific program in Byzantine Studies. But they are interested in people who may be doing that, and as a result do rather fascinating things with their lives and accomplish things that are of interest to other people.

So, my point of view is that the telling the story of the College is largely the telling the story of the people who have been there or are there, in an interesting way, and in a way that illustrates the distinctiveness of the institution as quality.

The President compared the austere, cloistered appearance of Kenyon with the Denison campus:

Denison has a kind of luxurious quality about it, and on the other hand, ours doesn't and we don't want it that way, because it doesn't represent what we're about. We like to be comfortable, and we like to be very rich in cultural resources, but we're not interested in 'luxury.'

Reflecting on the image of isolation that dominates Kenyon, President Jordan said:

Isolation? What does that mean? Does it mean physical separation from the population center? Yes. But then, so are lots of colleges that are not generally viewed as isolated. Does it mean participating in an educational experience which in toto is somewhat different from other people's? And if so, yes, we are saying we stand for certain distinctive values in education and we're not for everybody. And we don't say that snobbishly. We're just saying there are a variety
of needs out there, and we can’t meet all of them. We’re going to deal with those people whom we can serve well, and we would like that to be a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds and diverse geography, but at the same time, acknowledge that this is not a mass institution.

In another sense, he sees isolation as a term that equates with separation, in the sense that students who are from the northeast would find many of their friends going to such places as Williams or Amherst or Bowdoin, which, in turn, would give them the approval of their peers. Kenyon may not be as well known in their area.

So I think that there is that psychological dimension of isolation which has nothing to do with physical location, but has to do with the way people perceive what it means in going to Gambier, Ohio.

What do people associate with Kenyon? The President believes they think of The Kenyon Review, not the location.

What is Gambier and why would you have heard of it? It’s a little village on a hill in the woods. And it is Kenyon. In terms of substantive educational experience and the way people respond to it, our location is a clear asset. In terms of the more remote perception of it, it’s a problem.

In light of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old population, President Jordan believes the focus of public relations should be to "tell the distinctive story." He sees himself as the chief public relations officer of the institution, both internally and externally, acknowledging that he’d consider that a clear majority of his duties.
As to where he feels it is most important that there be loyalty within his administration, he said:

I'd put it in terms of chemistry of the relationship, and I think it's most particularly critical with the Development office, and that has to do with the way you work together. The chief Development officer is also a PR officer. And the reason I say you need a special relationship with the chief Development officer is that you are going to be working together in such situations involving institutional needs, involving donors, where you have to have a kind of trust, mutual reliance and intuitive understanding so it works. You don't have quite the same quality with other officers, because you are dealing with human personalities here. You're dealing with trustees, you're dealing with donors, you're dealing with leading alumni, and it's people skill.

President Jordan had no apprehension about working with the Public Relations Director who had served the previous administration, because he had had experience working with the Public Relations office as the chief academic officer at his previous institution.

I felt easy about it, and rather assumed I could work with almost anybody. It wouldn't be a problem. When you come in as President, you need to make an assessment over a period of time of what's strong, what isn't strong. I wasn't apprehensive about it, but I was aware that I was going to have to evaluate that whole function.

The President confines his role to setting objectives, which deal with the larger institutional objectives, and considers the public relations staff members the experts.
The Kenyon President considers public relations in the narrow definition, relying primarily on the function of news dissemination.

The previous Public Affairs Director was brought up from the ranks and trained and essentially the stature of the program grew with his capacity to lead it. We added staff and did some very important things. I think we can view that as a very successful chapter. When he wanted a career change, we went out on a search. Now, we also knew that we were moving into a period where the public relations function was going to have critical importance and would have to be integrated much more closely than the several activities of the institution that had been the case. So this search took on a very special importance.

You shape your program by the talent you have available, and we now have a different kind of talent available to us, so I expect the character of the program to change.

The President sees the creation of the external affairs committee of the Board of Trustees as a critical development in the transition from strictly a news operation to a broader perspective of public relations function.

John McCoy, president of Bank One in Columbus, is chairman of that committee. We have some nice high-powered people on that. The Public Affairs Director will be one of the principal administrative liaisons of that committee, so this will give him access to some of our leading Trustees..to thrust public relations into a kind of prominence at the Board level that it hasn't had before.

Vice President for Development

The Vice President for Development, who is over the offices of Alumni, Development, and Public Affairs, agrees
that public relations has been seen in terms of publications
assistance, press releases, and media relations.

It was a public relations effort that just kind of happened from year to year. I don't think there were any major significant plans put forth about what the purpose of public relations was for this place. It mirrored a number of things that in my opinion were the case at Kenyon back in the '50s and '60s...maybe until Phil Jordan became President, where Kenyon was inward looking rather than outward looking.

We had always had a good reputation. We didn't have any problems at all attracting a certain group of students. We didn't need very many, as Kenyon was extremely small. Prior to 1969 we'd have only 500 students...400 students...300 students. Classes back in the '30s had 30 or 40 people in them. We were an extremely small college. We still only have 8,900 living alumni, and half of those graduated since 1973. Whoever's raising money here in the year 2000 is going to have a lot of fun, if we do our job correctly now. But if I had to categorize PR in a phrase, I'd categorize it in the same way as fund raising when I came here 11 years ago: it was absolutely not aggressive at all.

The Vice President sees the change in public relations as a response to a change in climate and personnel, adding that he and the President were responsible for the changes.

And I'm not being egotistical about fund raising. Til Phil Jordan and I came—he came a year and a half after I did—this place didn't raise any money. It was just not aggressive at all. It didn't have any staff people. The Board was, and rightly so at the time, more interested in the operations than the financial picture...there was an awful lot of 'The Lord will provide' attitude. Not to get into religion, that's not my notion. If you want somebody to help you've got to ask them. So we got more aggressive with that.

The staff for the entire college relations arm of the College 12 years ago consisted of a Vice President for
Development, Director of Alumni Affairs and the Director of Public Relations and his assistant, plus four secretaries. Today there are 20+ on the staff.

We're more serious about it since Phil Jordan was hired...a focal point of activities around here. I think that's why the public relations area has begun to change in the last few years. For a long time they were running along kind of trying to catch up with us. Now they've got to be way out in front in terms of image of the College and so forth.

The Vice President believes that having the Kenyon name in The New York Times once a year is meaningless, for the amount of time and energy that goes into it.

That's where I have a lot of interesting conversations about hiring PR firms like Hill & Knowlton and others. It's possible in a year or two to shoot your star up and get a lot of coverage. What happens in the third year or the fourth? It's hard to keep firing stars. There's a level the institution itself has to come up to, in all that it does, not just getting on the Today Show. OWU has used PR firms, and it's going to be interesting to see what happens there in two or three years...what is the impact of all that heightened activity. But for this year, if it goes out across the college community and across the constituents, fine, but if it just hit the Today Show audience, I'm not sure about that.

When he became Vice President, he fired the PR firm that had been serving as consultants. He believes that is when Kenyon really started to focus on admissions and fund raising.

Ten years ago we called on an alumnus who heads Proctor & Gamble who brought his marketing people into Kenyon. Proctor & Gamble is the world's largest and leading marketer. They analyzed our Admissions situation, which provided us with a tremendous amount of advice at that
time, which I think has provided us a jump on a number of other places... We have one of the best organized alumni admissions programs I've ever seen. It's a joint venture between the Alumni office and Admissions office.

Everybody always kicks PR, and they get defensive, but the issue was they have to be out in front developing the image for the place, and again, I'm narrow minded about this, but in this day and age, everything that the PR office does has to have some impact, however measured, on donors or students. And if it does anything else, it's superfluous.

While fiscal management had been the emphasis of the Board for ten years, the creation of the external affairs committee marks a significant change.

There's a change in the way they perceive the College and their role within it. And the external affairs committee means that the Board of Trustees is very interested now in our external marketplace. Fund raising and external affairs are the two big issues for the next ten years or so, and the weight of the Board, the key people, are now on those two committees, and that's a rather dramatic change. I don't know that the Board would sit back and analyze it that way, but that's what has happened.

The change has come through the support of the President and Vice President, with the addition of the new Director.

We're changing the name of the Public Relations office to Public Affairs, a minor change, but I'm trying to signify to people that what we used to do in Public Relations is not what we're going to do in the future. We're not going to get involved in putting posters up on campus for lectures. I don't care about that. We're going to do more things externally oriented.

The agenda for the new external affairs committee will revolve around marketing the College, putting together a
Marketing package that describes Kenyon's distinctiveness.

Marketing and strategic planning are the buzz words. Those are the issues of where we are now. These are issues we never dealt with in the past, because our minds were elsewhere. I don't think it is necessarily damning or bad we didn't do them a couple of years ago...there were other things more important at the time. Now this has probably moved up in importance...such things as what goes out of here. A year and a half ago we did a publications audit. We collected every single bit of stationery, every single envelope, every publication, every brochure, every booklet that was printed that went out of this place and put them all together...and said, this is Kenyon's image. To say the least it was eclectic. Every department has its own stationery. I didn't realize how many different purples there were until we got into this thing...Different colors, different style, different lettering.

The new Public Affairs Director is charged with unifying the College stationery and creating a stylebook, so that there will be guidelines for publications. He reports to the Vice President, who is a member of the Cabinet and reports directly to the President. The Vice President sees the President as an articulate spokesman, not only for Kenyon but for higher education, as well.

College presidents didn't get involved too much in that. They were on campus and then they started making money and now they are getting out into the marketplace in a little more public way. Lee Iacocca brought that about, and the fellow who bought Remington Shavers...so there has been a lot in the past couple of years about the making of a president as a public relations, public affairs kind of symbol for the college.

We've had the President on talk shows and interviewed in the press, and he's written newspaper articles, but I think that we are going to have to get him out into the public arena a little more dramatically than we have in the past.
The President of Kenyon has open office hours for students and faculty, is involved in committees, attends all faculty meetings, while also teaching courses.

He spends a lot of time being the leader, not just simply a President who goes out on public relations or in the public arena...and there's a pull, a tug on that...It's a matter of trying to find the right balance between the style and nature of leadership on campus and the time that can be used for leadership elsewhere. We'll probably be pushing that a little bit more in the external marketplace. That's my crystal ball.

Market research, to be shared by Admissions and Development, is being done to enable Kenyon to target its marketplace.

What tended to happen in the past was you'd hear from a couple of alumni and decide that was what everybody thought. You'd hear from a couple of prospective students and find out why they didn't come and decide that was why they all didn't come.

He sees all of it as a service, in some respects like an agency, in terms of attitude, and believes there is no reason to do PR unless it serves some people, some part of the college, or the entire college.

Sports information we could probably stop tomorrow and it wouldn't affect the sports program. There are a number of people who do have fond feelings about athletics at Kenyon, so it's important to keep that going, so we'll maintain that, but I don't think it's important to increase it. You have to look at what the purposes of sports information is, and it's to keep people feeling good about the place and help in recruiting students, so you need to keep that going.
The Vice President said there is a high level of conflict between most Admissions offices and Public Affairs offices, which is always a topic of conversation when GLCA Presidents get together.

The best way is to cooperate and try to get that cooperative spirit going. Ideally, the Public Affairs office ought to know what will sell in the marketplace, but in order to know what sells, they’ve got to have some data from the Admissions office...what do you put in the catalog. The Public Affairs offices have a fairly good sense of that, but they can’t get that in a vacuum. They aren’t out there talking to Seniors. And, what photograph races somebody’s motors? Admissions people don’t know what would be a good visual presentation, and PR people ought to. This comes to play most significantly in the slide shows. You’ve got five minutes to tell the story, visually, and you’ve got to get the focus. When it’s done, they ought to be able to say what they feel, think and what you want them to do. It’s an interesting exercise. It’s like the fellow who wrote the letter, and in the first paragraph, apologized, ‘I’m sorry this letter is so long. I didn’t have time to make it short.’ And we’ve got to practice that sort of thing, too, so it’s very much a working back and forth.

The Vice President sees the Admissions staff as functioning in public relations roles for the university.

The President and I meet with them about the case for Kenyon: when they go on the road, what should they stress, what are facts about this place, what impressions should they leave, and what are the significant things that make Kenyon Kenyon. I run through what we talk to foundations and alumni about. There are a lot of parallels between when we are asking people to give money and recruiting. It ought to be the same story we’re telling, although there are different approaches.
The Vice President schedules two staff retreats each year to coordinate plans.

I meet with each office, and I take notes, and I have an agenda for them sent out in advance. We set objectives for the year and make sure everything is covered, and find topics of interest to all three offices [Alumni, Development and Public Affairs]. However cooperative you want to be, there are some things that are done in the PR office that don't concern the Development office. We spend part of a day discussing interrelated topics. We all have a sense of 'I do this and you do that.' The President has a staff retreat in August when we go over similar kinds of things with the College as a whole.

The three offices of Alumni, Development and Public Affairs are housed in the same building, along with the Vice President, which provides ease of access when one area needs the help of another.

Prior to the arrival of the new Public Affairs Director, the Vice President said, the effectiveness of PR in recruitment was mixed.

To be specific about it, I think the PR office has been very helpful in such things as the slide show, Alumni Bulletin, and Admissions newsletter. Where they have not been all that helpful, and I have never really finally decided where the problem is...I think the problem is in both areas...but they have not been particularly helpful with the catalog, with the Admissions flyer. We've gone to an outside designer with the content—a fellow in Columbus who designs it for us. The designer has been very good at designing things that are visually pleasing, but I'm not convinced that it says what it ought to say.
The Vice President alluded to the new Public Affairs Director's experience, explaining that the reason he was hired was his job at Princeton was to work as a liaison between Publications and Admissions.

The Admissions office at Princeton is just an unbelievable kind of office. You can imagine what it would be in an Ivy League school, and he was very effective in that. He kind of took over the publications—what they said, not just the way they looked. In the past, I think that was a weakness here, and he's going to take care of that.

In terms of effectiveness of PR in the area of fund raising, the Vice President said it has been a "mixed bag."

The Alumni Bulletin has won a lot of national awards, and it is perceived by large numbers of alumni as being an excellent publication, stimulating, informative. It has a high readership and is a basic foundation for raising money. It's all done here. In that respect, PR is very helpful. In some campaign documents, we've gone outside for some publications, inside for some...mixed bag.

The effect of public relations on the image is in early development stages, he said.

The PR office has gotten kind of bogged down into little niches...they do a publication, slide show, or this or that, rather than taking a look at the entire institution and our relationship in the national marketplace. If we're a national institution, which I think we are, we draw students from all over the country. That's the market we're in, and in terms of the image, the image is not just derived from one publication or one slide show. It's a whole host of things that combine together to put out a college's image and I think in some respects the image we have today is an image that was probably in some people's minds 20 to 30 years ago. The Kenyon Review.
Kenyon was on the cutting edge of a number of national things. The Advanced Placement things started here. The new criticism and heritage conferences, those kinds of things for a small college were really unusual back in the '40s and '50s. I think our reputation is good. If they know it at all, they relate it as a pretty fine educational institution. The problem is, I don't think enough people know it. In some respects, we're probably one of the best kept secrets around, but that's just hyperbole on my part.

The Vice President feels that the focus now should be on trying to determine what image they want to portray, and how to go about it. He recognizes it is not something that can be done overnight, however.

I think students love Kenyon. We have one of the lowest attrition rates of any place in the country. They stay. They are stimulated by it. Alumni participate—highest rate by all measure in the three institutions [in this study]. So, I think our customers, if you will, are satisfied. They feel fondly about this place. It's an emotional thing. I can't put a label on it.

Viewing Denison from a distance, the Vice President sees that President Good had a positive impact on the academic emphasis.

My image of Denison, prior to knowing it, was that there were a lot of sororities and fraternities and that it was a big party place. Much the same for Ohio Wesleyan. Kenyon was the flip side...very austere, very serious, very tough, very inward looking, self-analytical, and you didn't come here and have a great time. I think we've changed that a little bit, as I suspect Denison has changed in academic framework. That's a tough issue to get a handle on.

You can sit back and say, 'Yes, our image is a fine small liberal arts college in the middle of Ohio'—Snore!—There are only 2,400 of those in the country. So there have to be other kinds of things that will make the character of this place. There is a difference between Kenyon and other
colleges, just as there are differences between other colleges and Kenyon, and we've got to get a handle on those differences that are distinctly unique to this place and do a better job of presenting that to the public.

The prevailing image of Kenyon deals with its isolation. The Vice President argues that it is not as isolated as others.

I can't imagine a place more isolated than Williams, but they get 4,000 applications each year and we get 1,700. One of the facts we have is we're in Ohio. That's probably more critical for us than it is for other places, because we've always depended so heavily on eastern schools, and there are people who are so provincial that they think arrows are still being used out here. There's not much you can do with that.

More significant to those who have visited the campus, and chosen to enroll, has been the beauty of the place, the size of the community, the fact that the faculty are required to live within 10 miles, he said.

On the other hand, he sees the campus of Ohio Wesleyan University as very similar to Denison, in that social life and activities are important there.

Any time you get an age 18 to 22 year old, they are going to have fun. It's tremendously important here, but it's only been coed for 16 years. There may be some of that old male college stuff: play hard, work hard, go elsewhere...Denison or Ohio Wesleyan...on weekends.

Our students are in fact away from things here, but there's a lot of contact.

Director of Public Affairs

The new Public Affairs Director agrees that Kenyon is no more isolated than other intense liberal arts
institutions:  

I spent years at Princeton, and although it looks on the map like it's less isolated, it is just as isolated as Kenyon.

A Kenyon graduate, he remembers it "felt right" when he visited the campus, and none of the other schools he was considering at the time could approach that feeling for him.

It takes a match, and it's really not easy to identify the student, which is something of a public relations problem...especially when it comes to Admissions. It's a little hard to tailor Admissions materials, when you don't know exactly who that student is that is going to be attracted to Kenyon. We have a pretty good idea, but not as good as we should have. We're working to correct that with the latest research.

He has analyzed what the various college guides have said about Kenyon and its competition and found:

A great deal is made about Kenyon's isolation, in almost all of the guides. Bowdoin in Maine, which is equally isolated, doesn't get the same sort of nasty comments about its isolation that Kenyon does. A lot of that has to do with the fact that most of these guides come from the east coast and they think of Ohio as being absolutely flat, with no kind of industry other than agriculture, with cities that are nothing more than centers for that agriculture industry. There are lots of nasty comments like, 'No one who has ever been to Columbus would mistake it for a culture center.' And with Bowdoin, we currently lose 100% of students admitted to both. It's the only one we're in a situation like that, but it's something that is a concern, something wrong there, because Bowdoin is no better than Kenyon. The location, for some reason, is more attractive.
Several years ago the college produced its own guide, a spoof on *The New York Times* guide, entitled *The Gambier Times Selective Guide to Kenyon College*, which takes a humorous look at the isolation factor:

A lot of students who read some of those college guides get the idea that Gambier is so 'boonie' they need to hire a guide to blaze the trail to Kenyon. This is not the case at all...It is understandable that you might assume that a town which boasts three restaurants, a market, a bank, a gas station, a clothing store and a bookshop isn’t exactly life in the fast lane....Coming to Kenyon is not the same as being banished to Siberia. Gambier is filled with interesting, fun people. It is as lively—or as isolated—as you make it. Gambier maybe out of the way, but it is not out of the mainstream.

The satirical brochure features cartoons of such things as a man in a pith helmet cutting his way through the jungle to Kenyon with a machete, and a student on a bicycle passing a sign that reads, "Entering Gambier. Don’t blink!" It was designed to counter the criticism in the various guides, to be used as a recruitment brochure.

The new Director said that the image is very good, as far as it goes, but that Kenyon is not known widely enough.

It's a limitation of what they know of the College. A lot of people associate it with *The Kenyon Review*, and nothing else, and we do have very good programs in sciences, and an excellent record of getting graduates into medical school. It's known as a school that’s one of the best for English. It's also one of the best in other things.

And the students are not all wealthy. One of the great things about this place is you have east coast sophisticates and kids from Ohio farms. If you look at how many went to private schools, how many to public, the misperception of the 'Rich Kids School' is not anywhere close to reality. But I don’t know if we want to go so far as
countering it. I think we want to make it clear that it is a diverse student body. We can't try to perpetuate a false image of the College.

The new Director believes that the President recognizes the College needs to be better known, and known for the right things throughout the country, and that he was hired to be an initiator for public relations.

I'm hoping that is the way the job will turn out. There's a certain amount of just responding in a job like this, because you can't have your hand on the pulse of everything that's happening on campus. So, when things happen, you have to be ready to deal with them, but you also have to be thinking all the time about new projects, ways you can get the College's name out to its various constituencies and let people know what's new and exciting on campus.

The Director said he will be sitting in on cabinet and faculty meetings, and intends to increase contact with faculty and administrators.

One of my plans is to take a faculty member to lunch every week, and find out what that person is doing. That will have a lot of benefits.

1. We'll find out what is going on. Once we know that we may be able to publicize what they are doing. We'll know which newspapers and magazines are interested, and write stories tailored to that particular outlet.

2. Once they know that we're here and interested in what they're doing, they are more likely to come to us and tell us about it. The same holds true for administrators.

The position involves working with those who need help publicizing their projects and involvements.

The way I see the cooperative aspects of the job developing: we have to be ready to help them and let them know this is the place they should
come for help. And that can create problems sometimes, because people may expect too much from us and may expect us to drop everything we’re doing, because to that person that is the most important thing. But I think that even if you say ‘that’s not news,’ there is always something that can be done that will satisfy what they see as a need. If it’s not news for The New York Times, it may be something for the Mt. Vernon News.

Kenyon’s public relations has tended to be "limited in scope," he said, emphasizing news releases with the Mt. Vernon News seen as the major news outlet for the college.

While it’s important to have coverage in the local paper, for the College’s name to become better known you’ve got to put emphasis on getting coverage both regionally and nationally. We’ve had some coverage in Cleveland and Columbus in the past, but beyond that...We’ve got to go to other outlets in the region, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago. We’re not really recruiting from Mt. Vernon, because any student interested in Kenyon from Mt. Vernon is probably not getting his or her impression from the Mt. Vernon News anyhow. The parents probably aren’t either. We need to go further afield to the east coast, the west coast, southwest, southeast areas, where there are going to be larger student populations in the coming years. As the pools of students get smaller in the east, they are going to get larger in the west.

He sees his office operating as a public relations agency, listing the clients in order of priority:

1. Admissions;
2. Development;
3. Athletics.

While not ready to call Admissions the major focus, he recognizes that it must be a priority, because a campus can’t run without students. He feels that the effectiveness
of public relations efforts in recruiting has improved dramatically in the past few years, but that it can still be more effective.

And the enrollment figures show obviously we're not making any big mistakes, but we still could do a number of things better than we do. I think the Admissions office does a superb job here, personalizing the admissions process for students. They really develop a close relationship with students applying for admission.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of the public relations effort in the area of fund raising is difficult to assess, according to the Director of Public Affairs.

It's difficult to make an exact correlation. Maybe the better we communicate with alumni, the easier job we're going to have of getting them to contribute to the College. I think that's true with any constituency. The more they know about the College, the easier job we're going to have soliciting funds. I think it has been relatively effective. The Alumni Bulletin is well received...that's a project that is ours. Our office has final responsibility for all the writing that is done, all the production, decisions about stories, the research.

The Director of Public Affairs plans to begin expanding the function of public relations beyond the mainstay news release.

There are a number of things I'd like to see happen. I think...start doing an annual President's report, in which he tackles a real issue, instead of just reporting what has happened at the College during the year. Something I'd like to see him do for his first report, which I hope will be coming out next Spring, is the role of athletics in liberal arts education. It's a hot topic nationally...and the college is entering into the new North Coast Athletic Conference. I'm hoping we'll make it an insert for the Alumni.
Bulletin, so all of the alumni get it, and pitch it to various outlets. I think it is the sort of thing that in a condensed version would be a good back page for The Chronicle of Higher Education. I think we do need to take advantage of the fact we've got such an articulate presentable President.

He said that his job as Director of Public Affairs is to assess needs and apply public relations to solve problems for the College. He saw that information readily available at the fingertips would help the College's representatives answer questions when they are recruiting or fund raising, and developed a pocket-size solution:

I think I need to be looking around at all times to see things that may not have been seen before as potential subjects for stories, and also looking around to see where publications are needed. One example, I've started working on a pocket-size Kenyon vital statistics that will be updated each year and will be used for all the people who travel for the college, will be sent to the alumni who do Admissions work, and those who do annual giving work. It will have information on Admissions for last year, financial aid, endowments, budget, listing all the senior officers and Trustees of the College...all the information that you really need when you are traveling, representing the College anywhere. When someone asks you a question and you don't have the answer, you need to get to the answers quickly. It'll be vest pocket size.

As the new Kenyon Public Affairs Director assessed the public relations function in relation to recruiting, fund raising and conveying the image, he described his impressions of Denison and Ohio Wesleyan.

I'm not sure they try to present this image, but I think Denison has more of a reputation of
kids who are a little less academically oriented, a little less intellectual. A 'Party School' image is definitely there. I'm not sure how true it is, but I know it has a reputation for social life that revolves around fraternities.

Ohio Wesleyan's image has changed dramatically from the time I was in college [Class of '73] to now. When I was in college, it was really thought of as being almost as good as Kenyon, academically, pretty similar in student body, but maybe somewhat more midwestern-oriented than Kenyon is. They've had some admissions problems in the past few years and I get the impression from a variety of sources, including my brother when he was applying to colleges about six years ago, that it had the reputation of being a 'Safety School' for kids from the east coast. It was the school that you'd apply to, knowing that you'd go to it only if you didn't get into the others. I think that probably has a lot to do with the admissions problems over the past few years.

