

DISSERTATION

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT: WORKING WITH AND THROUGH THE MEDIA TO
ADVANCE THE INSTITUTION

Submitted by

Paul T. Carringer

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Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: James H. Banning

Laurie A. Carlson
Timothy G. Davies
Bruce Hall

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ABSTRACT

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT: WORKING WITH AND THROUGH THE MEDIA TO ADVANCE THE INSTITUTION

The purpose of this study was to examine how community college presidents successfully work with and through the media to advance their institutions. Four successful cases were studied. These success stories came from the list of Paragon Award winners selected annually by the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) and be cross referenced with the list of college presidents from the membership list of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

While there has been a body of work created exploring the for-profit organization and how the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) works with and through the media to enhance the reputation of the organization, there has been little research conducted in the area of the value a president of a community college brings to the reputation of the institution through her or his own personal visibility through the media.

The study assessed and characterized into common themes how each participant, both the presidents and lead public relation executives, successfully worked with and through the media to advance their individual institutions. Common themes emerged both with the presidents and the public relations lead executives.

Data revealed that there was a significant connection of each case studied and organizational goals such as financial health and market share growth. The importance of teams was noted with the role of the president being one part of the teamwork. The centerpiece of each case was the story of the institution and that story being the focal point of media coverage.

Results of this research suggest that community college presidents can reach organizational goals through a strategic process of telling the institutional story to and through the news media.

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groups who gave me “time off” from my public service to complete this journey and the many friends who consistently nudged me to the finish line.

The institutions studied: I want to thank the presidents and public relations lead executives of the institutions studied for taking time from their busy schedules to allow me the opportunity to study them. I have learned much from their stories.

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my wife Patsy Sue (Mullins) Carringer, my sons Philip Donald Carringer and Andrew Robert Carringer, my mother and father, Donald Fred Carringer and Violet Johanna (Wermter) Carringer, Jeanette (Carringer) Gladden, Dr. Shah Hassan, Dr. Scott Palmer, and Christopher Smith.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Community colleges are often a significant center of community activities, culture, athletics, and reference materials within a city or region. The community college exists to meet the needs of the local community and do so with many different forms of education and training opportunities. With a student-centered approach to teaching and learning, the community college operates in a different way than many of the more traditional colleges. The community college exists because of the declared desire of the local community to have an institution of higher learning of this type in their area. Support for the community college comes from many places including the state and local legislatures, local businesses, local taxpayers, unions and alumni groups to name a few. These groups represented target markets or publics with which the institution communicated for continued support. To ensure its continued existence by attaining support from the local community, working with and through the media, the news reporting press, to tell the institutional story is important. And, the president of the community college must lead that effort as the chief spokesperson or the person who has the responsibility for the identification of the chief spokesperson for the institution.

This study examines community college presidents and how they successfully worked with and through the media to advance their institutions. Four successful cases were studied.

In this study there is a review of how organizational leaders work with and through the press to build the reputations of their for-profit and not-for-profit organizations as well as communicate with a variety of groups that are important to each organization. In addition, the value to the organization is discussed. Moving to community college leadership, a review of how presidents do their jobs is offered. This includes an exploration of the president as communicator and how that role often involves the press. This study also details a research methodology that

allowed this researcher to explore how successful community college presidents have worked with and through the press to advance their institutions.

Researcher's Perspective

This researcher has been an active public relations professional for over 20 years. Experiences include being a marketing communications agency owner with a focus on public relations for corporate, political, and not-for-profit clients. I have developed many public relations campaigns, strategies, and tools to help move forward the stories and positions of my clients. Messages must be carefully crafted, have goals for communications that can be measured, and be provided in ways that are of value to the receiver.

Some of the most difficult challenges I have faced have come from poorly crafted messages, unplanned communication with members of the media, and a lack of understanding of how the media develops stories and why. Working with and through the media to build or protect the reputation of an organization is a process that should include the development of a strategic plan, development of messages that fit the plan, delivery of the messages in forms acceptable to the receiver, evaluation of feedback, and then adjusting messages based upon feedback. Relationships with members of the press must be developed and nurtured to develop working processes that are effective for both the media members and those wishing to communicate with and through them.

In my experience, communication failures occur more often from the person about which the story will be written. This comes from organizational leaders who have not developed relationships with reporters, who are afraid of communicating with members of the press, and have no public relations strategy. In my experience, it is rare to find a reporter not attempting due diligence in the creation of a story. It is common for the person or institution that is the focus of

the story to ignore, obfuscate, distort, or outright lie about the situation in cases where problems occur. Another problem starter for leaders of organizations is to push the press off onto an underling when it is the organizational leader the media wants to talk with.

To carry out this role effectively, presidents of community colleges must have a strong working relationship with key media representatives. Good working relationships with members of the press that are president-to-media and not through other spokespersons for the institution are very important. These working relationships also must be understood not to be ones where the press reports for the institution, but reports about the institution. Presidents of community colleges are assumed to have a strong interest in working with and through the media, of all types, to advance the mission, vision, and values of their institutions.

The community college president is the chief communicator for the institution. And, as the chief communicator, the president is expected by the press to tell the institutional story, be the counterpoint to stories in opposition to the institution, and provide factual information for the institution in a timely fashion.

Rationale for Study

There has been some study of the organizational leader, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and president, in the for-profit and in the four-year and graduate level institutions as to the relationships between and effects of contact with the media and the reputation of the institution (e. g., Pincus, Rayfield & Debonis, 1991; Ross & Halstead, 2001; Sample, 2002). However, little has been done to examine the role of community college presidents as chief communicators and their interaction with the press to build the reputation of the institution and communicate its mission, vision, and values.

A more complete review of the literature is provided in chapter two but as you will see, the CEO of an organization is noted as being a significant contributor to the public reputation of the institution she or he leads. A positive public reputation provides positive benefits to the organization including better financial health for the organization, public and target audience belief of the institutional messages even during times of negative media reporting, and more positive long-term relationships with the organization by constituencies important to the institution.

While there has been a body of work created exploring the for-profit organization and how the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) works with and through the media to enhance the reputation of the organization, there has been little research conducted in the area of the value a president of a community college brings to the reputation of the institution through her or his own personal visibility through the media. Community colleges must communicate with a variety of internal and external publics to survive and thrive. Facing these leaders is an increasingly difficult path of media options that must be navigated. This path was determined, not by the community college and its leaders, but by the many and varied constituencies or publics of the institution. Some target audiences or publics relied on traditional media such as newspapers to get their information. Others moved to electronic media where blogs and instant messages deliver messages faster than ever imagined, often from unknown sources, and often with institutional challenges that occurred before the leader of the institution realized there was a challenge.

The purpose of this study was to describe the role of communication that presidents of community colleges have as it relates to working with and through the media (press) to reach constituencies (publics) with messages delivered by credible third parties (press) to advance the

mission of the institution. It was theorized that the direct involvement of the president occurred in successful media relations cases.

Methodology

A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized. The case study method provided an advantage to other research strategies such as an experiment that “deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context, a history that dealt with “noncontemporary events” and surveys that are limited in their exploration of the context of the cases being studied, (Yin, p. 13). The case method preserved the context and afforded a holistic view of the process under consideration (Gummesson, 1991). The use of a multi-case approach is preferred in that it is intended that the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings were strengthened (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29). The case study is the preferred research strategy for this study in that it did “contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2003, p. 1) with regard to how community college presidents work with and through the media successfully to advance the community college.

Participants and Study Sites

This study examines how community colleges communicate with and through the media to advance the institution and do so with the direct involvement of the president of the institution. These success stories came from the list of Paragon Award winners selected annually by the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) and was cross referenced with the list of college presidents from the membership list of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The success stories were used for both sample selection and analysis. The NCMPR is the only organization that represents marketing and public relations professionals at community, technical and junior colleges in North America. As the focus of this

study was on the role of the community college president in working with and through the media to advance the institution, it was important to connect the Paragon Award winners with institutions where the president was deeply involved in a situation that created the opportunity to be considered for and receive the award. The selected cases were unusual and of interest due to the recognized successful outcomes of each case. Because of the need for the presidents to communicate with a variety of key groups and to do so through the news media, the underlying issues are important to community colleges and have both policy and practical implications.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the role of communication that presidents of community colleges have as it relates to working with and through the media (press) to reach constituencies (publics) with messages delivered by credible third parties (press) to advance the mission of the institution.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What practices do the presidents of four exemplary community colleges use when working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
2. What do four presidents of exemplary community colleges believe about working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
3. What individual skills and attributes helped to form these practices and beliefs?
4. How do the presidents organize and deploy their human resources in this successful case?

Definition of Terms

Angle – The viewpoint of the news story.

Constituencies – Groups of people with interest in the institution. These groups tend to have similar points-of-view that bring them together to support or create change within an organization.

Media – News press members such as reporters and editors.

Pitch – A prepared presentation of a story or point-of-view. A pitch is designed to either get favorable coverage or present the side of the story from the perspective of the person or institution responding to a story. This can be proactive or reactive.

Public Relations – Skills, tools, and tactics designed to communicate messages through the media to create favorable opinions of a person, institution, event or product. These efforts are designed to advance the person, institution, event or product and enhance the revenue and product lines, such as courses, degrees, and certificate programs of same.

Public – A target audience of people who are important to the person or institution. These include primary publics (direct impact on the organization), secondary publics (indirect impact on the organization), and tertiary publics (ability to shape opinions, but have no direct impact on the organization).

Reporter – Professional who gathers information and writes news stories or reports for publication through a media outlet.

Study Limitations

The study was limited to the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) Paragon Award Winners for the years 2001 through 2009 and within categories that involve the community college communicating with and through the media. This awards

program recognizes outstanding achievement in communications at community, junior and technical colleges. It is the only national competition that exclusively honors excellence among marketing and PR professionals at two-year colleges. The category of interest was the Media Success Story. There are three awards given in this category annually. The NCMPR headquartered in Greeley, Colorado, and has 1,550 members from more than 600 two year institutions in the United States, Canada and the Bahamas. For this study, the president interviewed of the institution must have been in that position at the time of the event for which a Paragon Award was given.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) was utilized to provide the names and contact information for the presidents of the Paragon Award winners. This organization represents 1,100 two-year institutions in the United States and Canada with a few institutions outside of these nations. The members of this organization are the higher ranking administration members from these institutions. It has a broader scope than does the NCMPR. The NCMPR is affiliate council of the AACC.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to describe the role of communication of the presidents of community colleges that relates to working with and through the media (press) to reach constituencies (publics) with messages delivered by credible third parties (press) to advance the mission of the institution. Successful cases were studied to allow for an understanding of the patterns used to successfully work with and through the media by community college presidents. This study provides a review of the literature and describes a methodology to allow for this study to be undertaken and reported. The study and its results are hoped to have both policy and practical implications for the leaders of community colleges and the institutions they serve.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review the important literature relevant to my proposed research. In chapter one, I explained and justified the need for a qualitative study that would examine the role of communication with the media and through the media to important publics by the president of the community college and how that communication successfully advances the mission of the institution. I identified four research questions appropriate for this multiple case study which reflect my professional interest and experience in public relations and community college leadership. They also acknowledged the research framing the scholarly discussion of my topic. In this chapter, I review the literature and addressed how my research questions are reasonable and appropriate as well as how they fit into the context of the current scholarly discussion of this topic. These questions, when addressed, provided a greater understanding of community college leadership, the role of communicator as it relates to the work of the community college president and how to successfully advance the mission of the institution by communicating with and through the media the organizational story.

I have organized this chapter in the following manner. In “The Chief Executive Officer” I have reviewed works covering the for-profit world of business to examine organizational leaders and their roles as corporate communicators. I explore findings that might be helpful in moving the examination specifically to community college presidents. This body of literature describes and explains the process of communication with publics of interest to the organization and the value of communication designed to build the reputation of the organization.

In “The Community College President” I have reviewed works covering the job of community college president, how individuals carry out the responsibilities of the job, the challenges they face, and the connection of the roles within the job and the effort to

communicate the mission, vision and values of the institution. How presidents viewed themselves in their roles was explored as well. The literature reviewed in this section identifies three critical functions of the president, manager, leader and communicator. The literature reviewed also explores the challenges, frustrations and pressures that impact presidents. A review of the literature covering how presidents work with the media is provided and a summary of the roles of the president, impacted by the challenges, frustrations and pressures faced, as it relates to working with the media is offered.

In “The President and the Media” I have reviewed works covering how presidents work with the media, how presidents view themselves in that role, and how working with and through the media to tell the institutional story provides positive benefits to the organization.

Finally, in my “Synthesis” I briefly restate the critical conclusions from my review of each section and show how these can be organized into a framework that provides a foundation that explains my research questions. This foundation included the elements of the role of organizational Chief Executive Officer, the communication with and through the media to advance the organization, and connection of organizational leadership and communication to the role of community college president as it related to advancing the institution by telling the story of the community college to publics of concern working with and through the media. These elements are reflected in my research questions.

The Chief Executive Officer

In this section, I explored the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the role of communication that leader has and how it impacted the organization. The CEO of an organization is noted as being a significant contributor to the public reputation of the institution the person leads. The public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller (2001) has studied this

phenomenon and found through its research of a variety of influential business groups that the CEO is estimated to contribute 48 percent to the reputation of the organization. This CEO influence on the reputation of an organization provides significant payoffs the more favorable the reputation of the CEO. The payoffs included better financial health for the organization, public and target audience belief of the institutional messages even during times of negative media reporting, and more positive long-term relationships by members of constituencies important to the institution. In the business world, the reputation of the CEO has a direct impact on the financial health of the organization. Larcker notes that a 10 percent positive change in the reputation of the CEO is represented by a 24 percent increase in the market capitalization of the company (Gaines-Ross, 2003, p. 16).

The role of corporate communicator as the chief promoter of the organization and protector of its reputation is recognized as a very important function of the organization president and chief executive officer (CEO). In fact, it is often the case that the president or CEO is the literal image of the organization (Pincus, Rayfield, & Debonis, 1991).

Organizational leaders have many external groups that are stakeholders in the organization with which they must communicate. Known as publics, they include consumers, employees, stock holders, prospective employees, employee and community groups, families, legislators, business partners, and publics important to the welfare of the organization. Corporations develop specific identities with the various publics with whom they must communicate. The identity created “is intended to call attention to, and differentiate, the individual and organization from others in a cluttered commodity marketplace” (Park & Berger, 2004, p. 97). Connecting with these publics is important to the success or failure of the institution (Miller & Tuttle, 2006). This success extends to recruiting new employees and

leaders. In a study completed for Hill and Knowlton, graduates of leading institutions granting Master of Business Administration degrees cited how well a CEO communicates with all stakeholders as being a key performance indicator when evaluating an organization for which they are being recruited to work (Hill & Knowlton, 2008).

The Community College President

In this section, I explored the job of community college president, how individuals carry out the responsibilities of the job, and the connection of the roles within the job and the effort to communicate the mission, vision and values of the institution. How presidents view themselves in the role was be explored as well.

What Presidents Do

To begin a study of the role of communications and president of community college, understandings of what presidents are known to do while serving as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is important. What exactly do they do? This issue was explored by George B. Vaughan in his book *The Community College President* (1986). In the chapter, *The President in Office*, Vaughan describes duties, responsibilities, roles, frustrations, and pressures facing community college presidents.

The community college president is no longer the founding president of the institution as was the case for many institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. The community college CEO has become both a business leader and a manager and has moved away from the position of educational leader and entrepreneur once associated with the position. As the community college has evolved from a new partner with the community in education to an established provider of training, retraining, and degree attainment, the work of the CEO has changed. Vaughan found

that the CEO is now more of a marketer, tone-setter, interpreter, money manager, and politician (p. 54).

Hood, Miller, and Pope (1999) describe the working roles of the community and two year college president as the leader of the institution for articulation of vision, and acting as spokesperson, interpreter, and chief executive administrator (p.4). Along with carrying out these roles, the college president must be a civic and community leader, spouse, parent, and more. Balancing these demands was often difficult and requires that the person develop a focus and not attempt to do all things for all people and constituents of the institution.

Presidents see themselves playing a variety of roles and acting in a variety of ways to fit the roles they view as important. Eddy (2005) notes that some presidents see themselves as being visionary and charismatic leaders while others identify as team players and servant leaders. Still others find themselves to be the ultimate decision-maker or more of the leading manager for the institution.

Challenges, Frustrations, and Pressures

With the role and patterns of leadership of the community college president comes frustration and pressures. Vaughan (1986) describes the many frustrations faced by the CEO and indicates that the majority of these frustrations come from the day-to-day operations. Included in the list of frustrations are economic turmoil, politics, coordination of messages and interactions with a variety of internal and external groups, time constraints, and personnel decisions (pp. 64 – 65).

The pressures that face the president come primarily from the position that the community college has in the educational chain within a community. It tends to be between K through 12 institutions and the traditional four-year, degree-granting institutions. The community

college must be responsive to the needs of local residents, businesses, and educational institutions because of this place in the supply chain. It needs to be responsive to the community more so than the traditional four-year institution, as the community college president faces a variety of pressures from groups both internal and external to the college with unique agendas. Vaughan (1986) includes local businesses, unions, politicians, and minority groups and states that “the pressure from special interest groups can become intense” (p. 74)

The role played by the press in the work of the community college president was discussed by Vaughan (1986, p. 77). The author discussed a case that highlights the role of the press in the work and success of a community college president in which the fallout from press coverage caused strain for the entire community college system, not just for the individual college involved.

Community college presidents have a variety of roles and lead with at least four different patterns. The multiplicity of roles and leadership styles used bring many operational and personal frustrations and pressures for these individuals. Conflict was inherent in the job. “The college president who does not know how to deal with and be comfortable with conflict resolution is not going to make it today” (p. 78).

Hood, Miller, & Pope (1999) identified a variety of challenges facing the two year college president. Six stand out in their study. First was the need to keep the campus current with technology and its challenge of finding the funds required. The presidents also identified the challenge of building partnerships with business and industry. Keeping high quality faculty and helped them grow was another challenge. As much as the presidents want closer relationships with business and industry, they also wanted closer ties and more articulation opportunities with

high schools. Finally, the challenge of obtaining the needed financial resources to meet the mission of the institution was noted as being high on the list for the two year college president.

The President as Manager

Vaughan (1986) discusses the role of manager as it relates to the community college president. The president must be “a manager of values, a manager of change, and, just as important, a manager of the routine” (p. 61). As a manager in the institution, the president must connect management of the routine with the management of the vision so that both the near-term and long-term operations of the institution are assured.

The President as Leader

As the leading manager of the community college, Vaughan (1986) explored the role of the CEO as leader within the institution. Leadership was different from management. The role of management revolves around the administrative function of the institution. As leader, the community college president moved beyond the day-to-day administration of the institution and provides a vision of the future for the college. Vaughan described four leadership patterns from his research. These were the patterns of message carrier and interpreter, educational leader, campus tone and atmosphere creator, and external leader.

