

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

JOHN A. HOCH

Public relations is a way of life for an institution — not a job for a single individual. The policies, program, and practices of the Bloomsburg State Teachers College and the performance of its people determine the quality of the institution's public relations with its many publics. Of particular importance are those policies, programs, and practices which have resulted in attracting and developing a good faculty and a good grade of students.

The keystone of any good public relations program is friendliness, just plain pleasantness, and the Bloomsburg State Teachers College has gone more than halfway in meeting the public. By taking time to be pleasant and helpful and by giving thought, time, and direction to its public contacts, the college has become known throughout the Commonwealth as the "Friendly College." Friendly colleges, like friendly people, do not leave friendliness to chance.

There was no definite program of public relations in the formative years of the institution. Perhaps one of the earliest promoters of the school was Dr. Judson P. Welsh, who served as principal of the Bloomsburg Literary Institute and Normal School from 1890 to 1906. Dr. Welsh was quite anxious to build up enrollment, and he extended liberal credit to prospective students whose financial resources were not quite as extensive as their desire for learning. If a student could find some reputable person to secure his note, Dr. Welsh would enroll him at once. In this way a large debt was built up, and faculty members would spend their summer vacations collecting some of these funds. In this way, they came in contact with those who owed the school money as well as with prospective students.

Dean Emeritus William Boyd Sutliff recalls capacity enrollments in the old Literary Institute and State Normal School when there was no need for student recruitment. However, after the purchase of the school by the state on May 22, 1916, a limited amount of recruitment activity was begun under the direction of Professor Bruce Albert, but there was no definite organization for the program and whatever results were accomplished are considered only incidental.

Shortly after 1920, the State Normal School became widely known through its extension program. Large numbers of students in area communities were enrolled in evening classes, and contacts were made not only with teachers-in-service but prospective students in the communities in which the classes were held.

What was possibly the first organized effort in the field of public relations began in 1927 when John C. Koch was appointed to the faculty as Dean of Men. Mr. Koch was intensely interested in the promotional phase of public relations, and in the next few years a number of interesting things were done. Weekly news releases were sent to sixty or more Pennsylvania newspapers, and special articles of interest were contributed to weekly papers and various magazines. As early as 1938, weekly broadcasts were made over area radio stations in Sunbury, Williamsport, Wilkes-Barre, and Scranton.

The college and the town of Bloomsburg were brought closer together by an annual Kiwanis-Rotary-College dinner, occasional banquets for the Fireman's Relief Association, the Bloomsburg Lodge of Elks, and other organizations. Although World War II forced a termination of these activities, the role played by such affairs in building community good will has been important.

A series of college films were made, beginning in 1929, to acquaint alumni and friends of the school with the various aspects of college life and developments on the campus. Especially commendable were the war-time films — "Bloomsburg Faces War," "Wings Over Bloomsburg," and "The Transition of a Teachers College." In addition, timely bulletins were published to carry the Bloomsburg story to the many publics served by the college.

Beginning in 1946 the program was enlarged and expanded under the direction of a faculty Public Relations Committee and a Director of Public Relations who serves as a coordinator and adviser for the public relations aspects of all activities of the college as well as supervisor of certain specific activities such as the news and radio service and student recruitment. The expanded program operates in two areas. First, it is concerned with the provision of acceptable objectives, policies, and practices. Next, it is concerned with the interpretation of these policies and activities to the various publics.

In order to achieve these ends, the public relations program provides the following services:

Coordination of the public relations activities of all departments and services of the college.

The operation of a newspaper and radio service. A weekly news release is mailed to daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state, while special news stories and articles of interest are provided certain newspapers and magazines and radio stations when requested or when the news item requires special attention.

Consultation between the director and departments of the college whose activities have especially important public relations consequences, such as a placement office, extension service, business office, athletic department, and the directors of annual conferences in Elementary Education, Business Education, Secondary Education, and Retail Selling.