He attributed the problems to reducing admissions standards, and declared that Kenyon would find new markets to keep the applications at a high enough level that it won't be necessary to diminish the quality of the student body.

This campus seems quieter and more scholarly than Denison and Ohio Wesleyan. You're going to be a lot more challenged here than at Denison, but that's good...to grow while you are in college. That's the whole point.

News Director

The News Director sees himself as a journalist, hired by the College and loyal to its institutional goals.

I'm sort of the College writer. Although I do a lot of news writing and writing for the alumni magazine, I also do Admissions, Development and sports writing. In the last couple of years we've taken more and more responsibility in the Admissions area.
It's hard to quantify the effectiveness of public relations in the area of recruitment. Last year we did all the recruitment brochures and search pieces and newsletters. The year before we did some of them and consulted on them, but now we are taking a much more creative role in producing. They tell us what arguments to use—they know the student constituency better than we do. We have a role in recruiting in all the printed materials and slide show. It is critical that we continue to bring in a full freshmen class each year.

His involvement with Development entails preparing case statements and different materials that fund raisers can utilize.

Some will be direct mail, others will be nicer pieces they can leave with people, and I'm sure there will be some video. We have recording facilities and cameras. We could do a lot more with it than we have. With a full staff, three full-time people and part-time help in sports, I'm sure we will.

He believes that the staff of the Public Affairs office is sufficient to handle the PR needs of the College in light of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old population.

From time to time we might like to hire consultants, graphic arts people or specialists, but I think the size of the office now...we obviously are a little bit slower than some colleges in becoming computerized...it's taking place now. I think eventually in this office we would like to have computer terminals. We'd like to have at least one word processor in the office.

The primary communication piece, he said, is the Alumni Bulletin, which goes out to all alumni, parents of students, and news media.

The News Director recalled handling crisis PR, when his role became most awkward.
We did have a very controversial firing of some coaches a couple of years ago, and one of the coaches sued Kenyon successfully. The appeal was upheld. He is very well known, and in fact he's now running for local office in Knox County, and has a lot of media friends, so during the course of the lawsuit, our office got a lot of calls. Both sports reporters and general interest news people wanted to know what was going on, why was he fired, and I was told to direct everything to the President. I wasn't really happy...a lot of people I've worked with for years, and they're friends of mine and I had to tell them I can't help you, had to play the bureaucrat and pass it on. I am employed by Kenyon and I love it here, and feel very strongly about this place, but in situations like that, I simply couldn't convey information to people.

He did advise the President, but knew advice was also forthcoming from legal consultants and others.

I guess my advice is almost always the same, and maybe it's a little naive, but I always think being as open as possible—obviously there are some things that people have a right to privacy—but in general it's always best to let the media know what the facts are, because usually it turns out that if you don't give them much information, a lot of rumors come out that are much worse. That's how I would advise Phil Jordan in most situations.

The Public Affairs staff is involved in image, but he said everyone is involved in one way or another.

Everyone who travels, meets people...they represent Kenyon, and we try, of course, in very direct and explicit ways to convey our image. It's a quality institution, good place to live, good place for students to be, ideas are valued here, the people learn to write and speak well and to argue well. I guess it's in the old tradition of the liberal arts. There is no grad school, no nursing, no vocational, no business school, but the philosophy of the school is that we just teach liberal arts to undergraduates, but we do that
very, very well.

He said that the frequently mentioned "isolation" of Kenyon is one of the biggest strengths.

It's very lovely, and a lot of students really like being apart from the world. It's safe, and pretty, and you can go jogging. But a lot of students from the east coast and major metropolitan areas kind of think of going to an Ohio village as being [isolated]. It's a problem of how students think life is. I think most students who come here stay and don't find there is nothing to do.

He perceives both Denison and Ohio Wesleyan as being very good schools. Although he has heard Ohio Wesleyan University has had some problems with admissions, fund raising and people leaving, he said he believes the University is relatively very healthy.

But I think of them pretty much as peer colleges...I think they have similar philosophies to us. Denison is probably a little bit freer, a little bit livelier. We're probably more conservative in some ways. But I would say that their students are similar, faculty similar, pretty similar institutions to us.

While he has heard repeatedly of Denison's "Party School" image, he said that he thinks that is exaggerated.

Conveying the accurate image to the public is an important function of public relations. The News Director sees the American public as the primary client in general, and then secondarily, potential students and potential donors.

I don't really see us as picking as clients the Admissions office. I see us as somehow trying to work with the image of the College as a whole,
and some other things will kind of...benefit.

Usually the News Director directs his copy to target media, depending on the local, regional or national interest he perceives. However, when Paul Newman came to campus to direct a play, the News Director was faced with another problem.

Paul Newman is a graduate of the College, and of course when he’s here—and he’s back semi-frequently—it’s the other way around. I mean, when he was here to direct the play, he said he would only give two interviews. In that case—I mean, 99% of the time we’re hustling to try to get reporters here—so that was very unusual. I’ve had a very close relationship with Associated Press in Columbus, and they’ve run a lot of my stories straight, or they’ve stylized them a bit. We have a good relationship that way. When they get things from here, they know it’s not just a bunch of smoke. So AP was one. The other one was Newsweek. The AP one came out very well. They sent a woman reporter, and it was a real nice piece. Newman was sort of burned by Time, so we went to Newsweek for the other one, and no one liked the piece she wrote. It was very superficial and show-bizzy. We thought here he was to direct a student play, and it was kind of an exciting theatrical and educational event, and she sort of counted Budweiser cans.

In handling that type of story, he said, his rule is to use one regional and one national contact.

Maybe we’d do something like the Cleveland Plain Dealer and The New York Times. Whenever you have a big hot story like that, you don’t want to—if you are limited to two choices—go to the big New York people exclusively and shut out all these people who cover you year in and year out. You obviously can’t give every paper and every station a crack at some of these people, but I think that it’s important that you do something locally. I wouldn’t want to do it all in Ohio, if you have Newman. I think then you do want one New York Times or 60-Minutes or something—shoot
for the stars! I think that's a working guideline.

He said that the Public Affairs office at Kenyon tries to report what is going on, both in the classroom and outside.

We feel there are a lot of good people and good stories here, and we try to communicate them to the general public, specific audiences, but basically what we're trying to communicate is real news. We are not trying to invent an image, but take what exists here and make sure people know about it.

**Director of Alumni Affairs**

The Alumni office also is in the business of making sure people know about Kenyon. While the *Alumni Bulletin* is Kenyon's direct line to graduates, the Alumni office also stays in touch by visiting each of the 33 associations at least once a year. The Alumni Director said that the President plays an important public relations role with the alumni.

The President's office is always the number one concern of the Alumni office. When we have on-campus activities, built around alumni coming back to the campus, they are generally kicked off by the President, who gives an overview capsule of what is happening on campus, the spirit of the campus, financial picture, future plans. That's how his role is perceived. PR is an important part of his activities. We try to concern ourselves with that aspect on alumni trips. If he is a guest of the College on a trip, he talks to the educational editor of the paper or local TV personality. He never hesitates to do any of it. He is always in the arena.

The Alumni office works closely with Public Affairs in finding the graduates to feature in the magazine, and
utilizes Public Affairs talents in developing slide shows to take on a tour of alumni associations.

As to the Alumni Director's role in the efforts of public relations, he said:

I suppose in the eyes of the public, mine would be to make sure that this institution has the current knowledge of what's going on. That would go for everyone within the Alumni office. We should all be able to give the current status to alumni whenever asked. The best way to do that is through the constant contact with the alumni associations, through personal contact or through telephone or letters. There are only two of us, plus a secretary, so all correspondence is circulated, to keep us up to date.

The Alumni office does not get directly involved in the day-to-day fund raising, he said, recognizing that there is an important role they play in the long-range Development efforts.

Our concern is primarily to encourage the love of the alumni. When it comes time for them to contribute or volunteer, the Development office is the natural office to approach them on that.

The alumni are especially conscious of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old population, and a primary concern of the Alumni council is finding prospective students.

We're all conscious of that. I guess that's one of the reasons that 75% of the students of the freshmen class had been contacted by an alumnus.

He believes that the image that "Kenyon is too tough" is one reason they lose some good students.

That image just doesn't hold up...not that much more difficult than any other good Ohio schools. There is a seriousness about the student here that is in keeping with the kind of education
they end up with after four years.

I guess we have to accept what we hear, that Kenyon is on the threshold of a national reputation, which all of its alumni would be extremely proud of. The college in all its years has gone from a regional Ohio institution to one of national and international recognition. And that seems to be the direction it is following.

As one who has lived in Granville, his image of Denison has some roots. However, he said, the PR aspect doesn't reach his office in printed form, although he does receive the Ohio Wesleyan publication.

I get the feeling that Denison is not doing the kind of PR that we are involved in. My knowledge of what's going on at Denison usually comes from the Columbus newspapers, whereas staying in touch with OWU is a little simpler, because we do receive their quarterlies. We are in closer contact, for some reason.

To compare Denison and Kenyon would be a difference in attitudes, ways of thinking. There is a social activity at Denison which has some emphasis that we don't have here, and I think at that point you may find differences in what kinds of students go to each campus.

I think with the three colleges [in this study], Denison, Ohio Wesleyan and Kenyon—you can't offer a better selection of varying types of institutions for varying types of students in such close proximity. They each have a flavor that is unlike the other two, the style of student, campus life, the programs. They all have a point of balance, so the student has a reasonable choice.

Current students are drawn into Kenyon Alumni activities with summer events such as picnics, beach parties, etc.

At the insistence of the undergrads who want to get to know the alumni, all this summer activity has come about. They are interested in finding out a little more about future careers. That they have an interest in being in contact in certain situations with the alumni is a new trend.
I'd say in the '60s they'd turn their backs on making that kind of request. This has only come about in the last few years, and it's really delightful, because the alumni enjoy associating with the students and this gives them that opportunity. It really has a lot to do with PR, particularly in the eyes of the alumni.

Alumnus

One alumnus, a resident of Columbus who is active on the Alumni Council, said that public relations at Kenyon has improved dramatically in the past six years, particularly in the area of alumni relations through the Alumni Bulletin.

It has generated interest and is commented upon in gatherings of alumni. The quality has improved to that extent. As in most alumni publications, there are a certain amount of what's going on in the class of '65, but also there are the articles and the information as to what is going on on campus, and articles written by scholars, alumni. We recently did a study on what various alumni do. It was fascinating, and a useful recruiting tool. We can show a prospective student, 'Now, here's a woman who majored in English, and is now running a children's home in inner city New York, and there's a fellow who was a psych major who is a test pilot for the air force,'...that kind of thing, in addition to scholarly work.

You can, with hard copy, show a high school senior that a liberal arts education does not necessarily mean you become a lawyer or doctor. 'Here's what else you can do.' From that standpoint, it's been fantastic.

News coverage has also improved dramatically, partially due to the turmoil over the economic status of Kenyon Festival Theater, he said.

Some of that publicity has been unfavorable, but I think the 'theater fall-out' has been good. Last year they kept the theater going when it was in trouble, because of the value that they felt it had from a public relations standpoint on the
general public as far as perception of the College is concerned. People who are drawn to the theater know of my relationship to the College and are constantly stopping in and telling me of the high quality of the plays, beauty of the plays, and that's again a good PR tool.

The alumnus said that the Public Affairs office must be providing sources to local media that have resulted in the favorable articles about research and faculty.

Because it's not a university with a noted research background, I think it is important to realize that there are people there who are doing research, as well as being teachers, which is a primary function at Kenyon and one of its strong suits.

The problems of the predicted decline in the 18-year-old population and resultant demise of 400 colleges by the year 1995, were recognized by the alumnus as of crucial concern to many colleges for a long period of time.

Kenyon recognized it and started doing something about it a number of years ago. It's one of our strong suits, as I see it. There are many things that can be improved at the College, not the least of which is its financial condition, but we have a very strong alumni recruiting network that has been in place...for at least ten years. We had an alumni phonathon in September. Whereas four or five years ago we had six or seven people, this year we had approximately 20 calling prospective students. As a result, when we talk to freshmen at the beginning of the school year, which we do routinely, they tell us that one of the reasons they selected Kenyon over another school was that they had a personal contact with alumni, not a pressure, but 'Can I help you? What can I do to assist you?' and it's followed through by the College and by the alumni.

The Dean of Admissions writes many personal letters to prospective students, and people are amazed by that. And that's a PR tool in another sense. And it's very important in our recruiting.
Another alumnus from Youngstown reinforced the importance of the Dean's personal touch when he told of having visited Kenyon on a Saturday when he was a high school senior. No one was around when he and his parents wandered into the Admissions building. A kind man spent a couple of hours talking to them, and later, when they received a personal note from him, they learned that it had been the Dean of Admissions who had given so freely of his Saturday afternoon.

Alumni do follow up with students once they have begun college at Kenyon, said the Alumni Council member. However, he said it is an individual thing that is not organized in any way.

As to public relations efforts in dollar volume of fund raising, he said that it needs to be more effective.

Our annual fund has increased dramatically over the past six years of giving from alumni. We need to make our name better known among potential friends... contributors, and that effort is being studied right now. The new Public Affairs Director is going to be a big help, because of his sophistication in that area. We need to get the word out that here's a place that's very special, and that your dollar will be well invested here. The word got out to the foundation that donated $5.5 million for the new library. We haven't received those major gifts that a lot of colleges of comparable reputation have.

The Columbus alumnus believes that people outside the so-called Kenyon family have a perception of the school as being extremely well endowed.
It’s extremely under endowed, compared to others of its size. When you take Oberlin, one of our strong competitors...it’s a fantastic college, and has an endowment five times the size. Now, admittedly a lot of that came from one source, Alcoa Aluminum family. So that’s where we really have to get the word out. Everybody recognizes that problem and is working very hard on that.

Facts and figures in a full-page chart in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 17, 1985, p. 12), back this statement. Oberlin shows an endowment market value as of June 30, 1984, of $121,435,000, placing it 49th in the nation (Table includes only institutions participating in the voluntary comparative-performance study by the National Association of College and University Business Offices). Denison is listed as 110th, with the value of the endowment at $33,743,000, and Kenyon in the 155th rank at $17,450,000. (Ohio Wesleyan is not listed).

Surveys show alumni participate in funding because they are convinced of the college’s excellence and feel others ought to have that experience, the alumnus said.

The image of excellence is colored by the pervading perception of isolation.

A lot of students from the east perceive it as being isolated without anything to do. There’s some perception of that even in Columbus. You know, ‘What do you do in Gambier, Ohio?’ It’s a tough question to answer, unless you go there, because there is so much activity on campus. When I talk to a prospective student, I use my own experience, and I say admittedly that was 20 years ago, and it has changed for the better. There are now women there, which was the best thing that ever happened to the College. I was against them
when I was there, but since I've become involved in alumni affairs, it is the best thing that ever happened. From every standpoint...academics, certainly, I think, in the last three or four years, women have been the largest percentage in the top ten of the class.

While minority recruiting is a strong concern for many alumni, efforts to attract blacks have not paid off, he said.

It bothers a lot of us immensely, but that problem has not been resolved, and I don't know if it'll ever be resolved.

The alumnus said he had a favorable image of both Denison and Ohio Wesleyan University.

Of course, I'm prejudiced to a certain extent. I think the academic environment at Kenyon is better than both those places, and that again is from an outsider looking in. I don't have experience living on either other campus.

Denison, I think, is probably the most beautiful setting I've ever seen. But I happen to like Kenyon's better...the buildings and that sort of thing...but that's a personal thing. If you are recruiting an athlete, I think Denison's the most fantastic place in the world. I played lacrosse at Kenyon and Denison's my favorite place to play, outside of a prep school in New Jersey.

He recognized Ohio Wesleyan's problems, and said he had followed the situation there very closely.

I'm glad to see that they are coming back. They fell down academically, obviously from the student body standpoint, and I think this new President, based on what I read, and what I've heard from my closest friend who is very active at OWU, that things are really on the upswing. They had some serious problems, which they tried to downplay, but I just hope they are able to make it, because those three---Kenyon, Denison and Ohio Wesleyan--plus Oberlin and Wooster, are perceived as a five-some. It's very important that OWU thrive.
One problem, he admitted, is that Kenyon is not well known.

Definitely not! I think even the alumni are sometimes apologetic. Somebody will ask...and I was guilty of that myself, early on...we'd say, 'Oh, a college you probably never heard of, a small school in Ohio.' We have been very assertive in our efforts to say that's not good. People in Columbus know it pretty well. I think that's improving as our demographic span is getting people into areas where we did not draw before. The name is getting better. In academic circles, it's very good, because of many things, including The Kenyon Review. Name recognition is not as good as it should be, but I think that's changing. When I was in the Navy, I don't think anyone on the base had heard of it.

The Columbus alumnus said that the present scope of public relations is limited.

I think the attitude of the community—we always refer to it as the community, students, faculty—is we can stand on our own. We don't need anybody tooting our horn. I think that, well, I know that it has to change...must change...and I think it will change and I've seen evidence of it changing. The attitude of professors and the staff...the administration is fully aware of that, and they're very concerned about that.

Sports coverage is sporadic, at best, he said, alluding to the dearth of national recognition of Kenyon athletics.

The only national recognition that sports programs have received is Sports Illustrated did two articles, one on a player who was the leading scorer in the country...and he brought a lot of publicity to the College...and an article on the swim team, which has been national champion, Division III, for five straight years. The swim team is widely known.
Other sports receive less recognition, he said, but he feels that can be improved. The Alumni Athletic Association was recently formed to assist in publicizing all sports.

And I think this will be the first of many alumni interest groups to help publicizing. It may get a little unwieldy for the College, but I think that what we're trying to do is broaden the base of alumni involvement, therefore getting more people involved in spreading the name as well as assisting the College in developing certain areas.

The Alumni Athletic Association grew out of a difficult situation, when the football coach filed suit, said the Columbus alumnus.

All of a sudden people came out of the woodwork, complaining about this. If all these people are interested, let's do something and get them involved. Hopefully, it will be one avenue for publicizing one phase of College life.

But the athletic program does not sport the usual coterie of cheerleaders and marching band.

They just wouldn't stand for that. Students get up in a group and start yelling. One year they had a string quartet at the Homecoming game. They don't have a band, and I think that is a little bit of the 'cool' image or elitist attitude. There's no question about it. Once you're there for a month, you get that feeling. I think a lot of it has had to do with the fact that in the past it was an all men's school, the only one in Ohio, and we played that to the hilt, believe me.

The rarified atmosphere of the College on the hill is compared to a "Camelot" in spirit and appearance. The inward-looking attitude described by the alumnus needs to be
countered, he said, and the function of public relations needs to be broadened beyond the news releases.

Obviously, we’re not going to launch a media blitz, but to some extent we have to.

**Dean of Admissions**

The Dean of Admissions thinks of public relations as a generic term, he said, that applies to any enhancement of the college by anyone connected with it.

Anything that gets the name mentioned, whether it be in a casual conversation an alumnus has with a business associate to the most well-planned attack on a foundation, I think of as being public relations.

In this broad sense, in his opinion, there is not enough done at Kenyon in terms of public relations.

And, of course, I have conceptions of every college and I think of it in terms of Admissions and how well one is known, and how accurately one is perceived by the public. A lot of times there is a big difference between reality and perception.

He is convinced, however, that there are few, if any, colleges in which a public relations campaign designed to market a particular college has a major impact on admissions.

I don’t think one can market a college in the same way one markets ammonia or detergent or everything from a compact to a luxury automobile. I am firmly convinced that college choice is completely an emotional process and no amount of hype, no matter who puts it on a prospect or a prospect’s family, is going to change an initial impression.
The Dean had just returned from a trip through Georgia, North and South Carolina, where he participated in college fairs at Governor’s schools (six-week enrichment programs for the outstanding students in the state). Of the 100 colleges participating, the few out-of-state schools included Mt. Holyoke, Williams, Kenyon, and other east coast colleges with national reputations.

At these schools were the brightest kids from every county in the state. The Georgia kids flocked to Emery, because they knew Emery. They flocked to Duke. They didn’t know Middlebury. This goes back to my original point, that I don’t think a public relations campaign to hype a college can be that effective, because I think that there are colleges regionally in the public awareness all across the country.

Down the east coast you have everything from a Harvard to a Bates, a Bowdoin to a Middlebury to a Connecticut Wesleyan. And kids in New York and New Jersey and a few in Philadelphia and Washington, DC apply to some of those schools. Kids from other parts of the country apply to those schools, too, but not in record numbers. Then you get to Pennsylvania, and you’ve got the Bucknells and that kind of school. They know vaguely about another place, but they’re not interested. They have the attitude, ‘Why not stay at Bucknell? It’s close to home. I’ll get a state scholarship to reduce the cost a bit.’

You get to Ohio and you hear of Oberlin, Kenyon, Denison. You get into Minnesota and you’ve got Carleton, and kids from Illinois apply there. Places have their own reputations regionally from which they draw 75% to 80% of their students, and in some places even higher. This goes all the way across the country. When you get to the west you’ve got Pomona, Whitman and Claremont, and Reed in Portland, and so forth.

I really think that the regional orientation overrides any kind of PR effort, which doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. But when I was in South Carolina I overheard a student who had just opened
a brochure from Amherst and said to two of his friends, 'Wow! Amherst costs $13,000, and heck, I'll just stay here and go to Dickinson for $9,000 and get the same kind of education.' He closed the Amherst brochure.

He said he believes that a lot of that happens with the type of student a selective college is seeking. There is an awareness of a range of schools. A student may know he wants to attend a small liberal arts college in a non-urban setting, with perhaps a strong English program, for example. The student goes to one of the various guides and makes a list of possible schools. There'll be Kenyon, Oberlin, Hamilton, Bowdoin, Middlebury, Colgate, Emerson, Emery, etc. The student may wind up with a list of 30 schools, but will then begin to narrow the list geographically.

I'm not saying that they all want to stay close to home, because if kids didn't migrate, we'd all be in trouble. But I think that in probably 80% of the cases, the decision is to stay close to home or not go more than 500 miles. One day's driving time is far enough in 98% of the cases. Health, Education and Welfare has migration figures on students going to college, and you'll find 4% of students who graduate from high school in Ohio migrate out of state, which might be no more recent than 1980 or 1981, but I don't think it has changed that much. Ohio is blessed with so many educational opportunities, but I still think that at least in 95% of the cases kids don't have a choice. There are always the kids in the affluent suburbs who say, 'I'm going to Harvard' or 'I'm going to Duke' or 'I'm going to jump all the way to Stanford' or what have you. But only the real minority do that. I'm sure that above 95% of the cases, it's close to home. I have very strong feelings about this. And at Kenyon, our PR effort that results through Admissions should concentrate on the 4% because we're dependent on that geographic range. We're not an Ohio college in the sense that that's where
our students come from, so we need out-of-staters, and we do spend a lot of time recruiting California, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana and places like that, as well as Fairfield County, Connecticut, but we're dealing with an extremely small number of students. And those are the ones that the public relations effort, as far as I'm concerned, is geared to. You're using PR effort as effective as it can be, and once again, I have doubts about the efficiency of PR hype campaigns. Anyhow, you deal with Ohio kids and Buffalo kids and Louisville kids and you deal with Pittsburgh and Indianapolis and Detroit kids and try to draw them in. We don't ignore Ohio kids, but we spend more time on that miniscule 80,000 prospects possibly, who are going to be migrators, and unfortunately there are about 700 small liberal arts colleges in the country. We're all spending our time concentrating on those 80,000 kids. That's why kids perhaps are hype-conscious, because they are getting so hyped.

Although not suggesting that public relations efforts should be eliminated, he said he feels it is important to start out with an idea of what PR can do, and be realistic, then, in what is done.

And that's where I think an awful lot of individuality of people, and of places, comes into play in a PR way. I don't think you can go to J. Walter Thompson and say, 'We're Kenyon College in rural Ohio, and not enough people in Cheyenne, Wyoming, know about us and we want you do design a campaign that will make us a household word in Cheyenne.' It's never going to happen, because kids in Cheyenne, Wyoming are going to say, 'Gees, why should I think of Gambier, Ohio, when I can think of Colorado College, just 200 miles down the road, and I know about it, and I can continue to go skiing. That's what I'm used to.'

He said that public relations comes not only from the Public Affairs office, but also through Development, Alumni, and Admissions offices. And although there's no direct relationship on a line chart between Admissions and Public
Affairs, they do work closely.

Sometimes they'll write something for us. They run interference in terms of the mechanics of having something printed. They take care of all that for us, except for the catalog, which we do ourselves. We don't have any people who are specifically writers. When we want some help with photography, when we want some design help, we don't go to them saying 'Give us an idea,' for something; we go to them with ideas and say 'Will you help us implement this?' We haven't, in the past, gone to them to say, 'Hey, what would you do?' We've gone to them with ideas and said 'create something for us that we can use.'

The Dean of Admissions said he does not feel that Admissions has been the priority client of the Public Affairs office, although he hopes it will be under the new Director. A liaison from the Admissions office will be appointed to work with Public Affairs, he said.

He believes the President perceives that the public relations office exists to create a uniform Kenyon that is to be presented to any public, whether it be a prospect pool, a fund raising pool, or an alumni group.

