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OPINIONS OF NEWS MEDIA MEMBERS TOWARD PUBLIC HIGHER  
EDUCATION IN TEXAS AND PREDICTIONS OF THOSE  
OPINIONS BY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY  
PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

DISSERTATION

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By

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The problem of this study was whether differences exist between opinions news media members have toward higher education and the prediction of those opinions by college and university public relations directors. The purposes were to determine if such differences exist and to assess certain demographic factors' roles in journalists' opinions.

A survey instrument consisting of twenty-five statements on issues in public higher education was mailed to Texas journalists and to public relations directors at state-supported colleges and universities. The instruments going to the news media also contained demographic questions. News media members were asked to give their opinions on each statement by marking a five-point scale. Public relations directors were asked to respond in the way they thought most journalists would respond.

T-tests were performed to determine the significance of the differences between sets of means on each statement and for the means of the total of all responses. Tests of correlation were made to assess which demographic factors

seemed to play more important roles in the opinions of the journalists.

Major findings were that a significant difference did exist between the overall opinion of journalists and the prediction of that opinion by public relations directors, that significant differences existed on eleven of the twenty-five statements, that opinions were more favorable than predicted on twenty of the twenty-five statements, and that there was no significant relationship between demographic factors and opinion.

Major conclusions of the study were that news media members hold very favorable opinions on issues basic to higher education, that these very favorable opinions on a few basic issues more than outweigh slightly to moderately unfavorable opinions on several less fundamental issues, and that public relations directors consistently overestimate the journalists' unfavorable opinions on most issues but underestimate the very favorable opinions on the most basic issues.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

In 1882, when William Henry Vanderbilt told a newspaper reporter, "The public be damned" (40, p. 705), it was probably wishful thinking rather than a statement of fact. The power of public opinion had long been recognized. Abraham Lincoln, speaking in 1858, said, "With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed" (42, p. 757). A reflection of the power of public opinion is the extent to which it is courted by those individuals and institutions that find themselves in the public eye. Nolte (35) stated that the importance of public opinion has led virtually every organization to formulate a planned program for its influence. Childs (8) pointed to the complexity of modern society and the growth of mass communications media as reasons for the enhancement of public opinion and attempts to sway it.

No government, business, or institution, particularly in a democratic society, is powerful enough to do anything to anyone at any time. Korbe (27) stated that all organizations are social units, and therefore continue to exist through the favorable attitudes of those with which they come into contact. Rather than passively allowing these attitudes to

form, organizations plan programs for what Christenson and McWilliams called " . . . engineering the public's consent to a program or goal" (9, p. 419). This is done through a program of public relations. At the core of any public relations program is the placing of facts before a public that will present the organization's case in the best light. Lesley said:

When an organization seeks to win support for its method of operation, its principles, the system that supports it, or any other viewpoint, its most effective means are the channels of reaching the public that are constantly being utilized by public relations men (29, p. 8).

Childs called public opinion "the court of last resort" (8, p. 282) and said that the goal of the organization should be to make that opinion as enlightened as possible. For a business, of course, the motives of seeking a favorable public opinion are not altruistic, but rather related to bottom-line profits. Ehrenkranz and Kahn wrote, "The news resulting from PR-publicity efforts for an industry . . . can help a marketer attract new customers and reinforce on-going business relationships" (16, p. 7).

To some extent, public opinion affects higher education in a similar manner. Rowland (38) wrote that colleges and universities depend upon their news services to portray the institutions in such a manner that prospective students and donors are attracted. Yorke, interviewed by Nolte, said that colleges and universities " . . . have the same problem as

business concerns in building bases of public understanding and support" (35, p. 91). Cutlip, Center, and Broom cited an instance in which a man altered his will to benefit the cancer research program of a university after reading newspaper accounts about it (11, p. 363). As Doob (14) stated, favorable news about an institution can lead to prestige, and prestige to contributions. Muller (33) pointed to the competitive nature of higher education in the United States, as opposed to the government-run systems of other nations, as a reason for what he called the "uniquely American concept" of higher education known as institutional advancement. It may be said that this commercializes higher education to too great an extent, but Bender and Wygal said that " . . . without the necessary dollars, whether from tuition, private contributions, or governmental appropriations, people cannot be served" (5, p. 2).

But the extent of the support sought by higher education from its various publics goes beyond funding. It has come to be understood that public understanding and support of the missions of colleges and universities are vital to their well-being. Yorke, in his interview with Nolte (35), stated that the trend now is more toward building and maintaining such understanding than toward fund raising. Bender and Wygal (5) wrote that, in addition to money, an institution's public relations program can be measured in

legislative support, media respect, community acceptance, and employee morale.

What Muller (33) and Rowland (38) termed "institutional advancement," Bender and Wygal called by the more familiar label of "public relations" (5, p. 2). Muller said, however, that institutions of higher education direct their advancement efforts toward various publics, among which he listed donors, students, faculty, alumni, government, the media, and educational associations (33, p. 5-8). While public relations may describe such activities, very few institutions employ that term. Radock wrote of opposition to the term among faculty and quoted one university chancellor as saying " . . . we're not comfortable with the media of public relations. . . . Promotional literature seems a little unscholarly, and the biographical sketch in a national magazine suggests something less than academic humility" (37, p. 246). Thus, Radock stated, the term is "vaguely suspect" (37, p. 246), and he noted that the function goes by such euphemisms as "university relations," "information services," or "community relations." In Texas, state agencies, including state-supported colleges and universities, are prohibited by a provision of each biennial appropriations bill from having an office or department entitled "public relations."

The confusion in terms is understandable since there is considerable disagreement over the definition of public

relations. Marston quoted Robert Heilbroner as having called public relations men a " . . . brotherhood of some 100,000 whose common bond is its profession and whose common woe is that no two of them can ever agree on what that profession is" (31, p. 4). Steinberg (41) found the root of modern public relations in Machiavelli's The Prince and attributed its growth in this century to the growth of the mass media. Early definitions of public relations saw it as being manipulative. Lerbinger and Sullivan wrote of the control of the communications process, while Steinberg (41) described the "use" of the media. Marston defined public relations as " . . . planned, persuasive communication designed to influence significant publics" (31, p. 3). Harrington stated that public relations " . . . almost invariably involves altering the truth in a nice way . . . " (23, p. 59). More recent definitions spoke of a two-way relationship between the public relations practitioner and those with whom he seeks to communicate. Korbe (27) stated that it is the role of public relations to suggest ways the organization can be adjusted to meet the public's needs, not the reverse. Cutlip called public relations " . . . the adjustment of an institution or industry to its community" (10, p. 21), and Cutlip, Center, and Broom said that public relations depends upon "mutually satisfactory, two-way communications" (11, p. 2). Steinberg stated that when two-way communications become the goal of public relations, it " . . .

becomes a useful part of the whole complex of journalism and mass communications" (41, p. 256).

There is much confusion as to the difference between public relations and publicity. Publicity was defined by Parkhurst as "the garnering of free media exposure for promotional purposes" (36, p. 8) and by Cutlip, Center, and Broom as "information from an outside source used by the news media based on its news value . . . " (11, p. 8). The confusion occurs when public relations is thought of as only publicity. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (11) said that the confusion is understandable since public relations evolved from publicity. Lesley (29) also pointed to this relationship, and Childs (8) stated that public relations, publicity, press agency, and propaganda are so intertwined that they are difficult to separate. Newsom and Scott (34) wrote that while public relations may include all of a number of activities, including publicity, it is never just any one of them. Nolte called publicity "the most conspicuous tool" of public relations (35, p. 407), and Cutlip, Center, and Broom (11) agreed that publicity is but a part of public relations. Hall (21) stated that in the "early years," a public relations effort was judged almost solely on the amount of publicity generated. This view of publicity, however, has not totally been eradicated. Golden and Hanson (18) stated that many companies continue to measure public relations success by the number of newspaper column inches. Cutlip,



Center, and Broom (11) pointed to a dictionary definition of public relations as "persuasive publicity," and Baus and Lesley noted that " . . . the communications role employs most of the field's personnel, consumes most of the budgets, and gets most of the attention" (4, p. 329).

The product of the publicist is information. For that information to be accepted by the news media, it must qualify as news. However, as Golden and Hanson (18) wrote, there often is a diversity of opinion between editor and public relations person as to what constitutes newsworthiness. Badii and Ward (2) stated that while almost everyone recognizes what is or is not news, no one understands why. Whitney wrote that most research had " . . . largely failed to predict what information will become news" (45, p. 69). Westley called news judgment a "multidimensional process" (43, p. 317) but stated that no more than a small part of the dimensions involved can be accounted for. Doig and Doig stated that "News is what the editors say it is" (13, p. 8). Geiber wrote that news is "what newspapermen make it" (17, p. 173). Howard and Mathews (24) explained the inexactness of news judgment in terms of the individual personalities of members of the news media, saying that, in the end, public relations people deal with people, not with institutions. Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas added, "As with everyone, the people you will deal with [in the news media] have biases and prejudices" (12, p. 15).

Bias on the part of the media can be intentional. Hennessey (22) cited pressure on reporters and editors to follow established newspaper policies. Greer accused the media of having " . . . their own particular and collective interests in shaping what they transmit" (19, p. 58). Luttbeg (30) stated that newspaper management may have personal biases, and Rowse (39) found that more than 80 percent of newspapers slanted their coverage of the 1952 presidential election. Golden and Hanson (18) stated that news may depend on an editor's or owner's pet peeve, and Nolte (35) cited personal whims as a factor. Hulteng (25) wrote that knowledge of an editor's or owner's viewpoints or biases can influence the way in which a reporter writes a story or what he elects to write about.

Many times, what is or is not news is not so much a function of prejudice as it is one of lack of newspaper space or broadcast time. Steinberg stated that the media " . . . receive thousands of press releases daily and are invited to cover innumerable press conferences and special events" (41, p. 303). The media have a fixed capacity, Cutlip, Center, and Broom said, and thus " . . . cannot possibly accommodate all the messages fed into them" (11, p. 359). The selection of one item over another, therefore, rests with an editor who makes a judgment that it is somehow more newsworthy. As Doob stated, " . . . newsworthiness depends not only on the event itself but also on somebody's judgment

about that event" (14, p. 432). Aronoff and Baskin called this capacity for choice among news stories "the essential power of the press (1, p. 256). The term usually applied to the process is "gatekeeping," derived from a 1949 study in which White found " . . . how highly subjective, how reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations that communication of news really is" (45, p. 386). Cutlip, Center, and Broom (11) wrote that it is upon the selective interests of reporters and editors that news coverage depends. Each person in the media through whose hands a story passes, wrote Steinberg (41), cannot help but bring his own values into play in evaluating newsworthiness.

Drew (15) stated that, while objectivity is ostensibly the goal of the journalist, it seldom is attainable. Bias in the news media, whether in reporting a story or selecting the events on which to report, depends upon the beliefs and attitudes of the writer or editor. These beliefs and attitudes are formed, in part, by past experience. Bruner (6) stated that an individual categorizes incoming information and, on the basis of experience, partially screens it. McCombs and Becker (32) listed background and values along with capabilities and training as affecting the communications process. Bagdikian (3), Steinberg (41), and Doob (14) also found personal values to be a factor in news judgment. Cassata and Asante (7) stated that people need to achieve consistency

in their views and tend to avoid information that will create inconsistency. People thus give attention first to communications with which they agree. Lesley called this the "predisposition" of the recipient and stated that "This is a composite of his heritage, his outlook on life and on the subject of the communication that has accumulated through his lifetime, his fears, training, group memberships, and so on" (29, p. 10). Newsom and Scott wrote that communicators " . . . cannot entertain the luxury of saying what they want to say the way they want to say it. A thorough knowledge of the message's recipient is imperative" (34, p. 109). Doob (14) went on to say that this predisposition, if known, can be used to elicit the desired response.