First was the pattern of community college movement leader and interpreter of the institutional message (p.56). In this role, the CEO extended the message of the movement from the college campus into the surrounding community.

The second pattern was that of education leader (p. 56). In this role, community college presidents deal with the development and management of curriculum, teaching, and learning.

This role extends beyond these traditional areas and include helping to provide access to

education for students and to provide external support to gain the resources needed for the work of faculty and staff.

A third pattern was that of mood-setter and the leading developer of the environment of the institution (Vaughn, p. 58). The president set the tone for the institution. A positive tone helped to build morale of the faculty and staff which was considered essential for the success of the institution. Vaughan states that “The president must always exercise vigilance to see that all members of the college community work to produce a climate that assures a quality educational program” (p. 58). The tone of the institution helped to motivate people to do this successfully. Also with this pattern was the vision of the institution, and its establishment and articulation.

The fourth pattern was that of external leader (Vaughn, p. 59). In this role, the president worked with a variety of external people and groups including legislators, business leaders, special interest groups, other educational institutions, the press, and other groups served by the community college. The latter groups may be unique to the area served by the college. The president must be able to articulate the mission, vision, and values of the institution that help to provide support for the college from a variety of external groups. “The external leadership role is a major one for most presidents and is seemingly becoming more important with each passing day” (Vaughn, p. 59). Vaughan closes the discussion of this pattern with the role of public relations played by the president. This role was growing in importance as it relates to communicating with the various external groups important to the institution and the successfully delivering on the promise of its mission, vision, and values. Here, being able to work with the press was highlighted as an important requirement of the CEO.

Where Vaughan (1986) explored his findings of leadership patterns, Neumann and Neumann (1999) discussed three distinct strategic leadership skills. The first skill was visioning,

the ability to understand and articulate how the institution can be successful in the future. With this skill, the president does not see the status quo as being helpful in the long run and seeks change. A second skill was called focusing by the authors. This is a skill that moves the institution to a collective focus on the future rather than on the fundamentals of day-to-day functioning. The third skill was one that blends leader and managerial roles of the president. Described as implementing this skill helps the college by setting personnel, timing, and structural goals for the implementation of the processes needed to actualize the vision (p. 73).

The three skills discussed by Neumann and Neumann (1999) are important because each one relate directly to the financial health of an institution. Taken together, the three skills define the strategic leadership type of president. An important finding of the study was that the strategic style of the president when more of a manager, named by the authors as an “implementer” or “maintainer” (p. 76), lowers the enrollment and resource growth. A more managerial leader style was consistent with institutional quality either increasing minimally or declining. Of the institutions studied those with leaders whose styles were more managerial tended to be in decline.

College presidents used patterns of leadership and the associated skills to make sense of the environment and issues within the college’s environment. Eddy (2005) discussed how important this was in times of uncertainty. This role of sense maker was comparable to the vision skill described by Neumann and Neumann (1999) in that the president makes sense of situations by placing them in the framework of the vision for the college. Feedback loops help to make the vision clear for all constituent groups and thus help each group understand the sense of the situation in context of the vision.

The President as Communicator

Two year college presidents believe that being a communicator was the most important role of the leader (Hood, Miller, and Pope, 1999). Nearly 97 percent of the 96 two year college presidents who participated in this study listed being a communicator as very or somewhat important. This role was rated as the leading and most important role of the president. Presidents who are able to communicate successfully with a variety of institutional constituents tend to be able to move the vision of the institution forward. This ability to communicate seems opposed to the challenges identified by the authors which are more administrative in nature. Yet, the participants said clearly that being a successful communicator within the institution to constituencies such as employees, faculty, and administrators is more important than being able to administer to meet the tough challenges noted.

Ross and Halstead (2001) carried out an extensive study of college presidents and the role of communications in carrying out the mission and articulating the vision of the institution. In this study, 80 percent of the 623 participants strongly agreed that communicating with public relations tools and skills was very important to the success of the president and the institution. As the leading communicator for the college, the president uses the tools and skills of public relations to promote the institution, protect and enhance its reputation, and move forward the mission and goals of the institution by communicating with internal and external audiences.

Successful college presidential communicators used a variety of formats to communicate with institutional constituents (Eddy, 2005). These presidents used very human means such as face-to-face meetings as well as print and electronic media. While the experiences of the president tends to direct use of one or a few tools with which to communicate, successful communication comes from the analysis of the many ways with which communication can be

accomplished and then matched with the needs of the constituents. Finally, multiple feedback loops helped the president refine and better target the messages sent to the various institutional constituent groups.

Effective communication flows through channels that were both vertical and horizontal (Hoff, 1999). Multidimensional flow of information helps build relationships among the president, institution, and constituencies and brings with it successful long-term communications. There tends to be many unique constituencies that were important to the college. Alsop (2004) notes how important it was to know precisely who makes up these groups and to communicate with them in ways that fit each group. From the corporate world, these groups can include customers, employees, prospective employees, retirees, past employees, value chain partners that includes suppliers and distributors, investors and potential investors, government officials, regulatory agents, competitors, news media, social and environmental activists, and members of the local community. For the community college, we included constituency groups such as alumni, union members, donors, and organizations with which there are articulation opportunities. Vaughan (1986) also supported these attributes of the president to identify and communicate with a variety of constituency groups.

The President and the Media

To promote an organization, CEOs are increasingly working with journalists to create third party credibility for messages sent to target audiences. This role of chief communicator and reputation manager for the organization is now an “unwritten part of every CEO’s job description” (Garbett, 1988, p. 246). And, in some cases, it was written as an area of functional responsibility for the organizational leader. Gaines-Ross notes that the power of the media and

its interest in the CEO of organizations makes this audience of the institution one the most crucial stakeholders (p. 20).

Presidents themselves identified the media as being a very important audience and the development of good media relations as key to the success of the president and the institution (Ross & Halstead, 2001). The authors described how presidents divide their attention to press relations between developing positive coverage in a consistent and prominent way and minimizing negative coverage. The study found that in the view of presidents and trustees of colleges positive media relations help to provide validation of the mission, vision, and values of the organization by a third party, the press. News stories tended to be very visible and generate responses from the publics to which they were directed. News tended to create images within the minds of the public that can be positive or negative in relation to the reputation of the institution. Current news created a sense of urgency within target audiences. Colleges used the news coverage to help enhance its reputation by reprinting or in other ways distributing the messages from the media to other targeted audiences.

As the chief spokesperson and image leader of the community college, presidents “must be able to speak to a variety of audiences, internal...and external to the institution” (Torres & Evans, 2005, p 74). This included speaking to a variety of audiences in many different and public settings because “The community college president is the public face and voice of the institution” (Torres & Evans, 2005, p 74).

There were many strategies and associated tactics that can be utilized by presidents to successfully work with and through the media. Vaughan (1989) cautions that the president should be concerned with her/his reputation and its mystique when dealing with the press. He points out that not every question from the media should be answered and that there should be a

staff that can be helpful to the media rather than having all media relations go through the institutional CEO. In addition, Vaughan stated that when attempting to correct an error in fact or interpretation of fact by the media, someone other than the president should confront the issue to keep the position of the president as a positive one.

Sample (2002) follows Vaughan's theme as he described a systematic approach to dealing with the media. Sample explained how presidents work for positive press coverage to advance the institution by telling its story to a variety of followers and supporters. The author also noted that limiting negative coverage was as important as getting positive stories covered by the press. Sample noted that press coverage can elevate the college "in the eyes of donors, politicians, business leaders, and other influential people" (p. 166).

Media coverage was identified as critical in advancing the mission and vision of the college by reaching targeted audiences that were important to the institution. In addition, working with the press can lower the impact of negative stories and help to protect the reputation of the college. The president played a leading role in this effort to advance the institution by communicating its message of mission, vision, and values.

The president should be concerned with working with and through the media to advance the institution because there was evidence to suggest that press coverage helps in many ways. For example, the academic reputation of the college can be enhanced and protected, new programs and services can be highlighted, internal groups can better understand the vision and the mission of the institution, and a competitive position can be articulated by the college leadership in the local community. Positive press helped every area of the college including academics, admissions, athletics, business and university partnerships, community relations, fund development, legislative relations, and student recruitment. In addition, a proactive media

relations plan with the college president as its chief spokesperson can be very helpful in a time of crisis (Ross & Halstead, 2001).

Synthesis

Much has been written about the media, the institution, and the CEO with regard to business firms and traditional four-year colleges. The CEO of an organization was noted as being a significant contributor to the public reputation of the institution the person leads. This CEO influence on the reputation of an organization provided significant benefits the more favorable the reputation of the CEO. Benefits included better financial health for the organization, public and target audience belief of the institutional messages even during times of negative media reporting, and more positive long-term relationships by members of constituencies important to the institution. In the business world, the reputation of the CEO has a direct impact on the financial health of the organization as noted in the literature.

The community college president has become both a business leader and a manager and has moved away from the position of educational leader and entrepreneur once associated with the position. As the community college has evolved from a new partner with the community in education to an established provider of training, retraining, and degree attainment, the work of the CEO has changed. Presidents have evolved into roles of articulation of vision, spokespersons for the community college, marketers, and chief executive administrators. The changing roles and demands have created new challenges, pressures and frustrations for persons serving in this leadership position.

To promote an organization, CEOs were increasingly working with journalists to create third party credibility for messages sent to target audiences. Media coverage has been identified as critical in advancing the mission and vision of the college by reaching targeted audiences that

are important to the institution. In addition, working with the press can lower the impact of negative stories and help to protect the reputation of the college. The president played a leading role in this effort to advance the institution by communicating its message of mission, vision, and values. Yet, little research has been done with regard to the community college, its CEO, and the press.

Conclusion

Community college presidents worked in an environment of change and challenge. Communication with publics important to the community college have become important to the institutional leaders as they work to advance the institution. The media has become an important part of the communication effort of community college presidents.

The community college was often a significant if not the center of community learning opportunities, activities, culture, athletics, and information. The community college exists to meet the needs of the local community and does so with many different forms of education and training offerings. With a student-centered approach to teaching and learning, the community college operates in a different way than many traditional colleges. To ensure its continued existence by attaining support from the local community, working with and through the media to tell the institutional story was important. The president of the community college must lead that effort as the chief spokesperson for the institution.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe the role of communications of the president of the community college as it related to working with and through the media (press) to reach target markets (publics) with messages delivered by credible third parties (press) to advance the mission of the institution. In this chapter, I described the research methodology selected, rationale for its selection, research questions, research process and the role of the researcher.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I explored incidents within the community college that provided a successful expression of the institutional message to publics of interest to the institution with the community college president as the key institutional leader working with and through the media. This inquiry was about who did what, when, where and why. This led to an understanding of how the positive outcomes were achieved.

A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized to address this overarching question. The case study method provided an advantage to other research strategies such as an experiment that “deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context, a history that dealt with “noncontemporary events” and surveys that were limited in their exploration of the context of the cases being studied (Yin, p. 13). The case method preserved the context and affords a holistic view of the process under consideration (Gummesson, 1991). The use of a multi-case approach was preferred in that it is intended that the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings were strengthened (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29). The case study was the preferred research strategy for this study in that it did “contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2003, p. 1) with regard to how

community college presidents work with and through the media successfully to advance the community college.

In support of the multi-case approach, Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggested that the multi-case findings were “more compelling, and they are more likely to lend themselves to valid generalization” (p. 440). Themes are allowed to emerge from the multi-case study through the comparison of multiple types of data both within each case and then among the cases which provides a more holistic reporting of the attributes being studied (Merriam, 1998).

The use of a case study was chosen “because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 28 – 29). In addition, qualitative data provides thick, rich descriptions which emerge during observations, field work, and interviews with participants and therefore tends to be specific to the particular case under study (Merriam, 1998). There was a variety of sources of evidence including interviews and documents. Dealing with multiple sources of evidence was a unique strength of the case study methodology (Yin, 2003, p. 8).

This study was designed to allow for the characteristics of qualitative research to be effective. This included the holistic nature of qualitative inquiry, the natural setting in which the investigation occurred, and the smaller population of study versus the larger number of participants necessary for statistical significance in quantitative research (Merriam, 1998). There was no control over behavioral events. The research described and illustrated the patterns used to successfully work with and through the media by community college presidents and explained complex causal links in the real-life interventions studied (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

The focus of this study was to examine how community colleges communicate with and through the media to advance the institution and do so with the direct involvement of the

president of the institution. These success stories came from the list of Paragon Award winners selected annually by the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) and cross referenced with the list of college presidents from the membership list of the American Association of Community Colleges. The success stories were for both sample selection and analysis. The NCMPR is the only organization that represents marketing and public relations professionals at community, technical and junior colleges in North America. As the focus of this study is on the role of the community college president in working with and through the media to advance the institution, it was important to connect the Paragon Award winners with institutions where the president was deeply involved in a situation that created the opportunity to be considered for and received the award.

A screening process was used to first learn about the pool of possible cases from the Paragon Award documentation. These candidate cases were reduced by exploring the level of involvement in each case by the president of the community college.

Evidence came from documentation submitted by the community college for consideration of Paragon Award committee, archival records from the college, NCMPR and media and interviews with the community college presidents and public relations staff members. Semi-structured interviews with the selected institutional presidents were conducted. In addition, interviews were conducted with strategic public relations staff members who were actively involved in the cases under study.

Questions were of the “how” and “why” type. Questions of these types are more explanatory in nature which supports the use of case study. And, the cases under study were not able to be manipulated which is another indication that case study is a preferred method of study

for these events. In addition, the cases examined have a contemporary focus which is a situation where case study is effective (Yin, 2003).

Field notes were recorded in a journal as the interviews are recorded with an audio recording device. Field notes were condensed and placed into a larger file for examination.

Case study was utilized to discover what patterns and themes emerged among the decisions that were made by the president and why they were taken in implementing a successful media communication effort within notable individual cases (Yin, 2003). Cross-case analysis helped to discover what common patterns and themes there were within these cases and that are found across all cases under examination with the decisions of the president being the focus. As a research strategy, “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Schramm, 1971, cited in Yin, 2003).

Merriam (1998) discussed the characteristic of the case as a bounded entity and that this characteristic was the most defining. In the community college cases studied here, the involvement of the president on the event for which the Paragon Award was given is bounded by the context of the event itself making the investigation well suited for the case study design. The population of this research is bounded by the quality of having been examined by a panel of industry experts as judges and then recognized with the Paragon Award.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study and primary or central research question were to describe the role of communications of the presidents of community college that relates to working with and through the media (press) to reach constituencies (publics) with messages delivered by credible

third parties (press) to advance the mission of the institution. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What practices do the presidents of four exemplary community colleges use when working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
2. What do four presidents of exemplary community colleges believe about working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
3. What individual skills and attributes helped to form these practices and beliefs?
4. How do the presidents organize and deploy their human resources in this successful case?

Participants and Sites

Purposeful sampling was used to select four institutions that are Paragon Award winners and have presidents who were active in the media success story recognized with the award. According to Creswell (2003), purposeful sampling also helped this researcher in that “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore, must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). Specifically, institutions achieving the recognition of the Paragon Award in the “Media Success Story” category were reviewed for direct involvement of the president in the events that led to the recognition of success.

The study was limited to the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) Paragon Award Winners for the years 2001 through 2009 and within categories that involved the community college communicating with and through the media. This awards

program recognized outstanding achievement in communications at community, junior and technical colleges. The category of interest was Media Success Story. There were three awards given in each category annually.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) was utilized to provide the names and contact information for the presidents of the Paragon Award winners. This organization represents 1,100 two-year institutions in the United States and Canada with a few institutions outside of these nations. Institutions from the AACC were eligible if they were award winners in the Media Success Story category of the Paragon Awards. The AACC has as its members the higher administration from these institutions and has a broader scope than does the NCMPR. The NCMPR was affiliate council of the AACC.

Letters were sent to the selected award winning community college presidents and public relations officers asking them to participate in this research project (Appendix A). Presidents were asked to participate in an interview lasting about one hour. Public relations officers were asked to participate in a separate interview lasting approximately one hour. Telephone calls were made to confirm the interview as scheduled.

Data Collection

For each institution, open-ended, semi-structured interviews consisting of one hour with the institutional president and one hour with the institutional public relations officer were conducted. Two additional hours were allocated to allow for the examination of documentary evidence from the submission of information that was utilized to consider institutions for the Paragon Award. An interview protocol form (Appendix B) was utilized to support the interview sessions.

The semi-structured interview was guided by the list of questions, but not constrained by them. The use of semi-structured interviews was designed to allow for the complete exploration of themes or topics through the inclusion of flexibility that provides opportunities for in-depth follow-up questions. The researcher responded to new ideas and topics that emerged and followed the new direction established if appropriate and helpful. One set of questions was prepared for the president (Appendix C), while a second set was prepared for the public relations officer (Appendix D). The purpose of the questions was to keep the interviewer on target and on topic. This ensured that important topics are covered and that the questioning foundation was consistent across all participants interviewed. Interviews were recorded with an audio recording device.

It was intended that the interviews be completed on the campus of the institution being studied. These visits allowed the researcher to meet the participants personally and individually. This helped the researcher better understand the campus and community environment as well as the individuals working within these environments.

Field notes were kept in a notebook that served as a journal of the time spent with the community college presidents and the public relations staff members. In this notebook it was intended that the researcher record interview details, sketches of models that seem to be reflected in the data being gathered and thoughts of the researcher as the interviews progressed. From the transcribed notes of each interview and with the field notes as input, individual case reports were written.

In each case, the documentation from the Paragon Award process was examined. These documents helped the researcher understand how the case was presented for consideration, what criteria were used for determining the exemplary aspects of each case and what additional

information might be helpful to the research from documents outside of those presented in the award application.

Data Analysis

Each interview session was audio recorded with the permission of the participants via signed consent forms (Appendix E). The recordings were transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions were provided to the participants for member-checking purposes to include content review and accuracy. Following the member checks, revised transcripts were provided to participants at their request. An audit trail describing all details of data collection, development of categories and the decisions made along the way were maintained throughout the study by the researcher to help maintain trustworthiness and reliability. Dependability was addressed through careful and systematic attention to the audit trail as it was created and analyzed.

Data was organized by utilizing computer word processing software to transfer field notes and the transcribed interviews into one document. This document was reviewed and enhanced by highlighting thematic text, coding notations and developing additional input to aid the understanding of the document. Data from the Paragon Award process documentation along with other artifacts were used to augment this compiled document.

For text analysis, computer software were utilized to index, sort, search and theorize. Pattern-matching and more specifically explanation-building from the patterns discovered were utilized to analyze the data (Yin, 2003). Coded data was displayed, when appropriate, in matrices and networks to help the researcher see patterns and relationships.

From the individual case reports and analysis, cross-case conclusions were drawn. Common conclusions from the cases aided in providing an expansion of the external

generalizability of the findings (Yin, 2003). Detailed descriptions of each case and the context within which the case occurred assisted the issue of transferability.