I think he views public relations as the formulator of that Kenyon story, so that it is uniform and consistent and we're all telling the same thing to whatever audience we're addressing. We may tell it in a different way.

He said that he and his staff in Admissions are participants in the public relations.

Absolutely. I don't think of us as being recipients in any way. I think that everything we do is PR. And therefore we're active participants. Of course, if we win a national swimming meet and PR does a story that ends up in a national magazine, we're recipients of that, but we're active participants in creating Kenyon, and
spreading the word about Kenyon.

The Admissions office is in a unique position, he said, because of the opportunity no one else in the College has to reach a certain audience.

I suppose as Dean of Admissions, I am ultimately responsible for a very big segment of the Kenyon public image, and as a result, I have to be aware of everything from geographic public relations—and by that I mean how well and wide-spread we’re telling the Kenyon story to a teenage audience in California, Maine, what have you—to coming up with the ideas that I think are going to appeal to the kind of student we wish to attract to this College. We’re looking for the student who is really in the top 5% to 10% of measured academic ability. Our test scores average 570 verbal, 580 math, and that’s in the high percentile, so it doesn’t mean we don’t get students below that, but it averages out.

The Dean believes he plays a key role in public relations for Kenyon.

My role encompasses everything from targeting markets I think we can be successful in, to figuring out ways of being successful with them, and that goes all the way from publications to direct mail pieces to visiting to entertaining counselors to going out and meeting people myself. There is an advantage to having a kind of continuity represented by my 27 years [in Kenyon Admissions], in that I know a great many people working in the secondary schools. Over the years I have worked with them, and that, too, is PR. I think it is a very key role in public relations, because that is basically what I’m doing.

He said that image, accurate or not, determines success in Admissions and fund raising efforts.

I have strong feelings about what attracts students, and what attracts dollars. And academic reputation and academic snobbery in the private
sector are important. Your public image, accurate or not, determines your success as a fund raiser, determines your success in attracting students. What other people know of you and think of you really becomes vital. Academic reputations are hard to build. A prestige place in some kind of academic pecking order is hard to come by. You can destroy an academic reputation very quickly. It just takes a couple of years. Word gets out quickly. But you spend 50 years building a reputation.

I really think your reputation is built perhaps more by networking than by anything else. I think reputations are often unjustly attributed, and I think some places are not given enough credit for what they do. Here in Ohio, I think of Hiram College, and Hiram is an absolutely marvelous college of 800 students, which probably achieves its missions as a college better than most colleges in the U.S. in what it does for students, and how it takes really untrained and uninspired talent and does a lot with it. And to me that should be cause for a fabulous reputation, but they don't have the reputation, and I think that's really too bad. I think any college that does as good a job as I feel they do, should be lauded for it by having people beating on their doors, and they are not.

Reputation is a result of networking, he said, and therefore a form of PR.

It's what's abroad in the land about you. With five men making a decision about you on their foundation board, with alumni saying, 'Wow! This door has been open to me, because I said I graduated from Kenyon,' to the individual who says 'My kid went to Kenyon and had a fabulous experience, and therefore I'm going to give you $1,000 a year for the next 20 years'...So, I definitely think PR can affect volume of dollars, but perhaps not in a controlled way.

Everything public relations does to create campaign literature, everything they do affects reputation, he said.

And it definitely affects image.
The image we hear most often is of an academically rigorous college that works its students hard, and has a superbly personal kind of environment. This is what kids tell us, when we send our questionnaire, doing our research on why they apply to Kenyon and so forth. And the academic reputation, things like The Kenyon Review, and in central Ohio, Kenyon Festival Theater, all of those things attract people, make them think of quality, and it attracts, therefore, the kind of students we need to perpetuate that idea.

We have a very high degree of alumni loyalty, and I think it's because they got what they expected and then some. And we graduate over 80% of the students who enter, so students do stay. They are able to accomplish their educational goals as an undergraduate here, therefore the loyalty is there.

He said Ohio Wesleyan, on the other hand, is suffering from a decline in reputation.

In the past they had a good following in the east, but they are drawing in their horns and they are now more a local place, because they weren't getting the kind of eastern applicant they wanted. They ran into some very hard times in Admissions in the past five or six years, and I think it's because they tried to be too many things to too many people...splitting themselves too thin. From what I've heard from counselors I've known for a long time who used to send students to Ohio Wesleyan and no longer do, their standards slipped in admissions...they dipped drastically. They dropped almost 1,000 in enrollment, reduced the size of the faculty, and all these things are characteristic of something wrong. I would hope that somebody would study the decline of a once proud small college, and try to find out what has caused this so we can all take lessons.

Kenyon and Denison have many cross applications, he said, and people tend to think of Denison as a very social place.

We go to many of the same schools to recruit students. Counselors have a pecking order, and they put Denison down for the less serious
student, the more social student, and I think probably the wealthier student, although our kids are fairly wealthy. We're more expensive than Denison, but I think that because of our academic requirements, we get a slightly less affluent group, but it's a minor difference. We have 34% or 35% of our students on aid, and many of them are from middle-income families. Also, we get maybe 50 kids in a freshmen class of 425-450 every year who are not from poverty backgrounds, but very low on the economic scale. Kids are tremendously flexible today, and democratic! They haven't any idea that they have a roommate who comes from a family that has two yachts, and they don't have beans. First of all, jeans are the great leveler. Nobody dresses, at least here, and this is the difference between us and Denison. Our students dress in jeans and tattered clothes. At Denison, the women students particularly dress up more. So I think there is that kind of visible difference.

Many decisions are based on the dollar sign, he said.

I wish it wouldn't. I wish we could get across to the public...This is a good PR campaign nation-wide and that's financial aid. We don't do a good job of letting students know that financial aid is available. Not every student who applies is going to get aid. Not every student who needs it is going to get aid, but it's worth trying for at some college, because at some college every student will get aid, as desperate as colleges are for students now. But we've got all sorts of things getting in the way. We've got the ambitious kid who thinks he can only learn in one spot, who refuses to look at places that would aid him, and might be better for him, so you've got the snobbery that works in a lot of ways, and the pecking order, and you've got the parents. We seldom draw from Ohio. Last year we had 45.

Those with family income of $35,000 do not think of themselves as needy, but when they are asked to take $10,000 off the top, they are, he pointed out. He sees the high school counselors as unwilling to learn about financial aid, because it is the most rapidly changing area.
When we have workshops, the questions aren't about aid. They are about 'How can we trick you and slide in the dumb kid who really wants to go here?’ They've got far too many things to do to worry about college constantly, when in a lot of high schools that's only 20% of their students. So they'll say to a student, 'Why do you want to go to a private school and pay all that money, when you can go to Ohio State for $3,800 a year?’

And while there are very few minorities at Kenyon, the Admissions Dean explained this is because the isolated campus does not appeal, and an infinitesimal number of foreign students want a liberal arts education.

When I first came here, there were only 30 faculty and 350 students and you not only knew their families, but you knew their dogs' names. But there are a lot more people now. I go a whole year and don't see some of the people. I imagine it is very tough for single women in this community...you see the same people all the time. Having been here as many years as I have, I have a circle of friends. I’ve selected from among people for friendships as you would in any community.

There are commitments with people who work in this kind of college in this kind of community, he said. Everything is adequately explained before the person is offered a contract, and if they want the anonymity many seem to cherish, he said, then they should go to elsewhere.

I really mean this. I really think there are unspoken commitments in a small college in a small community...commitments to students...you're going to become a faculty adviser and you're going to be harped at til you become good at it. Everybody knows that at the outset. If it's an anathema to them, they don't need to sign the contract. If the fact they need to live within 10 miles is a problem to them, then keep looking for a job. I think one of the
hardest things for a new person coming into this community is that if small college has not been part of that person’s background, if they’re used to size, this is a foreign environment. The expectations that our kids who have had that background place on faculty is harder on the faculty.

It’s not isolated. Any place you’ve got students and Ph.D.s, there’s no isolation, because an awful lot of sparks fly!

He does not think most people perceive Kenyon as isolated, pointing out the accessibility to Columbus, and the inexpensive air fares available from there.

It is simply a fact that the small colleges in this country are primarily in non-urban communities. But we can get to Northland in 50 minutes and be eating at Casa Gallardo. There are people living in Philadelphia and teaching at Swarthmore, who can’t get to Casa Gallardo in Philadelphia as quickly, so that distance from a major metropolitan area doesn’t become a problem. People who say I’d like to go to the Metropolitan Museum...they could go to the museum in Columbus in 50 minutes, and they can get to the Metropolitan Museum in 1 hour and 50 minutes. Again, if they lived in Greenwich, Connecticut, or Scarsdale and wanted to go to the Metropolitan, it becomes almost the same expense to drive in, pay the tolls, garage their car, and have a meal. It becomes almost as expensive as to fly in on People’s Express from Columbus, Ohio. I don’t buy that. I’m sorry. I don’t think in the minds of most people it is isolated.

Although they haven’t felt “the crunch” yet, the Dean of Admissions said they have been aware that the demographic dip was coming, and planned accordingly.

We knew it was coming 15 years ago, and going coed was the smartest move we could have made. That opened up a lot of new places we could recruit, and made us attractive to a lot who wouldn’t consider us if we were single sex...Most
of our students had been from Ohio and east of Ohio. We had maybe 20% of our students from west of Ohio. Now we've started very intensive recruiting in Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, California, Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri...Before that about ten states provided all our students. It was very hard to go into California, where we were unknown, and we had zero students from California. Now we have about 15 students every year from there, but we've had California counselors here as our guests, and on tour we've entertained counselors at luncheons and so forth.

And we've used our alumni. We have a very active alumni recruiting program that is organized through the committee of the Alumni Council. We have all the help we want from them for anything...We used alumni, we used parents, we used any source we could, to reinforce the idea that Kenyon College existed. Now we send a staff member out there for three weeks every year to recruit. All of this slowly is building up some kind of an awareness...And this is filling a void that is left by the decline [in 18-year-old population].

And all of this adds up to a full-blown public relations program of publications, news dissemination, direct mail, correspondence, personal contacts and special events.

Assistant Director of Admissions

Working with publications and special events for Admissions is the Assistant Director, a graduate of Kenyon. He said that public relations is especially important to the College in recruiting and fund raising.

The Public Relations department has far-reaching importance in a school like this. If it's making people aware, more students will apply and more will enroll. If it's keeping alumni informed so that they give money, our capital fund comes off well.
It is his perception that the job of public relations is to publicize through news releases and to produce necessary publications for the College. But he concedes that there is much that needs to be done in enhancing Kenyon's name recognition.

I can go to a lot of places and tell people I work for Kenyon and draw a blank. It was a shock to be up at Marion for a college fair last year and a repeat performance at Mansfield this year and have people walk up and say, 'Where is Kenyon?' They could get there in an hour.

The College's isolation is seen by the Assistant Director as a fact of life for Kenyon, but not necessarily a detriment.

If anything, we want to play it down, but we have to admit it readily. And I can make a strong case for it. We're not going to go out and say, 'Hey, we're isolated. Don't you want to come here?' So, in that sense we're playing it down, but it's obviously something you can't hide, so it's one of the focal points of my oral presentation about the school.

The isolation creates a kind of "Camelot" existence at Kenyon, with its stone buildings and cloistered atmosphere.

To some extent it really is the 'magic mountain' and idyllic place. It is a place where you can immerse yourself in whatever you fancy and you don't have to concern yourself with a lot of very practical things while you are here. Every student eats on the meal plan and lives in a College-owned dorm or apartment. Students don't have to worry about paying rent to the landlord, buying and preparing food, violent crime and things like that, which make it a little idyllic. And I don't think that's too bad, because for the rest of your life you're going to be out there paying the landlord, cooking your meals and worrying about your own safety. And for four years, if you can get away from those kinds of
things, you can really get the education. To my knowledge there has never been a violent crime, a rape, a shooting, a robbery.

He acknowledged that living in Gambier is like living in a fishbowl.

But, I think it contributes to that education that we’re promising where you really interact with your professors. They really do say, 'Call me at home...Stop by my house...Hold class in my home this week.' It's nice to get to know the professor and the spouse and children. For a staff member, it's easy to take your work home with you because essentially you work in your backyard.

He sees the images of Denison and Ohio Wesleyan as similar. His impression is that Ohio Wesleyan has tried to be more things than just a liberal arts college in recent years, and that it gets a little confused about what it is, and how to present itself. And he sees Denison and Ohio Wesleyan as "Preppy" compared to Kenyon.

There is a country club atmosphere...a 'Party School,' and Greek life is more important than it is here.

An Oberlin student is more concerned politically or socially than a Denison student. Denison students are more concerned about social life than social issues. I like to think we’re a middle ground between Oberlin and Denison. We have our share of preppies, and we have our share of rugged individualists interested in saving the world.

Prospect and Parent

But Kenyon is not for everyone, as the Admissions staff is quick to point out. One prospective student, a senior at a private school in Pennsylvania, interviewed as she toured Kenyon, said she would not choose that College because she
felt very uncomfortable during her interview. Her mother said they were most impressed by the Denison viewbook:

Denison’s big book [viewbook] was more impressive. It showed education can be fun, as well as educational. I liked the quotes from professors and students in the Denison book.

Assistant Director of Admissions, continued:

The Assistant Director of Admissions said:

I see students come through here...and I can look at them, or if I talk to them, and from their interest and their seriousness as a student, I can tell if they are going up to Oberlin or down to Denison.

The Assistant Director said it has been a good year for Kenyon, because of Lisa Birnbach’s College Book. Her appraisal of Kenyon was very favorable, he said.

She did something for Rolling Stone, and she mentions us in People magazine as having one of the most beautiful campuses. She mentions Kenyon specifically, so the PR job was done by someone. She spoke with the Dean of Admissions on campus when she was here, and obviously had a good experience on campus. I think it’s just she liked what she saw.

The image that needs to be preserved and proliferated, he said, is featured in copy written by the News Director for the catalog.

The approach he took to it was to portray what Kenyon is so intent on preserving, tradition, traditional liberal arts, traditional ceremonies. In that respect, PR certainly has been attentive to the image of the college, and they keep it consistent.
He said many people see public relations as one of the President's primary roles.

As one example, he had a choice on a Saturday afternoon, of going to the inauguration of the new President at Ohio Wesleyan University, or greeting parents of 100 prospective students and the students themselves here, and he chose the reception here. They obviously were two PR functions, and I guess he thought he could send a representative to Ohio Wesleyan and the college would be represented, and nobody carries the weight in speaking with parents...Very few are as powerful a speaker as he.

The President also holds open office hours, during which time students are free to talk with him about their concerns.

I can never really recall him just wandering in and shooting the breeze with people in the waiting room. But he does hold open office hours once a week, and I think that's appealing. Some students take advantage of that...the bolder ones. It's a PR move and it's announced in Newscoee.

Newscoee, a bulletin sponsored by the College, is edited by the wife of a librarian. It is available at lunch Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

It's a vital thing. If she ever went on strike, if there were ever a case when Newscoee were not put out, the community would come to a standstill. It's like a community bulletin board, and you always know what is going on. It's probably more well read than a lot of what PR would put out.

Faculty Member

The faculty views the role of public relations at Kenyon as having a long-term effect, according to a
professor who has taught at the college for many years.

I would imagine it would be something like a 60:40 business, in which hearsay and reputation make almost more difference than what they do. I've been wondering about this problem, because the English department of Kenyon College is oversized. We have too many people who major in English. I'm not sure that anybody any more is recruiting, especially for the English department.

If you were to take a list of the ten things that are interesting about the College, and then tell somebody to cut out eight of them, they'd throw away eight and say, 'A strong English Department and Kenyon Review.'

I was once talking to a man at the University of Toronto, and I said that I teach at Kenyon College, and he said, 'Oh, yes...wonderful place, strong liberal arts college, publishes the Kenyon Review. I never miss an issue!' [At that time] it had been suspended for two years. The Kenyon Review is a mighty powerful thing. It was dead as a doornail, yet he still read it every time it came out! Those kinds of things have a long residual effect, and it's hard even to change them. Of course, the College has to enhance that every bit it can, and it is self-sustaining, self-fulfilling and self-promoting and that makes it easier for the PR department to do that.

He concluded that gossip, hearsay and word-of-mouth may be 40% of keeping Kenyon before the public, while 60% is the important role public relations can play in publicizing events and issuing Alumni Bulletins and brochures. He said that the President perceives it quite differently, however.

I think he places a value upon extravagant public effects. He likes splashy effects. When the Kenyon Review was started up again, he was very quickly sold the idea that with the right investment of money, a national PR blitz would transform the whole thing. So there was a large sum of money spent over a couple of years, hoping for a really big time thing. At one time, the Kenyon Review had a circulation of over 20,000, all created out of a $175,000 PR budget, massive mailings. The thing is, those are completely...
artificial subscriptions. Most people bought the magazine for some reason...they had no idea why. They just had sales techniques for selling soap and everything else, so they bought. I think he has a tendency to think that kind of thing is terrifically important.

The faculty representative said that special events originate outside the Public Affairs office, and then they are asked to publicize them. The focus, he said, is on publicity or generating news releases, with recruiting and fund raising the aim.

I don't think that there is much that the Public Relations department can do about enhancing the intellectual reputation of the College. It has to be there. Most of the things that make the difference in that area aren't the kind of things that make much news. People in the English department write reviews for newspapers around the state, and also on the east coast a little bit, and sometimes those places will pick up notices of books that people are writing or something like that but there are only 15 of us. You have to do something splashy.

He said the public relations efforts were very important to the Admissions office in the competitive marketplace of the '80s.

If you let your name fade away a little bit, you could become dimmer. That's the reason I would put it at 60:40. I think friends and family and all that make a lot of difference in recruiting, but if there weren't good things that appear in the paper about Kenyon College occasionally, I think people would forget. I think we're now over the hump. We've maintained our selectivity.

The Development office also depends on Public Affairs to keep the name of the College in the news, he said.
My impression would be that the work of Public Relations—news releases, publications, the Alumni Bulletin—is keeping something like an attractive story about Kenyon available to a good many people...And I think they are most effective in their Alumni Bulletin...without that it would be very difficult for the Development office to do their work. It provides a kind of basis of authenticity for all their claims.

Kenyon has a tradition of having some intellectual snobbery connected to it, he said.

I know it has nothing to do with faculty. The faculty is a perfectly fine faculty, but the Kenyon English department is really quite flamboyant, with half a dozen publishing novelists. There is a difference in the classroom in the way students expect them to stick their necks out. People want to get a certain professor's classes and get his view of the world. That tradition goes back a long way, and it still survives, I think, in altered circumstance.

I think that the really outstanding and brilliant and very ambitious, creative or intellectual student tends to go somewhere else now than to Kenyon. I'm talking about a small number, the three or four people who really had some seeds of genius in them...are hard to find. I think it is because we're a less extravagant, eccentric place than we used to be. Less extravagant and ambitious, too...More sensible.

Denison, on the other hand, comes across as much more socially oriented, he said.

They are not as serious. I think 'Party School' may be true. I think whenever Kenyon has anything to do with Denison, Kenyon turns into a silly fraternity kind of 'Party School.' It's contagious...actually they act worse than Denison students. At homecoming we do our little cutesy-pie routines...some kids from cross country will do something like lead cheers. They'll all run up and lay down in a 'K' with purple pants on. It's all very low key. The tradition is pretty strong. There were some girls a couple of years
ago who said we'll lead cheers. They went out and people just looked over them. They were girls in those cute little outfits. It's all right if somebody comes out in a jump suit with Budweiser stamped on it and acts like a clown. People go along with that, but there's not even much support for that. But anything more serious than that...No, sir!

The main difference for students is in its isolation and the size, he said. It is hard to be anonymous. However, as a faculty member, he does not feel trapped in Gambier.

I'm happy here. I love it. You can't live outside ten miles away. My wife and I spend two months away in the summer, and that makes a nice balance. Gambier has always been the elite place to live [in this area]. It's fun. It's a nice life. I've never locked my car in 17 years. I even leave my keys in my car. My insurance company wouldn't like that. They might steal another person's gold pen, but they won't steal my car! Student

A sophomore student agreed that Gambier is a nice place to live, but that you don't know everybody.

I came when it was raining...it's beautiful in the rain! I thought, 'It must be amazing in the sun!' The curriculum has a great reputation, among people who know colleges, so the beauty is icing on the cake! And people are very friendly. You get to know them, and it's like one big family. The individual has a lot of space...room to grow.

She told of an incident relating to images that took place when she was giving a tour of the Kenyon campus to a prospective student. The young man was accompanied by a friend, a student at Denison.

Everything had been going well, but at the end of the tour he asked what I thought of
Denison. I said, 'Preppy, rich, spoiled snobs!' and he said Denison thinks Kenyon is for 'wierd, studious nerds!'

Newspaper Editor

The editor of the Mt. Vernon News, the newspaper serving the Kenyon community, said the image has changed remarkably over the years.

When I was going to Ashland College, and even when I came here to work some 30 years ago, I always had the impression Kenyon was a school for very wealthy young men. Of course, it was an all male school.

It has always had the image of being a fine academic school. It has a faculty that's unique. They stay around a long while, and are totally committed to the academic facet of education.

I think the image, especially with women on campus, has calmed down, like any other coed institution.

Name recognition is an acknowledged problem, he said.

A lot of people do not really know of Kenyon. We had a reporter several years ago, a graduate of Ohio University, and when I took him around town and drove over to Gambier, he had never heard of Kenyon. And this is not unusual. Every now and then you mention Kenyon, and someone says, 'Where’s that?' But in the academic world, it's well known, I'm sure.

His assessment is that Denison and Ohio Wesleyan are both thought of as outstanding small colleges. He did not perceive Denison's image as a "Party School," he said.

The isolation of Kenyon, he said, is both advantageous and disadvantageous.

The campus is quite unique. It's a beautiful campus, and I think a lot of students appreciate that. It is sort of isolated from large cities. Students come into Mt. Vernon [about 10 miles away], and before they became coed, they used to
come in and cause problems. It's generally agreed that women have had a fairly sedating effect on them. They were pretty wild. Dr. Jordan has been a stabilizing force over there. I think he's an extremely fine administrator.

The editor said that in a community situation such as theirs, the close relationship the newspaper has with the College Public Affairs office is important. He had met with the new Director to discuss how they could work more closely.

We've had some problems over the years. They bring in quite a large number of outstanding speakers from all over the country, and sometimes they'll let us know or we'll get a news release the morning of the event or the day before. In fact, I have a note from Kenyon wanting to know if we'd cover a certain program when Robert Novak was over there to speak. We didn't even know he was going to be there. How can you cover if you don't know? Naturally, we'd cover it if we'd know.

Kenyon has a really fine, well organized news bureau and they send out a lot of stuff, but the staff apologized, saying that sometimes they don't know about an upcoming event til that day or the day before. So one of the problems is getting news to us. They recognize that and are going to try to get it to us.

Sports news is another matter of concern, he said.

Their emphasis is on intellect, not on athletics, but they have a tremendous athletic program that takes a back seat to academics, but they played out at DePauw at Indiana Saturday, and the news director said he was having trouble getting a story together. We cover their home games, but we don't send someone to cover away games. They have a part-time Sports Information Director at Kenyon. He's up in his 70s, and was with us 40-some years. I'm sure he's not able to make those trips. He will sometimes give us something, but our Sports Editor says he has to rely almost entirely on the coaches to call him. They have his home phone number and sometimes, just like some of the high school coaches, if they
play and they lose, they forget to call. It's a concern and a problem. They depend a great deal on Mt. Vernon and Knox County for their support.

Like Denison, the editor said Kenyon makes every effort to "hush it up" when a student gets into trouble.

If public agencies get involved, they can't, but if they have a problem on campus and they don't call in the sheriff, if somebody fell out a window or something like that, the PR office won't help. We've tried to get things out of them over the years. When we heard about the football coach [being fired], we naturally called the News Bureau first, but they'd just say they can't say anything. We have a reasonably good relationship, except when we get in these situations where they say, 'No comment.' And on the other hand, they want you to publicize their programs and speakers. But it's really not a two-way street.

The Public Affairs office has relied heavily on the news release, he said.

They provide us with news releases, but as far as a news conference, no, they don't have anything like that. There's also a calendar that I assume comes from the News Bureau. It lists all the things the public is invited to. That's something someone could clip out and paste on the refrigerator. I know we're on the mailing list at home, and we get the calendar almost monthly.

Ideally, he said, there needs to be an open line between the newspaper and the College, going both directions.

We can be friends with them, but occasionally we have to dig for stories. I think the PR people understand that, but they have to go by what the private school's administration says, or else they're going to lose their jobs.

I talked to Dr. Jordan about a year ago about using their experts when we need a resource, and he said, 'Oh, that's great. We'd just love that.' So a lot of times we need this information now, for today's paper. There's a problem of time.
Community Resident

A community resident who chose to attend Denison after living in Gambier all her life said the two colleges are really quite different.

Kenyon students are a lot more down to earth. They're on a different air wave. They're preppy, but not as preppy as Denison. My father just said I'd have more fun at Denison and I'd enjoy it more. I was going to consider Kenyon, but I didn't think I'd grow. I live in the town and I know all the professors.

It is tougher at Kenyon than at Denison. I think it goes: Kenyon, Denison, Ohio Wesleyan University. I'd say that Denison is a bit more party-oriented than Ohio Wesleyan and Kenyon.