Thus, it becomes important for the publicist to know the predisposition, the opinion, the mental set of the media person with whom he deals. Howard and Mathews stated that no news release or other form of communication will pay dividends " . . . if it conveys the wrong message, or . . . has been sent to the wrong person . . . at the wrong time" (24, p. vii). The successful publicist must "know his media," stated both Hall (21) and Jefkins (26). Nolte (35) pointed out that the story that pleases one editor may not please another, and Ehrenkranz and Kahn stated that "How to deal with the media, how and what to transmit to them, is of vital concern to all who would have their views expressed" (16, p. ix). Newsom and Scott wrote that the public relations

practitioner " . . . knows the importance of getting to know the newspeople . . . " (34, p. 141).

If, as Nolte (35) wrote, the public relations person, once knowing the attitudes of his publics, can tailor the message accordingly, then it follows that the publicist, knowing the opinion of the media, can do the same. The communicator, according to Lesley (29), should first know the mental posture of the public he seeks to reach. For the publicist, the public to be reached initially is what Marston (31) called the "press public." He stated that "All of them [the media] serve as gatekeepers, opening the door to wider contact with a broad public through these media" (31, p. 55). Aronoff and Baskin called the media the "audience" of the public relations person, " . . . a medium through which to reach the larger public . . . " (1, p. 258). Lesley (29) described the skill of the communicator as the prime factor in all communications efforts and said that the successful communicator will understand how his message will be received and how the receiver will respond. Marston called "thinking like the editor" (31, p. 123) the key to successful public relations, and Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas (12) advised that it is far easier to deal with an attitude that is known and understood. Korbe stated, "The public relations man is interested in the deep taproots of an individual's opinion and the group opinion of which he is an inseparable part" (27, p. 16). Thus, if the publicist has an idea of the opinion of

the media toward his institution, he can, as Grunig stated. " . . . predict with some accuracy the probability that it [his audience] will coorient with him what kind of information it will process, and what effect his communication might have" (20, p. 263).

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study is that of whether differences exist between the opinions members of the news media have toward higher education and the predictions of those opinions by college and university public relations directors.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were

1. to determine if significant differences exist, either in the overall opinion or in the opinions on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions and the public relations directors' predictions of those opinions toward public higher education in Texas, and
2. to assess to what extent the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalists, and the proximity of a state college or university are related to news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas.

### Research Questions

1. Are there significant differences, either in the overall opinions or in the opinions on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas and the college and university public relations directors' predictions of those opinions?

2. To what extent are the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalist, and the proximity of a state college or university related to news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas?

### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined and had specific meaning each time they were used in the study.

1. News media--Texas newspapers holding membership in the Texas Daily Newspaper Association and those Texas television stations, listed in the 1987 edition of the Gebbie Press All-In-One Directory, which have news departments.

2. News media member--the person at a newspaper or television station having primary responsibility for the coverage of higher education. In cases in which no specific individual is regularly assigned to cover higher education, the term was defined as that person at the newspaper or

television station having primary responsibility for assigning coverage of higher education.

3. Public relations director--the person employed by a state-supported college or university in Texas who has the primary responsibility for disseminating information about the college or university to the news media.

4. Public higher education--universities supported by state appropriations and junior colleges, community colleges, and postsecondary technical schools supported by state appropriations.

5. Opinion--the external expression of a combination of inwardly held attitudes and beliefs on any given topic.

#### Significance of the Study

The study is significant in that it serves, not only to inform college and university public relations directors about the opinions held by news media members toward public higher education in Texas, but also to point out what differences may exist between these opinions as actually held by the news media members and as thought to be held. The public relations directors, therefore, are aware of areas in which their messages might be modified to coorient with the opinions of their audience.

The study also is significant in that it informs college and university administrators, faculty groups, alumni groups, higher education associations, state legislators, and other



groups and individuals working in and with higher education of the opinions toward public higher education held by news media members.

### Delimitations of the Study

The study utilized survey research, a review of related literature, and a synthesis of related literature. News media members in Texas and public relations directors in Texas public higher education were the subjects for this study. Opinions toward public higher education were obtained from news media members. Predictions of those opinions were obtained from public relations directors. Survey instruments were developed for this study and used to obtain these opinions and predictions.

### Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the population, to the number of responses obtained from the population, the validity of the survey instruments, and the honesty of the participants.

### Basic Assumptions

It was assumed for the purposes of this study that the survey instruments sent to the news media were answered by the persons having primary responsibility for covering higher education or having responsibility for the assigning of such coverage. It was assumed that the survey instruments sent to colleges and universities were answered by those persons

having primary responsibility for disseminating information about the colleges and universities to the news media. It was assumed that all participants answered the survey honestly.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Attitudes and Opinions

There is considerable disagreement among authorities as to the definitions of beliefs, attitudes, and opinions and the manner in which they are interrelated in the formation of public opinion. Korbe (46) stated that beliefs are more or less rational views derived from observation and thinking with some reliance on faith, that attitudes are derived from beliefs and are expressed in the tendency to react in a certain way, and that opinions are outward expressions of either beliefs or attitudes. Hennessy (37) made little distinction between attitudes and opinions, and defined opinions as "sharpened attitudes with more specific referents" (37, p. 320). He divided attitude into two aspects, the cognitive and the affective. His view of the cognitive aspect of attitude corresponded to Korbe's definition of beliefs; the affective aspect to Korbe's definition of attitude. Like Korbe, Doob (23) held that opinions are derived from a combination of the rational and the emotional, but he used "knowledge" (23, p. 26) as a substitute term for belief. He stated, however, that opinions express a combination of the two, whereas Korbe said that opinions can flow from either

beliefs or attitudes. Doob recognized the difficulty in all such definitions and stated that

Actually, as employed by laymen and social scientists, attitude is a somewhat vague term which frequently merely calls attention to a psychological problem without contributing a coherent solution. It is, however, a convenient concept when a detailed analysis of individual behavior is not feasible--as is almost always the case in studying public opinion and propaganda--provided that its psychological attributes are specified (23, p. 27).

Smith (73) also considered attitude a two-dimensional structure, but while she, like Korbe, labeled the cognitive dimension "belief," she stated that the affective dimension is an "evaluation of beliefs." She said that the strength of attitudes depends on the "cognitive schemata" (73, p. 39) or the manner and degree to which the individual brings personal beliefs, feelings, and assumptions to bear upon a given stimulus.

Public opinion, on the other hand, refers to the collective opinion held by a "public," a word which Childs (14) said is virtually interchangeable with the word "group." He emphasized, however, that the person who studies public opinion must first define which public is to be studied. He wrote that

. . . it [public opinion] is synonymous with mass opinion. In many instances, however, it is far from clear who constitutes the "mass," whether or not reference is made to the peoples of the world, the citizens of a particular country, the men in the street, the average person, the common man, or the voting public. Vagueness in the use of the term is usually attributable to the user's failure to explain carefully



what public or collection of individuals he is referring to. . . . The number of publics is legion (14, p. 12).

He thus defined public opinion as "any collection of individual opinions" (14, p. 12). Doob defined it as " . . . people's attitudes on an issue when they are members of the same social group" (23, p. 35). Both Doob (23) and Marston (53) made the distinction that public opinion is an outward manifestation of commonly held attitudes rather than the presence of such attitudes. Marson stated that "Public opinion may be defined as the decisions of groups of people . . ." (53, p. 33). Newsom and Scott pointed out that public opinion often is based not upon facts, but upon " . . . the conception or evaluation of an event, person, institution, or product" (59, p. 31).

#### Attitude Formation and Change

From the above, it seems clear that, despite some disagreement on specific definitions, there is general agreement that opinions, both individual and collective, or "public," are outward expressions of attitudes. What are the factors in the formation of attitudes? Smith (73) wrote that the total life experience of the individual comes into play, and listed direct experiences, vicarious or symbolic experiences, and stereotypes as the three components. Doob (23) stated that physical and social stimuli are arranged mentally by each individual and that some stimuli or groups

of stimuli give rise to attitudes. He wrote:

In any case, the individual has come to make the attitudinal response to some stimuli and not to others. When a group of stimuli arouses approximately the same responses, the gradient is known as one of generalization; and when some stimuli arouse response and others do not, the gradient is called one of discrimination. Gradients of generalization and discrimination can be learned; not only attitudinal responses but also all habitual responses, internal or external, are evoked by stimuli which are so arranged (23, p. 28).

Lippmann (50) wrote of the role played in the formation of attitudes by stereotypes, "pictures in the head" formed in part by direct experience but mostly by indirect experience, such as information received about the object from external sources, including the news media. McCombs (54) listed the nature of the stimulus, previous experience and learning, and the structure and process of perception as the factors making up each individual's attitudes and predisposition to opinion. Cutlip, Center, and Broom acknowledged that while "The media, through content and emphasis, build and change opinion; yet the content and the emphasis in the mass media are selected in response to the opinions of the audience" (19, p. 177).

Linked with the question of how attitudes are formed is that of how they function within the individual. Hennessy (37) listed three primary approaches to the study of attitude dynamics--the balance theory of Fritz Heider, the cognitive dissonance theory of Leon Festinger, and the functional theory of Daniel Katz. While the first two generally

describe attitudes in terms of the individual's internal consistency between attitude and reality, Katz (45) stated that each attitude needs to be considered in terms of what function it performs for the individual. He described attitudes as performing four functions: the instrumental, adjustive, or utilitarian function; the ego-defensive function; the value-expressive function; and the knowledge function. Of special interest in the study of the media's role in public opinion and of attitudes within news media members is the knowledge function. Katz stated that people " . . . seek knowledge to give meaning to what would otherwise be an unorganized, chaotic universe. People need . . . frames of reference for understanding their world . . . " (45, p. 284). Lippmann (50) posited that people use knowledge to form an internal picture of the world which can be adjusted to individual viewpoints.

Attitudes, once formed, however, are not immutable. Just as they are formed by incoming information and stimuli, so can they be altered. Smith (73) stated that attitudes either can be reinforced, strengthening existing predispositions, or changed. She described as the traditional model of persuasion, the active seeking of attitudinal change, as based primarily on externally produced messages. Earlier forms of the model, she stated, have included the "hypodermic needle" theory, which holds that " . . . as receivers of messages, we are all relatively passive and defenseless;

thus, someone can 'inject' a persuasive communication into us and change us, just as a drug is administered . . ." (73, p. 4). Later forms of the model of persuasion, she stated, were based on the assumption that the receiver of the message is not passive but is able to choose which parts of the message to accept and how to perceive those which are chosen. In this "transactional model" (73, p. 5), attitude change comes about as a result of interaction between sender and receiver. She stated that persuasion, a change in attitude,

. . . is best viewed as a symbolic activity whose purpose is to effect the internalization or voluntary acceptance of new cognitive states or pattern of overt behavior through the exchange of messages. Consistent with this view, we assume that a process of persuasion has occurred when people internalize the meanings they assign to messages in an atmosphere of perceived choice (73, p. 7).

Smith wrote that it is the individual's "cognitive schemata" which determine the unique way in which he will respond to a given message, and that attitude change is brought about through the person's " . . . interpretation of messages, not to some raw reality unaffected by human cognition" (73, p. 8). In his discussion of Katz' functional theory of attitudes, Hennessy stated that the utilitarian function, the one dealing primarily with the perceived desirability or undesirability of each object in terms of rewards or punishment, and the knowledge function are "more important for the everyday life of the individual" (37, p. 326). He said that opinion change can occur if " . . . a new stimulus

. . . is seen as related to attitudes which serve one or more of the functions . . . " (37, p. 326). Newsom and Scott said that a message, in order to persuade, must be "compatible with the motives of the public you are trying to persuade" (60, p. 33). Smith (73) stated that an understanding of the function of an attitude is important to the person seeking to alter that attitude. It can thus be argued that a communicator who knows or suspects which function is served by an attitude will better be able to form a message in such a way that it will be received and that a desired action will be taken.