Trustworthiness

Triangulation is a process by which validity of the data is established through the collection and examination of multiple types of data and comparing the sources of information (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation strengthens the accuracy of the findings in qualitative inquiry and thus increases the internal validity of the study (Creswell, 2003). Triangulation of the data was achieved through examination of the documentary evidence including, but not limited to, the supporting materials provided during the Paragon Award nomination process, Paragon Award committee minutes, newsletters covering the case of interest, news reports and citations of recognition. Additional triangulation was achieved through the use of field notes, peer debriefing and critiques by an educational researcher.

Merriam (1998) defined internal validity in qualitative research as how well the research findings match with reality. Merriam also noted that reliability, or the extent to which replication of findings in a study are possible, is enhanced. Internal validity was aided by developing detailed field notes of each case and moving them to a journal. Pattern-matching was also helpful here. Reliability was aided through the process of coding the data and reducing it to themes. An audit trail described all details of data collection, development of categories and the decisions made along the way maintained throughout the study by the researcher to help maintain internal validity and reliability. Dependability was addressed through careful and systematic attention to the audit trail as it was created and analyzed.

Role and Biases of the Researcher

This researcher has been an active public relations professional for over 20 years.

Experiences include being a marketing communications agency owner with a focus on public relations for corporate, political and not-for-profit clients. An assumption of the study was that community college presidents are recognized as the chief communicators for their institutions and as such must work with and through the media to advance the mission, vision and values of the institution. And, they must do this to reach and communicate with a wide variety of publics that influence the direction of the institution.

Some of the most difficult challenges I have faced have come from poorly crafted messages, unplanned communication with members of the media and a lack of understanding of how the media develops stories and why. Working with and through the media to build or protect the reputation of an organization was a process that should include the development of a strategic plan, development of messages that fit the plan, delivery of the messages in forms acceptable to the receiver, evaluation of feedback and then adjusting messages based upon feedback.

Relationships with members of the press must be developed and nurtured to develop working processes that are effective for both the media members and those wishing to communicate with and through them.

In my experience, communication failures occur more often from the person about which the story will be written. This comes from organizational leaders who have not developed relationships with reporters, are afraid of communicating with members of the press and where no public relations strategy has been developed. In my experience, it was rare to experience a reporter not attempting due diligence in the creation of a story. It was common for the person or institution that is the focus of the story to ignore, obfuscate, distort or outright lie about the

situation. Another problem starter for leaders of organizations was to push the press off onto some underling when it was the organizational leader the media wants to talk with.

To carry out this role effectively, presidents of community colleges must have a strong working relationship with their key media representatives. Good working relationships with members of the press that are president-to-media and not through other spokespersons for the institution were very important. These working relationships also must be understood not to be one where the press reports for the institution, but reports about the institution. Presidents of community colleges were assumed to have a strong interest in working with and through the media, old and new, to advance the mission, vision, and values of their institutions.

Conclusion

In this study, I explored incidents within the community college that provided a successful expression of the institutional message to publics of interest to the institution with the community college president as the key institutional leader working with and through the media. This inquiry was about who did what, when, where and why. This led to an understanding of how the positive outcomes were achieved. A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized.

Cases for consideration came from the list of Paragon Award winners selected annually by the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) and cross referenced with the list of college presidents from the membership list of the American Association of Community Colleges. For each institution, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with the institutional president and the institutional public relations officer were conducted. Case reports were created, member checked and analyzed. Common conclusions were reported along with detailed descriptions of each case. Findings are reported some of which may have both policy and practical implications.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study of four community college presidents who have been noted for their successful efforts to advance their institutions with the news media. Included in the analysis and findings are the presidents' views regarding the challenges, rewards, and frustrations they experienced as they developed and implemented news media communication strategies, as well as the interactions they had with members of the media.

Each institution is introduced by describing the settings of each campus and a description of the service area and environment. The events for which the individual institutions are recognized by the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) are discussed. Next, the participating presidents are introduced through a description of their individual settings and backgrounds. The public relations lead executive is introduced next with descriptions of individual backgrounds. Findings are presented in part by direct quotes from the individuals interviewed to provide rich and thick context that is a cornerstone of a qualitative study. From the review of documentation related to the case being studied for each institution including the submission books for award consideration by the NCMPR, newspaper reports, television transcripts, and event invitations, a deeper analysis was achieved. The findings reported in this chapter are presented by individual institution. For each institution, the following is covered: (a) the events for which each institution is recognized, (b) the individual presidents, (c) the individual public relations lead executives, and (d) a collective profile of a community college president successfully working with and through the media to advance the institution and conclusion.

Participants and Sites

A list of 26 community colleges that were award winners in the Media Success Story category for the Paragon Awards of the NCMPR from 2001 through 2009 was utilized to develop the participants for this study. Initially, 10 presidents were contacted with four agreeing quickly to participate. The six presidents not included in the study were encouraging and open to participating should any of the other presidents and institutions become unable to participate. For the four institutions included in this study, the presidents and public relations lead executives were interviewed, and then the data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify emerging categories, patterns, and themes.

The presidents and public relations leads were promised confidentiality in order to maintain the integrity of the data and to create a climate conducive to candid and rich responses. First name pseudonyms were utilized and assigned to each president and public relations lead executive to facilitate consistency and context of the narrative, and to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The presidents were very open and candid regarding their successes and challenges they found as the leader of the institutions and identified as chief communicators of the institutional message when the media contacted the institutions. The lead public relations officers tended to be more process-oriented relating to the individual tools and tactics used in each event, though also open and candid about their role in communicating the institutional message.

The presidents, three men and one woman, were in their forties, fifties, and sixties. Three women and one man serving as public relations lead executives were interviewed. All of the public relations lead executives had extensive experience with the institutions involved in the cases; each president had been leading their institution for four or more years. Each of the

participants, regardless of position within the institution, expressed a deep commitment to and understanding of their individual institutions.

The presidents participating in the study had career backgrounds that varied. Two presidents came from the ranks of faculty, one came from a career in academic administration, and one came from a mixed background of military and business leadership. The public relations lead executives all had some form of communication career background. Three of the four were former members of the press with two being on-air news anchors and reporters and the third a print media reporter. The fourth public relations lead executive had been involved in communication for institutions of higher education as a career.

The colleges ranged in size from campuses with an unduplicated headcount of 4,000 to more than 13,000. Two institutions were located in what would be considered rural communities serving sizable geographic areas, while two institutions were located in urban settings serving large populations with more condensed geographic markets.

Susan's College – Baker College

Susan is the president of a large community college with three campuses and two satellite educational centers located in a large urban area along the east coast of the United States. In the community served by her institution, there are many institutions of higher learning from well known exclusive private colleges and universities to community, technical, and junior colleges. The geographic area from which Susan's institution draws students is a finely focused footprint of five miles around the campus. Public transportation is an important part of student access to the institution. Campus student body growth has put stress on the institution with regard to classroom space and forced it to be creative with regard to how the college can continue to meet the needs of students and the demand for services while working within tight budget constraints.

I came to the institution by public rail transportation. The exit from the rail line to the main entrance to the campus was designed much like a business office building with a rather sterile entrance. Once inside the main building of the campus, the institution's student focus became clear as signs welcomed students and directed them to the many student service offices located close to the main entrance. There were several buildings all connected by a series of enclosed corridors and staircases. At times, it was difficult to know exactly which building I was in.

I was greeted by the public relations lead executive and offered time to get my equipment ready for the interviews to come. The administrative space was long and a bit narrow with every available space utilized.

The president's office was very well organized and displayed the president's love of art. The president was dressed in a business suit, was friendly, personable, professional, and very interested in my topic. The staff seemed professional and were comfortable with the president. The president's love for the work of students and their success was obvious. In fact, the president noted that some of her colleagues would continue working because they would be financially challenged if they retired. She, on the other hand, would continue to work because she enjoys helping students achieve and working to help the institution advance.

Baker College Event – Academic Offering

The event for which Baker College had been recognized was actually a new way of offering academic opportunities for students at the institution. Offering classes via a variety of methodologies and at times that fit unique student needs was becoming challenging to the academic leaders and faculty of Baker College. The new way of offering classes was suggested

by faculty and was so unique that it stood out within the region, the nation, and the educational sector.

The new academic delivery provided a time and place that fit a small but important group of students at Baker College. The marketing of the new time and place was rather simple due to the demographics, psychographics, demogeographics, and buyer behaviors of the narrow target group. The members of this target market wanted face-to-face classes, not electronic or web-based classes. They could attend classes at times when other student target groups had no interest in attending. The demographics of the group members were similar to other groups served by the college, but specific work, lifestyle, and life stage characteristics meant that the new time and place for classes would fit, whereas more traditional and electronic delivery methods and availabilities would not.

To work for the students in this target market, two things were needed—faculty willing to work at times not within normal business hours, specifically beginning at midnight, and classroom space. Space on campus was open due to the time of delivery for the intended classes because the campus was normally closed with no classes offered face-to-face at the time that the new classes would be offered. Faculty members self-selected and offered to teach these students at a time during the day when faculty would normally not be on campus. In fact, the faculty who volunteered to teach these classes were excited and eager to teach this group of students at the uncommon time on campus.

Beyond faculty and space availability, once classes were initiated it quickly became obvious that members of employee groups within the institution were needed to implement the classes. For example, janitorial and security staff would be needed. Physical facilities staff would need to turn on power and be ready to handle normal maintenance issues. The required staff

would not be large in numbers, but would need to be identified and recruited. Just as was the case with faculty members, staff members and volunteers self-identified to work for the students and the institution during the time of the classes.

This self-selection and the excitement to help the students in the unique target market, and to do so at a time of day when classes had not been held and the campus was closed, was a significant part of the story as the media developed it.

News media from the region were drawn to the story due to the way it served the local community. The national media were drawn to the story due to its unique way of serving students as well as the connection to the concept of expanded access for all students. This concept of expanded access was in the national press due to the concept being a part of an educational initiative by the President of the United States and the Secretary of the United States Department of Education.

Susan as President

Presidents help to develop the institutional culture that drives how these leaders and their PR teams work with and through the media to advance their individual institutions. Learned behaviors that come from early experiences help to prepare this president for cultural leadership. The following is an example of how Susan develops this culture.

When I was working on my MFA, we were taught one thing above and beyond any other thing as were all struggling to become artists, which was that in order to be noticed as an artist you must have a gimmick and it really doesn't matter in the end how valuable your gimmick will be. It will prolong its longevity, its value, but you won't get noticed in the first place unless you have a gimmick. Now I tend to think in terms of how gimmicks will be of value because I'm not just for the show.

Throughout the interview, Susan used the term "gimmick" to describe how the associated campaign for which the institution was recognized had a quick connection or "hook" for the

media to pick up, cover, and ultimately develop a success story that gained wide ranging coverage for Baker College.

This early experience was a “trial by fire” according to Susan in her first college presidency. It led to concept of “gimmick” and using a “gimmick” to craft how to present a story to the media so that it would gain attention and coverage. She needed to simplify and make clear what a complex budget process and potential rejection of funding for her institution by a variety of funding partners would mean to the community.

There was a ritual at that institution that occurred every single year between October and April and that was that the 21 local school districts had to approve the college’s budget because they each contributed a proportionate share based on the number of students that came from their school district to college and so while here, for example, we receive state appropriation and while in other situations, community colleges may gain the bulk of their funds from local property taxes supplemented by student tuition. So every single year, the 21 school districts took a vote on my budget, and I had to get a majority, and if I didn’t, the budget wasn’t passed.

So as a result, I wanted to keep costs down for students. They didn’t like that even though they were their students because they wanted to keep the money for their individual school districts, so I ended up literally having to go to 21 school district meetings repeatedly from October through April. As a result, I showed up in the local press of the 21 school districts probably at least monthly, and I ended up showing up in the newspaper in the State capital very frequently and probably even more often on television because finally it came down in my first year of my presidency there, I simply pronounced that if they didn’t pass the budget, because we were heading into April, I was going to close the college. Oh and you can image the sound bite that provided.

To an institution that had been there since 1940 something I think and had 10, 11 thousand students at it and so once I said I was going to close the college, of course, everyone wanted to speak with me. So television cameras came on campus. I mean I didn’t have to even go anywhere. I eventually learned how to use a sound bite and how to simply keep repeating the same thing over and over and over again no matter what the question was because I was sure that I had a message and the message I had had to simply be repeated or it wouldn’t show up even once

This learned behavior was used in the recent media success story that was discussed with Susan.

I recall when the New York Times was talking to me I thought this is going to be hard to get a sound bite, and it's going to be hard to make the New York Times think this is important enough to put in a prominent place, right? So I decided that when I spoke to them I would compare myself to the old lady who lived in a shoe because that's kind of a catchy phrase and so when they said to me, 'Well, how are you managing all this?', I said I've likened myself to an old lady who lived in a shoe because I figured if there was any sound bite that was going to captivate them that might do it and they did and they put it on the front page of the Times.

Early experiences, including educational experiences, helped Susan to understand the visual aspects of stories and media coverage.

Another thing you have to understand is that even though I come from a visual arts background because my master of fine arts degree is in color-color theory, painting, and intaglio printmaking processes, that still isn't a far cry from media... it helped me in terms of what my persona would be like when I'm speaking to the media, what my face should look like on television.

Susan described how learned behaviors from experience created skills that would be helpful in crafting and presenting a message to the media that could move the institution forward. Her experience of putting into simple terms a complex funding model and what the potential of funding rejection by multiple partners would do to the institution in her first presidency developed the skill of making the complex simple. She also developed the skill of painting word pictures that illustrate the story she is trying to tell. Including the skills of developing a good gimmick or story hook, how a person should look on television, and how to use a sound bite, Susan described how the concept of being approachable was key to a cultural atmosphere that allows ideas and stories to gain a foothold.

We finally hit the right gimmick which was the midnight classes and it happened in all honesty, not out of my doing, it happened from the faculty members and they're just very innocent, look around and realize that we didn't have the space to continue offering as many classes as we needed to because our student enrollment was going up so high and they just approached me and said, 'Well, we have space at midnight' and I thought that's it, let's do it.

My goal, of course, as president, when I was being taped all those times was to be approachable.

From learned behaviors and the skills developed from experience, habits and ways of thinking and acting are developed. Susan describes the habit of the repetitive sound bite and how this helps to maintain a consistent message. “That’s where my repetitive sound bite comes in. Because I can’t ever be quoted repeating the question that the reporter asked and being misled so that it sounds like a response.”

Good ideas are described as coming from energy and team involvement according to Susan. The culture at Baker College is such that ideas are supported, as is the habit of offering ideas and opening up the discussion of ideas. These habits lead to stories being developed that help the college meet its mission of service to students and the community.

Frankly, I have a lot of energy and I have a lot of ideas, as well as many other people in the college so why not be part of it? I typically am quite involved in anything and everything from the start here and as it gets legs, and as others begin to take ownership for it, I start to back off and move on to the next work that needs that kind of influence. I will spend an intense period of time on something that I’m trying to promote and it will be an intense pocket of time until it catches on and then I’ll move on to something else. Sometimes it’ll be two or three things that will have this intense pocket of time being devoted to them simultaneously by me until I move on to something else. I do whatever’s necessary.

The executive staff is involved in everything. The executive staff was involved in the brainstorming session with PR and me in terms of how or the vehicle for which we would publicize.

I think from a perspective of more value, there was a faculty member that came to me and then the department chair, they were right; we had too many students and not enough space. It was a solution and it was a good idea because it helps other students who couldn’t come to school otherwise be able to do so. So for me, whenever any community college can increase its presence, it’s visibility in which it resides, in our case within the city, which is immensely hard to do, that makes it a stronger institution. It makes individuals want to come here, whether as guest speakers like Sanjay Gupta last year, or whether it’s as faculty members, or whether it’s attracting administrators that are very qualified and experienced, but people want to go with a winner and so pragmatically, that was very helpful for us.

Okay, so you see, here is a gimmick with a really high value quotient. But it wasn’t my gimmick, it just happened to be a gimmick. In the best sense of the word gimmick, not like a pet rock, for example, I think because when the executive staff and PR sat down

and thought about how we were going to promote the classes, it was inevitable that it would be picked up by the media and once the associated press picked it up then it was national.

Again, keep in mind, we don't develop stories here. We develop programs that may or may not catch the interest of the media.

The habit of working with the media in the way that the media members want has its roots in Susan's early experiences.

Well you know, at face value a good story is a good story... you've got to be ready and if it's true that success really is when preparation meets opportunity, which I believe is the case, then that's what happens.

To be politically astute, to know what the reporter wants, to know what your message is, and to know the difference between the two. If someone calls me and wants to know my opinion on a topic, which is not going to be helpful to the college, then there's no reason for me to be the spokesperson. I think the hardest person to work with is the one that comes with the story already regardless of what their level of experience is.

You know in all honesty, I don't pay attention that much of who they are because it doesn't matter to me, what matters to me is what they want to know and what topic we're interested in, and how they're going to portray us. And, as far as I'm concerned it could be an amateur, first time on the job Globe reporter, and can be someone highly needed, it makes no difference to me. I mean they get the same level of respect and they get the same level of time to get there.

Rules that are a part of the culture within Baker College are described by Susan as being guided by learned behaviors and habits. These include the non-reactionary and systematic responses to ideas and media relations.

We don't do anything reactively. I think in a very systematic fashion there needs to be a step-by-step campaign to publicize anything new and to engage individuals and attract them to it and so for us whether it was midnight classes or whether it would've been, I don't know what else it would've been, we would've developed a strategy for it. We do things in a pretty orderly fashion here. The interesting thing I think about this institution is that we'll jump out and do something that looks crazy like midnight classes, but once the idea pops up, as unusual as it sounds, we'll then go about in a very systematic way of making sure it works.

Susan describes values that the institution displays that come partially from the leadership of the president. In addition to discussing the value of media coverage to the institution, Susan mentioned the values of fun-seeking, human quality, human touch, and truthfulness.

Sometimes, I mean I think sometimes when they do human interest stories about the students, for example, who have taken our midnight classes, that's strengthening the human touch. I would like the human quality to remain. I don't want to get so technologically advanced that we're all using Skype to speak to one another and that's all we need to do to see one another or that we're offering everything online. I like to be in the middle of it because otherwise this job is no fun. Then be really sure you're truthful. If you're not going to be engaging, be truthful.

The interview with Susan highlighted the concept of teamwork in carrying out a successful media relationship strategy. The interview with the public relations lead for Baker College helps to develop an understanding of how the team works together and how each member of the team brings skills and experiences to the effort of strategic media relations.

Susan talked about the work of a strategic media relations effort in terms of message development, finding a "gimmick" or story hook, and how energy and ideas lead to successful human interest stories being developed that gain media attention. Susan then connected these concepts of energy and ideas to media coverage by describing how the institution uses a systematic and strategic process to take good ideas and make them media worthy.

I think in a very systematic fashion there needs to be a step-by-step campaign to publicize anything new and to engage individuals and attract them to it and so for us whether it was project A or whether it would've been, I don't know what else it would've been, we would've developed a strategy for it. We do things in a pretty orderly fashion here. The interesting thing I think about this institution is that we'll jump out and do something that looks crazy like project A, but once the idea pops up, as unusual as it sounds, we'll then go about it in a very systematic way to make sure it works.