Shop Owner

A shop owner agreed there are preppy students at Kenyon, but added that they also like the Bohemian kind of peasant look, which wouldn't go at all at Denison.

Commenting on the isolation, she said:

Some of the seniors say, 'This is a fun place for the freshman, sophomore and junior years, but by the time I was a senior, you're so sick of seeing the same people and no town, just nothing...'. Especially coming from inner cities, those who grew up in New York and Connecticut and Boston and they love it for the first year. It's just heaven. We're out in Ohio, green country and fields and corn and farmers, and they love it. They think they are really doing something different and they are. And after two or three years they say, 'What do we do now? We're not used to this. We didn't grow up with not having 35 choices as far as a movie theater,' and when they come back here [after a break], the Mt. Vernon theater is showing things they saw months ago, so it's a different way of life.

As to town and gown relationships, she said that since Kenyon IS the town, the 'powers that be' at the College
"feel really confident."

They don't have to worry too much about public relations. They feel real confident knowing that professors live within ten miles, and they are buying a house from them, and have to sell it to them, if nobody else will buy it. The town's only so big, and there are only so many houses. There is a different level or social status, if you're not administration or professor's kids. If you're maintenance kids, you're a different level.

She acknowledged that it is a beautiful campus, and that prospective students who tour are impressed.

They show them all over campus and many fall in love with the campus that way, especially if they come from inner city. This is gorgeous, and they don't realize there's nothing to do. They're going to have to drive to Columbus or Cleveland to see concerts, so it is different. But again, they have a car, so no problem. The one without a car or here on a scholarship is going to be sitting in the dorm.

She said they attract students who fly in to the Columbus airport and hit five or six colleges in Ohio.

And they attract students through alumni, Daddy or Grandpa! They don't have to worry too much about public relations.
Chapter VI

Ohio Wesleyan University

Since its founding in 1842, Ohio Wesleyan University has maintained its connection with the Methodist Church. Its charter stipulated that "the University is forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all religious denominations, and designed for the benefit of our citizens in general." The University defines itself as an independent, liberal arts college. The University maintains its connection with the United Methodist Church through the election of Trustees from both the East and West Ohio Conferences.

During the last half of the 19th Century, the University sternly prohibited drinking and theatre-going, requiring attendance at worship services, sometimes 13 per week.

The all-male Ohio Wesleyan University was united with the Ohio Wesleyan Female College in 1877, and is credited with coining the word "coed," absorbing courses in Home Economics, Fine Arts and Music, which developed into departments.
Known as a "West Point of Missions," the University sent hundreds of graduates abroad, particularly to Asia.

In the 1960s, protests against the Vietnam conflict were linked with demands for academic "relevance," which resulted in new courses and programs in Black studies, business, women's studies, human services and nursing.

The 200-acre campus in Delaware, a city of 19,000, about 20 miles north of the State capital, Columbus, has an enrollment of approximately 1,500, and a full-time faculty of 123. While 30% of the students are from Ohio, 40 other states and 30 countries are represented. The University confers bachelor of arts degrees, plus three professional degrees: bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of music, and bachelor of science in nursing (Ohio Wesleyan University Catalog, 1984/85, p. 3-9).

Three years ago, Ohio Wesleyan University was teetering on the brink of a long downhill slide. OWU had a proud 140-year history as one of the best small liberal arts colleges in the midwest. But nothing in the archives prepared the little Delaware school for the double whammy of depopulation and hyperinflation. As costs soared, enrollment began to plummet. To many on OWU's pleasantly rustic campus, spending more and more dollars on fewer and fewer students looked like a ticket to disaster (Cook, Columbus Monthly, May, 1984, p. 85).

President

But that's where the "turnaround President" comes in.

From more than 200 applicants, David Warren was chosen to
become Ohio Wesleyan's 13th President.

He was the unanimous choice of the search committee, but as one committee member said, "It really wasn't much of a contest. He [Warren] had brains, he had ideas, he had management experience, and he had charm. We're lucky to have him (Cook in Columbus Monthly, May, 1984).

The problems he faces are well-known, especially in academic circles. Said Christopher Swan of The Christian Science Monitor:

...the enrollment dropped steeply in late 1981, when the Selective Guide to Colleges by Edward B. Fiske, education editor of The New York Times, rated Wesleyan a low academic-achiever with high-octane partying every night. This brought a crackdown on alcohol here, and the drop in enrollment has left a number of classes small and some others empty (The Christian Science Monitor, May 22, 1984, p. 20).

But the new President, who arrived in March, 1984, was welcomed for his "youthful vigor" and creative ideas for the institution, and labelled a "turnaround-specialist" by the media.

Already the former academic dean and provost at Antioch College and former chief administrative officer for the city of New Haven, Conn., has made his presence known. The national news media took notice when Warren spent his first weeks on campus living in dormitories with students. And he has introduced to Ohio Wesleyan the National Colloquium, a year-long, in-depth study of a major social problem, the first of which will be the nuclear age.

...In David L. Warren, Ohio Wesleyan has chosen a Renaissance man to guide the 143-year-old institution through the challenges of a
technological revolution and a changing world
(The Columbus Dispatch, October 5, 1984, p. A-12).

President Warren announced his "live-in Presidency"
when he accepted the appointment.

My PR Director said, 'Why didn't you tell me
you were going to do something like that? Don't
ever do something like that without telling me.'
I said, 'I promise, I won't. The reason I didn't
tell you is my wife and I hadn't concluded it til
about 2 o'clock this morning. But, indeed, the
reason further I needed to say to the chairmen of
the board, outgoing and incoming, who greeted me
when I got off the plane that this is what I
proposed to do, and wanted them to know that I
believed it could have a substantial impact on the
visibility of the place and the internal morale.

And so the new President plunged headlong into his new
position, aware of the challenges, and keenly aware of the
value of public relations. Conversations in the fraternity
houses and dormitories brought the students and new
administrator into close touch with the reality of today,
while piquing their interest in the potential of the future.

It generated just a remarkable flow of
conversation, not only between students and
myself, but also among faculty and staff, whom I
invited to join me on the third or fourth night of
a given time at a residential hall or
fraternity...We all kind of loosened our ties and
sat around with anywhere from a dozen to 100
students, depending upon the setting. And then
we'd commence conversation about how well we're
doing at this institution, who were your mentors,
and tell me about the traditions of the
place...Talk about those things that seem to give
substance and meaning to your life here. And it
has had a profound effect on the way in which I
view the coming years here.
While it is difficult to quantify the effect, it is evident that the retention rate jumped dramatically, almost 10%, from a comparable period the previous spring to September.

Underclassmen have decided to stay. A number of them have said to me, 'I decided to stay, because it looks like something is happening here, and I want to be a part of it.'

And I feel like I have a stake in it...I have a chance to influence it, so as I said very early on in the stream of what turned out to be 21 interviews in about eight days with newspapers, magazines, television...I said, 'I hope you'll see this as more than just a 'man bites dog' story, because I believe that what we're dealing with here is the heart and soul of a liberal arts institution. And this is providing students a chance to tell me what's on their mind, tell faculty and staff, and conversely for us to talk back. And I happen to think students have been lost sight of in liberal arts schools, so if there is a story to tell, it's to tell about one liberal arts school that is trying to get back in touch.'

I think the media was remarkable...generous and insightful...in the way in which they treated it. They did go out as I urged them to, and talked to students and talked to faculty, and talked to alumni and got a sense of the effect this was having, so the more the media came and asked 'What's happening here?'...the more attentive became faculty and students to their own possibilities, and the internal morale, enthusiasm and energy really built very quickly.

This was reinforced by the media attention, which was catalyzed by the Today Show 25 days after his arrival.

About 4.5 to 5 million people saw it and an avalanche of mail came from alumni, and friends...and other college presidents, saying 'Now you've created a problem for me. Now I'm being told I need to do this.' It turned out to kind of break open a whole set of new possibilities and gave us a chance to tell a story about the place and that in its single sole phrase is what I think Public Relations is all about.
And the degree to which you can be unique, fresh, other than, better than, different, those are the qualities that will allow, encourage the press to pick it up. It's an old saw by now, but Public Relations has to do with everything that's going on in the institution. It's clearly not just some series of press releases.

The President planned a "giant tail-gate party" prior to the first home football game. Every student and every employee and their families were invited, along with 1,000 people from the community. The party, in the President's backyard, featured the pep band leading some 3,500 people to the stadium.

For what purpose? Well, to kind of celebrate the opening of the fall season, and it's fun to be together, and they've never done anything like this before. Now, three or four of those things will happen this year, and you can just attach one-word characteristics to them: spirit, community, good time, but the common denominator throughout is the sense that there's vitality, energy, a sense of richness and expectation in the place.

...Somebody needs to be the catalyst. That old phrase, 'The President is the institution's principal PR officer--it's an article of faith to me.

He is conscious of the public relations value of such things as the "Live-in Presidency" and the "giant tail-gate party."

There may or may not be public relations spinoff, and some things you do with a self-conscious thought that it might happen and if it does, that's terrific. But if it doesn't, nonetheless, internally it has the payoff. And when you can get something like the 'Live-in Presidency' and the National Colloquium where you're getting both internal and external effect,
then it really becomes very synergistic and the success of one builds the other, and the other one builds and it in turn spins back on the original idea.

It's nothing more than my own enthusiasm for the place. Enthusiasm is contagious.

The new President acknowledges that the University had gone through troubled times, but that there was a good feeling in the fall, before his arrival.

The place knew it was moving toward transition and was trying to get positioned to take advantage of it, and in some ways it was a more ideal environment in which to enter than coming off a grand success. At Denison, there you go. It would be enormously difficult to follow Bob Good. Tom Wenzlau [his predecessor] did some enormously important things for the place, built the endowment, constructed some very impressive buildings, hired a first class faculty, but he ran aground some PR problems which finally convinced him, I think, that there was no way in which he could pursue the mission that he wanted and still have to deal with these problems, so I think he made a very graceful exit, and created an opportunity for me to come in without the association with those problems and start fresh.

President Warren arrived March 4 and had his first faculty meeting March 12, at which he presented his Six Point Plan:

I. Increase Enrollment

II. Establish National Colloquium

III. Engage Our Students

IV. Improve Public Relations

V. Broaden Participation of Alumni

VI. Expand Development Activities

He told the faculty that each of these has a major public relations, plus major external and internal element to it.
We have to be constantly aware of the linkage between the two, and I said further that if we do well on any one of these, it will assist us on any of the other five, and if we do well on all six, then we're going to have basically a catalytic process underway, and I think when I report to the faculty on Monday I'm in a position to say, 'You did it!' That is to say, 'You had a role—I asked you to do something on each of these.' I laid it out to the faculty and distributed pieces of paper that said, 'Here are ways that you can help us on enrollment. I want you to be part of the steering committee for the National Colloquium and I'm asking you to come up and join me as I move in with the students. And I'm going to be sending the media around to see you, because they're everywhere talking to me, but you're the heart and soul, so get ready! And I ask you to work with the alumni in a new way. Go out in the field, when I go out to visit alumni and when they come on campus. And we're all going to be raising money in different ways. You have a role, faculty, in all of this.' Then I turned to the students and said, 'So do you! Take a look. All of those apply to you. Then I went to Rotary and Kiwanis and each of the alumni groups, with whom I've met, and said, 'In your own way, there's something here that you can do for me.' I pointed out, 'How do you think I got on the Today Show?... because one of the upper echelon executives of the Today Show is a 1954 Ohio Wesleyan graduate. And whom did he assign as head of the film crew to come out? ...Class of '70 Ohio Wesleyan, who wrote the script and knew just which buildings to shoot.

So, the bottom line, he said, is the six point plan simply identified the key variables, all related, and every one of them has a public relations implication.

Every one of them has an internal relation which builds our program, gives us morale, holds us together, defines what our priority areas are.

Dr. Warren said that the first decision he made was to include the Public Relations Director in the Cabinet.
I simply said to the Vice President to whom
he reported that I'd like to have [the PR
Director] be part of the Cabinet, because
everything that the Cabinet talks about is his
turf. He needs to know what we're up to, and we
need to know what he thinks about its implication.
So many times you hand the PR guy the mop and
bucket and say, 'Clean it up for us,' when in
fact, if he's in early on, he can help you wax the
floor. I mean, you can really make a
substantially different story. If it's
problematic, he can help you move through it, and
if it's a great opportunity, he can enhance it,
because that's what presumably his professional
skills are intended for. And our PR Director has
just paid off in spades!

But, he emphasized, PR is not just news releases. He
said that now that there's a vision that has some coherence,
the public relations personnel have a chance to work their
art and get a return on it that OWU has seldom seen or felt.

Of course, you do the nuts and bolts things
all the time, but now you see it as part of a
package.

The President's perception is that public relations is
a broad function, reaching far beyond publicity. Special
events often reap public relations benefits by reaching
constituents important to the University.

Parents of Ohio Wesleyan students have expressed
interest in the National Colloquium, and as a result, a
series of events will be planned to bring the parents back
on campus two or three times during the year, with a common
reading assignment for study. The President said:
What’s the tag line? ‘You, too, can go to college with your son or daughter!’ And they’re going to go back and say to their neighbors and people in their church, ‘Something very exciting is going on!’

And Ohio Wesleyan is reaching the churches through a mailing to every Methodist minister in Ohio, inviting them to join in this discussion:

‘This is a matter of great interest to many of your constituents, and we know for you, and here’s a chance for you to be part of a larger conversation.’ It was in the Sunday program for most Delaware churches, just an insert, and at the end of the program it said, ‘You are invited as a member of this church in Delaware to come join us.’ So that, in just a host of ways, we’re asking who ought to be part of this expanded community of scholars? Whom do we want to invite to join us in consideration of these questions? In its broadest answer, everyone...Advanced Placement teachers, clergy, United Way, Chamber of Commerce people, who clearly on a regular basis come, and who in turn can take this and with their own group create a small study, which is simply enlarging the arena of learning, expanding the community of scholars, and this place has the resources and the opportunity to do so.

Dr. Warren’s doctoral dissertation is on town-gown conflict, he said.

Having been both an elected official and an officer at Yale, I watched the classic confrontation...between a municipality and an institution of higher learning. And I’ve thought long and hard, and done some research about how to overcome that. I just happen to think learning is so much richer, so much more exciting, when you include in it the citizens in the particular town in which you live, because they bring a set of experiences, questions, feelings that are vital to students’ understanding of where we come from. Intergenerational learning I found just very exciting.
The new National Colloquium bridges that gap between town and gown.

I looked out on that crowd, and they filled the auditorium for John Hersey...and I saw Buildings & Grounds people, and local barbers, and people who are members of various churches, members of the Chamber, and a mass of students, and that said to me this is really the way it ought to be happening. Now, I would then also conclude, 'And that is public relations!'

Positive feedback confirms the reality of the upswing in morale, spirit and even town-gown relationships.

The Mayor said to me at a soccer match, 'You know, the feeling in town about what's happening is so positive,' and I said, 'That's because people are simply accepting the invitation to be part of what's going on.' But the invitation has to be there and the invitation has to be on a basis where people feel sufficiently comfortable.

The President's plan calls for a build-up in enrollment to about 1,800, to enlarge the endowment, to maintain the high quality faculty and staff, and to keep the physical plant in top shape.

The question behind it is how are you going to generate resources, bring in the enrollment and get the support? The answer is in the first instance, we have a base line of excellence here, a great faculty, good physical plant, excellent alumni, and secondly, now we need to create a profile of distinction, something that really does separate us from all the other Great Lakes College schools and the other liberal arts colleges throughout the country.

Pointing to the brochure advertising the National Colloquium, with a theme for the year "After Hiroshima: Life and Death in the Nuclear Age," he said:
That, in effect, says this institution has taken more seriously and in a more comprehensive way with a greater commitment of resources the question of how we link liberal arts to civic arts at a time when citizenship is more important in the life of the nation, state and village, than at any other time, and it also seems to be in a state of crisis. And we take seriously the issues of citizenship and that's one of the things that will happen if you come to this institution. You're going to have a chance as a student over four years to look at four tough questions. And you'll do it with faculty, staff, citizens, clergy, and there's no other place that's going to put it together quite like this, because we're committing resources of not only the curriculum, but the cocurriculum. Dramatic presentations, works of art, sculpture...and why not? It's happening in a way that's pretty exciting. It'll be a real test to keep the momentum up, level of interest up, commitment of resources up, but it will be a good deal easier to do to the degree we're able to turn out the number of students, the number of alumni and citizens at large.

I put my eggs in that basket. In effect, I campaigned on that. That is, I said in the interview process that this is what I would do if I were to come here. I waited 20 years, basically, to implement this idea...and for an institution to have the appropriate scale...not more than 2,000 students, an institution that had the teaching resources...sufficient physical plant...and an institution that already has a tradition. This one had a tradition of so-called 'education in a context of values.'

In his inaugural remarks, President Warren referred to Robert Hutchins, former President of the University of Chicago, who asserted that an institution's mission is that which the institution alone does, does better than or does differently than any other institution (Warren, Ohio Wesleyan Magazine, November, 1984, p. 12).

When that mission is known, it gives shape to the institution, orders its priorities, gives
cohesion, morale, and direction to its life. The college has to answer the question that Hutchins asked: 'What do you do differently than, better than or other than any other institution?' If you know the answer to that, you know your mission. If you don't, you're going to be wandering, and once you know the answer to that, it helps you organize your resources, tells you what your internal priorities are, tells you how you want to behave externally.

We're refining... In that respect, mission is kind of an on-going conversation, but at least for the moment, I think our mission is to be the pre-eminent liberal arts college in the country, so that makes the link between the liberal and the civic arts, that we can do it better than any other institution, different than any other institution—in some ways, we may be the only school doing it quite the way we're doing it, and in that sense, we meet Hutchin's task.

And the ultimate task would be, do the students find an educational experience of such depth and breadth and richness that they own it, and in turn become your ultimate public relations.

He said students will tell their friends and parents that "this is an extraordinary place."

If you haven't sold your students when it's all over, then you have fundamentally failed. After all the press releases and public relations maneuvers are over, they will go home at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and summer time, and they're going to sell it, or they are not going to sell it. And the fact that we had to revise our estimates upward for freshmen coming in tells me that some upperclassmen went home and sold it.

The other indices are that those who are there decided to stay, and jumped their freshmen returning percent to 85%.

The new President plans to further enhance the curriculum, in the so-called "Reach for Quality," a campaign launched by former President Wenzlau in 1981.
Dr. Warren credits his National Colloquium, a year-long examination of an issue of central public importance and concern, for generating a large part of the interest and enthusiasm. While anybody is free to hear the speakers, five hundred students signed up for credit. Some signed up for credit for the speakers series, some for the so-called Master’s Seminar, where they shape it to do a film, videotape, essay or sculpture, which underscores the belief that there are a variety of ways in which to learn and express through the liberal arts, and they are all legitimate. As stated in the National Colloquium brochure:

Still another feature of the National Colloquium and an essential element in creating the common dialogue on campus is the identification of courses within the curriculum which relate significantly to the Colloquium. While planning the initial Colloquium year, we earmarked more than a dozen such courses within a variety of disciplines: English, Fine Arts, Philosophy, Political Science, Chemistry, History, Economics, Physics, Religion, Geology/Geography, and Psychology. This kind of integration assures that many students are exposed to the annual topics, even within the traditional curriculum.

When the distinguished novelist and journalist, John Hersey, who wrote Hiroshima, left the Prologue Assembly of the National Colloquium, at which he was featured, he told President Warren:

When I get back, I’m going to talk to some friends at The New York Times, because I think this is absolutely stunning. It’s among the most important educational ventures that I’ve seen in just years.

And that’s what public relations is all about, said Dr. Warren.
That's a side effect, which I guess makes the point, when all is said and done, which is if what you’re doing has integrity and quality and is done in an imaginative way, it will almost naturally create the external message that you want...Almost, that is to say, but not quite. Someone’s got to be paying attention, all the time. Are we helping to have the story told? So Hill & Knowlton’s out trying to line up The New York Times. The impact is that it legitimizes in a way that virtually no other communication media does. I would say the single more important point of legitimization is The New York Times, followed by any one of the networks. If you ‘make them,’ it gives you a level of visibility and credibility, which has a continuing reverberating effect, and this is why the Today Show turned out to be so important.

Such recognition in the media helps build morale, he said. He, therefore, believes in using the clippings and videotapes to the University’s advantage.

It certainly builds morale and interest among alumni, visiting students, parents, and what not, to use that. The clippings, because they’re more manageable and compressed—as in the case of The Christian Science Monitor article, we’ve made 4,000-5,000 copies of those and used them for alumni, and prospective students and parents, and there it is! Here’s a nationally prominent publication, saying positive things about this institution.

Now, The New York Times is especially important to this institution, because it was Ed Fiske’s New York Times review that struck the most damaging blow from the point of view of many. We’re intent on having that institution or one of its subsidiaries render new judgment...Whether it’s Fiske that ends up re-writing his guide, which is very important, because he has enormous impact on the Bos-Wash corridor from which we get about 33% of our students—but a Times article by Heckinger or Fiske is just power. It’s far reaching. It’s the imprimateur of excellence, acceptance, credibility...all of those things.
When Dr. Warren was a nominee for the position, he made long-distance phone calls all over the country, asking colleagues for opinions of Ohio Wesleyan.

The image that came through was inversely proportional to the person's proximity to Delaware. The further they were from Delaware, the more highly they regarded the institution. West coast and east coast, the recurrent phrase was 'spectacular institution, first rate liberal arts college, exceptional school for generating graduates that go on for their Ph.D., a major source of business leadership in the country.' I mean, very high-powered phrases...excellent academic program...that was from professionals, alumni, persons who would be hiring, etc. About 50 of those. The closer I got to Delaware, and once I got to the college, they had a grim and demoralized view of themselves. And I was quite struck on my first visit to campus about how they undervalued, it seemed to me, the resources of the place. How thy underestimated the resillience of the institution, and of its national reputation, and I said so in the interviews. I said, 'I think you've got to stop wringing your hands and start extending them.'

The severe drop in enrollment was evidenced year after year as the freshmen class went from 740 to 630 to 680, and then dropped down to 425, dipping finally to 326.

That was the bottom line, because the conclusion was, with a 36-37% drop in enrollment, the quality of our students is not what it should be, and therefore, we've got a diminishing faculty in terms of numbers, and we're getting beat upon unmercifully by the media.

At that point, Ohio Wesleyan was accepting over 90% of the applicants, and retaining one out of two who were entering as freshmen and graduating as seniors.

Ohio Wesleyan may have had the ironic fate of enduring this problem five years sooner than
other GLCA schools], having had to face up to it, having made some very critical decisions, with respect to the 'Reach for Quality,' and tightened its enrollment when there was still a little slack to do it. As a result the profile of the incoming class just looks very promising. Validictorians are up by 700%, the Board scores are up, and important to an institution like this, the number of legacies are up and the number of students from Ohio are up. That's very important, because they tend to be as a group better students, and they graduate on time.

The President said his image of the University has changed, in that he feels the resources are even greater than he had originally thought.

I think we are certainly viewed as a friendly school, and continue to be seen as a school with a good to very good curriculum, and we want to move it to very good. I think we are viewed as a school that has a tradition of wrestling with matters of values, and we'll reinforce that. I think we're viewed as a school that, because of its size, should create a more mentoring relationship, but in reality hasn't—that's one of my surprises. That there is less link between faculty and students that freshman and sophomore year. The greatest fall-off clearly is the freshman year. That must and will improve. Intrusive counselling is one way; getting them immediately into some major intellectual experience is another way; creating a sense of community in which they can be a part is a third way. And reinforcing their own wisdom in coming here by others saying that it's right. Nobody likes anything more than to read a nice story that says, 'Boy, is this a crackerjack institution!' Success breeds success!

His perceptions of the image of Kenyon and Denison are clear, based on his knowledge of the institutions, viewed from his position at Antioch several years ago:

The first word with Kenyon is intellectual, and highly competitive. With Denison, it's an
all-around institution, with increasing academic quality, strong social life and strong ties to the east coast.

When he arrived at Wesleyan, the first place where he felt it was most important to have a friend was in PR, he said. He had no trepidation using the same staff as had served his predecessor.

...No more so than just picking someone blindly. The initial conversations told me as quickly as anything, that this was a person who was 'street smart' about how you tell the story, and had a good reading internally, and in some ways was slightly detached and apart from it, not tied into a particular department or tied in to particular politic, but was rather really responsible for how do you characterize the whole, and how do you take maximum advantage of the school's resources. He was asking the questions that I was having to answer, so there was instantaneous rapport.

The other person whom he turned to immediately was the Vice President for Business, from whom he could get straight unadorned answers to questions:

'How are we doing financially? Where should I, from your point of view, put my initial attention? Where are the land mines buried?' He's been around since '48 and is a wonderfully wise and thoughtful person...unflappable and with a terrific sense of humor. And then I, as you will, developed other friendships, but those two were vital the first 100 days.

The President has breakfast periodically with some of the senior faculty members to ask, "What do you see? What do you hear? What do you recommend?"--which is public relations in practice in the broad definition. Believing in the importance of his role in public relations, he estimated
his job is "110% PR!"

'Turnaround' is how he phrased it [in Columbus Monthly], but that's what I did at Antioch, that's what I did at the city of New Haven, that's why they hired me, because my experience had been basically in dealing with troubled institutions, which in each instance were institutions I thought had enormous capacity, untapped resources, and great traditions and a desire and a willingness, a waiting to take the next step. Some people can bring it to that point, but because of time, years, whatever else, you can't--there's no way the incumbent can move it beyond where he or she has taken it. That he or she has taken it a great distance is very important, but then there is a certain point past which you can't go, and someone else has to come in. I said I think this place is just about ready to jump.