#### Influence of the News Media on Public Opinion

We expect the news media to give us information about our world that we are unable to get first-hand. We also expect the news media to be an agent for social change. Janowitz (42) found that citizens in homogenous communities believe that newspapers should act to bring about community consensus. Smith (72) found that the news media ranked at the top of a list of groups perceived to have the most influence in a community. Studies by Ehrlich and Bauer (27), Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien (80), and DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (20) pointed to the perception of newspapers as having social influence and being seen as facilitators of communication in a large community.

Hennessey (37) pointed out that opinions are rarely based solely on facts learned first-hand, but on facts or other opinions communicated by other individuals. McCombs and Shaw (55) called the ability of telling people what to think about the "agenda-setting" function of the mass media. A study by Sohn (74) supported the agenda-setting theory, and Oskamp stated that "There is clear evidence that people attend to, are interested in, and talk about the information and ideas that they receive through the media" (62, p. 161).

Since the invention of movable type by Gutenberg, the technology of communication has advanced to the point where, as Marston wrote, "Modern men live in a sea of communications, deluged with a rain of words, sounds, and sights" (53, p. 11), but, as Doob (23) pointed out, the recent trend has been toward fewer mass media outlets, the ownership of which is concentrated in fewer hands, thus leading to a concentration of power. Few would argue that the power of the press is not a reality. "The press is an important factor in the formation of public opinion--some would say the most important . . .," wrote Childs (14, p. 166). Berry (8) cited the heavy reliance of the mass culture on information received through the media. Gilmore and Root (30), Oskamp (62), Harper (36), Golden and Hanson (31), Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19), Childs (14), Steinberg (77), and Marston (53) agree that the news media constitute one of the most powerful forces in our society. Peterson, Albaum,

Kozmetsky, and Cunningham stated that "There is virtual consensus that the news media have had, and continue to have, an influence on public perceptions of business" (66, p. 57). Burke quoted Kurt Leudtke, former executive editor of The Detroit Free Press as having said:

On your [newspaper owners] discretionary judgments hang reputations and careers, jail sentences and stock prices, Broadway shows and water rates. You are the mechanism of reward and punishment, the arbiter of right and wrong, the roving eye of daily judgement. You no longer shape public opinion, you have supplanted it (12, p. 503).

And Childs, while acknowledging that the influence of the news media is difficult to separate from other factors, stated:

Logic strongly suggests that that something which governments have so frequently tried to suppress, control, or use, to which individuals and organized groups so zealously try to gain access, and which circulates so widely and is read so persistently must have considerable influence. Certainly [groups] would devote far less time and money than they do to relations with the press if they did not believe the newspaper was a powerful molder of public opinion (14, p. 180).

This is directly tied to the agenda-setting function of the media, for the media can help to shape opinion, not only by providing information, but also through their selection of what information is to be provided. Oskamp stated, "By selecting, emphasizing, and interpreting events, . . . they [media] help to structure the nature of 'reality' . . . which in turn impels the public to form attitudes on these new issues" (62, p. 133).

The capability to inform may contain within it the power to persuade, but many writers consider the information role played by the news media to be a key to a democratic form of government. McDonald quoted a statement from James Madison, who said, "A popular government without popular information is but a prologue to a farce, or a tragedy, or perhaps both" (56, p. 43). Childs (14) stated that the competence of the public to make decisions rests both on the information it receives and its capacity to use it. He also stated that the "educational impact" (14, p. 223) is considerable. Doob (23) wrote that the news media are " . . . the principal media serving to acquaint people in modern society with events that they themselves have not witnessed" (23, p. 423). Berry stated that the extent of our reliance on the news media is shown by an estimate that " . . . approximately 98% of our population rely solely on the media of mass communications for 95% of their information . . . " (8, p. 2). This is well known by those who need the news media to make information about their organizations available to the public. Steinberg (77) stated that no campaign to influence public opinion can be undertaken without utilizing the news media. It has been suggested by some writers (49, 62) that there is a "two-step" flow of information from media to opinion leaders and then to the public.



While the news media play a large role in the formation of public opinion, they are by no means the only or even the primary factor. As Steinberg stated:

Media are not the ultimate determining factor in opinion and behavior. Indeed, it must be emphasized strongly that all the evidence reveals that they reflect social and other phenomena, rather than influence these phenomena. Within this framework, the impact of the media is formidable, but it is tempered by psychological set, previous experience and conditioned behavior and by group customs and value judgments (77, p. 264).

Cassata and Asante stated that the impact of the media " . . . must not be exaggerated or taken out of the context of the greater social order and the myriad of other important influences" (13, p. 109). One mitigating factor, as cited by Doob (23), is that the information given by the media often is imperfectly understood by the audience. Greer (32) pointed out that the information given by the media may be erroneous in the first place. Ellul (28) stated that deeply held opinions are not likely to be altered by psychological manipulations. Childs (14) cited the lack of correlation between editorial opinion and voter behavior.

Several authors stated that attitudes seldom are reversed by the news media but may instead be strengthened. Cassata and Asante (13) wrote that the media more often "canalize" behavior, directing pre-existing attitudes in one direction or another. Smith (73) generalized that three decades of research had confirmed that the major effect of mass media is the formation of new attitudes and the

reaffirmation of existing ones. Likewise, Lesley stated that it is far easier for a public relations person " . . . to accelerate a trend, but he cannot reverse it" (49, p. 12). Steinberg went so far as to question the media's power to instigate the development of new values, but he acknowledged the reinforcement role. Oskamp (62) also said that the media rarely produce "conversions." Stein (76) and Hennessy (37) both maintained that most opinion formation will continue to result from face-to-face communication. Steinberg (77) pointed out the difficulty of establishing any direct cause-and-effect relationship between the mass media and public opinion, and Cassata and Asante said that while "Scholars may tug at attitude changes" (13, p. x), there remains little doubt that media do have some influence. Berry (8) cautioned that the media must always work within the confines of audience demands. Doob summed up by writing that "All that needs to be said, therefore, is that the press is propagandistically important and that its precise importance depends on the factors operating in the given situation" (23, p. 438).

#### The Importance of Public Opinion to Higher Education

The exact nature of the effectiveness of attempts to influence public opinion--whether those attempts are called propaganda, public relations, communications, or publicity--may not be fully understood, but there is little doubt that

they can be effective. Ellul stated that " . . . all politicians and all big businessmen agree that psychological action, propaganda, advertising, human relations, and public relations . . . definitely produce results" (28, p. 287). The result, Nolte (61) asserted, is that virtually every organization has some planned program to enlist public support. The results can be manifested in bottom-line profits. Ehrenkranz and Kahn (26) stated that the news resulting from promotional efforts can help the organization attract new customers and enhance ongoing business relationships. This concept carries over to non-profit organizations and specifically to institutions of higher education. As Yorke said when interviewed by Nolte, "Colleges . . . have the same problems as business in building bases of public understanding and support . . . Many of the same techniques apply to both groups" (61, p. 91). Doob (23) stated that news about a discovery by a university can lead to contributions to the university, and Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) recounted an instance in which a man changed his will to leave money to the University of California cancer research program after reading stories about it in a newspaper. Higher education has had to seek outside support partially out of necessity. Harper (36) stated that even community colleges can no longer look toward state or local support as a sole source of income. Rowland (68) wrote that the decade from 1976 to 1986 saw the greatest growth in institutional

relations and that the next decade may be the most trying in the history of American higher education.

"Institutional advancement" is the term used by Muller (59) and Rowland (68) to describe the effort of a college or university to deal with all external and internal communications. The four primary functions of institutional advancement are given as public relations, governmental relations, alumni relations, and fund raising. Muller pointed out that such functions rarely are found in the universities of other countries and make up a "uniquely American component of higher education" (59, p. 1). He stated that this is because that, unlike institutions of other countries that are mostly government-controlled, American colleges and universities are the responsibility of the public. Thus, colleges and universities compete with each other for resources and for students. Education is viewed in some respects as a commodity and, as Jefkins (44) stated, media relations techniques can bring about the knowledge and confidence necessary to acceptance by the consumer. It is interesting to note, however, that, although virtually every institution has a program of public relations, virtually none call it by that name. Texas' state-supported colleges and universities are prohibited by the language of each appropriations bill from having offices termed "public relations." Radock (67) cites several "academic facades" for public relations, including "public affairs," "information

services," "community relations," and "public information." He saw the reason for such euphemisms in the fact that many faculty and administrators consider public relations somehow unsuitable to higher education. He quoted a university chancellor as having said:

Again, we're not comfortable with the media of public relations. The press conference is not in our blood. It's something that the typical academic person shies away from. Promotional literature seems a little unscholarly, and the biographical sketch in a national magazine suggests something less than appropriate academic humility (67, p. 246).

Colleges and universities, although they once were cloistered from the rest of the world, are today social institutions. And, as such, stated Korbe (46), they cannot exist without the goodwill and favorable attitudes of those with whom they come in contact. Lesley (49) stated that organizations, to win support for their methods of operation, seek to educate the public to their points of view through planned programs of public relations. Nolte stated flatly that "No one, other than a hermit, can succeed without public support" (61, p. 99). Christenson and McWilliams (15) and Childs (14) also took the view that all organizations, needing the public's approval, are faced with the problem of winning it. Childs said that in whatever field of endeavor, ". . . public opinion . . . is the court of last resort" (14, p. 282).

In seeking public support, higher education does more than try to solicit contributions. Harper stated that the

larger goal of a program of institutional advancement is " . . . to create among its various publics an understanding and appreciation that will result in ongoing commitment and support. . . . Without appreciation, there is little hope for necessary sustenance" (36, p. 1). Nolte (61) quoted Yorke as saying that the emphasis of institutional advancement has broadened and that the building of understanding and support, rather than fund raising, is now the major goal. Harper (36) stated that a college can measure its public relations success in terms other than contributions and enrollment, such as media respect, community acceptance, satisfaction of former students, and faculty and staff morale. Muller said that a successful public relations program will address the views of the local community, state governments, the federal government, educational associations, alumni, and other " . . . large and varied audiences that are geographically dispersed" (59, p. 7).

As previously discussed, seeking to form or alter attitude and opinion is a matter of communication with the various publics. For the college or university, stated Harper, this means a commitment in time, resources, and personnel. To provide information, Rowland stated, "Institutions usually depend on their news services to portray their programs positively . . ." (68, p. 3). Citing increased competition for financial support and for students, Perkins stated, "Against this background, the highest degree

of validity is to be found in . . . strategies that interpret the institution's mission and priorities in ways that win support in dollars, enrollment, and acceptable image" (64, p. 154). Muller cautioned, however, that the image of a college's various publics is by no means formed through public relations efforts alone. On the contrary, " . . . much of the world outside the campus will communicate directly with a student, a faculty member, or an administrator. Therefore, . . . the morale of a campus is probably the greatest single factor affecting its outside reputation . . ." (59, p. 9). Or, as Harper put it, " . . . all colleges have public relations whether they recognize it or like it. The quality of those relations depends on the college's approach to its communications with its publics" (36, p. 12).

#### The Definition and Function of Public Relations

Public relations, pervasive as it is in our society, has traditionally resisted precise definitions. Marston quoted Robert Heilbroner as having said that public relations practitioners are " . . . a brotherhood of some 100,000 whose common bond is its profession and whose common woe is that no two of them can ever quite agree on what that profession is" (53, p. 4). Lerbinger and Sullivan wrote that

No one--least of all those who practice it--seems to be sure just what it [public relations] is; it is called an art, a craft, a science, a profession, and not a thing at all, but a "matter of degree." Its objectives are as diffuse and as vague as winning friends, improving relationships, engineering consent,

getting credit for doing good. Its detractors (and there are many) accuse it of arranging the truth, of spellbinding the mossbacks, of manipulating the public for hire, of wrapping shoddy corporate practices in beautiful packages (48, p. 13).