The supervision and direction of an extensive recruitment and high school visitation program which contacted more than 60 high schools and 200 high school seniors last year. As a result, more than half of the present Freshman class were introduced to Bloomsburg and shown the opportunities that exist in the teaching profession. The supervision of a speaker's and entertainment bureau through which the college makes available in most agreeable and easily obtainable manner the instruction, information, and entertainment resources of faculty members and the students.

Assistance in planning publications, including promotional leaflets and bulletins, which are used to do a direct "selling" job. Such publications as placement brochures (issued in 1949 and 1950) introduce our graduates to school administrators; progress reports ("Five Years Are Finished" (1945) and "Five More Years Are Finished" (1950); recruitment aids ("If you Want To Teach" and "Twenty Questions Most Often Asked By High School Graduates"); and other bulletins and leaflets are highly important in the total public relations program.

The promotion of on-campus contacts for visiting high school students; the annual Invitation High School Basketball Tournament, Spring Fashion Show, Commercial Contest, and occasional "visiting" days provide valuable contacts with prospective students.

The development of motion pictures which provide a means of bringing the scenes and action of campus activity to prospective students, alumni groups, and other important college publics.

Assisting with the production of a weekly radio program, "The College Hour," broadcast over a local station.

Because relationships with the public, whether good or bad, are inescapable for public institutions, the objective of the planned public relations program of the Bloomsburg State Teachers College is to insure good public relations. The success of the program will be reflected in the future growth and development of the college and the confidence it inspires in the people of the Commonwealth whom it has so ably served.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

E. H. NELSON

Graduates of Bloomsburg have always been interested in their Alma Mater. The class of 1891 contributed about \$200 to purchase exercise apparatus. This was before the school had a gym-

nasium, hence, the materials were set up for use in a vacant class room. For several years before this, there was considerable discussion at Alumni meetings relative to an Alumni Memorial. At

one meeting a motion was made, thoroughly discussed and unanimously passed, that each member of the Alumni Association be asked to contribute a dollar toward the grading and putting into proper repair of an athletic field on the Campus.

In 1894 the B.S.N.S. Quarterly was established "to provide a medium of communication between the Normal and her Children." Up to that time we have only fragmentary records of Alumni Activities. The Quarterly has been published continuously to the present except for a period of four years (1922-1926) when the affairs of the Association were at a low ebb. A perusal of a complete file of these publications to be found in the Alumni Room, shows a spirit of loyalty and support through the 56 years.

In 1933 interested Alumni took the necessary steps to secure a charter and since that date the Association has functioned as a Corporation. Bruce Albert was the first president under the new status and guided by his aggressive leadership, a healthy growth was experienced. The loan fund was developed from a mere pittance to a working balance of over \$13,000. The class of 1893 made the initial contribution. Many other classes and individuals have made gifts through the years.

Professor O. H. Bakeless canvassed the Alumni to secure funds for the equipment and furnishing of Alumni headquarters in a room set apart for that purpose by Dr. Francis B. Haas, then President of the College. Today, we find in this room complete furnishings, trophy cases, and a varied collection of pictures, publications, awards, and mementos that have been gathered and are of interest to Alumni when they return to their Alma Mater.

For many years, Professor and Mrs. F. H. Jenkins took care of the business affairs of the Association, and Alumni today reap the reward of their careful management. Older Alumni will associate the names of Welsh, Waller, Wilbur, Dennis, Sutliff, and many others as staunch supporters of the Alumni Association.

Branch organizations of the association are to be found in several counties as well as in New York, Washington, and Philadelphia. Graduates who have gone far in their chosen fields and professions, as well as in State and National affairs, gather to spend an evening talking over their student days. Occasionally an escapade comes to light that has been a secret through the years as far as personnel was concerned. But the dominant theme of every meeting is that it was good to have been there and "years

to come shall find us ever, true to Bloomsburg still." This is evidenced when fine groups return to the campus each fall and spring to attend the exercises incident to Homecoming and Alumni Day respectively.