Susan leads by supporting the team with which she works and playing the role team members request of her. Her learned behaviors within the storytelling role included use of metaphor and visual descriptions. These behaviors help her as the chief communicator for the institution. Susan

understands the value of working with a public relations lead executive to help her be in the right place at the right time to tell the story of the institution and not get overrun with the work of getting the news media to want to listen to the story. While being skilled in storytelling to promote the institution, Susan values the tactical work that needs to be done in order for that story to be told and have meaning. In part because of this, Susan includes the lead public relations executive in the cabinet of the college.

Margaret, Public Relations Executive for Baker College

Susan was involved in the development of the midnight classes and the communication of those classes to and through the news media. However, the members of the institution who were involved in the creation and implementation of the idea had specific individual skills, such as course design and teaching that were used strategically, in a team effort, to develop and implement the program. The team helps to move what was an idea and energy to reality.

Margaret connected the brainstorming and creative thinking, and the involvement of Susan in the process, to the reality of creating a story that connects with the media and brings coverage of the story of the institution to life. Ideas are like an open door according to Margaret “Once you open up that door, it’s like now what?”

Strategy allows good ideas the opportunity to become successful. Baker College develops strategy in teams. The case examined here began with an idea coming forward from a faculty member. Brainstorming followed. The idea was developed more fully through the brainstorming process. Then, the idea was developed strategically and presented to the leadership team. Moving the idea to strategy answers a variety of questions that have to do with the mission, vision, and values of the institution and putting the idea into a strategic framework that is written and presented to the leadership team as Margaret explained.

We have what we call an executive staff. The president is on there, her personal assistant, my boss is on it, there's an executive director of foundation and development, we have a new director of sustainability, and we are hiring a new vice president and he will be on that, so it's a close compact group of people and they got involved in this also...I would bring my strategy and the president would ask to bring them some strategy and I would write it out and, like I said, you want to write these out. It's like a two or three page document. What's the strategy? Who do we want to hit? What's the collateral? What's the timeline? It's all in there.

For Baker College, the project that is the focus of this study came from the faculty. It then went to Susan and the leadership team for discussion, approval, brainstorming, and the development of institutional support. Then, a strategy was developed and agreed upon. From this point forward, Susan was involved as a spokesperson for Baker College. The work of the project that was developed with the strategic plan was carried out by members of the institutional team, including Margaret. The involvement of the president was fluid.

So the president's role in a situation like this, Susan helps to set the stage. The president was interviewed at the very beginning like an NPR interview which went all over. Then, she kind of was stepping back a little bit. But, then at a certain point when the media frenzy really started, then it was obvious that this was a presidential thing.

The strategy for the project was carried out with a variety of tools and tactics. The communication and media relations tools and tactics were developed, implemented, and evaluated by the PR Lead. Starting with the strategic guide, while these tools were being developed, the structure of the program was being developed by the faculty from which the idea came. An important aspect of the project is that Baker College did not create a story, the team created a program that created the story. Susan makes this clear, "Again, keep in mind, we don't develop stories here. We develop programs that may or may not catch the interest of the media."

As the structure of the program took shape, Margaret began to develop the media relations aspects that addressed the strategy. Understanding what journalists need is important and drives how the story is developed and presented for consideration by the media. The

president played no real role in this process. The story development and pitching process comes from the point-of-view of the journalist. Margaret starts the process by thinking like a journalist.

The first level of that is simply at the level of how do you talk to them? I really think this is crucial because journalists are very short with time, have to be quick, they are on a deadline, you have to have yourself been in a news room with a gun to your head. That's what I always tell people with an editor, I need that copy at 5:00. Where's the copy? You always have to have that image in your mind of how journalists work and they are very straight-shooting, very direct, they see thorough it.

Knowing how to work with journalists is the starting point. Establishing contacts and building relationships is the next step in the process. Who to contact is a part of the strategic communications plan developed for the institution that connects directly to the mission, vision, and values driving the institution. The program highlighted in this research was placed inside of the communications strategic plan meaning that the media members contacted reach target markets of importance to the college. Margaret explains how institutional messenger, message, and the journalists come together.

So you are always thinking what is the circulation? In newspaper for example, The Globe shoots right to the top. The Herald, it's kind of a tabloid paper, so we don't have many stories. Every once in a while though, they repeated the AP story and have done a few other stories with us. The Metro paper has done quite a bit on the project and it's read by so many people. The Business Journal is very important because obviously it's important to have good contacts in the business community. They broke the story on the project and they gave a page 1A cover story to the president. Radio; we had two from the local affiliated NPR network. We do broadcast media, and that's where it seems like you get on their radar screen they seem like they're much more subject to breaking news, you know like than the print media, but the broadcast media is another animal, you try and set it up for them.

I target specific media, like the New York Times. I don't want the academic newsletter, I want CNN, The New York Times, and the Washington Post.

I actually tailored a very specific email to the head of the regional Bureau Chief for the New York Times centered with background data. One of the things I've learned is that a lot of the truisms about media coverage in a case like this you can just throw out the window for example, it's old news and no one covers old news...not true. If it reaches a certain breaking point, media will start to feel like 'We've got to cover it' because everyone else is covering it. So, when the New York Times contacted us, it had already

been on page one of the Globe, it had already been on NPR twice, and it had already been on the AP, and the New York Times still covered it and put it on page 1A, above the fold.

Contacts and relationships lead to opportunities to pitch stories. This case started with the tailored contact approach to select media members. Then, media members began contacting Baker College. “We send out press releases though. I hope this doesn’t sound immodest, but this story and it’s almost true with other stories, the media comes to us.”

What makes the media come to the institution for the story has many attributes. Human interest, being a “good story,” and timing helps a story gain media momentum. Margaret discussed the surprise experienced by the leadership team due to the story gaining so much momentum so quickly.

We didn’t predict that it was going to take off like it did. From the very beginning said, ‘It’s a good story.’ What Susan pointed out, it had a lot of human interest. Yeah, that’s the story itself, having the good story.

Timing is everything. Our launch at this program coincided with the Obama Administration launching a major initiative, which I’m sure you know about. The President would provide that nation contact stuff, you know, the Obama Administration Initiative for Community Colleges. I remember with the Fox National reporter, I would see her in the morning and I said, ‘Oh do you know about the Obama thing?’ And then right away she starts Googling and that’s when it became part of the story. So that’s important.

The work for the PR Lead begins with strategy and continues with communicating with the media through established relationships and traditional public relations tools and tactics such as press release distribution. These actions mixed with some uncontrollable factors such as timing and having a good story with strong human interest helps to develop story momentum within the media. The most time consuming work for the PR Lead comes next. That is working the story.

Once the story has been developed to pitch to the media, and the press releases or other tools are created and distributed, contacting the media members begins.

We'll do a press release and the PR Newswire takes care of it for us (distributes the release to targeted media members) and then we do of course the local media...the release informs them.

Like let's say we had Sanjay Gupta here as a speaker then I will start working the phones and the like. Sometimes you just have to keep calling and calling and they never say 'Stop bothering us' because you're never speaking to the same person in the news. It's always somebody different. So, I've never had anyone say, 'Didn't you just call us?' The way that they see things structured is you're going to talk with somebody at one point and they're going to go to their editor and nine times out of ten if you ask them if they've heard of this, they say no. They're moving at a quick pace and so we do things like calling and establishing personal contacts. At the Globe, we have a very good personal contact now for example.

Press releases can lead to direct coverage from the release with no contact with the media member.

Because they're so short staffed and so low on resources, what I found they were doing, and this happens with our local press, they'll take the press release and just print it. That's the story.

But, with most stories that have depth, working the story requires time and energy to be spent to advance the story for the institution.

I can't tell you how much more time it took. I just can't tell you, incalculable. Because the phone just didn't stop ringing and then somebody was sitting in your chair. I set up all the video shoots, which was just hugely time consuming, which meant the logistics of finding where do they want to go, getting people to interview, and then when they arrived I stayed with them the whole time. It was very interesting. We went to workplaces and homes of some students. We went to a restaurant once to film. We went up on a rooftop, you know, we just went all over.

It was all the prep leading up to it, and they (the Gates Foundation team) were here almost a week and that was when I was trying to shuffle all the other stuff. And then for every single interview in this case I was there the entire interview. So, I was staying and sometimes going home, sometimes catching a nap, and going back and then staying however long for the activities. So, it's incalculable the amount of time this has taken.

My day starts out with x number of piles. One call from the Globe, and my day is gone. It can easily happen like that.

The story started a media frenzy that required even more time and energy. The story being as strong as a newsworthy case, Margaret and other members of the leadership team found

them managing the activities that surrounded multiple media member coverage as if it was the only job they have for the institution. It is an investment of institutional resources to help the media develop a story to share with their audiences, which helps advance the mission, vision, and values of the institution into the community. In this case, a large commitment of resources was required.

There were people coming in to take the shots. We had radio coming in. It's a big investment. I mean if you're going to have something like this, and it kind of falls in your lap, but when you have this opportunity to promote your college you just have to say 'this is it'. You don't say no. We've never said no to an interview. Even if the president couldn't be there, one of us would be there, so we never said no to the media.

It's just realizing that something like this is very demanding and that there's a lot of demands on the time, not just with me, but the professors, the staff, and everyone like that.

Even the student media matters. The student media member could then go to the main media, as you know, the student can end up on the Associated Press.

Who is allowed to speak to the press for the institution is determined by how open or closed the institution is to the media. Having an open style of dealing with media requests provides more access for media members and more risk for the institution in that someone may not speak clearly for the institution. Being more open or closed is a decision that then plays out when a media member comes to the institution following a story lead.

Yeah it's a personal decision and you know it can have a down side to it. But, what became obvious with this case was that the media wanted something. They wanted to speak to the professors. So we said, okay, you can speak to the professors.

I think that is a little bit of a personal style. I know for a fact that the person who was in this position previously had a really strict policy that no one spoke to the media. We weren't in the media that much. In this whole campaign there were no missteps, nobody goofed up.

Relationships with media member helps the PR Lead move stories forward for consideration. However, the people with which the relationships have been developed can move

to new positions and have no need for the news of the institution in their new positions. Relationship development and cultivation remains an important part of the institutional media strategy and recognizes that the people may change but the subject covered by the news outlet remains. “Peter was the higher education reporter and I worked so hard to cultivate that relationship. Then, he switched and now he’s general assignment. You know, you just try to work with the next person and realize that they are going to have different styles.”

Beyond the demands on the institutional leadership, as stories develop, the reactions of the people contacted by the media within an institution and the level of intensity of the demands of the story have an impact on the ultimate presentation story by the media. It is not simply how the PR Lead works with the media members, each person within the institution can drive the story. In this case, service to students is a cornerstone of the story. The concept of service to students is not simply displayed by the leadership team as a talking point. Without prompting, the media saw evidence of this value as they observed colleagues across the institution working with students. Margaret discussed how this service to the student value helped the media members understand the meaning of the story to the community.

Our professors were bringing them (the students) in food. Our security guards were going the extra mile and they would walk people out to their cars. The librarian came in to give them a special tour. I think they (the media members) were just so impressed by how willing people are here to make things happen.

The commitment of service extends to members of the media. Lighting was an issue for one television crew after hours. With few workers on campus, a boiler room worker stepped in to help.

I realized at a certain point when at midnight someone working in the boiler room was trying to find a certain way of adjusting the lights because the media team wanted that. The only thing that prevented him from doing it was an electrical board. All of them weren’t labeled, we he couldn’t figure out how to turn on the lights. It made me realize,

like I said to the facilities manager, the only thing that will stop anybody here from helping reporters with what they need is if they cannot physically do it.

That's what the editor of the magazine said, that it should be part of the story. All the way from the boiler room guy up to the president, just willing to help.

Developing stories requires individual attention to each media member. When conflicting interests of the media occur, creative thinking and flexibility by the PR Lead help move the story and institutional message forward while providing each media member with responses to their individual needs. Margaret describes this creative and flexible process.

I'll just give you one example and it just happened to work out right because everything could have been different: We get a call sometime in the summer from a very young reporter at the Harold and she was on the story before the Globe. She got sick, she wasn't calling me back. So this was kind of like a tough call and you know the Globe is more important and I had already set up the interview with the president. But this just happened to work out okay because then I had the Globe reporter and she said, 'but what about that one young woman from the Harold?' I said she got sick, she wasn't calling me back, and then the Globe got on it.

That would've been a tough call (had she not gotten sick and not called back). Most people in this business would say there's no question, you're going to go with the Globe.

Fortunately, I didn't have to make the decision and then they (the Harold) ran it anyway on their website. When you're in a thing like that you got people calling, you've got to make some decisions.

The Globe reporter always wants exclusivity. She got on the story I think the day before the courses were to open and an AP reporter had already been researching it for six weeks. He was set to come. We had four major media that wanted to come and show up and she was kind of demanding with exclusivity.

Then I was talking to the AP reporter and he said, 'you give her exclusivity' and of course that doesn't mean anything. What I did in that situation, it was a very difficult decision, it was real nice with the AP reporter because you could see how different he was as he sent me a wonderful email saying thank you. It was so hard juggling.

But what we did was if I couldn't give them what they wanted, I tried to give them something that nobody else got, so I said, 'Tracy, we can't give you exclusivity. We can't do it, we're public. We've already got people.' So then she said well this is what I want, 'I want to sit through that entire class, not just for a little bit. Can you let me do that and not let anybody else do it?' We could and she sat through the entire class, so she wanted to actually go and interview and frankly I'm not in the media a whole lot and it's because

I'm so busy setting it all up. That's the bottom line. You're going to set it all up and you're going to be dealing with all this you know.

The case at Baker College began with a strategy developed to overcome an operational challenge that directly limited the institution in reaching its organizational objectives. The story and the communication of the story to and through the news media was a direct result of the leadership team of the college responding to an organizational challenge. Each member of the team played roles that helped to implement the solution to the organizational challenge and tell the story. The president gave approval to the organizational strategy and served as the chief spokesperson for the college while supporting the work of other members of the team.

Kevin's College – Pine College

Kevin is the president of moderately sized community college of 16,000 students who attend classes on the main campus and three satellite locations. The location of the college near the center of a moderately populated city on the west coast of the United States allows for easy access to the main campus by a variety of students, including some from a nearby state. There are a limited number of institutions of higher learning in the area with Kevin's college being the only two year institution.

The college is an institution made up of commuters. While there is housing nearby, the college works within a wide geography to help students find housing. This includes the growing international population of students at the institution.

The college was born in the Great Depression. From its beginning, the institution has been a regional leader in providing many types of education such as technical, career development, and traditional arts and sciences courses and degrees while keeping costs for attending low. The case studied here concerns a satellite location for the college that was also born during difficult times and developed through challenges that included financial strain and

times when the partnership between the college and the community was not apparent and not well communicated.

The campus surrounds a large open green common area and is shaped much like an egg. Building profiles are low and allow for the natural beauty of the area to be seen from almost every part of the campus. I arrived at the main campus and made one complete trip around the campus before finding the building where my meetings would begin. I parked in what seemed like a pine tree forest and took a long slow walk to the building housing the president. This was a very pleasant walk and a lovely setting.

After my interviews were completed, I walked the entire campus. In the large center green there are many different kinds of art displays, gift plantings from around the world, and long meandering walkways. The campus is very inviting. The buildings fit into the landscape with many being newer and more modern architecture. The main campus is separated from its athletic fields by one main road. There is little to suggest that this campus is near the heart of a city. It seems to be its own center situated in the middle of a natural setting.

The building where I was to meet the president and the public relations lead executive was open, friendly, and comfortable. The president's office seemed small compared to the position. All around the room were items that represented the institution, including many different models of its penguin mascot. The president is a true fan of the mascot of the institution and collects different forms of the mascot from around the world for inclusion in his office display.

Pine College Event – Opening a New Campus

The case for which Pine College has been recognized centers on the development of a new campus location for the college and its dedication after a donated piece of land in another

area was rejected. After the land was rejected as the location for the new campus branch site, press coverage carried the story negatively in opposition to the decision of the college. The work to turnaround press coverage and community opinion started with the groundbreaking at the new location and culminated with a VIP tour during the campus dedication at the end of construction.

At the groundbreaking, members of the media were in attendance including the editor for the area's major daily newspaper. During the groundbreaking and in the time leading up to the VIP tour and dedication, the college community worked together as a team to develop the new campus and tell the story of the college and its growth. The entire college community also joined together to create the dedication event. And that teamwork helped to build the story within the community served by Pine College. Members of the college community took the news of the building and the needs of the college into the cities and neighborhoods served by the college.

The news media began to recognize the positive stories surrounding the new campus development and how that development connected to the future of the local community. This recognition came from the persistent pitching of stories to the press in a helpful way by the public relations lead at the college and the storytelling to members of the local community by faculty, staff, and volunteers for the college.

By the date of the dedication and VIP tour, the media and the local community had changed positions on the new campus from negative to positive. And, both the news media and the community were connecting the campus to the future growth and health of the region. This was a dramatic turnaround and one for which the college has been recognized.

Kevin as President

I was struck early on in my time with Kevin how the college fit him and he fit the college. The president met me dressed in a casual way, in a polo shirt and khakis. It seemed

perfect for the institution. Even our conversation was casual. We sat some at a table, walked around the office as he described where many of the mascot items came from, and watched college promotional videos highlighted with songs of the eighties and nineties. It was a fun conversation.

Even the natural surroundings fit the president. He is a bike rider and a former military leader who often was out deep in nature for long periods of time. Of all the presidents I had the chance to meet and interview, Kevin was the most relaxed.

Kevin had many experiences with the media in two different careers before becoming the president of this institution. As a military commander, Kevin worked with the media during some very difficult situations and several highly visible moments. These included handling the media in a professional way after an airplane crash in a remote location in a South American country where several American missionaries were killed. He was also directly involved with a visit of President Ronald Reagan to the Berlin Wall, where he was responsible for troops on the ground and working with the media in a leadership role.

I've always had a very good relationship with the press, you know I ask and give respect. There was one when we were actually doing a recovery (of bodies). American missionaries had crashed an airplane into a mountain side and all occupants died in the crash and so I was doing the recovery of the bodies and I was the commander responding to that. So, the Honduran press was waiting there, had a translator, and they were anxious to know, you know, family members were waiting, it was a really trying time, but you know, as we talked to the press we said you need to respect the family. You just take it seriously and you want to do your duty and you ask for respect and keep them informed.

From these early experiences come learned behaviors that helped guide the president as he faced new challenges and opportunities to work with the media.

You just kind of try to stick to the facts and not try to get too ahead of yourself on things. I mean there were times when we had gotten interviewed in the military for operations when I was down in Honduras doing some counter drug operations and taking mines off the border and the press would be down there. You just kind of stick to the facts, don't start editorializing too much, just kind of again be transparent and clear on things.