Earlier concepts of public relations emphasized its manipulative aspects, but later definitions have come to include the idea that public relations involves two-way communication. Hall (35) stated that the power of public relations is such that it can do anything from starting a war to selling a product. Marston (53) emphasized the persuasive effects designed to influence others. Steinberg (77) found the roots of modern public relations in Machiavelli's The Prince and wrote of the engineering of consent and the skill of pressure groups in using media. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) stated that the manipulative view of public relations was reflected in the title of Edward L. Bernays' book The Engineering of Consent and that the "engineering" concept became an enduring image of the profession. Lerbinger and Sullivan (48) wrote of the "control" of the communications process. According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19), Childs was one of the first writers to view public relations as a two-way process between the practitioner and those he seeks to influence. Childs stated that public relations are " . . . relations between an organization or individual and their publics, relations which are always two-way . . ." (14, p. 267). Aronoff and Baskin (2) stated that public relations seeks the understanding and acceptance



of the public and called it " . . . a means by which common ground is sought" (2, p. 7). Steinberg (77) stated that while public relations is persuasion, it is not necessarily designed to subvert, but to earn the public's goodwill. When such a view is practiced, he said, " . . . then it becomes a useful part of the whole complex of journalism and mass communications" (77, p. 256). Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) wrote that public relations may in some cases lead the organization to take corrective action to earn the goodwill of the public, a concept far removed from the manipulative view.

The concept of two-way relationships has come to be included in most modern definitions. Cutlip, Center, and Broom defined public relations as " . . . a management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depend" (19, p. 4). Aronoff and Baskin gave this definition:

Public relations is a management function that helps to define organizational objectives and philosophy and facilitate organizational change. Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics in the effort to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations. Public relations practitioners develop, execute, and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among organizations' constituent parts and publics (2, p. 9).

And Korbe presented what he called a "working description" of public relations, one which he said grows out of the

function of the profession: "Public relations is an organized, systematic activity which seeks to build goodwill, morale, cooperation and support among the publics of an organization through two-way communications" (46, p. 10). Less scholarly and more personal definitions sometimes were forthcoming from people in the profession. Harrington described his job as " . . . the craft of arranging the truth so that people will like you. . . . Public relations almost invariably involves altering the truth in a nice way" (38, p. 59).

If, as Korbe state, any definition of public relations grows out of its function, then what is that function? Brown (9) stated that the function of public relations is to facilitate the adjustment of an organization to its community. Pesmen (65) stated that the function is to ensure that the image the organization wants the public to have and the image the public actually does have are congruent. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) listed nine components of the public relations function with emphasis on analyzing the impact of organizational policies on various publics, adjusting those policies found to be in conflict with organizational survival, and communicating organizational policies to the publics. Hall stated that the value of public relations lies in " . . . reaching the public with the right message" (35, p. 7). Jefkins (44) described the function as one of planned communication, outward and inward. Childs did not concentrate on an extensive description of the function of

public relations, but instead wrote that it " . . . involves doing whatever is necessary to create and maintain good relations and to avoid or remove bad relations" (14, p. 267).

Do the efforts of public relations practioners have any effect? Studies such as those by Aronoff (1), Cutlip (18), and Dunwoody (25) indicated that they do. Stocking (79), on the contrary, found only slight correlation between media visibility and public relations efforts. Childs (14) wrote that the efficacy of public relations is difficult to determine through research methods and that more reliance is placed upon hypotheses, guesses, and suppositions. He wrote that the influence of public relations is " . . . one among many variables and one that cannot be measured and weighed easily" (14, p 285).

#### Publicity as Part of Public Relations

One of public relations' primary means of communication is through the news media, and one of the primary objectives is the seeking of favorable publicity. Parkhurst defined publicity as "the garnering of free media exposure for promotional purposes" (63, p. 8). His use of the word "free" was to denote the difference between publicity and paid advertising. But, as Nolte (61) pointed out, publicity can hardly be considered to be free given the resources devoted to seeking it. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) called publicity information from an outside source that is used by

the news media based upon its news value. Newsom and Scott defined it as "placing information in a news medium" (60, p. 21). Doob stated that the information given to the media by the publicist should have "news merits" (23, p. 368) and that publicity usually does not involve a deliberate attempt to deceive the public.

Publicity has received so much emphasis from many writers that, as Nolte said, "It is often erroneously assumed that publicity is public relations" (61, p. 407). Steinberg (77) pointed to the parallel growth of the news media and public relations. Newsom and Scott said that the use of the term "public relations" to describe publicity jobs is "unfortunate" (60, p. 21). Cutlip, Center, and Broom explained the confusion between public relations and publicity by stating that public relations evolved from publicity and is often the most visible part of a public relations program. They stated that "During the early years, public relations was viewed as a publicity effort to influence others. This concept of public relations as persuasive publicity still is used by many to define public relations" (19, p. 2). Hall (35) also described the view held by many that publicity and public relations are synonymous, and Childs wrote that the history of public relations is " . . . so closely and inextricably related to that of publicity, press agency, advertising, and propaganda that it is difficult, at times, to separate them" (14, p. 273).

Instead of being synonymous with public relations, publicity is only one aspect of the broader range of efforts employed by public relations. Marston (53) stated that public relations comprises much more than simple publicity. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) called it an important part of public relations. Ehrenkranz and Kahn (26) said that publicity is an important part of a marketing program because of the visibility it produces. Nolte stated that publicity is "a material aid in making a PR program effective" (61, p. 407).

Because of the visibility provided by publicity, publicity often is considered a more important part of public relations than is the case. Pesman (65) stated that the passing along to customers of any information that might be helpful in building a company's image is of great value. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) said that publicity is neither all-important nor omnipotent. Yet, Lerbinger and Sullivan (48) predicted that most top managers of organization see information as mostly a matter of publicity and added that many public relations practitioners would agree. Golden and Hanson (31) stated that the success of an organization's public relations program frequently is measured only by the amount of publicity received. Baus and Lesley stated that, "Though the conception of public relations as only communicating is fading, the communications role . . . consumes most of the budgets, and gets most of the attention" (6, p. 329).

The distinction between publicity as information used by the media as news and advertising as information in the media paid for by the organization is an important one. For one thing, as Jefkins (44) stated, it is frequently less expensive to get publicity through personal contact or through a news release or through a press conference than by purchasing an advertisement. Doob (23) pointed out that the activities of an organization may be so complex that advertising would be a clumsy or inappropriate medium. Publicity has an advantage over advertising in that it is considered more believable by the receivers of the message. Ehrenkranz and Kahn wrote that this is because " . . . customers are selective and consciously differentiate between news in an article and appeals in an advertisement or sales 'pitch'" (26, p. 7). The news produced by publicity, they stated, implies in the mind of the receiver an endorsement by the news medium. Hall described publicity as being like a raisin in a pudding, "consumed whole" (35, p. 9), and stated that the newspaper reader or television viewer is automatically on guard against placing too much credence in advertisements. Doob (23) predicted that many items appearing as news would go unnoticed if they were in the form of advertisements. The primary advantage of advertising over publicity is that the content of the message can, within limits of budget, law, and taste, be controlled by the sender. In publicity, however, the sender has little control over whether and in what

manner the message will be used, and this is what Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) called an "uncontrolled communication."

#### The Relationship of the Publicist and the News Media

A public relations practitioner, as has been shown, functions by communicating with the various publics of his organization. The initial public to be communicated with by the publicist is the news media. Using the definition of Nolte of "public" as "any individual, organization, or group whose attitudes and opinions can affect the organization" (61, p. 16), it can readily be seen that the news media constitute the public of the publicist. Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas (21) wrote that contacts with members of the news media are the publicist's most important tool. Marston (53) referred to the "press public" that serves in ". . . opening the door to wider contact with a broad public" (53, p. 55). Aronoff and Baskin stated that, for the publicist, the journalist is ". . . at once an audience, a medium through which to reach the larger public . . . Some go so far as to say that the practitioner's livelihood depends on reporters' or editors' decisions to use his material" (2, p. 258).

Many journalists look askance at being the means toward the public relations practitioner's end. The traditional view of the journalist toward the publicist has been one of mistrust. Aronoff and Baskin (2) stated that the common

view of public relations is that it is a debased, manipulative practice and that practitioners are referred to in derogatory terms. Aronoff (1) found that journalists regard publicists as being low in credibility. A study by Kopenhagen, Martinson, and Ryan (47) showed that a group of editors had essentially negative opinions of public relations, ranking it the least attractive out of a list of sixteen professions. Steinberg (77) warned that the journalist must be on his guard against hucksters and must judge public relations material on its worth as news. Tichenor, Olien, and Donohue (81) found, however, that there is general agreement between journalists and publicists as to news value.

Despite the dislike of many in the news media for publicists and public relations professionals, there is a mutual dependency. Brown (9) pointed out that many organizations are so large and complex that their activities can be made known to the media only through efforts by the organization. The reporter, when pressed for time, relies on a press release for the main facts. Hulteng (41), while he stated that the journalist should maintain a "wary distance" between himself and the publicist, nevertheless said that the two are interdependent, that the various news media do not have enough reporters to cover every aspect of their communities. MacDougall stated that publicists provide information " . . . which no newspaper or magazine could



afford to obtain by means of its own paid employees. To some extent, the media are today at the mercy of the public relations people . . ." (52, p. 43). McCombs and Becker (54) viewed the relationship as one of bargaining, the publicist furnishing information and the journalist furnishing access to the information channel. They wrote that "The final news product sent to the audience member is certainly compromised by the bargaining between reporters and sources" (54, p. 89). The extent to which the media rely on publicists for information is large. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) estimated that forty percent of the daily content of the media is provided by public relations sources. Bagdikian (5) put his estimate at sixty percent. This dependency on the publicist is not necessarily seen as bad. Golden and Hanson said that if the publicist " . . . does his job well--that is, if he services the reporter fully and honestly--the relationship can only prosper, ultimately erasing the shadow of doubt and distrust" (31, p. 15). Cutlip, Center, and Broom stated that all elements of our information system--including public relations people and journalists--perform " . . . an important, integral function in the democratic process of the public's being able to arrive at a consensus" (19, p. 359). Aronoff and Baskin (2) said that, to a great extent, journalists are processors of information rather than gatherers. Jefkins (44) wrote of the need of the journalist for news releases. Sachsman (70) found that half the news

stories in one metropolitan area on a major subject were re-written press releases. Ehrenkranz and Kahn (26) pointed out this mutual dependency, Steinberg (77) called the publicist an adjunct to the journalism profession, and Brown (9) said that a reporter, while finding the publicist a handicap at times, will find him an indispensable help in gathering news.

### The Role of Research in Public Relations

If knowledge as to the attitudes or opinions of an audience can serve in some way to predict the response of that audience to a message, then it is clear that research into attitudes and opinions should be a major component of public relations. Doob stated that it is far easier to understand and to predict or control a phenomenon when it can be measured, and continued, "In like manner, public opinion can be adequately understood, controlled, or obeyed only after certain measurements have been made" (23, p. 91). He also stated that the wise advertiser should make "some investigation of consumer attitudes" (23, p. 343) so that he can have some idea of how to elicit a desired response. Jefkins (44) wrote that the truth about attitudes toward an organization must be known before public relations planning can begin. Childs (14) stated that the first step in public relations is to survey opinions and that procedures should be undertaken in light of the surveys' findings. In his discussion of publicity research, Williams (85) stated that

such research can uncover story ideas. Pesman (65) also called research the first step in a publicity program and stated that prior to any attempt to communicate, the publicist must " . . . find out whom you are writing to--and how you can best reach them" (65, p. 17). Newsom and Scott wrote:

Only research will tell you how many real facts a public has, and only research will tell you what a public thinks it knows--the myths it holds, the rumors it has embraced. Some research professes to tell you how a public is likely to think, what it might do (60, p. 59).

Korbe (46) stated that research provides a mirror in which the organization can view how it is perceived by its publics.

While public relations research into public attitudes and opinions and the effect on them of communications may be necessary, it is also very difficult to accomplish with any certainty in the results. Nolte said that

. . . public relations is a mature but still imperfect art. . . . Fortunately, it is not a science. . . . If human attitudes and opinions were all reasonable and rational, it would be possible to sway those attitudes and opinions in a predictable manner (61, p. 49).