Feeling that some formal recognition should be given to members of the Association who, through their loyalty to the college and honor brought thereto by their professional activities, a Distinguished Service Award was originated and the first presentations were made at the May, 1948, Alumni Day Exercises. Those honored to date are as follows:

1948	John C. Conner	Educator, Philanthropist
	Dr. Francis B. Haas	Former president of the college, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
	Danny Litwhiler	Major league baseball player
1949	Lindley H. Dennis	Nationally recognized leader in Vocational Education
	Ida M. Sitler	A fearless teacher in the field of Biology
1950	William B. Sutliff	Many years of devoted service to his Alma Mater as teacher and Dean of Instruction
	Carrie Clark Myers	A leader in the field of Children's Literature
	Dr. George E. Pfahler	World leader in the field of radiology

No more than three awards are made each year. To be thus honored is a compliment to the recipient and to the College.

Numerous scholarships are awarded each year to worthy students. The Bruce Albert Memorial Scholarship, the Sauner scholarship, the Class of 1950 Scholarship are annual awards. In addition there are about 12 fifty-dollar awards available annually to students designated by the college administration as deserving of the same. The Student Loan Fund is always available to those who can qualify as being earnest, reliable students in need of assistance from the financial angle in completing their work at the College.

A bronze tablet, "The Husky Plaque," lists those who have contributed \$50 or more to "the spirit that is Bloomsburg." New names are added each year. More and more as the years come and go do the Alumni rally to the support of their Alma Mater. A fine Siberian Husky dog, purchased by the Association and presented to the College, Alumni Day, May, 1950, symbolizes the living spirit of loyal sons and daughters of the Literary Institute, the Normal School, and the Bloomsburg State Teachers College.

LOOKING AHEAD

HARVEY A. ANDRUSS

Writing in a college bulletin FIVE MORE YEARS ARE FINISHED (1945-1950) in April 1950, John A. Hoch, Director, Public Relations, poses certain questions and suggests their answers in a section titled "Looking Ahead."

Great opportunities loom ahead and in order to meet the Challenge posed by these broadening horizons our College must continue to grow in service to others.

A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching showed that 20% of American youth between the ages of 18 and 21 are enrolled in institutions of higher learning. California leads the several states with 30%, while Pennsylvania's average of 7% is far less than the 12% figure reported for New York State.

Obviously, Pennsylvania must narrow the gap between her present low percentage and the national average, or the future of the youth from 18 to 21 in the Commonwealth will continue to suffer.

What steps will Pennsylvania take to close this gap?

The answer to this question may well indicate the future development of our College.

To meet the needs for higher education among the youth of New York State, there was created the State University of New York comprising 33 separate institutions of higher education which include eleven State Teachers Colleges, eleven state-operated institutions, and eleven "contract" colleges. By expanding oppor-

tunities, New York has shown that if there is a college with low or medium fees within commuting distance, a higher proportion of youth will attend college. An increase in the total number of college enrollees cannot help but affect the enrollment of all collegiate institutions within the state. California's experience is similar.

Does the answer for Pennsylvania lie in similar expanded programs of higher education?

The community college presents new educational frontiers. A relatively new and developing educational institution, the community college attempts to meet the post-high school educational needs of youth in the college-age group. Ordinarily, the standard two years of college work are offered, but many of the newer institutions are developing programs to meet the vocational and general educational needs of the students who are preparing to go directly into civic and semi-professional life.

A recent report of the President's Commission on Higher Education defines the community college as the next great area of expansion in higher education.

Does the Pennsylvania answer lie within the area of developing a system of tuition-free or low-cost community colleges?

It is well recognized that lack of funds acts as a curb to college enrollment. Federal or state scholarships are advocated by many as the solution to the problem of increasing college enrollments. Following broadly the precedent set by the G. I. Bill, the Presi-