How this president works with the press in his current environment has been shaped by past experiences. Themes of honesty, clarity, and brevity were consistent themes during the interview that helped to describe how Kevin works with the press; they are ways of working with the press that have been learned over many years. “I know the press has a job and so I do want to respect they’re trying to do their job and keep them informed...I keep them up-to-date on what’s going on and if things are changing. So, I just try to keep them informed all the time”.

A recent issue highlights how Kevin puts this concept of informing the press into action after a tragic accident that impacted college leadership on a weekend.

Well, the press didn’t get (the information about the accident) until late Sunday night and I got a call. I was already in bed and asleep at 10:15 at night and I was a little annoyed. But, I tried not to come across (annoyed) to him (the reporter). I mean I know the reporter. So, I just responded to his questions. Again, I know he has a job and wants to report this and the most accurate information as available. I just try to put myself in the reporter’s and the media’s shoes because they have a job and they’re trying to do the best they can.

With this college president, style of leadership is very apparent. It is a relaxed, yet professional, approach. The president’s office is full of representations of the college mascot and, while it is a professional office setting, these images and items bring a relaxed and fun atmosphere to what can be a place where difficult decisions have and are being made. Regarding the reason for the many images of the college mascot, Kevin gave me a look inside his view of leadership and how he works with the media.

The president prior to me had a lot of negative press and people were looking down at the (position of) president. I knew that one of my key things to do was to build the morale and make people feel good about (our college). I came here and sort of halfheartedly joked that we are the “Mascot” nation and I’m telling you people love it. It (the mascot) is something people can identify with and it makes them feel good and so when you go onto the college you will see (the mascot) everywhere. I have people giving me (images and representations of the mascot) all the time. All these mascot images for the most part are what people stop by and give me. I get cards that have the mascot on them, Christmas cards, birthday cards. So, people in the college (family) can identify with that and it has

worked so well. (Seeing that) I knew that people feel good about themselves working here. So, I've actually had a good relationship despite some controversial things here as president.

This style helps open up communication even with groups that may not be very appreciative of the actions of the president.

Again, I think it's just being consistent as an individual. They know that they may not agree with what I'm doing, but they know that I'll be upfront about it, transparent, and clear. And, I'll stand in front of them and I'll explain to them why I made my decision and I think people in the long run, even though they may not like that, I think they appreciate and respect that and I think that is what helps in the media relations. You are willing to stand up even though you've made some tough decisions and I will do that. I try to clarify if people try to make little twists and turns (regarding events in the community and reporting), but I do it in a very respectful manner where I don't anger the folks. And, I actually have a good relationship with (members of the press and the community) that are somewhat disagreeing with the college.

Kevin's college has a process for the involvement of internal groups in the work with the press. But, the flexible style of the president helps build relationships that allow for groups to find their own way of dealing with the press if needed. This flexibility helps to keep the college and the community informed and helps to develop opportunities for communication to occur.

For example, I don't try to control the union on what their protocol for the media is. It's hard to tell the faculty what the protocol is, but typically we go through the president's office for any sort of representing the college. It's a two way street. They go right to the press at times for things and the press knows who to go to as well. By them going to the press, we have both been contacted when something comes up.

Working with the press to tell the story of the college is very important in Kevin's opinion. There are many reasons for working with the media to get the institutional story through to the community. The event for which this college was noted involved capital funding, some of which came from governmental sources.

I think it is (telling the community the institutional story through the media) is extremely important. There is a big sea change happening at community colleges, in particular ours, with regard to our funding model where we called ourselves a state supported institution. We are now a "state assisted" institution, and that is a big difference. So, less than half of

our money is coming from the state now and we are more reliant upon donor dollars. We used to say donor dollars were really only used for the excellence (scholarships) or to buy equipment and things like that. But, now we are looking at how donor foundation money is being used for some operational dollars to endow some chairs of departments where we can fund some personnel permanently out of an endowment so that we can maintain this excellence quality of education here at the college. So, yes, I am in the process of developing this white paper and then we are going to release that to the media as an editorial to the local newspapers on how things are changing and in terms we hope they will help us with our message to raise money for the college.

Telling the story of the institution to the local community also helps to deepen the community's sense of identity with the college, which Kevin sees as important. Institutional visibility through the press provides value to the college by connecting it to the community. Press coverage shows that the college provides many resources and opportunities to the community and helps to make the case for support of the institution by members of the community through funding, volunteering, and event participation.

The first thing that comes to mind is just the fact that it helps the donor foundation. Colleges are really the only institution that people in this area really identify with. People that live in this region, not just the local community, identify with our college and that is another thing that I think makes us special and it makes the media thing (coverage of the institution by the press) so important. Because you can't run into anyone in this community that doesn't have some connection with our college. The Mayor of our community is a graduate of our college. The former speaker of the house for our state is a graduate of our college. Significant business leaders in this community are graduates of our college. And, so I can go on and on... "my daughter, my son, my dad, my mom all went to this college" (what people in the community say to Kevin when he goes out to events). The media is absolutely critical and you know we did a survey where we went out on this campaign and people looked highly upon our college... they really respect it and value it and know it is a good institution.

Kevin's belief in the value of media coverage for the college shaped his earliest work at the college.

The president prior to me had a lot of negative press and people were looking down on the institution and president. I knew that one of my key things was to build the moral and make people feel good about our college.

Kevin's learned behaviors from his career prior to becoming president of Pine College informed his leadership of the college. His experiences helped him to see the value of working with and through the media to advance the institution. And, his experiences helped him understand the value a team can bring to the communication of the mission, vision, and values of the institution to and through the news media in ways he could not do alone.

Betty, Public Relations Executive for Pine College

At Pine College, both the president and the public relations lead view their teamwork with regard to the media as having significant value to the institution. This is important as it allows Betty to move forward consistently with media relationships and story development. The event for which the institution was recognized was one story in a string of planned media relations activities. As a strategic plan, the work to develop positive stories fits with the overarching business plan of the college. It is the strategic nature of the work and the team actions that drives the success long term. Betty talks about the value of this strategic plan put into action over time.

If you look at the cumulative audience that we have reached (for the news coverage of the event), and it is a staggering number, I am curious if we had to buy it (through advertising purchases) what it would cost...and there is the point. We did some community research last year and how the people perceive Pine College. So when the research came back, not only was Pine College the first college that came to mind, but overwhelmingly, the feedback was positive and the messages that we had emphasized were ones that had resonated.

Even the negative stories can lead to positive outcomes. Betty takes each story and message as one piece of the larger strategic plan to develop the image of the institution positively in the minds of the various groups the institution needs to communicate with.

Here's the thing, my goal is always 95% positive and more than that (if possible). The community research we did last year and how people perceive Pine College was gratifying because the departure of the previous president was painful. And, the (event

for which the college ultimately was recognized) was painful (in the beginning). There has been a lot of stuff and we have worked really hard to keep positive stories out there.

Betty emphasized the strategic nature of the work.

It's the four part process. It's the research, the planning, the execution, and the evaluation. You got to do the planning and the execution, but the research and the evaluation all too often get pushed aside and yet they are so important. By the time I pitch a story, I've researched it pretty thoroughly.

I think media work should flow out of institutional goals. What is it you are trying to accomplish as an institution? One of our goals is to focus on learning. You are looking at all of the elements of the strategic plan and saying well okay, what are the components there that we want to communicate about?

You know, strategically, what is it you want to accomplish and how do you get there?

Betty emphasizes how teamwork helps move forward the strategic plan and its elements of communication to target markets.

We support each other, it is a partnership. That is probably the single most important element. The president has partnerships with everyone, but this one (between the president and the lead communications officer) is really important that it work for both. Yeah, in the end it's about people.

It is really important that you advocate for your role as the communications advisor and as the communicator managing the program on behalf of the institution. If you market yourself (internally) as the Public Information Officer (PIO), then that's what you are going to be, you are going to be the PIO. I think one of the biggest challenges (on the institutional leadership team) is how do we make it clear that is our most fundamental role (lead communications for the college). Don't get stuck in the weeds.

Betty sees the relationship between the president and the lead public relations communicator for the institution as that of a team where the efforts of both people are supported as they work to advance the institution. How these two individuals work together is dependent upon the styles of each.

Actually, all of the people I have worked for have had very different working styles. Try to find out as a communicator what works best for each individual, how they want to get it (information), do they want to sit down and talk or do they want it in an email? The current president supplies an answer pretty quickly. The former president liked to ponder. When we finalize it (the statement or point-of-view for the president) I try to remember

what the president enjoys doing (and develop the work in the way that fits the president best). I think presidents are people too, you know.

Another key part of the teamwork is that the communications lead be an active participant in the leadership decision-making of the institution.

The previous president and the current president here both have been wonderful partners. They have very different styles and very different goals and aspirations, but what I appreciate about both is that they understand the importance of what we do. I always say that my most important job is to be communications advisor. Both (of these individuals) always open their door to me and they always listen. More often than not, they are kind enough to take my guidance. When they can't for whatever reason, they always give me the opportunity to speak my mind. And, that is invaluable and you can't ask for more than that. And, that is one reason where everywhere that I have worked I have advocated for the communications officer, by whatever title, to be a direct report to the president. You cannot have that impact if you are not at the table. (If) the structure did not allow me the access that I thought I needed to really be as effective as I could have been, I would be interested in leaving.

But, being a participant at the leadership table brings with it some unique responsibilities when a person is serving as the chief communications officer.

When I am asked to define my job, I say that I manage the communications program for Pine College on behalf of the president. That is my job. So, we (the president and communications lead) are building that relationship. The importance of that relationship is probably paramount. The president needs to know that in that room (at the leadership table) nothing he or she says leaves my lips ever. He or she needs to know that there is one safe place where he or she can say anything and it will not go anywhere else. He or she needs them (the lead communications officer) as a sounding board.

Sometimes, there is no such thing as good thinking, just good rethinking. And, you are building that relationship so that you truly are a team. Well, it goes back to that relationship again, it is just invaluable.

Each member of the leadership team has a role to carry out for the institution. Betty talks about when it is important to bring the president into the media relations activities and when it is not so as to maximize the value of the work to the institution.

My philosophy goes back to when I was a reporter. I didn't want to talk to the PR person unless there was no one that would talk to me. I want to talk to the person in charge and so whenever it is that he (the president) is the right choice, and he is really good about doing this, we love to have the president represent us. I will say he is on the front line. He

is a great ambassador. He is a great advocate and champion, so he is remarkable about doing (working with and through) the media.

You have some (presidents) who are polished, but that's not Kevin. And, it is what people like and respect about him, you know, he looks you in the eye and he tells you the truth and that is very well received by everyone he deals with and that is with the media as well.

So, we try to gauge what the story is, who the appropriate person is, but when it is appropriate and he is available, we love to have the president represent us.

In the case for which Pine College was recognized, the character traits displayed by the president helped to move what was a difficult and negative situation to a successful one. The case centers on the donation of land for the development of a new branch campus. The donated land would have allowed Pine College to connect with a local school district to provide a variety of classes that focused on high school to college transition.

A new president, prior to Kevin, reviewed the donation, historical data, and growth data and determined that the donated land and the connection to the particular school district did not meet the growth needs and mission of the college. It was determined that the new branch campus would be built in a different part of the region near a concentration of high technological companies. The original donated land was abandoned and the service to the individual school district was changed. In hindsight, the decision to change location and direction seems to be the correct one according to Betty.

I mean, today if you visit it (the chosen location), it is so huge, so developed, everybody has gone there. In hindsight, I think most people will tell you it was the right decision. But, the way it was handled based on media reports, I would say it could have been handled more gracefully.

The school district was very upset that the rug had been pulled out from beneath them. A state legislator who was involved with the school district was not happy. It was a huge deal. The local newspaper was not happy. The press coverage was pretty brutal.

In the effort to turn the situation around, Kevin was at the center. The key event that was looked to as the moment of truth was the opening of the new campus. Leading up to that opening and the active media campaign surrounding it, work behind the scenes took on a sense of urgency and was a team effort across the college. The leadership of Kevin and his translation of the effort to repair the relationships damaged by the shift in location and priority was centered on certain character traits that went beyond simply polishing up a message and pushing it out to the target markets. Betty explains how the character traits of Kevin as the spokesperson for the college reshaped the scene and rebuilt relationships.

(As an institution) it takes years to build a good reputation and it can be gone just like that. And, it can take years to get it back again. Now, if you have a reservoir of credibility for the goodwill, that I think can shorten the time, but those kinds of things are just so devastating.

I think the most important attribute of presidents is bringing integrity to the table. Everything flows from that because that is directly related to credibility. People always ask “what is the biggest similarity between what you did as a journalist and what you do now?” and it is credibility and if I lose that I am useless. So if a president doesn’t have integrity and credibility, it doesn’t matter what they say or how polished they are, nothing else matters.

And, he just got it from day one and it became an ongoing part of his presentations within the community. Whether he was giving a speech or other things there was never a time when it was a question (his integrity).

The event for which the college was recognized began with serious relationship damage for the institution between its leadership and local community leaders. Beyond the leadership and presence in the community with integrity of the president, the project and event were both centered in the strategic plan of the institution.

I think having a long-term goal where the college comes together collectively (was an important point in the ultimate success of the project and event). That project could not have happened successfully if the college had not consistently moved forward. Looking for benchmarks, looking for opportunities all along the way to thoughtfully build excitement.

Long-term goals as a part of the strategic plan need action steps, tools, and tactics to allow the goals to be achieved. In the case of the event for Pine College, not only did these actions need to implement the communication of the new campus opening, they needed to overcome the negative perceptions that came from the decision to change the development's location and connection to a local school system.

I always say a media campaign is only as good as the work going on behind the scenes. In this case, people had to design and build an amazing facility. The entire college community had to program it. In our area, we had the responsibility to communicate these stories. How do we let go of the past and get people excited?

I believe in having your messages ready. I happen to like being disciplined about your messages because, it's like, if you are a lawyer, do you really want to ask a question for which you don't know the answer? I find that most interviews go off track when people go off the message.

That (message) push really began on the day of the groundbreaking. We were fortunate that the state legislator who had been so unhappy nonetheless put that aside and came out and was present that day. The editor emeritus of the regional newspaper and (who) also served on the state board was there too. Both of those gentlemen are standing next to each other lifting shovels of dirt. Once that happened, we began to kind of regularly remind the people (in the community), you know this is actually looking good. When that happened that began to become real to them (the community members) as well. Newspapers were targeted to carry the stories. This included the larger regional dailies as well as smaller weeklies, neighborhood editions, and minority publications.

I take those papers very seriously. People read those papers cover-to-cover. Their readers are terribly loyal and they welcome the stories as long as you can show a connection to them. We kept doing that and some of that (effort) was just patience, patience, and patience.

The tactic used to follow up on the many stories of the new development was a VIP event.

What I cared about was getting media people there. (The VIP event was attended by publishers and reporters from all of the media targeted in the story development step.) Within days, beautiful, glowing columns filled with excitement about this beautiful new facility (were published). And, that led to the final mile marker. We hosted a community open house in late August where we opened the doors. As one of the board members said, "What was so exciting was today it became not just the college's facility, it became the community's building." People were genuinely excited and we exceeded attendance from day one. It shattered all expectations.

The results of the event for which the college has been recognized addressed specific goals of the strategic plan. It also turned around a negative situation and long-standing story about the college.

The reviews (of the facility and its opening), the faculty love it, the students love it, the community loves it. I am as proud of it as anything I've done given the opportunity to turn around all of those negatives and get everyone excited and basically kind of reintroduce the building.

We did very well on the dedication story. But, to me it's kind of like this was not a sprint, this was a marathon. I go back to that VIP event. That was the definitive moment where after that you stopped hearing (about the negative past of the development) and there were no more references back to (the negatives) even at the end of the stories. That to me was the definitive moment (represented by) the glowing article of this building by the regional newspaper that changed the context of the reporting as well as the editorial coverage. That (negative history) got heard for the last time and we never heard about it again.

The Pine College case is tied directly to operational objectives of the institution.

Developing a new campus in a way that would engage the business community served by the college and its programs was strategically planned. It was designed to grow the student body and associated revenues while supplying specifically trained graduates to a business segment of importance to the community and served by Pine College. The first placement of the campus, proposed to be on donated land, was a misstep in that it was not physically close to the center of commerce where the targeted industry members did business. Kevin recognized this problem, moved the location to better fit the operational objectives of the college, and worked with his team to change the negative tone of community conversation. He and his team did this by working with and through the news media to tell the story of the institution and its value to the community as that value was enhanced by the new campus location.

Daniel's College – Central State College

Of the four colleges visited, Daniel's institution is the smallest in student headcount. There are just over 2,300 full time and 1,600 part time students with females leading the count at twice the number of males. The college serves students primarily within three counties with the majority within a 30-minute drive from the main campus. Due to its rural setting, this institution draws students from one of the largest geographic areas when compared with the other institutions studied.

The college is on a relatively small piece of land in acreage. It is bordered by a large regional medical facility, a major interstate freeway, and a large forested area on two sides. The buildings of the college face into a common grounds with parking lots on the periphery. The campus is separated by a road that circulates traffic around it. Founded in 1966, the college was the first community college to open in this large northeast coast state.

The event for which the college was recognized was a capital campaign that helped to construct a new medical services educational facility on the campus. This newer building features medical training labs that are considered futurist by the industry it is intended to serve. Helpful to the mission of the college and the utilization of this new medical training facility is the closeness of the large regional hospital. The parking lots of the college and the medical facility literally touch each other on the northern end of the campus.

On my way to the campus for the interviews, I missed the entrance to the campus and had to go through the parking area of the medical center. What is interesting about this is the fact that the signage for the medical center was much more eye-catching than that of the college. The medical center location was the key reason for the building of the new center for medical

services education on the campus. The college campus seems hidden behind the medical center, a point made by the capital campaign donor who is the centerpiece of the event studied here.

A walk around the campus after the interviews reflected a place where 1966 meets the future. Buildings such as the one housing the administration looked like a well kept 45-year old structure right down to the windows, blinds, and furniture. Leaving that building and walking to and through others it seemed I was working my way from the mid 1960s, into the '70s, and, when I reached the student cafeteria and the new medical teaching facility, into the future. All of the buildings appeared to be well maintained, but the era in which each was built, the 1960s and 1970s, was very apparent. The campus was relatively small and could be covered on foot in a short period of time.

Central State College Event – Capital Donor

The event for which Central State College has been recognized surrounds the uniqueness of an individual donor to the capital fund for a new medical teaching center. As Bill, the public relations lead for the college put it, million dollar donors to capital campaigns “are a dime a dozen.” But, it is uncommon for someone who never made more than \$11 an hour as a worker, who lived a very frugal life, and who had no previous connection to the college to donate such a large sum of money. The donor was the story.

Media coverage began with an editorial in a local newspaper after a press conference was used to announce the gift. The editorial and a couple additional stories were local. The Associated Press (AP) picked up the story after the editorial was published because of the very unique story of the donor. AP stories are consistently monitored by the national news media. Once the AP broke the story of the college, the gift, and the donor, the national press became interested in the story due to its humanistic angle. Bill stated that “this editorial and other things

got picked up by the AP Wire Service and then it became like the national story and he (the donor) was on Katie Couric's show. Cable News Network (CNN) was another station that interviewed him and then Kiplinger Magazine. It appeared all over the country on TV, newspapers, etc."