Steinberg stated that, unfortunately for the researcher in public relations and public opinion, social science research is considerably less accurate than that in the physical sciences. He added:

. . . nor are the media themselves as amenable to empirical research. The media are volatile and changing. Society itself is in a state of becoming. Despite the contributions of the semanticists and the mathematical theoreticians, the language of the mass media is elusive. . . . The determination of

effect in media reaching very large audiences simultaneously is neither easy nor practical . . . (77, p. 263).

He also said that there is virtually no way to obtain scientifically verifiable truth about public opinion (77, p. 224). Childs (14) was describing the same problem when he said that the question is not whether the New York Times has influence, but how much it has. Moore (58) wrote that the difficulty of such research and a lack of understanding about it contribute to a tendency on the part of public relations people in higher education to avoid it altogether. Despite the large number of studies done on the influence of the media, Childs (14) stated, much of the findings are the product of more or less imaginative insight, rather than general comparisons, and a review of personal experience.

### Bias, Prejudice, and Opinion Within the News Media

#### The Human Element

One of the most cherished tenets of American journalism in this century is that of objective reporting. Opinion, in theory, should be reserved for the editorial page or the portion of a newscast clearly labeled "commentary." Reporters and editors should deal only with the facts. In practice, this is impossible because of the human element always present. As Aronoff and Baskin put it, "You cannot communicate with a newspaper, you must deal with reporters or editors" (2, p. 26). Steinberg (77) stated that all who communicate

are subject to normal, human frailties and that precise balance and objectivity cannot be achieved. Howard and Mathews stated that, while the publicist certainly must know the type of media with which he is dealing, their audiences, and their technological constraints, " . . . in the end, this is a people-to-people business. A media relations person deals with writers, editors and photographers--not with newspapers, television stations and radio microphones" (39, p. 43). MacDougall (52) wrote that the news media are peopled with men, not dieties. Childs (14) stated that the nature of a news medium is determined primarily by the people it employs. Drew (24) and Hackett (34) found evidence of media bias in their studies. Doob wrote that " . . . the facts do not speak for themselves; the people who perceive the facts do the talking . . ." (23, p. 270). Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas (21) and Greer (32) commented on bias within the media. Hennessy (37) described a study in which more than 80 percent of the country's newspapers were found to be biased in their reporting of a presidential campaign. Doob (23) stated that the accuracy of reporting is a product of the abilities and biases of the reporter. Steinberg (77) called the modern American newspaper "facts with a strong overlay of opinion" (77, p. 222). Clark (16) predicted that the amount of opinion in news reporting will grow to the extent that interpretive reporting will replace the newspaper or broadcast editorial.

Personal biases on the part of reporters and editors cannot help but color the news that they report and edit. Doig and Doig stated that there is considerable truth in the notion that "news is what the editors say it is" (22, p. 8). Geiber wrote that "News is what newspapermen make it" (29, p. 173). Brown (9) pointed to the slogan of the New York Times, "All the News That's Fit to Print," as implying a personal judgment of what is newsworthy. Oskamp (62) said that biases on the part of reporters and editors are a strong determinant of what is available for the public to read.

#### Deliberate Bias

Although deliberate bias is less prevalent than it was in the news media of the last century (8, 14, 15, 23, 76), it still is to be found. Some of this deliberate bias stems from the views of the owner of the news medium. Nolte (61) stated that all media reflect in their coverage the viewpoints of ownership or management. Doob (23) described a study in which a majority of Washington correspondents said that they were aware of a fixed policy of their newspapers and wrote their stories accordingly. Doob (23) wrote that the viewpoints of owners seldom need to be spelled out to reporters. Hulteng stated that such viewpoints, pet peeves, or sacred cows " . . . can seep through a news organization as though by osmosis" (41, p. 44). Hennessy stated that

many reporters experience less pressure to follow a "party line" than in previous years.

Deliberate bias in journalism is not necessarily restricted to ownership or top management, but can also be found throughout the news organization. Greer wrote that many in the media who complain about management of news " . . . have their own particular and collective interests in shaping what they transmit . . ." (32, p. 58). He stated that individual writers and editors insert their viewpoints by the intentional use of certain words or even by the placement of a story on a newspaper page. Berry (8) stated that the news content may depend on the whim of the editor, and Golden and Hanson (31) commented that every editor has pet peeves. Doob (23) stated that the reporter may intentionally insert his opinions into his description of an event. Starck and Soloski (75) found that reporters' personal involvement in an issue affected the way they wrote about that issue. Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas (21) stated that reporters may have strong personal biases, and McCombs and Becker (54) reported that some reporters write their stories to please their sources. A study by Drew (24), however, indicated that attitude toward news source has little effect on reporters' stories.

### The Gatekeeping Function of the Media

No newspaper or television station can possibly report everything that occurs, even everything that normally would be considered of some news value. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) cited the limited number of column inches available and the fixed time of a newscast and stated that the media cannot accommodate all the messages they receive. Steinberg (77) commented on the thousands of press releases sent and hundreds of press conferences held each day. Hulteng wrote that the volume of information coming into a newspaper is so great " . . . that inevitably a substantial fraction finds its way to the spike or to the wastebasket" (40, p. 11). Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) noted that space and time limitations may result, not only in some stories being left out, but also in others being distorted. Brown (9) stated that, just as editors select from among a large number of stories, reporters select from among a large number of facts in writing their stories.

While many items may be newsworthy, no item, as MacDougall stated, "is news until it is reported" (52, p. 13). Hulteng (41) asserted that the person who makes the final decision about what will or will not go into a newspaper or onto the air wields tremendous power. Aronoff and Baskin claimed that "The essential power of the press is its capacity to choose what is news" (2, p. 256). Hulteng said that this choice " . . . helps to shape the agenda of public



discussion and thus, ultimately, the march of events in our society" (42, p. 40).

The term "gatekeeping" was first applied to this function of the news media by White, whose study found " . . . how highly subjective, how reliant upon value-judgments based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations that communication of news really is" (83, p. 389). Gilmore and Root (30) commented that the gatekeeper is a stopping point beyond which some news items are not allowed to pass. Lippmann (50) spoke to the importance of gatekeeping when he said that the coverage of an event serves to signalize it. Tanzer (80) said that public perceptions are colored as much by what people do not see or read as by what they do have access to. Janowitz stated that the gatekeeper serves to "detect, emphasize, and disseminate that which was important" (42, p. 618). Westley (82), Doig and Doig (22), and Childs (14) stated that there is not a single gatekeeper in each media outlet, but that the selection process is continuous. Hulteng stated that gatekeepers

. . . open the gates of the media--newspaper columns, the air time on radio and television--and let through to the public information and ideas. Or in some instances they keep the gates closed and block out certain information and certain ideas. How freely and how selectively these gates are maneuvered determines to a great degree the perception the rest of us gain of the scene and events outside the narrow range of our immediate circle (40, p. 62).

Given the enormous amount of material that crosses an editor's desk and the constant pressure of press deadlines or newscast time, it is little wonder than most items receive a snap judgment rather than careful, thoughtful consideration. Bagdikian (5) reported that three-quarters of wire service materials are considered at a rate of one to two seconds per item by editors. The gatekeeper's judgment, therefore, is almost reflexive and is based on his experience and his opinions. Berry (8) stated that whether or not a story will interest readers or viewers is a matter of the editor's opinion. This has important implications for publicists, for, as Golden and Hanson (31) wrote, what the publicist may consider very important may not interest the editor. Just as a news story arouses in an individual a response based on his previous attitude about that subject, stated Doob (23), an editor's reaction to publicity material is influenced by his opinions. McCombs and Becker (75) stated that journalists bring their individual attitudes or values into news judgment, and Doob (23) commented that the newsworthiness of an event depends on someone's judgment about it. He also discussed predisposition as a factor in how messages are received and what actions are taken. The receiver of a message, wrote Steinberg (77), is not a blank page to be written upon, but an amalgam of values, experiences, and opinions. Steinberg (77) stated that value judgments in journalists cannot be overlooked or eliminated,

and McCombs and Becker (75) said that the gatekeeping process is a mixture of background, capabilities, values, and training. Korbe (46) and Bagdikian (5) also stated that individual values have a role in the process of the gathering and reporting of news. Korbe (46) stated that the extent of interest the receiver of a message has in a subject will contribute to reception, and McCombs and Becker (54) stated that reporter and editor attitudes toward a subject influence how it is covered. Lesley described an individual's "predisposition" toward a subject as " . . . a composite of his heritage, his outlook on life and on the subject of the communication . . . , his fears, training, group memberships, and so on" (49, p. 10). Starck and Soloski (75) stated that predisposition is of concern. Jefkins wrote that while the image of an organization given out by the public relations practitioner may be an accurate one, " . . . it all depends on what experience or information the impression is based" (44, p. 49). Doob (23) stated that learned responses and habits are capable of being evoked by the communicator. Bruner (10) stated that the perception by the recipient of a message is selective and that much of the message is screened out by the receiver's past experiences. Lesley stated that predisposition " . . . not only determines to a large extent what the communication is perceived by the recipient to be, but also the degree to which he exposes himself to an idea" (49, p. 11). Cassata and Asante (13)

wrote that people are more prone to expose themselves to messages in accordance with their opinions, and Steinberg (77) stated that readers are more likely to select and react favorably to message content with which they are in agreement. Thus, the bias involved in gatekeeping may not be deliberate but, as Doig and Doig (22) wrote, is the product of the frame of mind of the journalist. This counters the notion that the process of selection is related exclusively to news value. Westley stated that news judgment is "multi-dimensional" in nature and that " . . . we cannot account for more than a small part of what kinds of dimensions are involved. Conventional concepts . . . help only a little to explain what is going on" (82, p. 317). Sasser and Russell (71) found so little agreement among editors in their study that they suggested there might be no such thing as news judgment. Whitney (84) stated that most research has failed to predict what information will become news, and Badii and Ward called news " . . . a multidimensional process that everyone knows, rhetorically, yet doesn't understand, operationally" (4, p. 243).

Not all writers think that predisposition, judgment, or opinion play so large a part in gatekeeping. Westley (82) stated that overruling bias are the information requirements of the public. He cited a study in which "personal appeal" was ranked low by editors as a criterion in news judgment. McCombs and Becker (54) agreed that most decisions are made

with the reader or viewer in mind. Both Westley and McCombs and Becker stated that time and technological constraints could well play a more important role in gatekeeping than attitudes or opinions.

### The Value to the Publicist of Knowing the Media's Opinions

#### The Importance of Media Relations As a Tool of Public Relations

Since reporters and editors are the conduits through which the publicist or public relations practitioner is able to get his message into the news media and thus to the public in which he is interested, it follows that the building and maintaining of relations with these individual is an important part of the job. Howard and Mathews (39) stated that any form of media contact, whether personal or by press release, will be unsuccessful if it is made to the wrong person, in the wrong manner, at the wrong time. Nolte (61) maintained that the message sent by the communicator is never the correct one unless it succeeds in convincing the audience to whom it is sent. Therefore, as Ehrenkranz and Kahn said, "How to deal with this media, how and what to transmit to them, is of vital concern to all who would have their products shown, their views expressed, their plans announced" (26, p. ix). Aronoff and Baskin (2) said that the success of any effort to persuade depends upon an understanding of those to be persuaded. This understanding

should take place on a very personal level. Ehrenkranz and Kahn (26) stated than knowing the style of the medium is not enough, that the publicist must know the styles and responsibilities of his contact persons. Lesley (49) and Howard and Mathews (39) emphasized the need to build rapport with members of the media. Korbe wrote that the public relations practioner is " . . . interested in the deep taproots of an individual's opinion and the group opinion of which he is an inseparable part" (46, p. 16). Stocking (79) stated that while public relations efforts have some impact on coverage, more depends upon the newsworthiness of the subject and how it appeals to editors.