It is exciting. It's work. It's the hardest work I've ever done, because everything, every day bears on the basic question of the role of public relations. You constantly have to be vigilant about the good news and the bad news. You've got to ever be aware that what from somebody's point of view looks like just a spat may turn into a major confrontation. And there's good news that you've got to root out, you know. People don't realize there's a great tale to tell!

Vice President for University Relations

The Vice President for University Relations, whose responsibilities include Alumni Relations, Development and Public Relations, has been at Ohio Wesleyan for 21 years. Recognizing the difficult times through which OWU passed, he pointed to the 'turnaround' and explained his perceptions:

I think that's turned around now in so many ways. And I don't think that turnaround was just accidental or the rhythm of the seasons or something. I think there were a lot of things that were done. When David Warren came in as President and at the first news conference said, without telling anyone he was going to do it, that he was going to be a live-in President, and
would be seeking invitations, that was central to the whole...that became a 'hook' and he was very well aware of it. The PR Director picked up on it immediately. The next day it was in USA Today. Somebody mentioned in a meeting with parents late in the spring, when we talked about this—the whole live-in Presidency, Good Morning America, Today Show, and cable television, and how quickly this all happened. But a President in Indiana lived-in this year or last, and nothing was said about it. The story wasn't told in the way Warren was able, or we were able to tell it. It was newsworthy and attracted attention.

I think when the articles appeared in newspapers—there was state-wide coverage about our new President, especially that particular aspect of the presidency—immediately we weren't on the defensive any more. People were responding positively. We'd go to alumni meetings and people would come to campus, and you could hardly talk to somebody who hadn't heard about David Warren, and didn't know what he was doing. We were getting broader coverage.

But Public Relations has not always been conceived so broadly. The Vice President observed that public relations has changed sharply in the last 15 to 20 years at Ohio Wesleyan University.

For years and years there was an editor of the magazine and there was a News and Information Director, with some long-term continuity. The person who edited the magazine and also did other publications such as Admissions publications was here for 25 years, and just three years ago was put on half-time status, and left this past June. The News and Information person had been here for 20 years, and left about two or three years ago. During all those years, those people reported to the Vice President and operated pretty much independently...churning out the news releases, doing publications and editing the magazine.

We didn't have much in the way of weekly staff meetings or regular interaction. The view of PR was very narrow.
A major change came around 1970 with the appointment of a Director of Public Relations.

During that time we had much more of a public relations sense. He was supervising those people doing news and information, and the magazine, and I think doing more in terms of trying to develop a broader university view in terms of PR.

In 1974 we had an enrollment drop and several administrative positions were terminated. The President decided that since we hadn't had the Director's position all that long, and that was something the Vice President could do, the position would be cut.

[About five years ago,] there was concern among some faculty about the reputation of the college, and we decided to have CASE [Council for the Advancement and Support of Education] come in and do an evaluation of our public relations. They did a very thorough analysis and among other things recommended that a Director be hired.

As a result of the CASE evaluation, the current Director of Public Relations was hired.

He has spent more time than he probably ever thought he would or wanted to on Admissions publications, and I think that Admissions has been the driving force behind what we've been doing. He saw that as a high priority and did a lot to revamp our publications. We had a real hodgepodge of materials, lots of different Ohio Wesleyan 'looks'—depending upon who was preparing what publication.

We had a [nearby] PR firm come in and do an overall design concept for our publications and stationery.

The Vice President said he has mixed feelings regarding the decision to make the Director of Public Relations a member of the Cabinet.

I'm glad it was done. Some of the mistakes that were made in the last two or three years involving PR, I don't think would have been made
If he had been in the Cabinet, or if the previous Vice President had had a little bit better sense of Public Relations. Some decisions were made where somebody should have said, 'Hey, wait a minute! What about the implications and the press and so forth.'

I'm thinking particularly about...some coverage of Iranian students who were arrested involving an immigration dispute. I think it was the President's attitude to keep a tight lip, and if you respond or talk about it, it will just result in more coverage, so we would end up not really expressing the University viewpoint, and just being at the mercy of what others were generating...a kind of 'no comment' posture, I think.

Where I have some difficulty with the Director being there [in Cabinet], it makes the lines of authority and responsibility fuzzy. When I know he is meeting with the President and discussing whatever they're discussing, I also know I have to take responsibility for what's happening in PR, so if something doesn't get done, or get done well enough, where does the fault lie? So, it's awkward, but there's been so much that's been going on with this President that is of a PR nature, it would not be proper, I think, to have it all file through me. David Warren should not be telling me what he wants done, and then I tell the Director. I think it's much more effective for him to deal directly. I don't have an ego problem with it. Some people might.

The Director meets with us in our other staff meetings that we have weekly, and I think he recognizes my responsibility, and I don't have any feelings of conflict, but it's an awkwardness, maybe potential for problems in the future.

I feel pretty good about my own judgment in PR issues, that I can give the President good advice.

The Vice President said that the perception of Ohio Wesleyan just a year ago was so different from what it is now. The University was on the defensive, having to explain why enrollment was down.

Everything we were doing seemed to be responding to a crisis. There was the negative
publicity.

He credits the President's 20-year dream, the National Colloquium, as important in the turn-around.

Before he was even selected, he talked about National Colloquium and this dream that he had for 20 years. He let everybody know that if he were selected, that's what we were going to do, and he made good on his promise. And that has just been so well received internally and off campus. The first session in Gray Chapel...the chapel was filled. The program is first class!

We've been going out to alumni groups, talking about it, and last week in Cleveland, one of our wealthiest Trustees said, 'I've been saying for years that Ohio Wesleyan has to find something that would distinguish us from Wooster and Denison. We were too much like those others, and we have to have something that's different. We've got it now!' He was just thrilled by the National Colloquium, and the concept of it, the way David Warren has expressed it.

The Vice President said a lot of things that are good public relations are going on now that are beyond their control, just as in previous years they had a lot of problems that were beyond their control.

When we have 60 or 70 at an alumni meeting who get a positive impression when they hear the President speak, they go out and tell their friends. He's got a keen awareness of public relations, particularly where he has made major commitments of his time and the time and resources of the campus...In both the live-in Presidency and the National Colloquium, he really had a good PR sense.

The Vice President said that he had suggested to the President that they ask the Chamber of Commerce and all employees to be their guests for the first football game.

He thought it was a good idea, and the next day, he's having a tail-gate party at his house
and we're inviting 3,500 people and closing the street, and then I did suggest that we just open the gates all together and just invite everybody over to the game. I'm still getting credit, because he's mentioned that three or four times in speeches. So that says he has a good sense of PR.

The Vice President recognizes that the President's sense of PR, and the turn-around at Ohio Wesleyan will contribute to success in fund raising. (He had worked in Development, prior to becoming Vice President of University Relations, and considers fund raising his forte.)

We're introducing him to major donors...I find myself talking about David Warren and all the great things that are happening, but we need to be careful not to build the whole recovery on a personality. The National Colloquium is now much greater than one man]. It's got its own life, faculty are involved, and he could leave today and it would survive.

The public relations impact of the new President is well recognized; however, the Vice President knows he is dependent on fund raising specialists to initiate programs in that area.

I think I have a big responsibility for initiating, particularly on the fund raising side. I don’t sit around waiting. He needs a lot of direction, and he's asked for that. Comparing this whole operation to a bow and arrow, he just wants to get the arrow and point it in the right direction.

In his position as Vice President, he said, about 10% of his actual time is spent on public relations work, in the sense of working with those in the PR office.

There are a lot of events when I'm there as Vice President. I try to go to alumni meetings,
and that's PR, too. I think of it as alumni relations, but it's also PR.

He said that the biggest problem they have now in Public Relations is trying to sort out what the assignments should be.

The people [in PR] are capable. But since [the new Director] has come, we've taken on some major new activities, the marketing study and the marketing emphasis in Admissions. There are more Admissions publications being done, and I think he has taken on more and more. He's taken on the inauguration...because he was so involved in promoting the new President, so this was a natural extension. I think now, how much more can they do in publications? And how much more can the Director of News and Information do in media contacts? We are still on a shake down cruise, and I'm hoping that he can let loose of more of that responsibility and spend his time on more marketing studies and projects of general, broader PR.

Sports coverage takes a back seat at this institution, as they haven't had a full-time Sports Information Director for 15 years.

I would guess that within a year or two we'll have a fourth full-time person. It might be a Sports Information Director, if by having one that would free some others' time. Right now we have an alumnus being paid student rate part-time.

The Vice President of University Relations sees his role at Ohio Wesleyan as administrative.

As far as being the key person that is really at the focal point of shaping the public relations program or policy, that's the Director's job, and he reports to me...but 90% of the time, it really is he who is the focal point of that office.

Although he considers himself a Development person, his title is Vice President of University Relations, which, he
said, dates back 30 years at Ohio Wesleyan. When it was first so named, the Vice President of University Relations was also in charge of Admissions and Placement.

Over the years, those two departments have gone...There have been changes without any change of title. Ten years ago there was no Director of Public Relations. At that point, I think the Vice President had more of the PR responsibility, but I don't think there was any more PR going on. Public Relations was seen as putting out the magazine and sending out the news releases, and doing the other publications for admissions. Now, as it's broadened, rather than have a Vice President who is the specialist in that area, a Director is the specialist, and my role is the administrator...for more of the hands-on fund raising, for the $4.1 million we raised last year.

He pointed out that the way duties are conceived is reflective of the fact that the personnel are located in different buildings. The Vice President of University Relations is in the Development office, with the Alumni office and Public Relations a block and a half away. A donor recently offered the University $1 million to construct an alumni center, which will house the offices of Development, Public Relations, Records and Alumni, with meeting rooms and a lounge. It's a project that has been on the drawing board for a decade, he said.

That physical separation makes it much more difficult to relate day-to-day with those people. When I became Vice President, we started having regular staff meetings. This year we'll go to lunch once a month. That's helped a lot, for us to be able to discuss concerns to all of us, Alumni Weekend and Fall Fest, for example. Fall
Fest is a combined Homecoming and Parents Weekend.

He said that one of the public relations problems that they haven't dealt with is the switchboard. If calls are answered abruptly, that can create a bad impression.

We don't run any training. That's under the Vice President of Business. It's hard sometimes to cross over into others' territory. That's a PR kind of thing, and if you're trying to create a climate at a small liberal arts college, you have to be sure it gets down to the operating level.

The image of Ohio Wesleyan University, he said, is a "mixed perception."

For some people there's just an immense feeling of pride. They see the college as outstanding and strong, as it was when they were students. For others, a significant minority of alumni, there are thousands who see it being less of a school than when they were here. They're upset to see changes. Standards are less, and they are somewhat upset by academic standards. Things they see of OWU they're unhappy about are things happening nationwide.

He said he agrees with the alumnus who thought Ohio Wesleyan did not have an image that was distinctive enough. While they talk of OWU as being the best of many worlds--in fact, that's what they said in their Admissions publication--in some ways he thinks that is pretty accurate. The image is of a good liberal arts education, and a school students would choose for professional school preparation.

One of the statistics David Warren has been quoting is that Ohio Wesleyan is in the top 20 among the 800+ liberal arts colleges in regard to the number of graduates who go on for Ph.D.s, and the top 20 in the number of chief executive officers of Standard & Poor's companies, and there
are only five colleges that are in the top 20 in those two categories. We have had this long history of producing outstanding scholars who go on for Ph.D.s and outstanding business people who become presidents of companies, as well as people who enter the clergy and become bishops in the Methodist church. It really surprised people when this analysis came out and showed how we really were. We were quite unique in having two different outstanding groups— the scholars and the business people.

The Vice President said he has a very positive image of both Denison and Kenyon. He sees Kenyon as more academic, and that Denison has good students, but is more social.

**Director of Public Relations**

According to the Director of Public Relations, there had been widespread concern on campus that Ohio Wesleyan had neither the image nor the visibility that was justified. As most things do there, he said, it came to a head through the faculty. Once the faculty was concerned, it was tended to.

I'd say a great deal of my first three years were devoted to image enhancement. One of our very first [projects] was a major market study. The good news was we weren't widely perceived as a broken down 'Party School.' The bad news was we didn't have any image at all. In a sense that was good news, too. It wasn't so much we had to tear down an existing wide-spread strongly held image. We had a relative tabula rasa and could create one.

When he became Director of Public Relations in 1981, he said, the name of the institution was three times a misnomer.

We really had done our best to sacrifice the equity encapsulated in all three parts of our name. Ohio? We were attracting a good deal fewer than a third of our students from Ohio. What Ohio
meant to two-thirds of our students from the northeast, nobody had really wondered about. It was an issue that was not being addressed. What is Ohio? To many students it's corn fields, isolation...people perceived this part of Ohio no differently than Kenyon's part of Ohio, Denison's part of Ohio, or even Oxford's part of Ohio.

Wesleyan? We've virtually severed our ties to the Methodist church.

University? We're clearly operating politically, academically as a university, with a department orientation, with a university government structure, but we were marketing ourselves like a liberal arts college. We might as well have called ourselves University of Delaware or College of Delaware or Joe Schmoe University or College. So we've addressed all of those questions.

I could substantiate it with the results of the Ingersoll Group, Inc. research...we were viewed as middle-of-the-road in just about everything, but by the same token, students' ideal college was middle-of-the-road.

Prior to the Ingersoll Group's research, however, the University requested an assistance from CASE in assessing the role of public relations, and its functioning within OWU.

The initial step was to bring in an evaluating team from CASE. I wasn't here at the time. But it was a top notch team, and they did a marvelous job of putting their fingers on problems large and small that were being encountered...They recommended a series of measures that could, in their view, improve how PR was done at OWU. This report was shared with me before I took the job, and it was most helpful.

One of the major recommendations was reorganization of staff, redistribution of responsibilities. They found that while there was a person entitled Director of PR, there was in fact no Director of Public Relations. It was largely public information and publications, with all three people, including the Director, reporting to the Vice President. The News and Information Director and the Publications Director did not report in fact to the PR Director. The
Director was doing Admissions publications, and was responsible for students doing sports information. The Publications Director was doing essentially the alumni magazine and the catalog, and such mundane things as sending out baby bibs for the alumni office—spending I would guess 60% of his time on class notes for the magazine. There was very little else in it.

The reorganization is more on traditional lines, he said, in that the Director is responsible for the other people.

It wasn't terribly expanded, but really I agreed with the concept that what we had traditionally been charged with doing had to be done better before we even thought about any broader scale of public relations. So, one of the team members [from CASE] recommended me as a possibility for this new in fact Director of Public Relations position.

The Director of Public Relations agrees that the new President is "PR minded," adding that it has been quite a change in the past year.

I think although his predecessor was wholly sympathetic, public relations did not occupy him on a day-to-day basis—as either a concept or something he was involved in—the way it does David Warren. I don't blame Tom for that, I blame myself for not hounding him more. It is so much easier to hound David if I have to, knowing that he is so concerned with public relations. And really, it rarely takes any kind of hounding. I think [personality] is part of it...certainly his experience in the political sphere would contribute to his recognition of the value of the image and position. And it just has changed the whole face of this job...in how it's regarded in the highest levels of administration, and there's less clash on a day-to-day basis.

The scope changed from specific—news releases and publications—to general public relations when the new
President arrived, he said.

The position of Director of Public Relations has evolved in the last few years, the Director said, to include the broader spectrum of PR.

For my position, the major change was to become more managerial, to get involved in more research, planning for image projection, much greater liaison with Admissions staff, getting more into marketing concepts rather than strictly PR. It’s been an ongoing, evolutionary process to this day, and with the arrival of David Warren, it has really broadened to include what purists would consider marketing rather than Public Relations...as an office on campus or in the broadest sense.

I’ve always interpreted PR as being three-pronged: expansion of visibility, enhancement of image and enhancement of position. That’s what we’re out to do. This office is not the only one that does that. This office does things that don’t fall into those categories, because they always have...but those [categories] are increasingly becoming a foci of everything we do.

In the area of image projection, he said, marketing in the broadest sense is part of the plan.

Now we are really coming up with themes that don’t say Ohio Wesleyan is like everybody else, but how it is different. Of course, we try to create that base-line of excellence that positions us with other prestigious colleges and universities, but on the other hand identifies the four or five threads in the fabric of this institution that make it quite different from any of those others. That’s where my job gets into much more than PR. It’s pretty much fallen to the new President and me to make sure these threads are not simply promotional themes, but to continue the realities within our curriculum and extra-curriculum. We are almost a distinctive institutional type.
He considers Admissions the primary client of the Public Relations office, with the Development staff and office another consideration. Much less direct client work is done with Development, but in the broader sense, everything they do in PR helps to "till the soil," for direct work with donors, he said.

In an indirect way, I think again the overwhelming evidence is that the fields have been plowed, and it's becoming increasingly easier for the planters to go out and sow.

People are coming back into the fold who have been disaffected, now primarily identifying with David Warren.

The Columbus Dispatch verified this with an article stating:

David Warren, Ohio Wesleyan University's new President, won a supporter recently—U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey of Washington, D.C., who was in Delaware to speak on the campus. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan in 1945, Richey contributed money and recruited students until a few years ago. Richey explained that he became disillusioned when the university relaxed its rules on student behavior...He said he not only quit contributing and recruiting, but he withdrew his son from the school. But after hearing Warren speak, Richey departed from his prepared address and announced he once again will contribute and recruit (The Columbus Dispatch, July 4, 1984).

The Director of Public Relations acknowledged that one of the most effective ways to position an institution is through the chief executive officer.

And we certainly have that opportunity. David Warren is receptive...he has a sixth sense for how an institution needs to be represented. It helps that his personal philosophies are consonant with the mission of the institution, but he knows the nuances, too, and if he doesn't know he asks.
If he knows he's going to have the most important four minutes OWU ever had on the Today Show, and he's not sure how that time can best be spent, we go over it. In that case we brought in the media trainer types from Hill & Knowlton. We didn't go for their two-hour seminar on how to be on TV, but we went over some of the issues we could raise if we had the opportunity. That happened to be a case more of 'stay away from this or that,' and David and I really determined how we'd try to steer the conversation.

Things seemed more optimistic on campus at Ohio Wesleyan during the fall, before the new President was hired, even though they had the smallest freshman class since World War II. It was a time for the issue of greater selectivity, and the new commitment to quality to be communicated, the Director pointed out. That increased morale, as people recognized things were getting better.

There was no John the Baptist, but the way had been prepared—I hate to put this in messianic terms—but already there was talk of a new era last fall.

That resulted from a combination of things, including the cultivation of the media, the hammering home, as Ellen Goodman pointed out in her column a year ago last May that there were only a handful of colleges—in this time of demographic challenge, particularly for private colleges, that were actually becoming more selective. She only mentioned Smith and Ohio Wesleyan by name, so that gave us great credibility to what we had been saying all along.

The Director is seen by some to be "at the elbow of the President," an accurate perception, he said, which reflects Dr. Warren's respect for the importance of public relations and what the Director can contribute. Elevating the Director to Cabinet status was an important move, the
Director believes.

I don't really want to be a part of the decision making process other than being able to contribute my two cents' worth when a sensitive issue is being considered. That's certainly now the case. We have avoided taking it on the chin in a number of sensitive matters that two years ago we would have got hit on the chin! Obviously, to be able to participate in that kind of proactive PR is not only easier on the heart, but much more cost-effective in terms of how one spends one's time. It takes a lot more energy to put out brush fires than to have averted them. That's not to say you can avoid all controversy. We've had some sensitive issues lingering in the press, but they haven't erupted in the public forum the way others did before.

We made some very bad marketing decisions, primarily relative to the merits of maintaining a certain size freshmen class, as opposed to maintaining selectivity, but that has been corrected. That is the principal contributor toward a smaller freshmen class. The greatest challenge there has been interpreting the smaller enrollment to our various publics. There are at least two ways people can perceive that. There is something fundamentally wrong with that institution that has caused prospective students to lose interest, or the correct perception, which more importantly get all the contributing factors out on the table. There's a smaller pool out there in the first place—it's important for alumni to know—and in the peak of all of this, when the urge of many institutions is to become less selective, we're becoming incredibly more selective. I mean, in the last three years, we've gone from a 93% acceptance rate to 68%, which puts us second in the GLCA to Oberlin in acceptance rate. That was just this year.

Ohio Wesleyan had been perceived as a "safety school,"--which according to Lisa Birnbach "is a 20th century phenomenon, a way to hedge one's bets now that college admissions are so competitive." Denison carries that same image in some circles (Birnbach, 1984, p. 475),
and the Director of Public Relations added, not only was Ohio Wesleyan perceived as a "Safety School,"--it was one.

We have no problem with inquiries, and no problem with number of applications. But when you get to yield on accepted applications, it became obvious we were a third or fourth choice institution. Any school that has only a 27% yield on accepted applications is clearly a third and fourth choice, but what do you do? Do you do more with the student once they've applied? You've got to do more once they've inquired or even before that so that their initial interest is at a first or second choice level, rather than third or fourth choice. And we clearly think we have--we had a 35% yield this year, and that's a radical climb from 27% to 35% and that has to do with image and position.

The Director of Public Relations said that Ohio Wesleyan is seen as a prestigious, selective, yet friendly institution. That friendliness was confirmed during the research, when faculty members, staff, buildings and grounds personnel, foreign and local students extended warm greetings to the researcher, a stranger to them.

It's part of the institutional ethos. It's always been there. We're most successful in communicating that without really making a conscious effort. The marketing committee of the Board, which is now a permanent committee, was asked to respond to my initial marketing plan...and almost to a person responded, 'Where is the 'friendly and caring'? That's not in the plan. We don't even have to work at that. It's out there.

In the most recent marketing research we did, part of it was designed to get the students' image of eight Ohio institutions with which we compete--or don't compete. There were 24 adjectives from which to choose, and they were allowed to pick six from those widely divergent types of institutions. And we haven't worked at either of the two things that came out for us. The first, a landslide, was 'Friendliness,' and
the second was 'Religious.'

Students divulged the same perceptions most people share, he said, of Denison being high quality and "Preppy," while Kenyon was seen as high quality and somewhat isolated.

Of course there were some great ironies, like Miami University being perceived to offer private school quality with public school price. How much less isolated is Oxford, Ohio, than Granville or Delaware? But because it is a public university, it was not identified as being isolated, whereas Kenyon, Denison and all the private universities were perceived as being isolated.

Faculty and student morale is on the upswing at Ohio Wesleyan, in a change that began the Fall before Dr. Warren arrived.

Morale is up, not because of any great program we've undertaken, but simply because when you are getting results from your external efforts, that has immediate effect on internal morale. It's often said that the greatest value to a story in The New York Times or appearance on the Today Show is not in generating applications or raising funds, but on internal morale.

The Director of Public Relations sees himself as virtually the marketing director on campus, while many still think of PR in the narrow sense.

The trustees...when it was clear enrollment was a major concern affecting their fiduciary responsibility--put together an ad hoc marketing committee, which ironically spent its first year looking at our sales operation, i.e. the Admissions office. Then almost as an after thought, they started thinking about marketing. Certainly there's a great deal of overlap between marketing and sales, but they are not the same.
According to Dr. H. Lee Mathews, professor of Marketing at The Ohio State University, "Selling is getting rid of what you've got; marketing is having what you can get rid of!" The concern of the Director of Public Relations at Ohio Wesleyan is that the University concentrate on the quality of the institution, so that it will meet the needs of those consumers, not in simply pushing the product.

Eventually, the trustees took his suggestion that they hire outside counsel, charging the Admissions Director to get someone who could study the marketplace and say who the winners and losers in the marketing game would be in the 1990s, and why, and then asked the Director of Public Relations to get some outside help with visibility and image.

As it turned out, we went ahead with the Admissions Marketing Group to do some additional research and thinking about our position and how we can do all three things: enhance image, visibility and position. Then David Warren came along. I said, 'We don't have THE story to tell, because we're not done with the preliminary work on positioning and so forth, but we do have A story to tell.'

Hill & Knowlton was his choice, hired to handle the national media, while the PR office would continue to deal with the regional outlets.

They've been helpful. It's a third hand. They've done what we've asked them to do...to pitch certain stories to certain areas, and they've helped achieve some success.
Public Relations has contributed effectively to efforts in student recruitment, the Director said, adding that they have been "eminently successful" in the last year or two, with the expanded role of PR.

It is an exciting time to be at Ohio Wesleyan. I could see that when I decided to come here. I knew we were at the edge of a precipice. The slide started sooner than anybody anticipated, but that's OK. I'd rather get it over with. It was almost inevitable.

There's that lag time between on campus reality and public perceptions, and the ripples were just going out. I saw no way that we could create a big enough splash so that the waves would get to the shore before the ripples did. We have recently—with David Warren...so that the outermost constituencies, some of the splash is getting there before the ripples, but we're definitely on the upswing.

Director of News and Information

The Director of News and Information, who joined the PR team in the fall prior to the arrival of the new President, said that Dr. Warren has a natural feel for public relations. In her perception, within this particular institution there probably has not been any other time when PR has been more important.

I came at a wonderful time. There's nothing better than to join a university where they are saying PR is very important and we're putting our money and our time into it. It's easy for me to look good!