The building to which the donor gave was a part of the strategic plan of the college. The subsequent stories that came from the uniqueness of the donor were a part of the public relations plan for the college. However, the size and scope of the stories reaching the national mainstream media were not planned. Once the story value was discovered, Bill and the leadership team at the college worked with the news media to tell the story. This provided the institution with extended visibility and value by allowing its story of service to the community to be told on a much larger scale and for a much longer time than anticipated.

Daniel as President

Daniel had recently moved to the presidency of a newer and much larger college in a metropolitan area of the Midwest. However, as he was president of Central State College during the time of the event for which the institution was recognized, he agreed to meet with me at his new institution.

Of the presidents visited, Daniel was dressed and carried himself much more like a corporate business executive. As he introduced his new team, I noticed that they all had strong corporate and major news media experience. This was a contrast from what I found when visiting Central State College. The public relations lead person at Central State was dressed in business casual clothes. The feeling of the offices was much more like an academic setting than that of the new institution where Daniel moved to. Central State had smaller and more crowded offices than the new institution for Daniel. The contrast was impressive to me in that the two

institutions, Central State and the institution Daniel now serves, are much different in the physical space afforded to the president and administrative leadership.

Daniel has been an academic administrator his entire career. His early experiences helped to shape how he views working with and through the media to advance the institution. He believes that the media as a partner is very important in the health and growth of a college. In the interview, these early experiences shaped ways of working with the media that includes relationship-building, truth telling, and being proactive.

I probably went into the role as a president there (Central State College) thinking about the media relations informed greatly by previous roles I had at other institutions. And, I've done lobbying work on behalf of three different institutions with the legislatures, so I understood it from that perspective (as well). I've been involved in student affairs work and had to do a fair amount of crisis management with (At one large southern institution) the largest streak in the world. You've never seen so many naked people in your entire life. We call that a crisis down there. It was a crisis when they started parachuting onto the football field. That was a crisis. That actually happened.

So, you know, it was experience in those roles where I learned things like truth telling, in getting the bad news out quickly, getting it out first, and don't wait for it to get to you. I learned a lot about the value of getting to editors and publishers, and other important journalists privately, socially, and forming relationships.

Daniel's method of leadership is open and very much team oriented. During my visit, he talked often about how the members of the college leadership team include the story tellers for the institution such as the public relations lead and the fund development officer. He introduced me to the people in these positions at his new institution and discussed the importance of those he worked with at Central State College.

Most presidents employ someone to deal with the media and public relations. (At Central State College), we had a fellow that had that (work assignment). He had marketing and media and did some of our publications. He had been around for a long time. He was worth listening to. He knew the reporters and he was a quick study on whether I was going to be an easy or hard president. He had served three other presidents already and he was very helpful to me. And, even though it was a small place, I could be just as hard to get in touch with there as I am here, sometimes on purpose. So, those folks (reporters) always went to Bill. Then, Bill would make the call on whether or not they should call

me. That was a decision he made. And, that is why Bill sits in the president's executive cabinet, not just the cabinet, but at the president's table.

I want the people that are primarily responsible for my message (in public relations and development work) to be direct reports. I don't want them getting any secondhand information about what I'm thinking about or any other vision that we are trying to put forward because that will kill you. I feel very confident that the direct reports in these roles can handle the questions from my voice and can help write things to design and convince with my voice and help us work more closely together.

What I am really trying to say is that if you get yourself into one of these jobs (college president), you better make sure you get somebody who technically knows more than you do and is wise enough to help you craft that message. I've been lucky to find that staff.

So presidents who want to be successful should use their resources and not think why you would have all the skills yourself. I think for a lot of presidents, the ones that really want to go it alone for whatever reason, it's a lonely place to be and I don't think it can be nearly as successful with that approach.

Listening to the members of the team includes working to match what the team recommends to the style of the president.

I listen to the advice I get and then I try to see what fits me. I try to make sure that when I am biased about something that they don't get in the way of taking good advice. You learn all the time, at least I have, what voices I trust clearly to be heard in the institution. And, if I get those voices, I'll pay a lot of attention to them.

The open leadership style and the experiences Daniel has been through inform his working style with the media and his media ethics.

Anybody that wants to write about us, we talk to, even when we are on vacation. I just think that if you get a chance to put your oar in the water in the public and help with the media, you can always have that to your advantage if you use it. I just have never found any down side to that to be honest with you. And, it seems to catch up to you terribly if you ignore them.

That reporter has a job to do and I've got a job to do. It's probably worse in my mind to promise more than you can (deliver), to be more than you are, to project an image that you cannot possibly over time live up to, than just to tell the truth, just be what you are. From an institutional perspective, it's a mix of good intents and good deeds. You don't want to tell so much you dig yourself into a grave, but honesty goes a long way in this business.

I know that every time I've ever been in trouble with the media is when I've really just ducked it totally, I had gotten into avoiding them. I've learned to come to embrace that we need to be partners (the media members and the president) as best we can. We have to be involved in change if there is bad news. We can't back away from it.

As much as Daniel works in his presidency as a member of a leadership team, he also has clear feelings about and intentions with regard to who should speak for the college.

I think the tricky part is trying to help the board and some of your key staff understand your respect for what anybody's called, in my view, as the chief communicator of the college...the president or the president's designee.

I try hard to make sure board members don't say much to the media, except the chair, and I'd prefer for the chair to defer because if a board member says it, it gets real murky about whether or not it's a board perspective.

The worst person to speak on behalf of the college, particularly in terms of a crisis, would be the board chairman or some interested board member or the Vice President that's responsible for that area (the one in crisis). First of all, it's the wrong signal in my view in terms of who is in charge and what you are trying to communicate. On the front end of all of these is that truth telling is the most important part. If folks can't trust your message whether it be the editor, publisher, reporter, politician, or whoever, then your credibility is all you got (and it is lost).

Clearly, we have rules set up internally with our own administrative structure as to who speaks on behalf of the college. But, if somebody wants to go on campus and talk to 20 faculty members, I'm certainly not going to say don't talk to them. I will however say, oh by the way, if you want the official college view, please give us a call.

The reason that Daniel has this partnership philosophy with regard to the media is the value to the institution he sees coming from the relationship. The value has as its centerpiece the development of community support, from tax payers to donors, for the direction of the institution and the providing of the resources needed to carry out the vision of the institution. The storytelling for Central State College by the media is directly related to the success of the event for which the college has been recognized.

The value I think is everything because we depend (on the local community) from a revenue perspective. Anything we want to do extra we have to do through bond referendum and we are always, everyday, with our messaging getting ready to sell the next referendum. So, every day we're running a little election for the confidence of the

local public. And, as their local community college, they have got to help us with that funding.

(To the community and funding partners, including donors) We say because of your ongoing support and because of your history of commitment to our institution, you enable us.

The media (while at Central State College) started to really believe that if the college said they were going to do it, it got done. We didn't promise things we couldn't do and we didn't have wishful thoughts. We were very concrete and we announced it publicly (the campaign that led to the event for which the college was recognized). In fact, we even had on our website an accountability report and voluntarily offered it to them. (We said) here is where we are year one to year five.

Daniel has understood the value of telling the institutional story to and through the news media from his earliest days as an administrator. As the president of Central State College, Daniel made certain that his public relations lead executive was on the presidential cabinet so that the skills of this person could be directly available to the institutional leadership and so that messages would not be filtered either to the news media or from the targeted audiences of the college. And, it is important to note that Daniel understands that he needs to be available to the team, play the appropriate role of chief spokesperson for the college, and support the work of the team.

Bill, Public Relations Executive for Central State College

As opposed to other cases I examined, the event for which Central State College was recognized and received national attention happened because of the person who was central to the event. Whereas the three other cases reviewed here have people, mainly working as teams, driving the events and activities for which the individual institutions are recognized, in the case of Central State College, one individual was such a human interest story that what could have been an average activity for the college became monumental.

This case is about the construction of a health services educational building to support the local healthcare industry. One of the largest medical facilities in the region is tangent to the Central State College campus. Part of the funding for this new building came from a \$1 million dollar gift from an individual who was unknown to the college prior to the announcement of the capital campaign for the building. He lived very near the college, never made more than \$11 dollars an hour during his working life, had no telephone or television, and bought his clothes from second hand stores. His story and his “blossoming” as a late-in-life donor to the college took the story from informational to inspirational, and from local to national in scope. Bill described the donor and the situation from which the media coverage was developed.

We have (this donor) who is a pretty unique guy. He was sort of a kind of recluse kind of a guy. He started working when he was 14 or something like that. He was a quality control person in a factory. He retired at 60. He just put stuff (money) away and he invested wisely. But, he never got into any of the thrills of life. He is 80 now and his finance guy told him “if you don’t want to leave this (his estate) somewhere, the state is just going to come and take it, so you should do something”. So, his finance guy, who happened to be on our foundation, brought him on campus and our president gave him a tour of the campus. And, he immediately said, “I had no idea this place, the college, was back here. Yeah, this is where I have to donate, to this place”.

We found out he wanted to make a donation at the end of November. And, we planned for this event (press conference) with the dignitaries there and all that. And, he was going to say a few words too. So, a development officer and I had lunch with him. We had met with him quite a bit and we had taken him under our wing, as they say.

Tactically, the press conference was not unusual. It had speakers such as the president and board chair along with the donor. A large check prop was created to show the gift in photo and video opportunities. A media kit, complete with press releases, was created and handed out.

If you want to speak on a national prospective, a million dollar donation is not something terribly unique. But, you know it’s just the circumstance and the kind of guy that gave the money and everything. One thing is before the press conference, we didn’t know how he would do. At first, he was very shy and didn’t know if he wanted to say anything. So, I told him he could write things that he wanted to say or speak from the heart. We really coached him. We were very apprehensive before he got up (to speak) that we didn’t know how he would do at all. For all we knew, he could have had a nervous breakdown.

The press conference, well, in a way, it did look like another press conference because it was all of the officials getting up and the trustees getting up. But what was in fact kind of special was when a student got up that was a beneficiary of the gift for the new building and was very emotional. And it was two students. Then when (the donor) himself got up, he was very touching and emotional himself.

We had the press conference. And, then after this occurring, he (a local editor in attendance at the press conference) wrote this editorial.

From the editorial that was generated by the press conference, national press became interested in the story of the person making the donation. The editorial went out over the Associated Press wire. Bill highlighted how the human aspect of the story, which the editorial centered on, made the story topical in almost any geographic market. “But, this editorial triggered a lot when it was in the press and that was when the associated press picked up the story. This pretty much captures what he was and what kind of guy (he is).”

The human story of the donor was so strong that it alone brought people to a place where they wanted to know more.

From the media standpoint, people like him donating a million dollars are a dime-a-dozen. But, he is the unique one because of his circumstance and that what he gave for was to really help. He could have given his money for anything instead. He still lives the way he did. And he gave the money to help out in the community. So, that in itself is a pretty noble gesture. I think that’s why the nationals (media) picked up on it.

Central State College has a leadership structure that puts the public relations point person at the president’s table. This aspect of the management structure is important to the development of positive media coverage for the college.

The president and I will have update meetings every week and decide where we are going. I am basically the spokesperson for the college as far as the media goes and a lot of it is that they call me and I lead them to the various things (they want and need). Anytime the president talks with the media, I coordinate it. And, our local newspaper publishes a monthly column by the president and we kind of work together on that.

Within the college, if someone wants publicity on their program or something like that, they are supposed to go through this office. And, there are always people that forget, or don't want to remember (that process). But, generally, everything that goes through this office is the official kind of college stuff.

Tactically, much of what Bill does on a daily basis is designed to make the job of the reporter easy to do. This way of dealing with the news media was the foundation of the early work on the event for which the college was recognized.

(The media) call me and give requests. They do that because then we can steer them and give them an angle.

I try to make their job as easy as I can make it. And, then we also pitch things to them like this story (the donor and donation). If you deal with them on a year round basis every day, then you obviously want to have a good relationship with them.

This is an unusual county because it's 160 to 170 thousand people who live here and they have three daily newspapers. Three gosh darn newspapers in a county this size! We get a lot of play in those papers. Actually, the guy that does the beat (covers the news of the college for the major daily newspaper), he is a pretty funny guy actually so we exchange emails and they are pretty funny.

And these days, it's not just the newspapers we really want to get to, but we also do a lot with the social network.

Strategically, there is a media plan for the institution that works to promote the institution long term. This long term plan fits into the business plan, mission, vision, and values of the college. Some of the work is the normal day-to-day story telling for the college. In a very few cases, such as the one for which the college has been recognized and studied here, the story itself is so compelling that it grows beyond the originally imagined scope of coverage.

Well, I think just like anything, you would go to your strengths and just keep on. We don't have like one campaign for the media. It's just ongoing relations year long. They get to know you. It's not like PR talk or something. It's more like opportunities. The college health center provides an opportunity. That's what this three million dollars was being raised for.

The president's role in working with and through the media to advance the institution is primarily strategic. The tactics used to implement the strategy are most often put into motion by Bill and others on the administrative staff. "(In this case) the president was involved with the solicitation of the gift. He was involved from the beginning. Once we had the gift, then it was pretty much turned over to us. He just knows that we do our job."

The value to Central State College is recognized by the president and the other leaders of the institution. The value is first to the institution and the community it serves.

I think a lot of the things we promote...are partnerships within the community because you get the community to buy in on what you are doing. So, we get the community behind a lot of the partnerships that enable the college to do things that it would not otherwise be able to do.

But, this case shows the value of media coverage of the stories of the institution because they helped the donor, the individual, as well.

I think from the perspective of it being a media success story, it wasn't media that grew, it enhanced our image in the community. And, then it also is a success story in that it helped him (the donor) grow as a person.

His life has totally changed because of this. He used to just go to McDonalds in the morning, Burger King, or walk around the mall, but never really talked to people. And, now he feels like he is a part of the college family. He actually will say that. We go to lunch in the cafeteria. He likes being around the students. They will come up to him, thank him for the gift, and that makes him excited. When we walk through the building, the teachers will let him come into the classrooms and say hello and they will all applaud for him. And, it changed his life forever.

As a professional communicator for Central State College for many years, Bill has worked with several presidents and through many changes in the ways news media work to source stories. The tools evolve and change, for example from fax machines and telephones for sharing story ideas to Twitter feeds. Bill's learned behaviors come from his understanding of how relationships shape, define, and advance stories about the institution, its mission, vision, and values. In this case, these learned behaviors that center on the human aspects of storytelling to

and through the news media made the case successful. Had this shy hermit-like donor been treated as a tool or had the story been told simply with electronic communications, the blossoming of this person would not have happened. It was the caring and humanity shown by Bill and Kevin that allowed the donor the opportunity to learn about and believe in the college and take a chance by telling that story of his, the donor's, discovery of the college to the world.

Ted's College – Mainsville Community College

Ted is the president of a community college made up of 3,300 fulltime, 3,600 part time, and 10,300 noncredit students that attend classes on the main campus and two satellite locations. The location of the college is in a pine forest, but within an hour's drive of several large cities on the east coast of the United States. The college was the second community college established by this state on the eastern seaboard. The institution was created to serve two counties.

This is a commuter college. Students drive into the campus, which is surrounded by parking lots. The buildings of the campus face inward to a common courtyard area. Many of the buildings have connecting walkways. One of the most prominent buildings houses a state college that provides students a smooth transition from the two year degree to the four year. The administration building is a two story structure that houses the president and marketing team on the second floor. The public relations lead executive is the manager of the marketing department as well.

Of the institutions studied, Mainsville has the second largest marketing staff and the longest working relationship between the president and the public relations lead executive.

The case studied here concerns one of the largest and most significant programs within the college academic structure. It is also the only case studied that has a long history of success.

Where other cases studied were episodic in nature, the story of this successful case has developed over many years.

Mainsville College Event – Fund Raising Gala

The event for which Mainsville College has been recognized and is the focus of these interviews is a gala that highlights an academic program within the institution. The original purpose was to raise funds and visibility for the program. A part of the strategic business plan for the college for 30 years, the event has grown and its purpose expanded to help raise money and visibility for the institution.

The media has been actively covering the event for most of its existence. The key to continuing coverage year after year is that the public relations leader within the college develops new story opportunities that are community-focused. The stories are fresh each year, connected to the current environment within the community, and focused on people that are either a part of the academic program, graduates, or businesses that benefit from hiring graduates of the program.

The event is held one evening every year and involves many of the businesses that benefit from hiring graduates of the academic program. The event draws in 800 to 900 people each year and is the largest single fund raising activity for the college.

Ted as President

Ted moved up to the position of president through the academic, academic leadership, and administrative path. He has been with Mainsville for his entire career. Ted is proud of his time as a member of the faculty and that his foundation is in the tenured faculty role of the institution. Ted moved up through the ranks of faculty, into the departmental chair position, and then into administration where he served in a variety of positions including being the Dean of a

branch campus of Mainsville. As Dean, he had his first experiences with the media. “I did some media work through college relations with the former president, but I wasn’t the lead. I was a backup for media relations for that campus. So yeah, I did have some exposure to the media, but not as the CEO.”

Spending his entire career at Mainsville brings both a long term view of what the college should become as well as the challenge of looking outside of the institution for direction. His early experiences informed his understanding of what he sees as the symbiotic relationship between the position of the president and the roles of marketing and fund development for the college.

I have the advantage and disadvantage of having my entire career at this community college, which is really, really hard for me sometimes to disconnect. But, one of the areas that we looked at and, when I knew I was going to be president, was that the community colleges generally need to expand their source of funds, it’s as simple as that. Resource development was relatively new. And, the marketing area has a huge role in the fund development effort.

I got very friendly with a local state senator and over the years he was very effective in the senate and one of his things was “Ted, if you’re going to do this (take the position of president), you better know how to tell the story cause they’re going to want to hear it from you.” He mentored me.

From this mentorship and his early experiences with the media, Ted developed ways of working with the media that have a foundation in fundamental guidelines of behavior. Ted explained these guidelines as well as how they translate into tactics.

Always be truthful, timely, and protect the organization. The president is the primary spokesperson for the institution. I think it is my chance to have a significant impact and could be a negative impact if you’re not careful on how people view the college. And, I take it very seriously. I know I am the spokesperson for their (the media) questions. I understand that and in this job, if I was president of a company or the chairman of the local zoning board, I’d be in that role as well. That’s what a leader does.

Ted’s individual approach to working with the media is strategic in that a process is in place to allow for the president to be involved when needed and valuable to the institution, but

also allow the professional staff to maximize the value of the president by asking the question “does this rise to the level of the president?”