#### The Importance of Knowing the Media

Most writers are in agreement that it is of paramount importance that the public relations person know the media, not only in terms of circulation, type of audience, press deadlines, or technological factors, but also in terms of the opinions of individuals toward his client. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (19) wrote that the publicist needs to understand the values of those who control access to the media. Aronoff and Baskin (2) emphasized the importance of gaining insights into the views of journalists with whom one works. Hennessy (37) stated that the process of influencing public opinion requires a knowledge both of the channels of communication and the character of the media.

Effective communication, stated Aronoff and Baskin, depends upon "a knowledge of one's audience" (2, p. 28). "Knowing the media" is virtually the first commandment to the publicist in several texts (2, 19, 35, 44, 49, 60, 61). Lesley stated that "Understanding human institutions and the attitudes of their members has emerged as one of the greatest needs of our time" (49, p. vii). Newsom and Scott wrote, "You must try to find everything you can about the media you work with, how they function and why. Part of PR is learning to be of service to the media, an aspect of the publicity function" (60, p. 16). Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas instructed the publicist to "get to know how editors think" (21, p. 4), and Marston (53) stated that the publicist should think less about the kinds of stories he wants to see printed and more about what an editor might want to print. Williams (85) commented on the importance of keeping in mind the editor's right to be an editor, and Howard and Mathews (39) stated that a knowledge of the special interests of persons who cover one's organization is important.

#### Acting on a Knowledge of News Media Members' Opinions

Once the publicist knows and understands the opinions, the predispositions of his audience--in his case, the members of the news media--he still must take actions based upon this knowledge and understanding. Marston (53) stated that the person who seeks to persuade communicates in such

a manner as to appeal to the mind or the emotions of the audience. Doob (23) stated that before the desired response can be evoked, the correct stimuli must be found. To the publicist, this means the selection and framing of a message in such a way that it will appeal to the opinions of the editor. Korbe (46) stated that once opinions are known, the correct message can be sent. Lesley stated that the competent public relations practitioner is skilled at " . . . formulating and projecting messages so they will reach the recipient under optimum circumstances and be readily decoded into the desired form . . ." (49, p. 10). Aronoff and Baskin wrote that messages should be framed " . . . to appeal to the interests and needs of the reporter and the ultimate audience" (2, p. 272). Nolte (61) stated that the publicist who knows the attitudes of his public is able to tailor communications and thus be more effective in influencing public opinion. Grunig (33) wrote that knowledge of opinion helps the communicator predict the outcome of his communication, and Childs (14) said that public relations procedures should follow the findings of opinion research. Jenkins called the acquisition of knowledge of the media a "painstaking business" (44, p. 90) but one that is a prerequisite to the marketing of a press release. Lesley (49) stated that the more precise the knowledge of the media, the more it helps the publicist tailor his messages, even to the extent of individualizing them. Counts (17) and Atwood (3) found that



the extent of agreement with the message is a factor in what kinds of stories are written by reporters. Delacorte, Kimsey, and Halas stated that "It is easier to cope with an attitude that is known and understood than to be faced with one that is totally unexpected . . ." (21, p. 15).

#### The Net Importance to Higher Education

If the public relations practitioner, armed with the knowledge and understanding of the opinions of the media, is able to tailor messages in such a way as to appeal to the predispositions of editors and reporters, he will be more successful in getting the "good news" about his organization into print, on the air, and in front of the larger public. In this way, the public relations director of an institution of higher education can help to influence the public opinion necessary to the support of the college or university. Nolte called this the "communicator theory" and stated, "Convince the communicators and they will convince others" (61, p. 325). Oskamp (61) wrote that the selectivity by the media has an important effect both on what the public learns and what it responds to.

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## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purposes of this study were to determine if significant differences exist between news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas and the predictions by Texas college and university public relations directors of those opinions and to assess the relationship of four demographic factors to the news media members' opinion. This chapter provides an explanation of the procedures used to achieve the purposes of the study.

#### Procedure for Collection of Data

##### Design of the Study

This study involved news media members at sixty-one television stations and 102 daily newspapers in Texas and also involved ninety-two public relations directors at state colleges and universities. The study involved the population. No sampling was done.

There were two survey instruments, one for the news media members and one for the public relations directors. The survey instrument used for news media members contained, in addition to questions designed to yield demographic data, a series of statements on significant topics in public higher

education in Texas. Each statement was written to elicit an opinion on the topic, and the mean of the responses yielded an overall opinion of public higher education in Texas. The survey instrument used for public relations directors asked respondents to predict what the responses of the news media members would be to the same set of statements. No demographic data was gathered on the public relations directors as it was believed that this is a homogenous population.

#### Participants in the Study

Because of the wide difference in the size and composition of newspapers and television stations, it was not possible to use single titles, such as "editor," "news director," or "education reporter" to identify those persons having primary responsibility for coverage of, or for assigning coverage of, higher education. Indeed, only a handful or large, metropolitan daily newspapers have reporters whose entire responsibility is the coverage of higher education. Therefore, the survey instruments sent to the news media were mailed to the managing editors or editors at newspapers and the news directors at television stations. These individuals were requested to direct the instruments to the persons who have primary responsibility for covering higher education or, if no such persons existed, to the persons who have primary responsibility for assigning coverage of higher education.

Public relations directors were identified primarily through the membership directory of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Texas Higher Education Directory published by The Association of Texas Colleges and Universities. In instances in which state colleges and universities were not listed in these directories, the correct individuals were identified through telephone inquiries.

### The Survey Instruments

#### The News Media Members' Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used for the news media members had two parts. The first part consisted of a series of statements, each dealing with a specific, significant issue in Texas public higher education. Participants were asked to respond to each statement on a five-point, Likert-type scale. Participants were asked to respond in one of the following ways: "strongly agree," "agree," "uncertain," "disagree," or "strongly disagree."

The second part of the instrument consisted of four questions designed to yield desired demographic data. Participants were asked if they represented a newspaper or a television station, how many years they had worked as a journalist, whether or not they held a bachelor's degree, and whether or not there was a state college or university within their immediate circulation or broadcast area.

### The Public Relations Directors' Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used for the public relations directors had one part. It consisted of the same statements posed to the news media members. The difference was that the public relations directors were requested to respond to the statements in the manner they predicted the news media members would respond.

### Development of the Survey Instruments

The statements on the survey instruments dealing with significant issues in public higher education were developed from an original list of thirty-six statements formulated through a review of articles on higher education in the Dallas Morning News, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. The thirty-six statements were grouped into the six general areas of governance, curriculum, faculty, mission, finances, and student life. After consultation with the director of research at Tarrant County Junior College, the director of educational information services at Texas A&M University, and two senior editorial writers on the staff of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, the thirty-six statements were reduced to the thirty considered to deal with the most significant issues in Texas public higher education and the ones most likely, when taken together, to yield an overall opinion. It was decided that, to obtain meaningful results, responses to each statement

should undergo separate statistical analysis and that no attempt should be made to combine the responses to a group of related statements to arrive at an opinion on one of the six general areas.

### Validation of the Survey Instruments

The survey instruments were validated for content and clarity by a panel of six experts. This panel consisted of three college presidents, one each from a university and a community college and one former community college president currently president of a private university, and three heads of journalism departments, one from a community college and two from universities. No member of the validation panel was a participant in the study.

Panelists were asked to judge the survey instruments on four criteria: Is each statement clearly and correctly worded? Do any statements deal with an issue that is not considered a significant one in Texas public higher education? Are there any other issues so significant that their omission from this survey instrument would jeopardize the validity of the findings? Will the sum of the responses to each statement yield a valid measure of the participant's overall opinion of public higher education in Texas?

In addition to reviewing the questions contained in the survey instruments, panelists were asked to review the instructions to accompany the instruments. They were asked

if the instructions were worded clearly and correctly, if they were easily understood, and if they contained any ambiguities that might affect the accuracy of the responses of the participants.

### Revision of the Survey Instruments

Based on the comments of the members of the validation panel, the number of statements on specific issues in higher education was reduced from thirty to twenty-five, five of the statements submitted to the panel having been deemed not to be significant. Additionally, one other statement was deemed to be ambiguous and was reworded. A comment was made that all statements should be couched either positively or negatively, so that a respondent with a strongly positive opinion on several of the statements, for instance, would check the same blank in each case. Five statements were reworded to conform to this suggestion, despite the possibility that having all statements worded in one direction or another might influence the responses. The choice was made to word all statements negatively. It was reasoned that negative statements would evoke more accurate responses from journalists, who deal mostly with controversy in their day-to-day work.

There were no suggestions from panel members for the addition of statements. There was unanimity that the mean of the responses to all statements would yield a valid

overall opinion of public higher education in Texas. The members of the panel found the instructions to be worded correctly and easily understood.

As a result of the revision of the survey instruments, the following twenty-five statements were used.

1. Faculty members spend too much time writing for publication and not enough in teaching.
2. There are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas.
3. Admission criteria at state-supported universities are too low.
4. There is too much duplication of academic programs among state colleges and universities.
5. Faculty workloads are too light.
6. The value of a college degree is overrated.
7. College courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical application.
8. Too much emphasis and resources go toward inter-collegiate athletics.
9. Presidents spend too much time on external affairs such as lobbying, PR, fund raising, etc.
10. There are too many foreign students in state-supported colleges and universities.
11. Tuition is too low in proportion to the amount of state spending on higher education.

12. Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state universities.

13. State-supported colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds.

14. State-supported colleges and universities do not provide adequate access for minority students.

15. State community colleges do not do an adequate job of preparing students to transfer to universities.

16. State colleges and universities do not do an adequate job of attracting business and industry to the state.

17. A state college or university is not an important economic asset to its community.

18. There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities.

19. State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities.

20. Too many undergraduate university courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants.

21. Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English.

22. Academic standards at state-supported colleges and universities are too low.

23. The system of academic tenure for faculty members should be abolished.

24. The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much power.



25. Higher education is not one of Texas' most valuable resources.

#### Distribution of the Survey Instruments

The survey instruments were typed and photocopied onto colored paper. Code numbers were written in the upper right corner to identify the newspaper, television station, university, or college to which each instrument was sent. In this way, a record was kept of all respondents so that a second mailing, if needed, would not have had to go to those already having responded.

Stationery with the researcher's name and address was printed on paper matching that on which the survey instruments were copied. Letters, individualized with each potential participants name, title, and address, were written. Two sets of envelopes were printed, one bearing first-class postage and having the researcher's name and address printed in the addressee's position, the other having the researcher's name and address in the return address position. Each potential participant was mailed a copy of the survey instrument, a cover letter, and a stamped and addressed return envelope. Copies of the cover letter and the survey instrument for journalists appear as Appendix B. Copies of the cover letter and the survey instrument for public relations directors appear as Appendix C.

### Collection of Data

The minimum percentage of return on each survey instrument was established at fifty per cent or better. Seventy-one of the ninety-two survey instruments mailed to public relations directors were completed and returned for a return rate of seventy-seven per cent. Of the 163 survey instruments mailed to news media members, 105 were completed and returned for a return rate of sixty-four per cent. Within the news media member category, thirty-seven of sixty-one television station representatives responded for a return rate of sixty-one per cent, and sixty-eight of 102 newspaper representatives responded for a return rate of sixty-seven per cent. Of the 255 survey instruments mailed to all potential participants, 176 were completed and returned for a return rate of sixty-nine per cent.

### Procedure for Analysis of the Data

#### Planning Stage

Prior to the preparation of the survey instruments in final form, professionals at the Computer Center at North Texas State University were consulted. In question were the physical layout of the instruments, the best method of recording the data, and which computer program would best be used to analyze the data.

It was determined that the survey instruments could and should be confined to a single sheet of paper, using both

sides. Key punch worksheets were used to record the data as responses were received, and the computer program Statistical Analysis System (S.A.S.) was used to perform the desired analyses of the data.

### Analysis of the Data

Narrative Summaries.--The percentage of return on each survey instrument was reported in narrative form. The demographic data from the news media members as to length of service, educational level, proximity of a state college or university, and employment by newspaper or television station also were reported in narrative form.