Since David Warren does realize the importance of marketing, public relations and promotion, he immediately established a relationship with all individuals in this office. He agreed right away to have a news conference as we brought him in to announce his
appointment. And--the PR dream--he stated, without anyone knowing he was going to do this, he planned to live with the students. I ran out the door at that point and called the wire services.

Recognizing the recruitment problems universities are facing, she said, it is important that her office disseminate the University's message beyond Ohio's borders to students in the east, where most prospects reside.

One night CBS news mentioned Ohio Wesleyan for alcohol policy changes. There's a case where a year ago a release went out about some of the changes made in the University, a 'Reach for Quality'--a kind of motto put in place a few years ago. To strengthen the 'Reach for Quality,' a release was sent out, and CBS obviously had it in their files and pulled it out when we were mentioned. They mentioned Cornell and Ohio Wesleyan University had made stricter rules this year on alcohol in public areas. There's dry rush. One of the things we do is discourage alcohol. It's a statement to the students that there is more here at Ohio Wesleyan than good parties. So, that was real pleasant to hear about on TV. The parents had just dropped the freshmen students off on campus, and got home to see it on TV. 'Thank goodness,' they'd say.

The Director of News and Information considers her function both initiator and cooperator in PR.

It takes both...I'm always readily accepting of ideas, and some of our faculty members have good ideas on how to get media attention. We're a small operation and we often cross over into someone's operation. It's really difficult to be Director of News and Information without thinking of the broader areas of public relations.

The media have paid attention to Ohio Wesleyan since the arrival of the new President; however, she realizes that the media are not the answer to everything.
What we do can only strengthen what everyone else does. When they receive something in the mail, they say, 'Oh, that's nice!' and then they pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV and see Ohio Wesleyan has done some terrific research or something...I don't think a university can just live on its media attention alone.

The Director of News and Information said that Hill & Knowlton has been helpful in media relations.

I work with the individual who coordinates our efforts for contacts with national media. I'll write a release and they'll send it out. Today I got a call from the American Medical Association about our National Colloquium. Every year the AMA devotes one of its issues to a Hiroshima topic, and I'm going to be working with them to develop something for their August issue. Those are the types of contacts I would not have access to, being in Delaware, Ohio. I look at Ohio primarily when I send out a release. The same release goes to Hill & Knowlton, and they distribute it nationally. On the national level, I deal with their questions after they've been approached [by Hill & Knowlton]. If they're interested, my name is given as the contact person for it.

It is her perception that Dr. Warren feels the media attention is very important, because of its effect on people he is approaching for monies for Ohio Wesleyan.

He's approaching people from New York and Chicago, and if they haven't heard of the University, we are very likely to be passed over.

Her image of Ohio Wesleyan goes beyond the traditional liberal arts concept. She sees the University as a feeder school for those who want to go on to Harvard for graduate school.

There's a bit of the university here involved, as well as the liberal arts college. Our faculty here are much different than those at other liberal arts colleges in which I've worked.
They are much more research oriented. They publish a lot more than others I’ve been involved with. One of the strong parts of a liberal arts college is the teaching aspect, and rarely do they go beyond that to publish, and I think we have both here.

Her perception of Kenyon’s image is that it has the highest acclaim academically, and that they are perceived by others as an intellectual college. Denison, on the other hand, has a strong reputation, but she sees it as probably more well-rounded, as far as academics and social life are concerned.

I think their perception is for a freshman who is interested in going away to school who doesn’t want to sit in the library all the time. I think Ohio Wesleyan is trying to define where exactly we fit in the picture. We are concerned about how others perceive us, instead of just accepting our usual pool of students and watching it decline. There’s been a real effort for some marketing...Admissions efforts have been stepped up. Alumni have been involved, because it is very important how they perceive the University, whether they will recommend it. They can be the best recruiters...or the worst, if they are unhappy. Who would you really listen to, someone who had been there and says, ‘Don’t go there?’ That would be an awful thing.

The Director of News and Information concluded that Admissions is the primary client of the PR operation.

Our declining enrollment makes that important. I guess our existing students are another aspect, below the prospective students, because if the existing students aren’t happy, we’re not going to get the prospective students here either. And Alumni are important...it’s so interwoven.

Director of Alumni Relations

The Director of Alumni Relations agrees that the role public relations plays is important at Ohio Wesleyan
University.

I think it plays a part in everything we do, of course, and the perceptions of what we're doing are very important in every aspect of our endeavors of recruiting students and fund raising, which are the two things we need to do well for our survival. It's important.

She defines public relations in a broad sense, knowing that it has not always been so perceived at Ohio Wesleyan.

...not just packaging or image, but all our contacts with the public, all our personal contacts, all our writing...PR is very important in everything we do. And I think it's just implicit in everything we do. I hope that the 1980s definition of PR is the one we're using, although I don't think it should be just the way we look or the way we seem, but what we are. Not just a television commercial, but the real product! I think PR should be a reflection of what we really are.

The Alumni office is in the same building with the Director of Public Relations and Director of News and Information, and is part of the same department of University Relations, all reporting to the same Vice President.

The current fact means we work very closely together with PR. We consult daily, informally, just in coming and going.

She has a consulting relation with the Director of Publications regarding editing of the magazine, which contains alumni information.

I feed her information I get, and with the Director of News and Information, I also give her releases about volunteers to feed the public. I'm working very closely with the Director of Public
Relations on the inauguration. We consult on things normally, and we are peers. I also work very closely with the other two.

The Alumni Director recognizes that the Admissions office has priority in public relations. The researcher observed the President as he walked into the Admissions office one day, spotted a mother and daughter sitting on the couch, and introduced himself as, "I'm David Warren. I work here." He then spent five minutes chatting with the visitors very casually. The Alumni Director responded:

He's done a lot of that, and I think it has been very effective. One day I was walking into his office—we had an appointment—and he was walking out. I said, 'You're going the wrong direction,' and he said, 'I'm on my way to Admissions. They just called me, and that is the RIGHT direction!' So he gave that his top priority. They do call him, and that's very good PR in the best sense. It fits what I think a school this size should be about...certainly with access to the President, shows he is accessible, and makes a terrific point.

Emphasizing that Ohio Wesleyan's concept of public relations is not the narrow focus on publicity, she pointed to the close working relationship that has been established between the Director of Public Relations and the President.

I see him very much at David Warren's elbow, working very closely with him. With the previous President, it wasn't...and it should be. By the time the University had reached the stage when they realized PR was an important activity, the previous President had been here a number of years, and I think his mind was set in a certain way, and also he grew up in an era when we didn't think of PR as a separate segment. It was always there in everything we did, of course.

I'm not on Cabinet, but I attend the Board of Trustees [meetings]. The other President
consulted heavily with the President's Cabinet...it was almost like going to church. It was from 1:15 to past the close of work, and it was four or five people to whom he listened very closely. One was not the PR Director. I think David Warren does not have the same perception of the role of the Cabinet. They might meet Friday morning, then Tuesday afternoon. That's my perception...shorter meetings. I think he meets alone with the individuals a lot more.

With the previous President, it was very much a unit, The Cabinet. Regularly activities or decisions or matters that were peculiar to one department were discussed by the whole...sometimes to my distress, where some who didn’t know about my area were privileged to discuss it. I think this is healthier. I think it will give more of us a chance...I think, at least I hope so.

She said the whole perception of public relations at Ohio Wesleyan changed with the hiring of the current Director, with additional staff and expanded budget.

That was the turning point. The Alumni Board—my group of volunteers—had been plugging for greater attention to PR, including publications and other aspects for a long time. We had as one of my volunteers, President of the Alumni, a man who has his own PR firm, and he was just cross-eyed because we didn’t pay the attention to it we should.

The Alumni Board, which consists of 15 elected, five appointed and some ex officio members, totalling around 25 or 30, has a communications committee that meets with the PR staff.

I think the fact that this standing committee was established is an indication that this Board sees that segment as very important to University operation. They view everything we’re doing as communications...all our correspondence, publications, Admissions statistics, media attention we get.
The Director of Alumni Relations sees her role as public relations.

Alumni Relations is just another word for PR. It’s an aspect of PR, and one of our major constituents is the Ohio Wesleyan Alumni body. It’s one of the most loyal, largest, most interested...I suppose it’s one of the largest constituencies, unless you consider the whole world as a constituency. But we have 28,000 to 30,000 alumni who are interested and supportive, and the trick we have is to keep them supportive. A lot of them have questions and a lot of criticisms. They pick up on things you wouldn’t believe.

I think not only in working with alumni, but as a casual passer-by, I see myself serving as PR in the community. In our church, with local merchants, in our friendships, we just live and breathe public relations.

Confirming her broad perception of the role of public relations at Ohio Wesleyan University, she said that PR extends to everyone involved in the institution.

I think the way my secretary answers the phone, the way the switchboard answers the phone—that’s been a big concern—the people in charge of hiring switchboard operators haven’t had the perception that that can form the first impressions. If a person’s voice is gruff, or they don’t do the courteous thing, such as saying ‘Just a moment, please’ or ‘I have to put you on hold,’ or if they make no response when you say, ‘May I speak to so-and-so?’—if there’s dead air, this can be very bad. I just think everything, the way we look, is PR. When our windows are dirty, when our grass isn’t cut...I think part of my job is to be alert to things like that, insisting that those things get done. We had to work hard to get this building painted, but we finally did.

Her perceptions of the role of PR in town-gown relationships are affected by the size of the town.

In a town this size, I think [PR] is total. There is a woman’s club in town that invited me to join and I had had my fill of women’s clubs, so
when we came, I said, 'I'm not going to join a women's club,' but my husband said, 'I think you have to. It's the town's vote, and you have to represent the University.' So I joined, and I'm glad I did. We are perceived as 'University.' It was interesting his immediate reaction was 'that's part of your job.'

I think we are representing the University 100% of the time, even in the town. In the summer, when I'm on vacation, I like to go shopping looking pretty casual, but I don't wear shorts, because people might say, 'Look at that old lady in shorts! She works for the University.' I think everything we do is 100%—I can't think of anything we do that isn't PR.

The Director of Alumni Relations said that Ohio Wesleyan is a totally different school than it was in the '40s, when she was a student.

I think it is a school with strong tradition, strong regard for history. I think one of our strengths is our friendliness. I think that's a major asset. I think we have some very strong departments, and a very strong faculty...a very critical faculty, and I think that's one of our problems. Some of my best friends are faculty, to coin a phrase! But it's a very political faculty with a lot of power.

The OWU campus is split into two areas, "where they live," and "where they study," she said, and the library is right in the middle of the corridor that separates the two. Efforts have been made to unite the campus, which the Alumni Relations Director said is a real problem.

The new librarian is just terrific. She has been there for less than a year, and she is just doing wonders for the perception of the library. She has a terrific PR sense. She has had social events in the library, and the internal PR is very important to her. She's working on it. She, if she's successful, that can serve as an important link between the two campuses.
The Director of Alumni Relations abhors the fact that offices are closed from 12 to 1 p.m. on campus, recognizing the effect that has on visitors.

Normally, University offices close from noon til 1 p.m., and I think that’s bad PR. I think somebody should be on duty. That’s something I’ve been working on for 15 years. A straight-A student or a major donor might walk in, and we’re out to lunch! Sometimes I’ve been here and people have just wandered in off the street. One of those actually turned out to be a woman who wound up leaving us quite a bit of money in her will. She came through with a new husband...she had just recently remarried and wanted to show off her school, and no one was any place, and I just happened to be here. So I ended up giving them a tour of the campus. I wasn’t solely responsible for her money—everybody paid a lot of attention to her then—but just that one moment could have turned her off completely.

She sees the lessening of emphasis on the Greek system as a healthy turn of events for Ohio Wesleyan that has definite impact on its image.

When I was here [as a student], you almost had to be Greek, unless you had a very strong character or no money. The campus really centered around Greeks. A lot of alumni remember the Greek organization above everything else. That’s the kernel of their college experience. So I think that’s good.

I also see our student body has been in recent years less interested in academic life. We’re working on this. I know when I was here in the ‘40s—to the late ‘60s or even into the ‘70s, it had a very strong academic reputation, very scholarship oriented, and also it was a place where faculty came and stayed. They gave their lives to it. Some were real legends. During the Depression they went without salary, because the school couldn’t pay them, or they took a big cut. The current faculty is much more apt to see it as a stepping stone to something else, so we see them
coming in and going back out. Not all, but some.

Through the recent troubled times at Ohio Wesleyan, she
said, morale was very low, but is better now, partly because
of the upward movement of Admissions statistics, as well as
the impact of the new President.

Everybody's all excited. A lot is hanging on
those young shoulders. I think he turned the
corner. It's fun to go out with him and show
alumni that.

The Director of Alumni Relations said that public
relations plays an essential role in recruitment, in light
of the demographic dip.

I think it's necessary. We used to just sit
here and students would just fall in the door. It
was a big family school. We had people in the 5th
generation, but I think with the decline in the
number of available bodies, PR became
essential...putting your story before the world,
explaining yourself, became essential. Admissions
directors up to the current one were very
suspicious about using alumni. I know from other
schools, that's not unique. A lot of them felt
suspicious of interfering alumni. That's all
changed.

One of the things that disturbs me is we may
get so intense about what we're saying about
ourselves that we don't pay attention to being as
good as we should be. It's happened here, but I'm
not a great believer in advertising. I turn off
 commercials. I don't think the medium is the
message. I'm not a true believer in packaging. I
want us to have a really good product and present
that story. I want us to tell the truth about the
wonderful things we had, and not pay more
attention to logos and fancy colors. I want there
to be something really good behind it. Well,
there is.

The Alumni Director said that she has at least three
perspectives on Ohio Wesleyan, that of an alumna, an
administrator and a parent, and has seen the positive and negatives from all three points of view. (She joined the staff in 1969).

Her perception of the images of Kenyon and Denison are also colored by her daughter's experience.

My daughter liked the English look of Kenyon, but she ended up coming here for a number of reasons. One was here was totally tuition free...now we have an exchange, but we didn't then. Their studio art wasn't strong at all.

Denison she wanted no part of. She said, 'It looks like a movie set.' Kenyon is eastern oriented...and we are pretty much, too...we draw heavily from the east, but they are self-consciously patterning themselves after eastern schools and the fact they only recently went coed...

I think Denison is very 'Preppy'...very 'pretty-pretty,' although I think they've become very scholarly in recent years. They haven't had some of the problems we've had. They must have a real strong faculty. I guess I look at Denison as being kind of boring. I don't think it has the common touch that I think we do.

Alumna

An alumna, who serves on the Alumni Board, sees the new President as more than an administrator.

He's more of a charismatic leader. Because of a varied background and really varied talents, I think he brings a lot to the University that we really haven't had. It's pretty hard to ask for all we got in one person!

She is encouraged by the turnaround that is taking place under President Warren's direction.

People my age are sending their children to college, and they would call me and ask if it was really as bad as they'd heard it was, saying, 'I won't even bring my child for a visit,' because they had heard so much about it becoming a 'Party
School' and the write-up in Ted Fiske's book that there was no emphasis on grades at all. The only positive note I could tell them was the level of faculty still...they were extremely loyal and there are very good profs still there.

The alumna said that she recognized the importance of recruitment in this era of the 18-year-old population decline.

Colleges generally have to do something now to recruit students. They don't have the numbers. [OWU] just slipped a little each year...and found themselves really in the basement. We're used to taking kids from the east. They were using it as a 'Safety School' more and more. That was happening, because as they realized they were in the depths, they also realized they had fewer Ohio students than they wanted. There is greater emphasis on recruiting Ohio students now. They also were not being especially kind to legacies. They very often were overlooked in mailings, etc., and that made parents unhappy, and it had a snowball effect in a lot of very subtle ways.

The Public Relations office has been effective in recruitment efforts, she said, noting the quality of publications directed to prospective students.

They send Admissions bulletins during certain times, starting in the sophomore or junior year, and a special letter from the President to legacies, and I think in a very organized fashion they try to recruit students. It is very carefully planned, although it has not always been well-organized.

The alumni morale is on the upswing, she said, with contents of the magazine playing an important role in this positive trend.

They are trying to make it more interesting for alumni, telling what faculty are doing...faculty they used to know...The Alumni Board always says to be sure to put in print the
awards the students are winning, too.

Alumni want to meet the new President, and the Director of Alumni Relations has taken him to a dozen places for meetings, she said, noting that subtle changes have enhanced the feelings on campus, by bringing people together and building pride. A video tape of recent TV coverage, the Today Show, etc., is available for viewing at the campus center, Memorial Union Building. Student mailboxes, which were located in individual residence halls, are now located there, so that every student enters that building at least once a day. And campus events are posted there, to add to campus communication.

All the students are supposed to go to National Colloquium, Wednesday noon. Over and over you hear alumni say, 'What we don’t understand is the campus not gathering as a whole.' Most all of us went to chapel three times a week, and it was not always a religious service. There had to be a body in your seat, as attendance was taken. So, this was an effort, another sideline that brought the campus together.

While morale is up, she cautioned that faculty wishes still need to be heard at Ohio Wesleyan.

They are the people who have suffered. The two faculty reps on the Alumni Board have had to speak up and say, 'Listen, everything is upbeat, but still the faculty...really we want to tell you some of us have hung on through all this, but some have been forced to move out, into business, too,' to send their kids to college or whatever they needed to do financially.

She sees Ohio Wesleyan as competing with Denison, and said that her impression has been that in the last ten
years, the University in Granville has taken the better students.

In my day [class of '61], Denison was more of an elitist school. I think it appealed to kids who could pay their own way more than Wesleyan.

Kenyon, she felt, always took the superior students. But the image of Ohio Wesleyan, she said, is changing. Two years ago she thought of it as a "Party School," she said, pointing out that unless alumni have been reading about the changes, they probably still think of it in that way.

Alumni felt that way from what they read about the Betas, for example. It's hard to correct, especially when Fiske [The New York Times Guide To Selective Colleges] was confirming it. When people comment on that, I say, 'I hope you do get the new edition of this book.' That's one thing Admissions and PR did do. For every high school counselor, Admissions people made sure they carried the new edition in [to the high schools] and took the old edition out.

Ohio Wesleyan has restored recognition to the local chapter of Beta Theta Pi, pending the receipt of signed agreements from national fraternity headquarters. The local unit will be allowed to rush again in Fall, 1985, ending a two-and-a-half year suspension imposed in 1983. As a result of "strong commitments from chapter alumni and from national headquarters," according to the Dean of Student Services, the chapter will be allowed to reoccupy its fraternity house in 1986, but will remain on probation through Spring semester, 1987 (Ohio Wesleyan Magazine, February, 1985, p. 4).
Dean of Admissions

The Dean of Admissions attributes many of the problems Ohio Wesleyan experienced to a much too liberal Admissions policy:

The University had gone too long with a much too liberal Admissions policy, and had reaped all the side effects: high failure rate and social problems.

This year, he said, Ohio Wesleyan only accepted about 67% of the applicants, which was one of the lowest acceptance rates in the GLCA. Recruitment is a coordinated effort, involving about 300 alumni, and the Wesleyan Student Foundation, a group of carefully selected students who apply, take tests, and are trained to give tours, visit their home high schools, write letters and make phone calls to prospective students.

We're working with them. This is the second year of their existence. We used to pay tour guides, but this is all volunteer. It's an internal PR effort, with three tours a day.

He said that overall the public relations efforts in recruiting have been quite effective. The public relations role he sees for the Admissions office is a fairly unified approach, to represent the University to best advantage.

In our case, to be very honest about the institution [is essential]. You don't want to mislead people. I see that true of Development and the PR office, and the President, as well. Our new President is very PR minded, almost to a fault....David Warren is good at it, and seems to enjoy national TV and such. He gets a big kick out of it.
The Dean sees the national exposure as helping with name recognition, and boosting morale.

People did get a boost after the national television exposure, and made a special effort to watch. But few, if any, [applicants] came from the national exposure.

The Dean, who now reports directly to the President, said that the impact of the "Live-in Presidency" was very positive on campus.

He didn't do all exactly the same way, and some were slighted, because of the amount of time he gave one living unit. For one reason or another he wasn't able to come to dinner...that happens, because of the demand of the job, but certainly for our students it was the first time they had a President eager to sit down and talk to them and be a part of their lives. Overall morale was going up all year. We were at a point that we couldn't get any lower, and something had to happen. But the year just kicked off well, and people sensed that morale was high, and for us, that is a big part of it. People came to visit, and if things are going well, that's 70-80% of it. Our students are our best sales force. They are really our best—or can be our worst--PR. We depend very heavily on the campus situation.

Admissions looks to the University Relations personnel for publications and posters. The Dean sees his role in public relations as a participant in presenting the University, and as a recipient in respect to brochures that are created for him.

But as far as a total PR effort, we're very much a part of that. Anyone who deals with the outside world, so to speak, is.

From an administrative point of view, I'm more of an initiator [of PR]. This office controls the Admissions part of PR. Certainly the Director of University Relations is well aware and contributes to what goes into that process so
we're not moving in one direction, and he in another. We consult with him on how we deal with certain issues...are we accurate?...and all say the same thing. Also, how we present the University, what we should emphasize, is coordinated with the PR office, and the Director is part of that process, which is reflected in our literature, so we're presenting a unified approach.

The Dean of Admissions believes in the importance of clear communication within the University, as well as to the external constituents, and pointed out that miscommunication can be detrimental.

I sat and listened to a faculty member the other day at a Sunday brunch for new students. He talked about some things on this campus that really haven't been here for several years.

An effort is made to keep people informed through a campus newsletter that comes out every two weeks for faculty and staff. It is coordinated through the Provost's office. And there is a daily bulletin, essentially listing the day's activities.

Basically, this is a strong and an academic institution with strong faculty. It's an institution that suffered set-backs in the last few years, but is coming out of it, and has regained some of the perceived strength it had before.

Current students, from the Admissions point of view, are pleased that we're more selective. It their eyes, it's better. For alumni, even though they might have not gotten in, most of them are glad to see it more selective. Students feel very positive. Basically, they feel good about Ohio Wesleyan both as an academic institution and as a place to be for a period of time. And that's a change. And this has a lot to do with the campus as it was last year, and as it has been this year.
But he is convinced that people's perceptions lag behind by about five or six years.

So there are those out there who see Ohio Wesleyan now probably as it was at its worst, and I think for the reality of this year, the perception may be three or four years down the road.

There are counselors who will still see us as an easy place to get into. In part because of what they see in guides and such, [they perceive] a 'Party School,' but we can do some things from a PR point of view, but in my view from what I've seen at half a dozen other institutions, you simply have to live through that, and allow the perception of the institution to eventually catch up. The perception of Ohio Wesleyan was a much stronger one or better one than reality at one time.

I think we'd gone through that [the 'Party School' image] before I came, and to a certain extent the first year I was here. Certainly students coming here have a good time, but they come now with appreciation for academics. A lot of it had to do with Admissions. We accepted students who had gone through high school with that attitude and they continued it in college. Often they didn't last that long. There are students who are seniors who will tell you it was well known it was easy to get into Ohio Wesleyan, but hard to stay. It was easy to get caught up in the 'Party School.'

The Dean perceives the image of Kenyon to be a very traditional, liberal arts, high quality institution that has maintained a level of quality over the years, and maintained admissions standards.

I have a high regard for it. Students can get an excellent education there, if willing to live in a somewhat isolated atmosphere. There certainly isn't much to do in that community.

He agreed with others that the pecking order puts Oberlin on top, followed by Kenyon, adding that he sees
Wooster, Denison and Ohio Wesleyan falling into a third plateau.

Denison is a quality academic institution with a good faculty. Often students are looking at us, Denison and Wooster. If you decide to go to one for whatever reason, you’re probably not going to make a mistake on quality of education. Denison in some respects has a more informal campus appearance, like some of the eastern schools. There are people who visit both, and often describe Denison as being more ‘Preppy.’ We often are told Ohio Wesleyan is friendlier, much more laid back, than Denison. I’m not sure Denison is any less friendly, but Denison does not project that image. But what I’m hearing from counselors and such...they tell me that Denison has more of a ‘Party School’ image than Ohio Wesleyan. I’m not sure they’ve reached the point that we did.

But in the Dean’s opinion, the bad publicity was not all bad, as it certainly increased name recognition.

I’m not sure it relates directly to PR, but the most important thing that can happen to us is retention...a greater percentage of returning students. We’re going to see it this year. That’s the key to our success. Maybe some of that has to do with general public relations and how students perceive themselves and the institution...their happiness with the institution. They really hadn’t paid much attention to retention before I came, since the numbers were always there.

Prospect and Parent

A prospective student and her mother, visiting the Ohio Wesleyan campus from the Chicago area, said they had already visited Denison, but discounted it because it did not have an Accounting program, as OWU does. The high school senior had received information from Ohio Wesleyan through her participation in ACT and SAT testing.
They were interested in finding a small private school within a day's drive of Chicago, where Accounting would be available as an area of study. The mother added that reputation was a prime consideration, too. The prospective student, adding that sororities were a factor, assessed her impressions of Denison and Ohio Wesleyan:

Compared to Denison, Ohio Wesleyan is a lot more comfortable. Denison seemed kind of snobby. The atmosphere—it's quieter—the way people dress—they didn't have any variety [at Denison]. It's very 'Preppy.' The Admissions there was kind of cold, but here even the receptionist was a lot friendlier. The one at Denison was just kind of cold.

We could have gone on a student tour at 11:30 at Denison, but that was too late for us. They told us where the material was, and we got it. They didn't ask if we had any questions or anything like that. It was like we were just intruding on something.