What we do is we have an agreed upon protocol and the media does contact the college and they contact us through our media relations officer. So they (the media) would have to pretty much come through that portal. They very rarely call me directly. Once in a while they do and I can handle that. If they call me, I will generally ask them, “Why don’t you talk to Nancy first?” But, generally speaking they would know that they would call Nancy on the issue and that she could cover that for them. If she thinks they need to talk to me she would let me know they want to talk to me which is fine.

(Even with the governing board) we’ve all absolutely agreed on a protocol that they don’t respond to media inquires. They are referred to me and go through the process that I had talked about earlier, (that of) going through college relations. The only exception is if ever the issue at hand is about me and of course I can’t speak to defend myself, they would do that.

The strategy begins with what Ted sees as a key role of the president, that being the chief spokesperson for the institution.

When I talk about this issue, I go back to the core leadership construct that I choose to guide my actions as president. Basically, the president has to do these three things. Number one is you work with the organization, the community college, to develop the mission and focus and goals for that institution and to make sure that it has your stamp on it. What happens is you hopefully get a shared mission. Number two is the management part. And, the communication is the next part (third). The third part is the major role that any leader has, and in this case the community college president. You need to be able to communicate that vision clearly and cogently, all aspects, from the largest to the most reasonably small part that anyone would ask about, both internal and external stakeholders.

In this case we drift over into the area where the CEO actually embodies the institution. I know that sounds trite and pretty much that doesn’t make a lot of sense to some people. But, I know when I’m out there, if I’m not looking too good that day, wrong attire, if I’m wearing casual clothes and I shouldn’t be, that it will get back to me. So, I know it’s not only what I say, it’s even how I look. To the media, it’s both how I look, my energy level, and especially how I can make a complex issue reasonably understandable to someone. It never ends.

Ted sees himself as a better communicator one-on-one with members of the media. And, the ability to talk with members of the media one-on-one comes from building relationships with

them. The success of working with the media with regard to the event for which the college has been recognized is an example of this concept of relationship-building.

I talk to people privately more effectively. On the informal level I think it's built on positive, professional relationships I've gotten with each one individually. I'm okay with approaching them and moving into what their good at. I think the single most important thing is I get a chance to articulate gracefully, not a speech, about how valuable (things like) scholarships are to community college students and especially students at our college, but to any community college students as a way to promote access to higher education. For example, every chance I get at that point, affordability and transfer issues, that's probably the most important thing I can do for the event. Let them know the money they are raising goes to that purpose and it's really important.

(For the event) where there is a need for the media communication, whether it's written or an interview by TV, that's where I serve. I serve because that's my job. I'm prepped of course on everything we are doing, why we are doing it, who is getting the scholarships, and all the stuff I need to know so I'm good to go. It's very targeted time. It's not a lot of time, but basically they (the media) understand that I'm the one that has to give those messages.

Personal contact is important. Face-to-face is important here. I like the TV stuff, but I believe the print media here is more influential.

In this case, I think this is an area of college relations, marketing, and all other college relations. (The public relations team is) a high performing unit within the college and I intend to keep it that way because it has a dual purpose. They're responsible for our enrollment as well as helping us raise money. So It's very very valuable a resource and asset and I treat it that way. Well, I think it's highly valuable.

Ted views the role of communicator and chief spokesperson for the institution as one of three key areas all leaders must engage in, with the other two being visioning and managing. The value to the institution of the president being the chief spokesperson and having a team of experts surrounding him and supporting his efforts is significant in his view. And, the event for which the college has been recognized and which is reviewed here is an example of the president serving the institution as its chief spokesperson and leading to a fundamental business need of the college, that of supporting its funding base.

Nancy - Public Relations Executive for Mainsville College.

Nancy has been at Mainsville College almost as long as President Ted. She has been at the institution serving in a variety of communication roles for more than 27 years. Together, this team of president and public relations executive lead are unique in the group of colleges studied. While most teams have worked through either a variety of positions outside of their current institution, or have worked with a variety of presidents or PR leads within the institution, these two individuals have been in the same college for long periods of time. And, it is interesting that the event for which the college has been recognized is a long standing event for the institution.

Nancy started her career in the newspaper business where she worked her way up from a reporter to editor of several papers within a publishing group. She then moved into the public relations career track serving in positions with a medical college and in the healthcare field. Then, she moved into the two year community college environment.

The event for which the college has been recognized has been an important part of the 27 years Nancy has been with the institution. It began as an event to raise funds for and awareness of a specific academic program for the college. Since that beginning, it has grown to become a fit strategically with the mission, vision, and values of the institution, well beyond its original purpose.

I've been involved with this project since the very beginning (of her time with the institution) and it will be in its 30th year next year. (The president) well, he is very supportive of this event and believes that it is very important to our visibility in the community. And, also it's our largest single fundraising event for the college. It is very large and he is very supportive of our outreach effort and very complimentary of them and the publicity we get for this.

Nancy views the involvement and support of the president as being very important for the event and the college.

He will promote this event and talk about it, attend it, and make sure he meets them (the various audiences including the media). Presidents must believe in public relations. I think that it is important that presidents understand what the media is looking for, to understand what their needs are, and then to know how to talk to the media where appropriate. On important issues that are important to the institution they should be a very credible and articulate spokesperson for that organization.

For the institution, structure and process helps the strategy of communication to be implemented. The president is involved in the structure and process as Nancy explains.

One of the things we've been doing here that I think is very groundbreaking is that we have, at our president's request, a group that meets. It is to identify emerging issues that could have an impact on the college that might have a media component to them, so that we are in readiness and that we are monitoring issues that are out there and we are ready to respond to them should they come to a point where we will need to be giving a position on those. So we have a regular process in place where we are monitoring and we come together as a small organizational team to look at what kind of responses we should have, how the issues affects the organization, and press responses to work with so that the president is ready for those kinds of things. He really relies on us to do that. Our shared philosophy is to be responsive.

We have open lines of communication, the sharing of information. We must know what is going on because the college has placed a value on what is done.

Nancy believes that preparation leads to successful media relationships. She explained that the president wants to know that she talked with a reporter. Then, he wants a list of questions to be developed so that he can be ready for the reporter and the possible questions. Then, the leadership team helps to build central points to the stories that "tell our story."

(For the media) unless you use our service, you probably don't know us. We provide a service. We help out the reporters and build the relationships.

Preparation is big for the president. He looks for a statement to be drafted. He wants to know what is it that you want to get across. The visual aspects of the story, he wants to know what they are. He understands the principles of media relations which are being open, honest and responsive. He wants the professionals to tell the leaders what to do and he will listen to them. Then, he gives (the professionals) the stuff to do the job.

For Mainsville, the president is a team member that plays a very specific role for the event. That is, he works with the team during the planning stage to understand the issues and the

process that is to be followed. He offers his thoughts, but allows the team to use their individual areas of expertise to drive the project. Then, the role of the president becomes that of chief message communicator for the institution. Nancy discussed the actions of the president during the event under study here.

For this event, I would say just a couple of hours (of preparation by the president) and as needed leading up to the interviews (for the event). But mainly, he will defer to chair people of this event...and really look to them to take the interviews so that they can also get exposure for the work that they are doing. While he likes to take the media interviews for other things, he will allow others to do it this way because he thinks it's important for the foundation folks who are involved to be in the lime-light for all the work that they are doing.

Ultimately, the value to the institution drives the strategy and actions developed to allow the potential value to be realized. This is fundamental to presidential support for public relations to be a member of the core leadership team of the college. The vision of the president must be aligned with the promotion and communication of the event. With this event, there is a measurable outcome that aligns with the mission and vision of the institution and supports its operations.

You know, the vision is very clear and consistent. (For this event) the only things that have shifted are that there have been some aspects of the fundraising is adding some additional features where they have been able to raise money for other types of scholarships (beyond the original fund raising scope of the event). It is his (the president's) belief that it is so important to provide access for students on our end of the field of higher ed. He wants students to know that they can afford to come here, so he talks all the time that ensuring that is best. So this event, because it's a scholarship event, is providing access and so he is all in support of that and you know, he is joined in our view by our board of trustees and foundation board. It's high profile, it has to be done well. It has to convey a positive image of the college, and it has to do well financially because then it ensures access for our students to come and spend money here.

Strategically, the value of the media coverage for the event is financial and brand building. Nancy described how not just any message placed before the public or stories developed by the media provides strategic value to the college.

What's the value? Well, certainly it has to be the right type of coverage, just any coverage doesn't have value. We have identified six key messages out of our branding research that we felt would be authentic messages for us. So, if you have the right messaging and you can convey that messaging, it does have a good and strong value to your institution because it can build support just as I have been describing.

The following statements from Nancy may be the most telling and important part of the entire interview.

(Because of the media coverage for this event) Not only do we get money from some private donors, but also our local government in very difficult times was able to give us a two percent increase (in funding). Now that sounds modest, but when you look around the state and you see that other counties were actually cutting their community colleges and we were getting a modest increase, then we were able to make the case that we were worthy of their support. So that's the kind of thing that you do in the media stories. You create opportunities or ask the people to create opportunities. The whole theme of what we're trying to convey is how this college creates opportunity of individuals and organizations.

The event for which Mainville College has been recognized is directly tied to the operational objectives of the institution. Funding growth, a significant challenge for the institution, is enhanced by the event through expanded relationships with businesses to which the college provides trained graduates. Funding growth is enhanced by the communication of the program highlighted by the event which leads to student enrollment. And, funding growth was directly impacted institution-wide by an increase in state support at a time when all other similar institutions in the state saw their financial support reduced. Communicating this event and the stories from it to and through the news media year after year has developed momentum for the program highlighted and the college overall. The president and public relations lead executive work with a variety of institutional team members with the common goal of program and institutional advancement. The team does what no single person could do.

Conclusion

Throughout the study, common themes emerged both with the presidents and the public relations lead executives. The two groups have somewhat different themes, but they connect through the center of these themes being the advancement of the institution. The presidents discussed themes that were more global in nature with regard to the individual themes while those associated with the public relations lead executives are more tactical in nature, yet still connected to those higher level themes of the presidents.

The themes that emerged from the presidents included: (a) simplifying the complex; (b) building and supporting a team of professional experts; (c) painting pictures with words; (d) making the job of coverage easy for reporters; (e) developing story hooks; (f) being honest, direct, and truthful while protecting the institution; (g) seeing quantifiable value in the public relations function; (h) understanding the role of the president in the strategic effort to communicate the institutional stories through the news media; and (i) being supportive of the public relations function.

The themes that emerged from the public relations lead executives included: (a) the development of a strategic public relations plan that connects with the business plan of the institution; (b) attaining presidential support for the public relations function; (c) implementation of the developed strategy in concert with the mission, vision, and values of the institution; (d) the need for teamwork; (e) the importance of relationship building within the news media and the institution; and (f) the importance of honesty and integrity in carrying out the mission of the institution through public relations activities.

All of the presidents had experiences early in their careers that developed their understanding of institutional storytelling, the value of that storytelling to the institution, and the

role of the president in being the institutional spokesperson. They learned to simplify complex messages and use analogies and word pictures to help make these complex messages understandable to both reporters and the audiences to which these reporters speak. Each president talked about their understanding of how the president, whoever she or he is, becomes the literal embodiment of the institution to the media, the community, and the many target audiences to which the institutional story must be told.

Internally, each president described the need for an expert in public relations to guide them; they value this person as a member of their leadership team. They also understand the value of a team of experts in helping to develop the communication strategy, tools, and tactics for the institution. They rely on the public relations lead executive to tell them what needs to be said to whom as each president carries out their role as chief communicator for the college.

Capping their understanding of the value of public relations to the institution is that each president can quantify that value. They can identify additional funding that come from the activities. They can identify students that become engaged with the college because of the media coverage attained. They can show responses from key members of targeted audiences that show how messages moved forward by public relations activities were supportive of the mission, vision, and values of the institution.

The public relations lead executives each discussed the need for presidential support for the functions of the public relations lead and staff. Each identified their direct access to the president and their position on the leadership team of the institution as important to their success. Each put less emphasis on the tools and tactics used to move the institutional message forward and more emphasis on the relationships between themselves, the president, the internal leaders of

the institution, and the news media representatives they need to work with to move the institutional stories forward.

Throughout the interviews, I noticed the relaxed, professional, and direct attitudes of the presidents. Each expressed their understanding of the need for the role of the public relations lead executive and the desire to have them at the leadership table. The presidents did not want to control the messaging beyond making certain it fit the institution mission, vision, and values. They wanted the lead public relations executives to help them craft the message, tell them the best ways to express those messages, and use them in a way that was most effective and efficient for the institutions.

While the presidents talked more in mission, vision, and values themes, the public relations lead executives talked about the tactical reality of telling the institutional stories. These executives talked about developing stories that bring value to the institution in ways that made it easy for reporters to take on the stories for coverage. Most of all, I noted how each of the public relations lead executives valued highly and protected vigorously the relationships they developed within the institution and with the news media. Each of these cases have the root of success in relationships.

In conclusion, I found the human aspects of the cases to be the core reason for their successes. Relationships, leadership, and teamwork helped the stories to emerge and be accepted for coverage by the news media. As one of the public relations lead executives noted, the tools and tactics are constantly changing. But, the relationships developed allow the stories to be told regardless of what tools and tactics are in vogue.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 is made up of four sections. The first section is a summary of the study. Next, the study findings are linked to the review of the literature. The third section discusses implications to the community college presidency of successfully working with and through the media to advance the institution revealed from the study. Finally, recommendations for further research have been provided followed by a conclusion.

Summary of the Study

The literature suggests a connection between the reputation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the leading executive of an organization and the strength of the organization as viewed publically. In particular, there is a connection between the reputation of the CEO and the financial health of the organization as Larker details in a Gaines-Ross study, which shows that a 10% increase in CEO reputation results in a 24% increase in a company's market capitalization (Gaines-Ross, 2003, p.16). Additional studies support the concept that CEO reputation has an impact on organizational health (Chatterjee et al., 1992; Hannson, 2004; Keller, 1993; Riahi-Belkaoui, 2004; Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Tosun, 2004; Wyatt, 2005), with one study showing that the CEO represents 48% of the total reputation for an organization (Burson-Marsteller, 2001). Ross and Halstead (2001) found that for presidents and trustees of colleges, positive media relations help to provide validation of the mission, vision, and values of the organization by a third party—the press.

The Table 1 shows a summary of the outcomes organized by the study's guiding questions.

Table 1

Summary of the Findings

Guiding Questions	Findings
Question One: Practices	The participants utilized teamwork, proper role positioning and action, and internal/external relationships to successfully carry out public relations campaigns. Each participant worked from a well-structured strategic communications plan that connected directly to organizational goals to implement actions that worked with and through the media to advance the institution.
Question Two: Beliefs	The participants believed that the institutional Chief Executive Officer/President embodies the institution and is the chief spokesperson for the institution. Each participant spoke to the importance of public relations and communication to the future of the institution. As the chief spokesperson, the participants treated members of the media with respect and worked to make the job of the reporter easy when it came to institutional coverage.
Question Three: Skills	The participants felt that making the complex simple in the development and delivery of messages to and through the media was a key to success. Participants identified the need to be accessible to both their team and members of the news media. While making the complex simple, participants described how being truthful and transparent underpin any message.
Question Four: Structure	The participants utilize a team to implement a strategic plan that carries the institutional message to and through members of the news media. Each participant had a clear protocol for message creation and delivery with individual team members playing specific roles in the effort to tell the institutional story to selected and well-identified target markets.

Methodology

A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized to address the overarching question of how presidents of community colleges work with and through the media to advance their institutions. The case method preserves the context and affords a holistic view of the process under consideration (Gummesson, 1991). The use of a multi-case approach was preferred in that it is intended that the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings were strengthened (Miles

& Huberman, 1994, p. 29). The case study was the preferred research strategy for this study in that it contributed “to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2003, p.1) with regard to how community college presidents work with and through the media to successfully advance the community college. Four community college presidents and four public relations lead executives for the selected institutions were interviewed. Data analysis using the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1988) allowed for themes and patterns to emerge from the multiple sources of evidence reviewed from each case.

Research Questions and the Findings

The guiding research questions for this research were as follows:

1. What practices do the presidents of four exemplary community colleges use when working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
2. What do four presidents of exemplary community colleges believe about working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?
3. What individual skills and attributes helped to form these practices and beliefs?
4. How do the presidents organize and deploy their human resources in this successful case?

Practices

The first guiding question (What practices do the presidents of four exemplary community colleges use when working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?) was designed to determine the practices utilized by community college presidents who have been successful in communicating the institutional

message to and through the news media. The focus of each participant was on the institution and the message, not on the president as an individual. The participants utilized a common technique—a team from the institution—to create, deliver, and manage the institutional message. In each case, a team of individuals was assembled to organize and carry out the various assignments that were a part of the events and message delivery by each institution.

In order to ensure the message focus was on the institution, messages were created within the framework of the institution's strategic plan, with the plan having a direct link to specific business objectives. Each participant discussed the need to take complex issues and create simple messages from them; the participants expressed the need to make the job of the reporter easy, while making certain all messages were centered on standards of moral and ethical soundness.

Teams and the specific roles within the team were an important part of how the participants created, presented, and managed stories from the institution to the news media. Team size depended upon institutional size to a certain degree, but regardless of size, teams were constructed to meet the ongoing communication needs of the institution as well as the immediate needs of the individual stories. As a member of the team, each participant understood their role as chief communicator for the institution; they were very clear about being utilized in that role when needed and appropriate. Each participant was very supportive of the other members of their team and the roles they played. One key point discovered was that all participants had their lead public relations executives as direct reports. These direct reports were also members of the senior leadership teams for each institution.

The practice of developing and using teams to help move the institutional message forward is supported by the literature. In a study by Eddy (2005), some successful presidents identified themselves as team players and servant leaders. This was the case for each of the

participants in this study. Team members had specific roles, which included developing messages for specific types of media such as print, electronic, and social. In Eddy's (2005) study, successful college presidential communicators were noted as using a variety of tools and techniques to deliver institutional messages to the many diverse audiences of interest to the institution. The participants of this study followed this theme and utilized team members for those tools and techniques with which the presidents did not have experience or expertise.

Presidential communicators employ various tools and strategies to overcome the stressors and constraints related to successful communication. The use of teams helped with the frustrations faced by college presidents as noted in Vaughan (1986). In Vaughan's study, time constraints were noted as being limiting to the presidents. The time available to do the work required often seemed to be less than needed to complete the actions effectively. This placed pressure on the participants in Vaughan's study. Participants in this study utilized team members to help better manage the presidents' time as well as the team. Vaughan also noted the stress of coordinating messages with the many unique stakeholder groups as being significant for presidents. In this study, participants utilized team members and a strategic plan to help manage messages and keep the stories of the institution consistent with the mission, vision, and values of each college. By doing this, the presidents helped to manage the time and task stressors that faced them when trying to advance the institutional story through the media.

Participants were concerned with helping reporters do their jobs while making certain to center stories in truth-telling, honesty, and transparency. Each participant expressed the need to create simple information from stories that were often complex. They did this with ethical and moral standards such as always telling the truth, telling what they knew as they learned the facts, and protecting the institution by not stepping outside the boundaries of facts. The messages were

designed to be as clear, consistent, and timely as possible. Setting this tone helped each team and its members operate in a way that was consistent with the standards established by the president.