Means and Standard Deviations.--The means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses to each statement and for the combined responses to all statements. Separate calculations were made on the responses of public relations directors, television journalists, newspaper journalists, and television and newspaper journalists combined.

t-tests of the Means.--t-tests to determine the significance of the difference between means for independent samples were performed for each statement and for all statements combined. Tests were performed on four sets of means: public relations directors and combined news media members, public relations directors and television journalists, public relations directors and newspaper journalists, and

television journalists and newspaper journalists. The tests showed if there were differences, significant at the .05 level or greater, between the opinions of the two types of journalists or between the journalists' opinions and the prediction of those opinions by public relations directors.

Tests of Correlation.--To assess the relationship between the opinions of journalists and the number of years they have worked as journalists, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated. Separate correlation coefficients were calculated for television journalists, newspaper journalists, and all journalists combined. To assess the relationship between the opinions of news media members and the dichotomous variables of educational level, newspaper or television affiliation, and proximity to a state college or university, point biserial correlation coefficients were calculated. Separate coefficients were calculated for television journalists, newspaper journalists, and all journalists combined on the variables of educational level and proximity of a state college or university.

Multiple Regression.--Multiple regression analyses were performed on data collected from the news media members to assess which factors seem to play more important roles in opinions toward higher education. In the first test, the individual means of all news media members were the criterion variable, and the four predictor variables were

television versus newspaper affiliation, length of service, educational level, and the proximity of a state college or university. In the second and third tests, the criterion variables were the individual means of all newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and the three predictor variables were length of service, educational level, and proximity to a state college or university.

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## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The problem addressed by this study is that of whether differences exist between the opinions members of the news media have toward higher education and the predictions of those opinions by college and university public relations directors. The purposes of the study were to determine if significant differences existed, either in the overall opinion or in the opinion on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions and the public relations directors' predictions of those opinions and to assess to what extent the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalist, and the proximity of a state college or university were related to news media members opinions toward public higher education in Texas.

Survey instruments to be mailed to participants in the study were developed and validated. The survey instruments consisted of twenty-five statements on issues in public higher education. The instruments were designed so that the mean of the responses to the twenty-five statements would yield an overall opinion of public higher education in Texas. In addition, the survey instrument for news media members

included questions asking for the desired demographic data. News media members were asked to give their opinions on each statement using a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Public relations directors were asked to give the responses they predicted would be made by most news media members.

The survey instruments were mailed to 163 news media outlets with a cover letter asking that the instrument be completed by that person having primary responsibility for the coverage of higher education or that person having primary responsibility for assigning such coverage. Sixty-one television stations and 102 daily newspapers received instruments. Of the 163 outlets receiving instruments, 105 returned completed instruments, a return rate of sixty-four per cent. Of the sixty-one television stations receiving instruments, thirty-seven completed instruments were received, a return rate of sixty-one per cent. Of the 102 daily newspapers receiving instruments, sixty-eight completed instruments were received, a return rate of sixty-seven per cent. A minimum return rate of fifty per cent was required.

The survey instruments were mailed to ninety-two public relations directors of Texas' state-supported colleges, universities, and postsecondary technical institutes. A total of seventy-one instruments were received, a return rate of seventy-seven per cent. A minimum return rate of fifty per cent was required. Of the 255 survey instruments mailed



to all potential participants, 176 were completed and returned, a return rate of sixty-nine per cent.

The purpose of this chapter was to interpret the data collected from the completed survey instruments. First, the demographic data on the news media members was presented. Second, the means and standard deviations of the responses to each of the twenty-five statements and for the sum of all the responses for each group were presented and discussed. Third, the results of t-tests for the significance of the difference between means of independent samples were presented for each statement and for the sum of all statements. Significance was calculated between the means of public relations directors and television journalists, public relations directors and newspaper journalists, public relations directors and television and newspaper journalists combined, and television journalists and newspaper journalists. Fourth, correlation coefficients were presented showing the relationship of the four demographic variables of television or newspaper affiliation, educational level, length of experience as a journalist, and proximity of a state college or university to the variable of opinion of public higher education. Fifth, results of a multiple regression analysis were presented to show the relative importance of the four demographic factors to the news media members' opinions of public higher education.

### Demographic Findings

Four questions on the survey instrument sent to news media members were designed to collect demographic data. The four questions were: Are you affiliated with a newspaper or with a television station? How many years have you been employed as a journalist? Do you hold a bachelor's degree? Is there a state university or a state-supported junior college, community college, or technical institute in the immediate circulation or telecast area of your newspaper or television station?

Completed survey instruments were received from 105 of 163 news media outlets. There were thirty-seven replies from sixty-one television stations and sixty-eight replies from 102 daily newspapers.

The 105 journalists reported a combined 1,664 years of experience. The least number of years reported was one, and the highest was fifty. The mean length of experience was 15.85 years, the median was 14.5 years, and the mode was ten years. The thirty-seven television journalists reported a combined 454 years of experience. The least number of years reported was one, and the most was twenty-eight. The mean length of experience was 12.27 years, the median was 12.25 years, and the mode was ten years. The sixty-eight newspaper journalists reported a combined 1,210 years of experience. The least number of years reported was one, and the most was fifty. The mean length of experience was 17.79 years,

the median was 16.50 years, and the mode was twenty-one years.

Eight of the 105 respondents reported that they do not hold a bachelor's degree. Three of those so reporting were television journalists, and five were newspaper journalists.

Seven of the 105 respondents reported that they do not have a state university or a state-supported junior college, community college, or technical institute in their immediate circulation or telecast area. All seven of those so reporting were newspaper journalists.

#### Means and Standard Deviations

The means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses to each statement and for the combined responses to all statements. Separate calculations were made on the responses of public relations directors, television journalists, newspaper journalists, and television and newspaper journalists combined.

Table I summarizes the means and standard deviations of the responses to each statement and for the combined responses on all statements. A mean greater than 3.000 on a statement indicates disagreement with that statement and thus indicated a favorable opinion of higher education on that particular issue. A mean less than 75.000 on the total responses indicates an overall opinion favorable to higher education.

TABLE I

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF RESPONSES BY PARTICIPANTS  
TO STATEMENTS ON SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Statement	News Media Members						PR Directors	
	Television		Newspapers		Total Media			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD*
	1. Faculty Publication	2.919	0.862	2.868	0.929	2.886	0.902	2.859
2. Proliferation of Institutions	3.460	0.989	3.367	1.233	3.400	1.149	2.521	1.194
3. Admission Criteria	3.216	1.084	2.985	1.086	3.067	1.086	2.930	0.990
4. Duplication of Programs	2.892	1.048	2.809	1.055	2.838	1.048	2.197	0.951
5. Faculty Workloads	2.973	0.897	2.956	0.836	2.962	0.854	2.437	0.937
6. Value of College Degree	3.703	1.222	3.603	1.248	3.638	1.234	3.451	1.156
7. Theory Versus Practicality	2.270	1.194	2.324	1.029	2.305	1.084	2.394	1.021
8. Emphasis on Athletics	2.432	1.144	1.927	0.919	2.105	1.028	2.169	1.108

TABLE I--Continued

Statement	News Media Members						PR Directors	
	Television		Newspapers		Total Media		Mean	SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
9. External Role of Presidents	3.000	0.888	3.059	1.020	3.038	0.970	3.028	1.082
10. Number of Foreign Students	3.627	0.953	3.324	0.043	3.429	1.018	3.113	1.050
11. State Spending Versus Tuition	3.568	0.959	3.323	1.099	3.410	1.053	3.155	0.966
12. Appointment of Regents	1.730	0.805	1.897	0.980	1.838	0.921	1.549	0.752
13. Efficient Use of Public Funds	2.811	0.877	2.765	0.916	2.781	0.899	2.423	1.104
14. Level of Access for Minorities	3.405	1.212	3.500	1.015	3.468	1.084	3.099	1.098
15. Preparation by Community College	3.297	0.812	3.250	1.013	3.267	0.943	3.099	0.944
16. Attraction of New Businesses	2.838	0.898	2.927	0.951	2.895	0.930	2.817	0.990
17. Economic Asset to Community	4.811	0.397	4.824	0.384	4.819	0.387	4.550	0.713 <sup>91</sup>

TABLE I--Continued

Statement	News Media Members						PR Directors	
	Television		Newspapers		Total Media		Mean	SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
18. Number of Governing Boards	2.730	1.018	2.809	1.055	2.781	1.038	2.254	0.967
19. Overbuilding of Facilities	3.162	0.839	2.897	1.039	2.991	0.976	2.366	0.975
20. Teaching Assistants	2.351	0.857	2.471	1.000	2.429	0.950	2.239	0.746
21. Lack of English Skills	2.595	1.013	2.485	0.872	2.529	0.921	2.620	0.868
22. Academic Standards	2.730	1.045	2.662	1.002	2.686	1.013	2.718	0.944
23. Tenure System for Faculty	2.649	1.357	2.809	1.162	2.752	1.150	2.479	1.081
24. Coordinating Board's Power	2.811	0.776	2.809	0.868	2.810	0.833	2.887	1.008
25. Education as State Resource	4.405	1.142	4.544	1.043	4.496	1.075	4.141	1.150
Total of Responses to All Statements	76.378	9.242	75.191	9.269	75.610	9.233	69.493	10.988

\* "SD"--standard deviation.

Although the combined news media members gave favorable responses to only ten of the twenty-five survey statements, the overall mean of 75.610 indicates a favorable overall opinion. The public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give favorable responses on eight of the twenty-five statements. The overall mean of the predictions of public relations directors was 69.493. The public relations directors thus predicted that the news media members would have a lower overall opinion of higher education than actually was the case.

This was borne out by comparing the means of the responses to each statement. In twenty of the twenty-five statements, news media members' opinions were more favorable than had been predicted by public relations directors.

Most means were near the midpoint. On only one statement, the one dealing with the role of politics in the appointment of regents, were the means of both public relations directors and news media members less than .2000. On two related statements, the one concerning the economic importance of the institution to the community and the one concerning higher education's economic importance to the state, the means of both groups were greater than 4.000.

Predictions, for the most part, were accurate. On only two statements, the second and third, did the means of public relations directors and news media members fall on both sides of the 3.000 midpoint.

### t-tests of the Means

A series of t-tests to determine the significance of the difference between means for independent samples were performed for all statements combined and for each statement. The tests were performed on four sets of means--public relations directors and combined news media members, public relations directors and newspaper journalists, public relations directors and television journalists, and television and newspaper journalists. The tests showed the level of significance between the journalists' opinions and the public relations directors' predictions. Table II shows the differences between the overall means.

TABLE II

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF COMBINED RESPONSES  
TO ALL STATEMENTS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	75.610	9.233	0.901	3.990	174	.0001
PR Directors	71	69.493	10.988	1.304			
Newspaper	68	75.191	9.269	1.124	3.298	137	.0012
PR Directors	71	69.493	10.988	1.304			
Television	37	76.378	9.247	1.519	3.257	106	.0051
PR Directors	71	69.493	10.988	1.304			
Television	37	76.378	9.247	1.518	0.628	103	.5316
Newspaper	68	75.191	9.269	1.124			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible totals to all responses was from twenty-five to 125, and seventy-five was the midpoint of the range. Table II shows that the mean of the responses of news media members to all statements was on the high, or favorable side of the midpoint at 75.610. Television journalists had a higher overall mean than did newspaper journalists, 76.378 to 75.191.

The public relations directors predicted that the news media members would have an overall mean of 69.493, lower than the midpoint of the range. This shows that news media members tended to have higher opinions of higher education than public relations directors thought they did.

The t-test between the means of the public relations directors and the news media members yielded a t-value of 3.990. The difference between the means thus was significant at the .0001 level.

The t-test between the means of the public relations directors and the newspaper journalists yielded a t-value of 3.298. The difference between the means thus was significant at the .0012 level.

The t-test between the means of the public relations directors and the television journalists yielded a t-value of 3.257. The difference between the means thus was significant at the .0051 level.