How a prospective student is treated during a campus visit is important, because that initial contact can influence the decision.

The mother said:

That's right. I absolutely think that's true. It wouldn't influence me that much, but for a young person— they don't have quite the experience to overlook some things—I think it is very important to feel comfortable when you walk into a place, and to have people greet you. And here, the President greeted us! That floored me! I didn't know who he was [until told later]. He's very young!

The mother said course of study, the size of town, and the location were important to her as a parent, when she looked at the viewbooks.
Looking through the brochures, I looked to see the Professors’ level of education. I looked in one of the college handbooks. There is one that gives placements, percentages of students going on to graduate school, placements in industry for graduates, how they rank in the country—as far as their standings go, in say Accounting. That’s another thing I go by. I think a lot of times mothers and fathers have to do a lot of the legwork, because kids really don’t know some of the ramifications of what to look for in a college or university. They know they can feel comfortable. I want them to feel comfortable, but also I may say, ‘Listen, if you’re going to a school, you want one with a fairly decent reputation in industry—if you’re going into that area—the hire-ability.’

I want them to have fun, too, so I want a good social life, something that’s available. That’s my philosophy. I think you need a good balance. Atmosphere—I think when you walk into a campus—that’s why I like to visit them. I wouldn’t ever want somebody to go to a school without being able to see it first. And you have to know what kind of student your child is. You want them to feel comfortable, not too far above their heads, nor too far below...challenged, but not to the point they’re going to get frustrated.

"Or flunk out!" added the daughter, who said Ohio Wesleyan was the campus she liked best so far.

It’s not as pretty as Denison, and University of Richmond [where her brother is a student] is a lot prettier than this, but I still like this better. It’s a lot more casual. I’m a casual person.

The mother added that while they thought Granville was a quaint, clean, small town, and she liked it, Delaware is bigger, and more to her liking.

Faculty Member

A faculty spokesperson painted a skeptical picture of the difficult times of Ohio Wesleyan, based on a perspective
of his many years on campus:

I don’t know whether we’ve come through it or not...whether we’ll survive it. The damage was so great, the loss so heavy since 1981, that what I think it came down to in some respects was a struggle between some elements of the community, principally our Trustees, on whether we want to be a quality college or a haven for anybody who can pay the tuition. Of course, I speak with obvious prejudice, but I think there isn’t room for that. You don’t pay this type of tuition unless you’re going to get a prestigious degree out of it, and the field is crowded with mediocre operations. In other words, granted some would pay to get their kids in here, but where the name doesn’t mean anything, in time it’s going to die.

He said that the new President believes Ohio Wesleyan is a first quality institution.

His goal is to restore this as a selective college, instead of a haven for anybody. It’s a tough thing to get back out of. Once you get a reputation for being a reservoir for people who can’t get into Oberlin, Kenyon and Denison, that’s bad.

The faculty member said that while there is a perception of Ohio Wesleyan as a "Party School," it can never match Denison in that category.

Closing one fraternity here was a stupid administrative move, the timing of it. But Denison had to close one, too. They had a student die, but we seem to get a lot worse publicity.

The faculty member who has spent his career at OWU cited statistics that show Ohio Wesleyan as a quality school, and said it is important to get the word out.

Ohio Wesleyan ranks in the top two or three percentage points among the 897 four-year liberal arts colleges in the number of PhDs that have been produced, which is a good bellwether of quality, because (a) you have to have inspired the students
to go on, and (b) prepared them to go on. We're way ahead.

Denison is good, but Ohio Wesleyan is far above it.

He pointed to the Yale Guide, which described Denison as being in a "small town," but added that it was, of course, easy to get to Columbus, whereas Ohio Wesleyan is in a very small town and it's difficult to get to Columbus. Delaware is much larger, of course, and it is easier to get to Columbus from here, he said.

Some people try to point to that [college guide reviews] as the reason for the downturn. I don't think that's true. I think the downturn came from the Admissions office, where they were producing volume at the cost of quality.

He assessed the morale as "really good right now," adding that he would like to see it even better.

When you get the inferiority feeling as I feel existed [before] and you don't want to make a career of the place, it's got to be a stepping stone. When I was first here, in the good days, it had the things it should have in good morale, in terms of people thinking this place was important, invaluable, an end in itself. We lost some to the University of Chicago and Ivy League, people we didn't want to lose, but we held our own very well, as it was a place to get to, not a stepping stone. If Ohio Wesleyan becomes a place you have to explain how come you spent time there, that certainly will be destructive.

The faculty member said he believes Dr. Warren can do the job, although it will take time.

What we need at this time is a magician, and I believe Warren comes close to it! I think he's come in with the idea of the place being selective again, and we've got to...it's going to take some time to get that back. I'm still extremely optimistic...with some reservations. If he can
pull this off, it will be great. I think he will. The faculty is strongly behind him, and the students like him. I think he's going to do it.

He sees the image of Ohio Wesleyan as "mixed."

In this school you have the church types who would like to go back to compulsory chapel and dry up the dormitories. I think we've lost perhaps forever a certain element of the Methodist church. I think Ohio has five Methodist colleges, and we've lost our portion of Ohio Methodist people who choose on that basis to go to Ohio Northern. That's a very Ohio school, and very Methodist school. Methodist pastors and the like have kind of written us off as too wild and wooly, too much of a 'Party School,' too liberal in terms of moral practices, chapel and that sort of thing.

The largest denomination at OWU, not the majority but plurality, is Catholic. I know that 20 years ago we had more Presbyterians than Methodists. Ironically, Wooster had more Methodists than Presbyterians.

He labelled Kenyon an excellent college, with an excellent faculty, as reflected in the number of Rhodes scholars.

Not that I go by that entirely. I had a daughter there. She went there two years, and academically she found it superb. She left because she couldn't stand being out in the middle of nowhere, but another factor---this is not a significant thing, and I don't mean this as insulting---I look up to Kenyon as a very good college---but it is sort of a superannuated prep school, and it's run like a prep school. Faculty must live so close so the kiddies could come in and drink wine. I find that a little stultifying in terms of developing character of the adult personality, but I still say, I don't want to talk against Kenyon. Kenyon is an excellent school. It has a marvelous faculty. It is a very traditional liberal arts college. It's had its problems in recent years, adjusting to becoming coed, and that's one of the things that drove my daughter out. It had just become coed at that time, and that was a traumatic thing, because some of the men were flexing their muscles and feeling
mad about the fact they now had these females around when they used to go to places like here to pick them up, and people always resent change of that kind.

Her main objection was there is nothing in Gambier, and I personally don't think that is a valuable way to educate somebody in college. I think they ought to be in touch with townies and real life, and it's a transitional stage from home to independence.

Denison, he said, has benefited from a series of very good presidents. While he recognized the "Party School" image, he said he has always been impressed with Denison.

It's a good college that's very much on the rise. It's coming. It's gone through some good times...The new President looks good, too. Our younger daughter considered it, but she likes big cities.

Denison, I think, is probably going to continue to rise as a good school. I don't think, looking at it even in modern historical times, as being in the same class as Wesleyan. Even though they might now attract better students, in terms of SAT averages, and be more selective than we can, I haven't seen evidence in their faculty of the kinds of peaks of quality as I've seen here over the past two decades, or at Kenyon or Oberlin.

If I were ranking private colleges in Ohio, I'd put Oberlin on top, and Kenyon and Ohio Wesleyan—those would both be very high, distinctly in the upper rank percentile, then I would drop down to Denison...I'd put Denison well above Wittenberg, but below Ohio Wesleyan University.

He said that is an historical thing, and that if Ohio Wesleyan can't come back with strength in five years to where it is again at least as selective, if not more so than Denison, then Denison will match OWU or pass it. The role of public relations at Ohio Wesleyan is important in this, he said. The current Director of Public Relations is "an
energetic workaholic, and the Director of News and Information seems to be very able and hard working," the faculty member said.

I think they're doing a good job from where I sit. It seems to be pretty good. It seems they have taken full advantage of David Warren and arranged things to give him lots of exposure. They've gotten a lot of ink out of his living with students. He's been on all three morning talk shows...Some people dismiss the idea that the President's show-biz stuff had anything to do with our turnaround this year. I think it did have something to do with it. I think there is no doubt that David Warren's raised the morale, so students who would say, 'Don't go there!' would say, 'It's pretty good...this place is good.'

In addition, he said, the PR office needs to develop home town releases, so that people hear about accomplishments of students from their communities.

I've always had a concern about home town stories, because I think when somebody pays that exorbitant tuition to send their kid off to a school seeking some prestige, that any time someone gets elected to a minor post or wins a freshman numeral for a sport, you ought to get that out. I know that's not the standard belief in PR. They had a number of studies here. I remember this one crew sent in from CASE who said home town stories are worthless, mean nothing. I don't believe that. If you are sitting out in eastern Pennsylvania, and you've mortgaged the house to send them to Ohio Wesleyan University, and a story comes back that the kid's been elected vice president of a sorority, that has a good effect.

Noting that the Director of Public Relations is now in the Cabinet, where he belongs, the faculty member concluded:
You want your PR person sitting there so he can say, 'This is what's going to happen to you.' A good PR person would say, 'Hold on a minute. You'd better get someone to get this out.'

**Student**

The academic affairs editor of the student newspaper said his friends have noticed an "upswing"—but he hasn't. They told him that compared to last year and the year before, everybody is friendlier, and attributed it to the new President and the National Colloquium.

They said there just seems to be a better feeling on campus, and morale is up, people are more outgoing and they are more, I guess, proud to be associated with the school. I, myself, haven't noticed it to the extent other people have.

He said that he was attracted to Ohio Wesleyan through a brochure he picked up at a college fair in his home town, where over 150 colleges had displays and representatives present to talk to prospective students.

I guess somebody from Ohio Wesleyan was there. They had a brochure, and one thing that attracted me was a strong journalism program, 'nationally ranked,' they said.

I looked at other schools. They weren't small enough, didn't promise housing...and Ohio Wesleyan was diverse enough to offer a Computer Science-Journalism major. That was one of the main reasons. Easily, if I did the work, I could swing the two.

I visited twice—once in the Fall, when we were just driving around the eastern sector of the U.S. trying to find schools. But once I voiced my interest in Ohio Wesleyan, I kept getting mail. That was interesting, of course, because nobody in my house was very experienced in shopping for a college, so I needed all the help I could get.

They called up my house a couple of times...somebody from the Journalism department
did that...that was nice. When we decided we were going to drive around the country looking at colleges, we decided we were going to come out here, and gave them about a day's notice, and they were nice enough to give me an interview and give me a tour—my family and me, and that was nice.

Although he found it friendly enough on his initial two-hour visit to the campus, when he returned and stayed with a student in spring, he said, it was "pretty friendly, but not the friendliest place in the world."

When I came out here in the fall, though, I found that it wasn't that friendly. I was a freshman. I felt, I think, a little bit disillusioned or deceived. It's a funny story. The person who gave me the tour was so nice when I was a high school prospect. I said, 'Hi!' to her a couple of times, when I first got here, and I don't know if she didn't recognize me or what. She didn't say 'Hi,' back or anything like that, but that kind of disillusioned me. That kind of passed, and it's getting to be a little better, I think.

The New Jersey resident based his opinion of Ohio Wesleyan on a couple of things, he said.

One was what people said about it, that was always favorable: good, small liberal arts school, old, thought it was closely associated with religion and the church. Then you got a different story when you looked in the Fiske Guide. That was really weird. I didn't really know what to think. It could be either way. I figured it couldn't be as bad as Fiske said it was.

I find that the social life is there, as Fiske says, if you want to pursue it. But he ranks it lower than a lot of state schools where you have a lot of students. I just don't think you can learn more in schools like that.

As a freshman he encountered boredom, since he was not involved in activities. But he found some of his classes
academically challenging.

After a while of unhappiness and discontentment, I’ve settled down. I got involved in the newspaper. I think the big thing is you have to be somewhere where you can establish friendships and ties with the University…having something in common. I didn’t really have that in my freshman year.

You don’t have to be in a fraternity to succeed, but it greatly accelerates your social life. For sure, it doesn’t help you academically or anything else that I know of.

He sees Denison as comparable to Ohio Wesleyan, noting that there is a big Greek system at DU.

It’s better in some respects, and not in others. I think we’re equal.

The student said that the new President has definitely affected the campus with his live-in experience.

I was in the latest dorm. I’m the student assistant there. He was very well received. He had maybe 30 to 40 students that went to talk to him in the TV lounge. People just enjoyed being able to get out their gripes on the University President. That’s what it reminded me of, anyhow. Somehow, in the beginning, it didn’t seem like such a big deal, but it actually worked out very well. It shows the President is down there with the students. He’s not just going to be up there flirting with the Board of Trustees and stuff, he’s going to get down there and talk to students. He’s not some out of this world intellectual that’s not approachable. That’s what I think the students like.

From a student’s point of view, he said, the President is making the University look better on the outside, and internally he’s bringing morale up and people are feeling better about their school.

I don’t think we can overestimate what he’s doing. He’s not down there telling a history
professor how to teach. I think the product was there, and is there, and it hasn't really changed other than his Six Point Plan. He is attracting better students. He's not forcing the faculty...but he's turning the public image of Ohio Wesleyan around. That's probably all going to fall into place.

As Academic Affairs Editor, he has examined the trend toward greater selectivity in the Admissions office.

It seems like they went from an 83% acceptance level—I know these figures, because I deal with them—to about 68% this year, so that's better. That was part of his plan, but that didn't jump. They've been trying to change that over a couple of years. Now, he's trying to push them to do it a little more.

The journalism major sees the President's National Colloquium as not only public relations, but as an event that has taken people's minds—and the media minds—off past experiences, such as the Beta incident, the decrease in quality and the Fiske report.

Before this, if you'd say, 'What's good about Ohio Wesleyan?' people would say, 'I don't know.' 'What's bad?' and they'd say, 'Well, the Betas got thrown off campus, the telescope was running a deficit and they've got to cut back.' Now you say, 'What's good?' and they say, 'Well, we're having this National Colloquium. It's really big!' That seems to overshadow [the negatives]. The way they are publicizing the National Colloquium, I think it is hitting the east. They say one out of three students is asking about it. It's definitely going into the brochures. It's getting a lot of publicity in foundations, and that has to help.

The student summarized his feelings about the turnaround and the new President:

He's great at PR. He's an incredible worker. They seem to want to hand him money!
President’s Retreat

As an outgrowth of the "Live-in Presidency," Dr. Warren proposed a "President's Retreat," for faculty, staff and students. Ohio Wesleyan Magazine, in an article headlined, "Closing the Gap: 'Let's talk about it,'" quoted President Warren:

As I went from living group to living group, it became apparent that there was a strong desire among students to build some new bridges; bridges that would link Greeks to Independents; bridges that would link international students to American students; bridges that would link men to women; bridges that would link those persons interested in the arts with those in athletics. What I saw and heard was a sense of some isolation by each of these living groups from all others and a desire to overcome it (Besel, Ohio Wesleyan Magazine, February, 1985, p. 10).

The "President's Retreat," held in November at a rustic camp an hour from the campus, brought ten faculty, ten staff, and 40 students together to discuss concerns and feelings about tradition and spirit.

What we are doing is taking hold of our circumstance—renewing our institution—and encouraging each student to 'remember from whence Wesleyan has come, how it evolved, and how we can be a part of both its past and future' (Besel, p. 11).

Members of each major campus organization were asked to nominate an underclassman who was not an officer, but "who had good ideas and work ethics." Then students living in residence halls and small living groups were asked to nominate participants. These groups also were asked to suggest faculty and staff (Besel, p. 12).
After participants were selected, they received a pre-Retreat thinking exercise on the issue of community spirit, and how to improve it at Ohio Wesleyan. The agenda for the Friday and Saturday "Retreat," included icebreakers, work sessions in both small and large groups, and a late Friday evening square dance.

After brainstorming for specific ideas, the list of suggestions was pared to five—"those projects, short-range in nature, which would be tackled this year" (Ohio Wesleyan Magazine, p. 13).

Participants were asked to sign up for one of the five committees:

1. Victory Bell/Lighting of Gray Chapel
2. Holiday Activities (campus Christmas tree lighting, caroling, lighting of Slocum Walkway)
3. Class Unity/Officers (to explore ideas of creating class logos, T-shirts, yearly-elected class presidents and freshmen residence hall)
4. History/Traditions (exploration and reporting of the history of Ohio Wesleyan’s social traditions)
5. Wesleyan Weekend (focus on a major concert, Olympiad, campus picnic, or community project.)

Three long-range projects specified were: (a) expansion of the student union into a larger, more comprehensive facility; (b) improved security/lighting on campus, and (c) the creation of a residential center.
The Christmas Tree Lighting/Caroling party, and the lighting of Slocum Walkway during the holiday were well-received, and the committees continued to meet to accomplish their goals (Besel, p. 13).

The "President's Retreat" ties in directly with the second point in Dr. Warren's Six Point Plan: Engage Our Students. The President said:

And it complements the 'Live-in Presidency' nicely. The fact that I continue periodically to live with students this Fall and Winter is an extension of that idea, as is the 'Retreat.' All provide opportunities for me to ask a few questions and for the students to respond and inquire without any barriers or distractions in between. It is both my belief and my practice that the President must be accessible, visible and forthright. Students need to know what I think and why I think as I do, which is fair enough. I ask those very questions of them. So, by 'engaging our students,' we may find one key to the renewal of an institution such as ours (Besel, p. 14).

Newspaper Editors

All is not well in the community, however, as The Delaware Gazette managing editor and news editor are quick to point out. The news editor said he perceives the function of public relations at Ohio Wesleyan as "slick, manipulative and at times helpful, to the point of being solicitous." The managing editor, new to the community, agreed, but added:

I think they're doing the best they can and trying to turn themselves around. We no longer accept everything they give us, and perhaps this attitude has made them conscious, not to take us for granted. Stories have to be the kind that
deserve space.

One of our problems is that the town is close to Columbus. They think it's a big deal to be in the Columbus media, so they play to the Columbus media as much as they can.

The managing editor said that Ohio Wesleyan could improve relations with the Gazette, first in the timing of major events.

We're not talking about news releases or what they send us. In that regard they are very good. We're talking about PR as their willingness to give us a break. We're saying they should say, 'You're the local media. You give us the most attention, therefore we're going to return the favor.' They don't do that. I guess they really feel if they get major play in the Columbus Citizen-Journal, or Dispatch, it's worth more to them than the fact our subscriptions cover them more extensively.

The major area of contention was the announcement of David Warren as President. The news editor said:

That was known Friday night. At the time, if they had wanted to, they could have issued the release, and we would have been the first medium to have it. We should have been. We have a Saturday morning paper, and it would have been ideal. They decided they wanted to have the announcement Saturday afternoon, for the Sunday Dispatch. When we had it, it was 48 hours old. We're on UPI, and the Dispatch has AP. Apparently the Mayor of New Haven, where Warren was before, broke the story, and it moved on the AP wire Friday night for Saturday papers. We didn't get it. We didn't have AP, so the Dispatch had it Saturday, and so the story that they ran Sunday was their second-day story, so now, we're in a third-day story. That was a very bitter pill to swallow.

The inauguration was also scheduled for Saturday, which rubbed salt in the Gazette wound.
It was at 11 a.m., and seemed to be timed for Columbus exposure. The Dispatch played the Warren announcement very big. I'll never forget it. The Saturday paper was THE big story. The Dispatch is a very good paper...wish we could do some of the things they did. Their Sunday paper had a full-page spread, big photos, lots of stories about his background. Yet, on the inauguration, they did not play it very big. We had a color photo of the inauguration. We would not have gone with a colored photo had The Dispatch gone color. They didn't run a photo of the inauguration at all.

Ours came out on Monday. It was a little easier for us, because we covered a formal dinner Friday night, and were able to do a photo, so at least we had a little jump, I think.

When it comes to sensitive issues, the editors agreed that getting the facts is like pulling teeth.

They do not volunteer...you really have to go after it. And you don't go through the PR office. I don't think we want their Director of Public Relations to act as a reporter for us. He's supposed to protect in times when news isn't quite as good, such as when someone is released or fired. I don't see anything wrong with putting out a release saying 'Joe Blow was released after five years with us because...was detrimental to the school or...' Then it would be up to us to dig it out.

We heard about the firing of the Safety Director through the journalism class. Their paper had it. We had trouble trying to find out through their story. A day and a half later, our reporter was able to get some people to talk. The school should have at least released the news.

The editors said that the PR office tends to protect by withholding information, when simply putting out the facts first would be the way to honestly protect them.

Ideally, they said, the model PR situation would allow release of information.
They shouldn't try to lay back and wait till we come to them after a problem has developed. They know the problem is there. They know it will come out. Above all, they should take the initiative, saying, 'This is what happened...this is what we're doing.'

They added that they would probably check with other sources anyhow, but at least the University would have a chance to get their side of the story out first. And availability is another problem. When the reporters have to wait until a spokesperson is in the office, it hampers their efforts. They do have areas of cooperation, however. They are cooperating on a poll, and have done that before, the editors said, and would like to do it more often. They also concluded that the newspaper could utilize faculty more as experts, which would strengthen the relationship between the University and the newspaper.

Community Resident

A community resident said that there's a town population that has absolutely no relationship with the University, and visa versa.

And then there are University people tucked into nooks and crannies all around town. If you have a dinner party in Delaware, you have to be very careful, because you might invite mortal enemies to sit across the table. There are people in this town unwilling to sit down with one another.

She said she is very hopeful now that the new President has taken over the reins of the University. Citing the negative news that appeared in the media, she said morale
had plummeted.

Shop Owner

Another community member, a shopkeeper in the University vicinity, sees it differently, however. He and his wife, both graduates of Ohio Wesleyan, returned to Delaware and bought the store, because they liked the flavor of a college town.

They appreciated young people with new ideas, and the sometimes unconventional ways they have of expressing themselves. The discussion of issues, he said, wouldn't be found in many other places. The resources for learning that the college town offers are also difficult to find, such as the library, and the arts performances.

Those are just a few of the things that give it a flavor. You can always see in the fall when the students come back, and the University gears up. It's a different atmosphere in town altogether.

The drop in enrollment had a substantial effect on shop owners, he said, adding that there was impact on the community economically.

We give a 10% discount to all faculty and employees of OWU, no matter what. It's just one way we try to support the University. They are so important to this community, and I have trouble sometimes convincing other business owners who are not necessarily alumni that we need this school and we need it badly. If they weren't here, this town would be completely different.

The new President, and I think even the immediate past President, both said our goal is not to get back to where we were in enrollment, but to maintain an enrollment between 1,500 and 2,000. That says right there they are not just
trying to get bodies and checkbooks.

I feel they are trying to be selective now, because they realize that that's the future. You don't want everybody in a small liberal arts college.

I think the behavior aspect has been brought into control beautifully, and the fraternity rush is now dry, and it's better that way. One frat would buy 15 kegs of beer for a party and with several doing that in one night, you'd have 100 kegs of beer flowing and that's bound to produce problems. The State of Ohio changing the drinking age was good. Freshmen generally are 18, so they're not able to drink at all. And I think that's creates a better atmosphere.

The shop owner said that the new President has already had an impact on the community and university through public relations.

He has a lot of energy, and he's had exposure in all markets, all over the country, and I think that's what we need. Media is how you sell anything. We really were selling something. I say 'we' because we feel a part of it, my wife and I.

He observed that the Public Relations Director had done an excellent job of supporting the new President's PR efforts.

Warren couldn't do it all himself. And then again, you have to have a product to sell—a good product—and they do. And he's a master of the media impact, the short concise impressive statement. He's not long and boring and a typical academic type, which you can't have on TV. People won't listen. Or in newspapers...they want impact things and he's good at that.

As for town-gown relationships, he told of the flea market held in the gym where University faculty, personnel, and students can have a table and sell things.
They can clean out their closets and make a little extra money. They always call me, and we have our table up there full of our seconds and defects and soiled and returned merchandise and we donate the money to the annual fund. They approached us about that...we didn’t ask. On the selfish side, it gives us exposure.

The University purchases umbrellas or jackets from his store, and the soccer team bought their sweaters through this local merchant.

We always give them a very, very good price. Usually we’re not making much mark-up on it. It’s goodwill at that point, and that’s the way I look at it. We’re just a small shop, but we can do little things like that from time to time.

The image of Ohio Wesleyan is ambiguous, he said, with no positive or negative involved. The new President is visible in the community, and that is helping to build a new attitude.

He is involved in the town. He goes to Bun’s and has coffee and talks to the business owners and gets to know people and that helps. He’s involved. I think the image has improved the last couple of years, even under Wenzlau, just because there’s less turmoil, less destruction of property, things like that. Now it seems to be people are more welcoming to students, because they realize they need their business, first of all, and secondly, the student body has improved overall a lot. They behave much better.

The image of the “Party School” was accurate for Ohio Wesleyan for a number of years, he said. Now it’s completely the reverse, he added. Academics are number one.

I think the image of academics being number one is being communicated. We had some awful
publicity for a year or two. We had The New York Times Guide thing, and we had some local publicity about student unrest...a riot a couple of years ago in a fraternity that hit national wires and that wasn’t good. We had a PR problem for two years. I think they had already begun to change things here on campus, and now that’s beginning to get out into the public.