Developing and delivering consistent and simple messages was important to the participants of this study in their efforts to build relationships with the media, businesses, students, taxpayers, legislators, and other community groups. The participants viewed their role as the spokesperson for their institutions as critical to the development of these community linkages. The key reason for these linkages was expressed by Daniel, and is reflective of the comments made by each participant with regard to the importance of the local community. Daniel said, “The value I think is everything because we depend (on the local community) from a revenue perspective. So, every day, we’re running a little election for the confidence of the local public.” Daniel’s comment is supported by research that points to the need for community college presidents to develop linkages with community groups and communicate the value of the institution with and through these groups (American Association of Community Colleges, 2006; Hood, Miller, & Pope, 1999; Weisman & Vaughan, 2006)

Beliefs

Study participants responded consistently to the second guiding question (What do four presidents of exemplary community colleges believe about working with and through the news media to communicate with publics of interest to the institution?), agreeing that the institution must tell its story to the community in order to survive, and that the president of the institution is its chief spokesperson. The literature supports this belief as noted by Simone in Pappas (1994), Ross and Halstead (2001), Torres and Evans (2005), and Hood, Miller, and Pope (1999), within whose study 97% of the two year college presidents cited being a communicator as the most important role of the leader.

The actions of the participants of this study are guided by a common belief that the president or CEO of the institution is the key spokesperson for the institution. Each participant viewed themselves as the message carrier, message interpreter, and tone setter for the institution. The literature appears to support this. Vaughan (1986) describes presidential leadership patterns that include message carrier, interpreter, and tone setter in the effort to communicate with many diverse community groups as the external leader for the institution. Each participant was very aware of their impact on groups, both external and internal, and how their messages and the ways they delivered the messages established a tone for the campus within the community. This belief, as Vaughan (1986) noted, helped the participants of my study take on their role as external leader with the understanding that there were many groups with which the president must communicate. The news media were key partners to each participant in the study in the effort to communicate with these groups. Ross and Halstead (2001) also recognized this role as being important to successful college presidential leadership. Successful presidents and leaders use the tools and skills of a public relations framework when working with external groups. (pg. 22).

Each participant noted that the role of chief communicator was either an unwritten requirement of their jobs or written in as a functional responsibility. The literature supports this both as unwritten in Garbett (1988) and written in Gaines-Ross (2003).

The practices noted by the participants in response to guiding question one were supported by a belief that working with the news media was important to creating a positive institutional value in the minds of community members. Gehurng, Johnson, Petrizzo, and Stubler (1986) agree with this belief and note that the image of the community college “is largely due to its daily working relationships with reporters” (p. 33). One participant in the study, Susan, highlighted what all participants believed, which is that “whenever any community college can

increase its presence, its visibility in which it resides, in our case within the city, which is immensely hard to do, that makes it a stronger institution.”

In working with members of the news media, participants described beliefs that centered on respecting the role of the reporter, making complex issues simple to understand and cover, and telling the institutional story without personal bias.

Skills

With guiding question three (What individual skills and attributes help to form these practices and beliefs?) each participant described the skills and attributes driven by the beliefs expressed in the second guiding question and displayed in the practices for each revealed in guiding question one. The literature supports the need to develop and employ skills and attributes related to working with and through the media in public relations efforts. For example, college presidents need to strategically employ public relations skills in the effort to articulate the mission and vision of the institution, make sense of the environment in which the institution operates, and place the vision of the institution within the realities of the environment thereby setting a tone for a positive future (Campbell & Leverty, 1997; Eddy, 2005; Neumann & Neumann, 1999).

Each participant described storytelling as a skill necessary to make the complex simple and to be able to share the institutional vision in a meaningful way to external groups—both to the news media and through the news media to targeted audiences. Storytelling was described in a variety of ways by participants of the study. Each participant discussed how they worked to make simple stories and statements out of complex issues so as to gain a better understanding of each story and its value to the members of the news media and community. Skills in storytelling included developing story hooks, gimmicks, and painting word pictures.

Study participants were consistent in responding to how they think about framing a story. Each participant described many things beyond the written words that make the story interesting and acceptable to the target audience. This included how things looked when presenting the story—from colors used for things like the backdrop of a set or scene to the clothing worn by the participant. This is the visual framing of a story. Sounds were a part of framing as well with regard to the tone. How a participant told a story was as important as what was being said. And, connecting the key concepts of a story to things that people could understand helped frame the story. Susan described how she referred to herself as the “woman who lived in a shoe” to tell the story of how the institution had run out of space for classes.

The idea that presidents need to develop the skill to make the complex simple was supported in research by Vaughan (1986) and Pielstick (1998). In the role of external leader, participants were consistent in their response that skills learned over time—through experiences each had—helped them to articulate the mission, vision, and values of a complex institution to groups who could help advance the college. These skills were successfully implemented when the participants were approachable, when the interaction with the reporters or editors were carried out in a way that showed respect to the reporter or editor, informed the reporter often in a one-to-one setting, and truthfully told the story with an understanding of the benefit to the reporter and their audience. All of the skills employed and the attributes learned by the participants were founded in the belief that communication must be truthful, transparent, honest, consistent, and clear.

Structure

The final guiding question (How do the presidents organize and deploy their human resources in this effort?) showed how the practices, beliefs, skills, and attributes of the

participants in the study were the foundation for how they developed strategies for the organization. The institutional human resources were matched to these strategies in the effort to advance the institutional mission, vision, and values. The central finding was that each participant utilized teams to take on the tasks of working with and through the media to advance the institution. Utilizing teams fit with the participants' belief that public relations activities are invaluable to institutions, but that they could not carry out the practices of the communications function alone.

Teams were believed to be so important to the participants that the leaders of the communications teams, in each case the public relations lead executive, were direct reports to the presidents and a part of the institutional leadership groups or cabinets. Team size for each of the participating institutions was determined by institutional size and the level of effort necessary to communicate with and through the news media. Each participant had a person or outside company that was a public relations expert; two participants also worked with external professional services firms to help create, guide, deliver, and evaluate the communications efforts of each institution.

Another point made by the participants was that they understood that they had certain skills and attributes that were valuable to the effort of communicating to and through the news media, but they lacked other valuable skills and attributes and that the coordinated effort of a team could provide. This realization and team orientation is reflected in the literature; the literature states that changes in the structure of American society impact the work of the president (Pierce & Pedersen. 1997). Using teams addresses both societal and communication channel/methodological changes, such as minority groups increasing in numbers on campus and technology used for communication such as Twitter. The participants agreed that keeping up

with change was only possible for the institution if a strong team with diverse skills and experiences was assembled to carry out the communication strategy.

The literature also appeared to support the use of teams by the participants as a way to help blend the manager and leader roles of the president (Neumann & Neumann, 1999; Vaughan, 1986). Participants described how they were team members and how they were brought in when a particular role in which they were strong or appropriate was required. Many of these roles were leadership oriented and helped support the managerial roles others on the team would play.

Built into the structure of the teams was, in all cases, feedback loops and opportunities for testing strategies and messages as well as helping to make adjustments informed by the feedback when needed. The literature supports the use of feedback as noted by Eddy (2005).

A strategic approach to communicate to target audiences, including the news media, was an important part of the participants' success. Each participant stressed the importance of strategy and that a strategic plan was used to drive all efforts to communicate to and through the news media. The use of strategy was also supported by the literature through Eddy (2005), Simone (as cited in Pappas, 1994), Shaink (as cited in Pappas, 1994), and Sample (2002). The strategy of each institution helped to establish a protocol through which news media opportunities were driven and contacts from the news media were processed.

Implications to the Community College Presidency

This section describes how the findings of this study successfully help the community college president to advance the mission, vision, and values of the institution.

Connection of Organizational Goals to Media Relations Activities

The work of advancing the institutional mission, vision, and values through the media should be tied directly to organizational goals, not just those of marketing and communication.

Tying messages directly to organizational goals can lead to the improvement of the health of the institution by increasing income and market share.

A finding not related to the guiding questions, but still an important implication, was that each event in this study provided both a financial improvement and student market share increase for the associated institution. There was a direct connection to the organizational goals of each institution for the activities undertaken in each case. The outcomes of the cases were measurable and showed an increase in financial support, an increase in students attending the institution, or both.

The literature supports activities such as those found in these cases by the leaders of each institution. Obtaining the financial resources needed to keep the community college stable and growing is noted as being a major concern for institutional leaders. Hood et al. (1999), Neumann and Neumann (1999), Golden (1992), and Vaughan (1986) discuss how leaders of community colleges require skills that can help to develop financial resources for the institutions. Increasing financial stability and building market share by working with and through the media is described in Ross and Halstead (2001) and Sample (2002) by leaders of institutions that build positive media relationships and express the mission, vision, and values of the institution in a way that develops a competitive position in the marketplace.

Importance of Teams

The participants of this study agree that teams should include an expert in media relations and that this professional should be a direct report to the president. Participants understand the value of each member of the team as well as appreciate the role of the president. The public relations lead executives in this study described the tools and tactics used in each case, while the presidents described the cases in a more general way relating more to the outcomes, not how the

tools and tactics used were implemented. Participants in the study agreed that the president most often does not have the skills or the time available to take on all of the daily work of media relations. Instead, it is important to have a person and team within the institution, or in partnership with internal and external resource professionals, to carry out planning, implementation, and evaluation of media relations in a strategic way. All actions must be tied back to organizational goals.

The public relations lead executives described how support and trust from the president was key to the success of the actions they took, as well as the success of others on the team. A strong partnership between the presidents and the public relations executives existed in every event studied here. Trust between these two institutional leaders was strong in each case. Desired goals were the same, though the lead public relations executives described reaching those goals in a more tactical way while presidents described them in overarching strategies.

President as Team Member

The participants in this study agreed that the president should be called upon only when the team requires their participation. Most often, this is in the role of institutional communications leader or storyteller. The public relations lead executives carried out the daily work of the media relations role and called upon the president for support and public communication in each case.

Institutional Story Centerpiece

The story of the institution must be the centerpiece of each attempt to work with and through the media to advance the institution. Participants of the study discussed how every interaction with the media was designed to tell the institutional story. The position or personality

of the president was only a lever to gain access and attention. The advancement of the institution, not any individual, was the goal. There is an overarching need to tell the story of the institution.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study may have implications for other research in the area of community college leadership and working with and through the media to advance the institution by the president. Further research might explore:

1. Relationships between community college presidents and public relations lead executives with regard to past experiences with the media and how those experiences influence behaviors of each. In particular, future research might explore whether or not negative past experiences with the press of current presidents influences how they hire for and build their marketing communications teams. Do presidents with negative past experiences develop teams that attempt to control communication with the media or change the role of the president with regard to being the chief communicator for the institution? How do negative and positive past experiences with the media influence how community college presidents develop the institutional structure and practice of media relations?
2. Direct relationships between overarching institutional objectives and the use of strategies to tell the institutional story to and through the news media. Does a direct connection to institutional objectives exist in additional cases and how does any connection enhance the support for and use of a media relations strategy?
3. The working of successful teams as they implement a communications strategy designed to tell the institutional story to selected target audiences. A particular area for study may

be the trust between members of the institutional communications team and how trust, or the lack of it, impacts measurable success of media relations and communications efforts.

4. How presidents learn about working with and through the news media to advance the mission, vision, and values of the institution and how they acquire the knowledge needed to develop, implement, and evaluate strategies in this area of leadership. Exploring how presidents acquire the skills, practices, and beliefs needed to successfully communicate with and through the media may come through formal education, real world experiences, or both. An exploration of how presidents gain their knowledge may offer insight into what opportunities exist for presidents and what gaps there are that could be met by additional educational opportunities.
5. Financial and market share growth through the connection of organizational objectives to the strategies and tactics associated with working with and through the news media to advance the institution. Exploring the measurable impacts on financial health and market share growth may inform the budgeting and staffing strategies employed by presidents in the effort to more effectively and efficiently communication with groups of people who are important to the institution.

Conclusion

Leadership as a community college president is demanding and changing as many of the old models of operation evolve. There is a need to develop new ways of funding the work of the community college and to build market share in an increasingly competitive environment. It is increasingly less common for presidents of the community college to be the founding entrepreneur. Many presidents now come from backgrounds that do not include the training needed to take on the myriad of tasks demanded in this newly competitive arena, which is akin to

running a for-profit business than. As the literature reveals, business stability and success has the leader of the business acting publicly to advance the organization.

This study highlights how four community college presidents have accomplished the business-like activity of telling the institutional story to and through the news media, the reasons for taking on this role, and how the outcomes positively impacted the financial wellbeing and market share growth of these community colleges. This study can inform individuals serving as community college presidents or those who desire to be of service.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATION LETTER

Dear _____:

Your community college has been recognized for its success in working with the media by the awarding of the Paragon Award from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) in the Media Success category in XXXX. As the leader of the institution, you have been identified by your peers as one of the outstanding community college presidents when dealing with the media to advance the mission and image of college.

I am a doctoral candidate in Community College Leadership at Colorado State University. My dissertation is an examination of how community college presidents successfully work with the media as chief communicators for their institutions. I am interested in the impact of the president on successful media relations.

To conduct this research, I am seeking to interview the presidents of four winning institutions of the Paragon Award with presidents were involved in the success story in direct contact with the media. In addition, I am hoping to interview the member of the marketing staff who was associated with this award-winning effort. Interviews should take approximately one hour and will be scheduled to meet the calendars and time availability of you and your staff. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will visit your campus to learn as much as I can about the environment and context. In addition, I will review the materials submitted to the NCMPR for use in evaluating your story for the Paragon Award. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in any activities you deem appropriate to further my understanding the uniqueness of your college and the case being studied.

The findings of this study will help community college presidents work more effectively with the media in the effort to advance the mission, vision, values and image of their institutions. In addition, it will help community colleges promote the value of their work in their communities to provide an open door to higher education. Would you participate in this study?

Thank you for your consideration. I will contact you within the next two weeks to explore your interest. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Paul T. Carringer

614-846-5528

pcarring@lamar.colostate.edu

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM

Date:

Beginning Time: _____

Ending Time: _____

Participant: _____

Location: _____

Field Notes:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENTS

Experience

How long have you been the president of this institution?

Has working with the media been a part of your job from the beginning?

What is your current relationship with the media?

Talk about your background with me as far as media experience is concerned. Tell me about any specific media relations training you have and if you have worked as a member of the press in the past.

What skills do you think are most important for presidents in working with the media?

Tell me about your early experiences in this job with the media?

Specifically to the case for which your institution received the Paragon Award, what was your involvement?

How did this case fit with your vision for the institution?

Did others here share your vision?

Discuss your feelings about working with the media.

From your point of view, what was important about this case and working with the media?

How much time did you directly devote to working with the media in the case we are discussing?

Visibility

What media outlets in your community are important to your institution?

Describe the current visibility of your institution and how the local press plays a part in that visibility.

What value does being visible in this community through press coverage bring to your institution?

Who are the best reporters and editors that you work with? Why are they the best?

Did these reporters play a part in the case we are discussing?

Vision

How does working with the media advance your vision of the future for this institution?

How was your vision impacted by the visibility attained through the case we are discussing?

Talk about your relationship with the media and how that reflects you as a leader.

When speaking to members of the press about your institution, what is your approach? How do you communicate with them?

In the case for which you won the Paragon Award, was the vision you have of the institution advanced?

What is your position regarding who can and should speak for the institutional vision?

Governance

How do other members of your leadership team such as the board and your cabinet view working with the media?

How was the leadership team involved in the Paragon Award case?

Is there specific training given to other leadership team members to help them in their interaction with the media?

Actions

What are the best ways to contact and communicate the media and why? What works best for you?

How do you evaluate your relationships with the media?

In this case, what generated the initial actions with the media?

What actions were used in the case we are discussing?

In this case, how did your team work together? What were the roles?

What is the single most important action that was taken by you in this case?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OTHER PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFF

Experience

How long have you worked with the president of this institution?

Has working with the media been a part of your job from the beginning at this institution?

What is your view of the current relationship with the media by this president?

Talk about your background with me as far as media experience is concerned. Tell me about any specific media relations training you have and if you have worked as a member of the press in the past.

What skills do you think are most important for presidents in working with the media?

Tell me about your early experiences in this job with the media?

Specifically to the case for which your institution received the Paragon Award, what was your involvement?

Did this case fit with the vision of the president of the institution?

Did others here share her/his vision?

Discuss your feelings about working with the media in this case.

From your point of view, what was important about this case and working with the media?

How much time did you directly devote to working with the media in the case we are discussing?

How much time did the president devote to working with the media in the case we are discussing?

Visibility

What media outlets in your community are important to your institution?

Describe the current visibility of your institution and how the local press plays a part in that visibility.

What value does being visible in this community through press coverage bring to your institution?

Who are the best reporters and editors that you work with? Why are they the best?

Did these reporters play a part in the case we are discussing?

Did this case impact the visibility of the institution in the community? If so, how and what were the results?

Vision

When speaking to members of the press about your institution, what is your approach? How do you communicate with them?

In this case, what did the president view as important in expressing her/his vision? Are the vision of the institution and this case connected? If yes, how and what were the results?

What is your position regarding who can and should speak for the institutional vision? Is this shared by the leadership team?

Governance

How do other members of the leadership team such as the board and your cabinet view working with the media?

How was the leadership team involved in the Paragon Award case?

Is there specific training given to other leadership team members to help them in their interaction with the media?

Actions

What are the best ways to contact and communicate the media and why? What works best for you?

What tools and tactics work best for your president with regard to communicating with the media?

How do you evaluate your relationships with the media?

In this case, what generated the initial actions with the media?

What actions were used in the case we are discussing?

In this case, who was involved directly with the media? What were the roles?

How did the team work together in this case?

What is the single most important action that was taken by you in this case?

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, [full name]_____, [title] on [date]____/____/____,

will or will not at this time)

participate in the dissertation research entitled “The Community College President: Working with and through the Media to Advance the Institution” conducted by Paul T. Carringer to fulfill requirements for a doctoral degree. I understand that:

- A qualitative interview protocol will be used;
- Participation is voluntary;
- Participants’ identifying information will be kept confidential and separate from their answers;
- Participants may withdraw at any point without penalty before the culmination of the study;
- Participants need not answer all of the questions; and
- Approximately two hours of time has been allowed for interviews and observations with presidents and public relations staff.

As a result of my approval, please coordinate the interviews through the person(s) indicated below.

I have read and understood the Informed Consent Disclosure, which answered my questions to my satisfaction. I sign below in verification of my agreement for the participation in the above research activity.

Signed:_____ Title:_____

Institution Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip Code:_____

Check the box if you would like to receive a summary of the study results.

Please return to Paul Carringer, PO Box 14487, Columbus, OH 43214

Phone: 614-846-5528

Fax: 614-846-5528. Email: pcarring@lamar.colostate.edu