Five years ago, when we’d go to raise money to improve the [fraternity] property, the common response we’d get is ‘I’m not putting any money into that, because they’ll just destroy the place.’ Now we have a fund raising program going on this year which has gotten off the ground and is positive. People are contributing and it’s all completely different, and I think one thing has been the PR.

He termed the role of PR "essential," adding that one newspaper article might hit the wire service and go all over the country.

When this one fraternity was removed from campus because of their bad behavior and so forth, they had a small disturbance, which was called a riot by the media. It hit Cleveland, it hit Florida, and out on the West Coast. And it may have only been a small article, but it was enough for a Wesleyan alumnus to see that and say, ‘What is going on there?’ For a number of years, they kept a lid on how bad it was, so that somebody was doing a job in PR to keep the lid on things. Then it blew up and they couldn’t hold it back. Somebody realized that it was internal and they had to take some strong actions, and they did.

The shop owner said that this was not easy, because numbers worked against them. They only have so many students to choose from, and if the attitude at the top is money is more important at this point, they are going to get the bad students, he said. If, on the other hand, the attitude of the administration is ‘We can’t sacrifice the integrity of the University for short-term economics,’ then
they can do their job.

His image of Denison is slightly higher academically than Wesleyan, he said.

My image, though, is that their faculty is not as distinguished as ours, and that may be a bias, but that is my perception. The physical nature of their campus is appealing...the rolling landscape...it's beautiful. They say that they know they spend a lot on the campus, but students get an awfully strong impression when they come, and their visual impression is very important...

Kenyon...I think they are strong in the arts. They have a good theatre there. I think of them probably on a par with Ohio Wesleyan in terms of their academics and faculty, but the thing that impresses me most about them is their theatre department, their arts, their music. It's isolated. Denison is not as isolated over there in Granville, as close to Columbus as we are. Delaware is probably the nicest of the areas, because of its proximity to Columbus. You can be at OSU in 30 minutes to use their library and go to concerts. You can do that from Denison, but not as easily.

As for Ohio Wesleyan, he concluded that the strongest points are the tradition, and a strong faculty. And it is friendly.

It was easy to make friends as a student. When I was interviewed at Wesleyan, one of the things that impressed me was that the people—I remember walking up the street and people that I never had seen before would say, 'Hello...How are you?...Nice day!' and things like that. I thought these people are very nice, casual, friendly. It's like the difference between living in Delaware, Ohio, and New York City. You speak to people on the street here.

The shop owner senses the upswing in the mood around Delaware, and now sees the positive attitude in alumni he contacts.
It used to be, years ago, we were discussing the latest calamity. Now we discuss the National Colloquium, the fact that the President was on TV the other day. 'Did you see him?...or did you see the latest test scores?...or did you know we have another guy from the fraternity going to med school?' A few years ago it was always dealing with crisis or problems or reacting, and now it's on with the future.

It sounds like I'm a PR person myself. But I'm being very honest when I say a few years ago it was dismal. But it's been turned around.
Chapter VII

DENOUEMENT

There are few earthly things more beautiful than a university. It is a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know; where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see; where seekers and learners alike, banded together in the search for knowledge, will honor thought in all its finer ways, will welcome thinkers in distress or in exile, will uphold ever the dignity of thought and learning and will exact standards in these things. They give to the young in their impressionable years the bond of a lofty purpose shared, of a great corporate life whose links will not be loosed until they die. They give young people that close companionship for which youth longs, and that chance of the endless discussion of the themes which are endless, without which youth would seem a waste of time (John Masefield, as quoted in the inaugural address of President Andrew G. De Rocco, Denison Magazine, December, 1984, p. 4-5).

Metaphors for Public Relations

The study of the three elite liberal arts colleges in Ohio, and the public relations role within those institutions, reveals similarities and differences in perception, configuration, design and execution of the function.

Universities, as John Masefield said, are unique in their position in society, and cannot be juxtaposed with industry.
However, there is an industrial metaphor that illustrates the public relations functions at the three universities studied, as well as the model PR program. Kenyon College, with its narrow inward approach to public relations, focusing mainly on news releases, is the Bentley of the automotive industry. The Bentley, a sedate, posh, British touring car, is not advertised, for to advertise would, in the words of an Englishman, "demean the product." It is known within certain circles, is highly engineered and respected, and commands the attention of those qualified to own it. Denison, on the other hand, is the BMW of public relations—the "Preppy" car, representing the well-balanced, well-designed and executed public relations program. The recently broadcast BMW slogan, "As long as there are people who can afford perfection, BMW will continue to pursue it," says it all. And the third automotive metaphor is Lee Iacocca's Chrysler LeBaron, the "turnaround" car for an industrial corporation in trouble. What that President is doing for Chrysler, Dr. Warren is doing for Ohio Wesleyan. The approach is dynamic, the public relations vital! Iacocca has taken a company that was on a downward slide and made it a respected success, through his personal involvement and personality. President Warren is the "turnaround" President of Ohio Wesleyan, whose personal involvement and personality contribute to the ongoing public
relations efforts of that University.

The model public relations program continuing this metaphor could be seen to draw on the advertising slogan, "The American standard of quality and good taste," which the Cadillac epitomizes. The "Cadillac of Public Relations Programs" would combine the solid, well-rounded public relations of the "BMW" with the bold, dynamic and dramatic style of the "Chrysler." It would utilize marketing techniques, for planning, "product development," and promotion, with the appropriate use of research.

The three universities can learn from each other, and likewise, other universities can take this research and apply the findings to their individual situations. While all situations differ, as presidents differ in personality, approach and administrative style, there is much that can be extrapolated to extend an understanding of the role of public relations and its function within an institution.

This study reflected an in-tuneness between the Presidents Good, Jordan and Warren and their respective institutions in terms of public relations goals. Denison's new President De Rocco might do well to leave the public relations program in the capable hands of the personnel within University Resources and Public Affairs, that the finely tuned, well-designed and balanced public relations program might continue to operate on behalf of that institution.
The congruence of perceptions could be attributed to the Presidents' perception of current informational needs, needs also recognized by faculty, staff and students. These perceptions are undoubtedly shaped by the institutions' histories, achievements and aspirations. If serving other institutions, the Presidents' agendas might be different; they may also be altered at these institutions over a period of years by changing conditions. At this point, Kenyon, Denison and Ohio Wesleyan exhibit public relations programs that could be described as "Inward," "Outward," and "Other-ward," as they face their publics.

Kenyon's public relations role is on the threshold of change, with the addition of a Public Affairs Director whose background will contribute a broader conception of the role. The broadening of the public relations perceptions can only enhance this well-respected, yet little recognized College. Where name recognition is a problem, PR can be employed to alleviate the situation.

President Warren has sensed an important need at Ohio Wesleyan University for quick visible results to his "turnaround" program to restore the morale and confidence of that institution's many publics. President De Rocco of Denison and President Jordan of Kenyon have focused their efforts on faculty achievements, both to boost faculty morale and to document institutional claims to academic superiority.
All three institutions have problems of image and identity which are of varying magnitude. Kenyon is most satisfied with its image, one that tends to attract the type of student who sees Kenyon’s isolation as a virtue. Denison seeks to modify its "Party School" image, to balance it with academic challenge. Ohio Wesleyan seeks to reinforce its image of friendliness, while struggling mightily to shed shadow images as a "Safety School" for those who have abandoned all hope for a more prestigious academic home and will settle for good times.

The Presidents and their supporting staffs have no obvious disagreement on institutional public relations goals. Any difference that might develop would relate to the means to achieve those goals.

If placed on a continuum, Kenyon’s public relations role would be on one end indicating a narrowness of function, and an inwardly-aimed program, as they admit they have relied on news releases as their primary focus for PR. Denison would sit smartly in the middle of that continuum, with a solid, well-developed, broad-based and well-balanced public relations program, while Ohio Wesleyan would be the most creative, exciting and dramatic approach to public relations under the new President.
Public Relations Issues & Practices

As Schoenfeld (1954) said, "Public Relations is synonymous with broad-gauged administration," and every administrator is "in the act" (p. 235). Within these three universities there is general recognition that public relations is everybody's business. Kenyon, with the narrowest view, realized the time for a broadened perspective had come, and recently hired a new Director to implement a new focus.

Throughout this study, it has been obvious that even the titles are questioned when applied in an academic setting, where marketing and public relations are generally suspect. The trend, however, is toward a marketing approach to academic public relations. Ohio Wesleyan has realized this, and is moving more and more in that direction. Denison, like Wesleyan, has employed market research in its search for answers to the enigma of student recruitment. Kenyon has consulted with Proctor & Gamble, Ohio Wesleyan with Hill & Knowlton and Admissions Marketing Group, and Denison has brought in a local consultant.

Titles of public relations administrators vary from university to university. Ohio Wesleyan uses the most elementary title, Director of Public Relations, while Kenyon and Denison chose the title more acceptable to legislative bodies, Director of Public Affairs. And the Vice Presidents
also are varied in title, with Kenyon having a Vice President of Development, Denison using the unwieldy title Vice President for University Resources and Public Affairs, and Ohio Wesleyan, again, giving the administrator the simple title Vice President for University Relations, which is somewhat of a misnomer, since the person involved is a Development-oriented individual who concentrates on fund raising for the University.

The hierarchy does not follow the recommendations of W. Emerson Reck (Public Relations—A Program for Colleges and Universities, 1946, p. 31), who strongly recommended almost 40 years ago that the person in charge of public relations hold Cabinet status. In only one of the three schools studied, Ohio Wesleyan University, has the Director been given that status, and that was the new President’s first decision a little more than a year ago. Denison and Kenyon have not accorded Cabinet membership to their Directors.

Reck also recommended that all functions of public relations be conducted within the same facility. Denison University and Kenyon College comply, but Ohio Wesleyan currently houses its Directors of Public Relations, News and Information, Publications, and Alumni Relations, a block and a half from the Vice President’s office. He also recommended that the public relations offices be as near that of the President as possible. In all three cases, the offices are a healthy jaunt from the chief executive’s
suite.

The well-established pecking order of the three institutions places Kenyon College on top, followed by Denison, and then Ohio Wesleyan. Only one interviewee, a faculty member at Ohio Wesleyan, disagreed with this hierarchy, placing his university above Denison. His perception was based on more than 30 years at Ohio Wesleyan, giving him historical basis for his conclusion, rather than simply a current look at the status of the institution. The order of prestige was well known and recognized by everyone from prospective students to Presidents.

It is interesting to note that the university with the most prestige on the ladder of excellence, Kenyon College, has the narrowest perception of public relations, and the least extensive program of the three. Their efforts focus inwardly to the faculty, staff, students and alumni, and receive little broadcast in external fashion, and depend to an inordinate degree on publicity and publications.

Name recognition was thought by all three to be a problem. As one alumnus pointed out, it is self-perpetuating unless faculty, staff, students and alumni are made aware of the effect of their individual identification. When someone asks, "Where did you go to school?" for example, the individual who answers, 'A small college in Ohio...you probably haven't heard of it..." is reinforcing the absence of identity. Such a lack was noted
as close as one hour from the college, indicating the need for public relations efforts in establishing a clear identity, so that name recognition is not a problem.

Image perpetuity was clear in all three colleges, where repeatedly the same catch phrases were uttered in response to the institutions. Kenyon was seen as excellent academically, traditional, and most of all, isolated. Denison carried the stereotypical images of "Preppy" and "Party School," while Ohio Wesleyan's image surfaced repeatedly as "friendly." The pervading attitudes reflect knowledge from second-hand sources, such as former roommates, friends, etc., and first hand experience for some. It was clear that the various guide books, from Lisa Birnbach's College Book (1984), to Ted Fiske's New York Times Guide to Selective Colleges and the Yale's The Insider's Guide to the Colleges affected the universities in a variety of ways. Kenyon issued a satirical publication, entitled The Gambier Times: Selective Guide to Kenyon College that was used to counter less than favorable light cast by Ted Fiske's book. Denison countered Lisa Birnbach's College Book, which called them a "Safety School," with an article in the local community newspaper. Ohio Wesleyan's new President mounted a full-court press on Ted Fiske, hoping to get a second judgement. All three schools recognized the devastating blows that can be levelled by the oft-quoted college guides. A favorable rating was cause for
celebration, and an unbalanced review, cause for more than one headache.

The size of these three liberal arts colleges contributed to the acute awareness among administrators, faculty, staff and alumni, of the role they play in public relations for the institution. The responsibility was felt from top to bottom, as individuals carried the university's image to a personal conclusion that wherever they go, whatever they do, they ARE the university. They represent the university in church and social settings, in neighborhoods and grocery stores, and, while it was agreed that the President carries the weight of this obligation, the others felt a sense of responsibility for their share of the load. The President could not do it all.

Recommendations

Several "campaigns" were noted by the three universities. Denison recognized the need to communicate the financial aid situation to prospective students and their parents. Much of the self-selection that is evident in college choice involves misconception of the university being "unaffordable" or "beyond our means." It was evident that parents with middle income, who did not know of the financial aid available, would discourage their children from thinking about the $10,000 college year, when taking that size slice off the top of their yearly budgets would severely hamper their existence. The parents with income of
$30,000, hardly a poverty-level, would be hard-pressed to pay the freight at one of these institutions, yet would normally not consider their child eligible for aid.

One parent said his daughter fell in love with Denison and he said, "Forget it! We can AFFORD a state university." He was not aware of the statistics shown in the Denison financial aid brochure that indicated that someone with his income could send a student to Denison for the same price as Miami University, a state school in Oxford, Ohio, when aid was considered.

The "campaign" needs to be informational in nature, with emphasis placed on the facts related to availability of aid, and level of grant given to students with various levels of family income. The chart is effective, but only if the parent gets beyond the built-in prejudice and seeks the brochure. The information needs to be communicated at college fairs, and in high school visits by recruiters. The prestige of the institution need not be sacrificed. A little snob appeal goes a long way. The universities will continue to attract those who can pay, but will increase their heterogeneity and enlarge their pool of possible students, in a time when all are conscious of the demographic dip and diminishing pool.

Admissions will continue as the priority client of public relations offices, as universities seek to fill their freshmen class. While some Admissions staffs still maintain
a hold on publications, it is especially effective and efficient to locate that responsibility with the public relations staff. They should be the experts, and with close coordination with Admissions personnel on content, should produce a superior product.

As the three universities maintain their selectivity, they will need to "fish in broader waters," not "deeper into the pool." This will increase the necessity for name recognition throughout the recruitment target areas. While one article in The New York Times does not a reputation make, continued media exposure does contribute to the recognition accorded the university.

And that national media exposure, whether print or broadcast, does contribute to the internal morale of faculty, staff and students, as well as increasing the "stock" of alumni. All who have a vested interest, whether on campus, or scattered throughout the world, benefit when the university receives recognition in the media. Dominance of publicity, however, is an unwise use of public relations efforts. There is much more to public relations than a series of news releases.

It is clear that some follow-up needs to be done when prospective students become freshmen. They should not be forgotten, once the tuition is paid. The Ohio Wesleyan student who felt deceived when his tour guide ignored him
once he was actually enrolled clearly divulged an area needing the University's attention. It would be fairly easy to make sure follow-up contact was made by the student tour guides, by providing a list of those who have enrolled, making them their "charges," as freshmen. True, they may have given tours to many prospects, but with a little effort, follow-up could be encouraged and facilitated by the Admissions office.

One Admissions director from a university in another state reported that students often flock to the Admissions office when they are newly-enrolled freshmen, because that has been the only contact they have had with the University. She said that they come in, expecting the same warm welcome they received when they were prospects, and often being disappointed when the Admissions office is not in loco parentis, and no longer takes a personal interest in their welfare. If that, indeed, is the expectation, some type of follow-up program is needed, or the Admissions office will be viewed as a cold, deceptive, "bottom-line" concern. With a little public relations acumen, it could be turned from a minus to a real plus, and might actually contribute to that all-important retention.

Faculty concerns are echoed in the Presidents' desire to make the public aware of academic excellence. President De Rocco of Denison University especially emphasized the need to publicize the achievements of the faculty, which
would raise the image of the institution. At the same time, the editor of the newspaper that serves Granville was amenable to the researcher's suggestion that faculty members become expert resources for the publication. The Public Affairs Director felt that a listing of "expertise" available within the Denison faculty could easily be compiled. A cooperative effort will serve the needs of the newspaper and the university.

Newspaper editors—speaking almost in unison—said that public relations needs to be a "two-way street." This notion was found in the literature in 1930, when Thomas E. Benner, visiting professor at Teachers College of Columbia University, addressed a 1930 AACNB assembly, telling them that the job of interpretation is a "two-way street" (see Chapter II, p. 25, of this study).

Unbeknownst to each other, editors from the three newspapers said that the biggest problem is access to the facts on sensitive issues, or negative news. Harral (1942) said:

Public relations should not be used to cover up mistakes, avoid unpleasant publicity, and in other ways deceive those who are copartners in justifiable activities (pp. 19-20).

The universities cannot expect the newspapers to publicize only those stories that reflect favorably on the campus, they said, with no concern for the newspapers' needs for the facts when there is a controversy, a crisis, or a
crime. All three universities were accused by the newspaper editors of cover-ups, to one degree or another. One editor understood the desire of PR persons to "protect" their universities, but pointed out that the best way they can actually provide that protection is through honesty, getting the facts out into the light. This does not mean coloring the facts, but rather presenting the university's story first, knowing that the editors or reporters will check with other sources. That is to be expected. It's just good journalism. There is no point in attempting a cover-up, as those involved in Watergate learned to their own demise. There is always someone, somewhere who will talk. It might as well be the Public Relations Director, who has the straight story and can present the university's side of it, honestly and openly.

Denison's new President spoke to this point, saying that bad news always gets out, and that there is no need to try to hide it. He espoused an open door policy on news, which the local newspaper editors would welcome.

Another point made by the editors of the newspaper serving Delaware was that the local community newspaper should be considered in the timing of important events and release of important news. Bad feelings were evident in regard to the timing of the announcement of the appointment of the new President. That would be big news in Delaware and the Gazette's circulation area, and they should be given
consideration in its release. It is dangerous for the university to depend on the local community newspaper for their bread-and-butter coverage, and then turn to the nearby metropolitan newspaper for major stories. There is at least the appearance of duplicity in that case.

Image cultivation in the community depends not only on the coverage in the local newspaper, but relations established with town and gown through general behavior, attitude, and efforts in public relations that take community needs into consideration, and welcome the involvement of the university's neighbors. The university needs to extend its hand in town-gown relationships.

It is well-known that image perpetuity extends perhaps up to five years beyond reality of the situation. If the image has negative aspects, the correction of those elements needs to be broadcast, to hasten the recovery and recognition. It is agreed that a university can rest on its laurels, while going downhill for awhile, but that the reality of the situation does catch up with it eventually. On the other hand, a troubled university, like Ohio Wesleyan, which has gone through some trauma over the past few years, must make every effort to publicize its "turnaround." It is true that "bad news travels fast," but the good news must be circulated through careful public relations planning for long range effect. Once a university gets a label, like "Isolated," or "Preppy," or "Party
School," it is difficult to shake it. Strategies in long-range planning for PR can be designed and followed through a marketing approach to put the image in perspective.

Presidents generally agreed that they are the chief public relations officer of the university. The personality of the individual contributed to that perception, with Dr. David Warren, new President of Ohio Wesleyan University, saying it's "110% PR." Dr. Andrew De Rocco, new President of Denison University, said he was unsure of the percentage and that it would probably vary from year to year, depending upon the priorities, while President Philip Jordan of Kenyon recognized PR is a majority of his job.

Public relations has a cumulative affect. It is a synergistic process, wherein the job of public relations is put into focus through the efforts of the many parts of the university. It cannot be a function that is isolated within the office of Public Relations at the university, but must emanate from every level. The Public Relations Director can direct the efforts, make long-range plans, and carry out the infinite variety of tasks with public relations implications, but must also depend upon the individuals connected with the university.

Public Relations Directors cannot maintain the image of the institution if the image is not merited by the capability of the faculty and the quality of the
university's program. The image should be an accurate reflection of the reality of the product. If the quality isn't there, it is important to work on improving it first, and then to work on image enhancement.

While publications are the most visible elements of a public relations program, they should not receive inordinate emphasis. The belief in their all-encompassing significance and effect is unjustified. The old saw, "Got a problem? Put out a publication!" provides an unrealistic and unsatisfactory solution.

Projected Research Topics

Additional research needs to be conducted, focusing on each of the other types of institutions in the Stanford Typology: Private Multiversity; Public Multiversity; Public Comprehensive; Public College; Private Liberal Arts College; Community College, and Private Junior College (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker & Riley, 1978, p. 59-60). This study could be replicated to provide contrast with the Elite Liberal Arts College.

And the replication of this study could be done using three Elite Liberal Arts Colleges in another state, which would further strengthen the "slice of life" generalizability, as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 116).
PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS ISSUES

The Admissions office and public relations could be examined in further research, focusing on the current era of decline of the 18-year-old pool, in relation to the changes in recruitment procedures that respond to the demographic dip. Douglass Steeples, provost of Ohio Wesleyan University, was quoted in The Columbus Dispatch as saying that on the basis of a survey, it is estimated that 400 U.S. colleges will close their doors between now and 1995 (The Columbus Dispatch, February 26, 1984, p. C-1), so this focus would be appropriate, as it relates to the survival of the fittest. Public relations will certainly play a part in the survival of institutions, and should be examined from that perspective.

The interrelatedness of Public Relations and other aspects of the University, such as Development and town-gown relationships, could be studied with implications for all types of institutions of higher education.

A content analysis could be done on such things as viewbooks, college catalogs, brochures and other printed materials. The effectiveness of said publications could be tested with the audiences for visual appeal, readability, content and general overall impression. This could be done on a case study basis, with one university's publications being studied in depth, or the viewbooks from a selected sample of like-institutions, or contrasting institutions,
being the focus.

According to Walter K. Lindenmann, formerly director of university relations at Hofstra and now vice president for attitude research at Hill & Knowlton, Inc., public relations counseling firm:

Market research is the essential first step toward improving communications for student recruitment (CASE Currents, February, 1976).

A study of the employment of market research in university relations programs would be appropriate, in light of the trend toward a marketing approach. The implications of the market research could be examined from the perspective of the one making the decision to use it, the cost for same, and the use to which it is put. Market research is only worth the investment if it is utilized effectively. Another study might examine the various approaches of market research firms, vs. the in-house research teams.

Universities are relying on outside consultants for a variety of public relations services, such as national media relations and publication design. An examination of these consultants and their effectiveness would be appropriate research.

Utilizing a higher education finance perspective, cost-effectiveness of publications could be studied. One important tool for recruiting is the university viewbook. Reflecting the image of the school, it provides general
information for the prospective students, with facts that they need in order to make an intelligent decision. The important thing to remember, according to Joy Fischer, former editor, Office of Publications, The Ohio State University is that:

The publication exists for the audience/reader—not 'Mother University' talking to the reader. It's what the reader wants and needs—not because we like it. It has to be effective and bring response. It exists not for you, but for the reader (Interview, July, 1983).

Evaluation studies of the audience assist in targeting the publication, and could be the subject of further research.

While small institutions seem to pay more for their publications, as discovered in preliminary research for this dissertation, and certainly far more per recruited student, some economies can be instituted to make their efforts more cost-effective. This could be included in additional research.

UNIVERSITY ISSUES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Special events and their impact on town-gown relationships, internal morale, or university image, could be the subject of additional research. This, too, could be an across-the-board study of all types, or could be limited to a particular category in the Stanford Typology.

The targeting of recruitment programs by Admissions offices would provide information useful in the era of
population decline. While universities like Ohio State aim for the masses, private liberal arts colleges target areas where they know they are likely to connect with prospective students. While Ohio State turns away thousands each year, the private institutions are carefully cultivating individuals in their aggressive recruiting efforts in targeted areas, considering centers of alumni population, and "feeder schools," which have sent students to the university in prior years.

A frequently suggested subject for additional research during the completion of this study was "Ohio Wesleyan University: The Demise and Rise of a Once-Prestigious Institution." While the "turnaround President" provides the hopeful perspective for that rise, the history of its demise could be the subject of an in-depth study, and could benefit other universities that are fighting for survival.

This demise, especially of private colleges, is primarily based on two things: lack of funds and loss in enrollment. Both areas could be studied from a public relations and/or Admissions/Development point of view.

A comparison study could be completed to explore the differences in mind-set between multiversities, who use the "scatter-gun" approach in recruiting, vs. the Elite Liberal Arts Colleges, who with particular types of students in mind, recruit the individual.
Many schools are actively seeking the adult market. The National Center for Educational Statistics estimated that more than 17 million adults were involved in some type of higher education program at colleges, universities, and private companies in 1979. The adult market requires class times that do not infringe on work commitments and [provision for] convenient locations (Evans and Berman, 1982, p. 631).

How the adult market is being approached, through public relations efforts designed to attract that specific target group, would be an appropriate and timely study.

METHODOLOGY ISSUES

Finally, the issue of attribution in dissertation research cries out for discussion in an article showing both pros and cons. The educational perspective that prefers identifying universities studied in generic terms, such as "X, Y and Z", and discourages use of names of individuals, should be examined juxtaposed with the journalist's perspective, with an insistance on attribution for credibility. This issue was discussed and resolved in terms of this particular dissertation in Chapter III, where a compromise was reached, allowing identification of the three universities and the individual Presidents by name, while identifying others only by title. The use and effectiveness of direct quotes in displaying the fabric of an institution would also provide a topic for further research.
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