The difference between the means of newspaper and television journalists was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number One on the survey instruments was:  
 "Faculty members spend too much time writing for publication and not enough in teaching." The statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether college and university faculty members are neglecting classroom teaching in favor of research and publication.

T-tests to measure the significance of the differences between means of the responses to Statement Number One were performed. Table III shows the results of those tests.

TABLE III  
 SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON FACULTY PUBLISHING

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.886	0.902	.115	0.185	174	.8531
PR Directors	71	2.859	0.975	.088			
Newspaper	68	2.868	0.929	.112	0.525	137	.9581
PR Directors	71	2.859	0.975	.088			
Television	37	2.919	0.862	.142	0.327	106	.7541
PR Directors	71	2.859	0.975	.088			
Television	37	2.919	0.862	.142	0.283	103	.7823
Newspaper	68	2.868	0.929	.112			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table III shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.886, gave unfavorable responses to the statement on faculty publishing taking too much time from classroom teaching. Newspaper journalists had a more unfavorable opinion than did television journalists, 2.919 to 2.868. The opinions of the news media members on Statement Number One ranked twelfth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would have a lower opinion. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.859 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.866.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .185. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. This statement ranked twenty-fourth of the twenty-five in level of significance at .8531.

The t-test between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .525 and .327. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .283. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Two on the survey instruments was: "There are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas." The statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not Texas, with thirty-seven universities, fifty community college districts, and five technical institutes, has allowed too great a proliferation of institutions of higher education.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Two were performed. Table IV shows the results of those tests.

TABLE IV  
SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON PROLIFERATION OF INSTITUTIONS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.400	1.149	.112	4.902	174	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.521	1.194	.142			
Newspaper	68	3.368	1.233	.149	4.114	137	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.521	1.194	.142			
Television	37	3.459	0.989	.163	4.102	106	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.521	1.194	.142			
Television	37	3.459	0.989	.163	0.416	103	.6786
Newspaper	68	3.368	1.233	.149			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table IV shows that news media members, with a mean of 3.400, gave favorable responses to this statement and did not, overall, think there are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas. Newspaper journalists had a less favorable opinion than did television journalists, 3.368 to 3.459. The news media members' opinion on statement Number Two ranked nineteenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have an unfavorable response. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.251 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.400.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 4.902. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0001 level. This was one of three statements yielding this highest level of significance.

The t-test between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 4.114 and 4.102. The differences between the sets of means thus were significant at the .0001 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .416. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Three on the survey instruments was: "Admission criteria at state-supported colleges and universities are too low." The statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the increasing demand for higher education and increasing calls for greater access to higher education for minority and other groups have led to a diminishing of admission criteria.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Three were performed. Table V shows the results of those tests.

TABLE V  
SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON ADMISSION CRITERIA

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.067	1.085	.106	0.851	174	.3985
PR Directors	71	2.930	0.990	.118			
Newspaper	68	2.985	1.086	.132	0.316	137	.7522
PR Directors	71	2.930	0.990	.118			
Television	37	3.216	1.084	.178	1.382	106	.1699
PR Directors	71	2.930	0.990	.118			
Television	37	3.216	1.084	.178	1.042	103	.2999
Newspaper	68	2.985	1.086	.132			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table V shows that news media members, with a mean of 3.067 gave favorable responses to this statement and did not, as a group, think that the criteria for admission to state universities in Texas are too low. Television journalists had a more favorable opinion than did newspaper journalists, 3.216 to 2.985. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Three ranked seventeenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have an unfavorable opinion. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.930 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.067.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .851. The difference between means thus was significant at the .05 level. This statement ranked seventeenth of twenty-five in level of significance at .3985.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .316 and 1.382. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of 1.042. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Four on the survey instruments was:  
 "There is too much duplication of academic programs among state colleges and universities." The statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the duplication of academic and degree programs from institution to institution, in some cases in state-supported universities in the same city, has been allowed to happen to too great an extent and is a waste of resources.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Four were performed. Table VI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE VI  
 SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.838	1.048	.102	4.130	174	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.197	0.950	.112			
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.055	.128	3.595	137	.0005
PR Directors	71	2.197	0.950	.112			
Television	37	2.892	1.048	.172	3.479	106	.0007
PR Directors	71	2.197	0.950	.112			
Television	37	2.892	1.048	.172	0.386	103	.7000
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.055	.128			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table VI shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.838, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that there has been too great a duplication of programs. Television journalists had a more favorable response than did newspaper journalists, 2.892 to 2.809. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Four ranked eleventh in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have a more unfavorable response. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.197 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.838.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 4.130. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0001 level. This statement was one of three yielding this highest level of significance.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 3.595 and 3.479. The difference between both sets of means thus were significant at the .0005 and .0007 levels.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .386. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Five on the survey instrument was: "Faculty workloads are too light." The statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the number of hours spent by college and university faculty members, both classroom hours and office hours, is too small as compared with the customary forty-hour work week and whether or not college and university faculty members teach too few class sections.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Five were performed. Table VII shows the result of those tests.

TABLE VII  
SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON FACULTY WORKLOADS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.962	0.854	.083	3.848	174	.0002
PR Directors	71	2.437	0.937	.111			
Newspaper	68	2.956	0.836	.101	3.442	137	.0008
PR Directors	71	2.437	0.937	.111			
Television	37	2.973	0.897	.147	2.864	106	.0050
PR Directors	71	2.437	0.937	.083			
Television	37	2.973	0.897	.147	0.098	103	.9225
Newspaper	68	2.956	0.836	.101			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table VII shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.962, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that the workloads of college and university faculty are too light. Television journalists had more favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 2.973 to 2.956. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Five ranked fourteenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have more unfavorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.437 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.962.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 3.848. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0002 level. This statement ranked fourth in level of significance.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 3.442 and 2.864. The differences between both sets of means thus were significant at the .0008 and .0050 levels.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .098. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Six on the survey instruments was:  
 "The value of a college degree is overrated." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the college degree remains, as once commonly thought to be, the key to a successful career and necessary to becoming a well-rounded member of society. The statement also was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the value of a college degree has been cheapened by the fact that a greater percentage of people obtain degrees than in the past.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Six were performed. Table VIII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE VIII  
 SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON VALUE OF THE COLLEGE DEGREE

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.638	1.234	.120	1.014	174	.3121
PR Directors	71	3.450	1.156	.137			
Newspaper	68	3.603	1.248	.111	0.747	137	.4566
PR Directors	71	3.450	1.156	.137			
Television	37	3.703	1.222	.201	1.054	106	.2942
PR Directors	71	3.450	1.156	.137			
Television	37	3.703	1.222	.201	0.394	103	.6942
Newspaper	68	3.603	1.248	.111			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table VIII shows that news media members, with a mean of 3.638, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that the value of a college degree remains high. Television journalists gave more favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 3.703 to 3.603. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Six ranked twenty-third in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.450 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.638.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.014. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. This statement ranked sixteenth in level of significance at .3121.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .747 and 1.054. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .394. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Seven on the survey instruments was: "College courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical application." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not higher education leaves the graduate strong on theory, but lacking in the ability to put the theory into practice and whether or not colleges and universities do an adequate job of preparing their students for careers.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Seven were performed. Table IX shows the results of those tests.

TABLE IX  
SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON THEORY VERSUS APPLICATION

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.305	1.084	.106	0.551	174	.5826
PR Directors	71	2.394	1.021	.121			
Newspaper	68	2.324	1.029	.125	0.407	137	.6843
PR Directors	71	2.394	1.021	.121			
Television	37	2.270	1.194	.196	0.565	106	.5731
PR Directors	71	2.394	1.021	.121			
Television	37	2.270	1.194	.196	0.394	103	.6942
Newspaper	68	2.324	1.029	.125			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table IX shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.305, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that college courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical application. Newspaper journalists gave more favorable responses than did television journalists, 2.324 to 2.270. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Seven ranked third in the low-to-high opinion ranking.

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give more favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.394 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.305.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .551. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. This statement ranked twentieth of twenty-five in level of significance at .5826.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .407 and .565. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .394. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Eight on the survey instruments was: "Too much emphasis and resources go toward intercollegiate athletics." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not programs of intercollegiate athletics at Texas colleges and universities are so heavily emphasized and use up so much in fiscal resources that the academic programs suffer.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Eight were performed. Table X shows the results of those tests.

TABLE X

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.105	1.028	.100	0.394	174	.6939
PR Directors	71	2.169	1.108	.132			
Newspaper	68	1.926	0.919	.111	1.401	137	.1635
PR Directors	71	2.169	1.108	.132			
Television	37	2.432	1.114	.188	1.596	106	.2488
PR Directors	71	2.169	1.108	.132			
Television	37	2.432	1.144	.188	2.468	103	.0152
Newspaper	68	1.926	0.919	.111			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table X shows that the news media members, with a mean of 2.105 gave low responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that intercollegiate athletics is overemphasized and takes up too much in resources. Newspaper journalists gave more unfavorable responses than did television journalists, 1.926 to 2.432. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Eight ranked second in the low-to-high ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would have less unfavorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.169 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.105.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .394. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked twenty-second in level of significance at .6939.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 1.401 and 1.596. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

This was the only statement on which the difference between means of newspaper and television journalists was significant. The t-value was 2.468; the significance, .0152.

Statement number Nine on the survey instruments was: "Presidents spend too much time on external affairs such as lobbying, PR, fund raising, etc." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the chief executive officers of state colleges and universities have given over too much of their traditional roles as managers of the institutions and heads of the academic programs in order to devote more time to external affairs.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Nine were performed. Table XI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XI

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON EXTERNAL ROLE OF PRESIDENTS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.038	0.970	.095	0.064	174	.9494
PR Directors	71	3.028	1.082	.128			
Newspaper	68	3.059	1.020	.124	0.172	137	.8639
PR Directors	71	3.028	1.082	.128			
Television	37	3.000	0.882	.145	0.145	106	.8918
PR Directors	71	3.028	1.082	.128			
Television	37	3.000	0.882	.145	0.296	103	.7682
Newspaper	68	3.059	1.020	.124			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XI shows that the news media members, with a mean of 3.038, gave favorable responses to this statement and think, as a group, that presidents to not spend too much time on external affairs. Newspaper journalists gave more favorable responses than did television journalists, 3.059 to 3.000. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Nine ranked sixteenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.028 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.038.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .064. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked last in level of significance at .9494.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .172 and .145. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .296. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Ten on the survey instruments was:  
 "There are too many foreign students in state-supported colleges and universities." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not the large number of international students in Texas' colleges and universities, many of them attracted by relatively low tuition, is a positive development and whether or not this is seen as a drain on state resources.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Ten were performed. Table XII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON NUMBER OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.429	1.018	.099	1.999	174	.0476
PR Directors	71	3.113	1.050	.125			
Newspaper	68	3.324	1.043	.126	1.188	137	.2370
PR Directors	71	3.113	1.050	.125			
Television	37	3.622	0.953	.157	2.466	106	.0153
PR Directors	71	3.113	1.050	.125			
Television	37	3.622	0.953	.157	1.441	103	.1526
Newspaper	68	3.324	1.043	.126			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XII shows that the news media members, with a mean of 3.429 gave favorable responses to this statement and think, as a group, that there are not too many foreign students in Texas. Television journalists gave more favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 3.622 to 3.324. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Ten ranked twenty-first in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.113 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.429.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.999. The difference between means was significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked eleventh in significance at .0476.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 1.188 and 2.466. The difference between means of the first groups was not significant at the .05 level. The difference between the means of the second groups was significant at the .0153 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of 1.441. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Eleven on the survey instruments was:  
 "Tuition is too low in proportion to the amount of state  
 spending on higher education." This statement was intended  
 to yield an opinion on whether or not tuition charged by  
 state-supported colleges and universities in Texas is too  
 low a percentage of the total budget of higher education and  
 whether the students should bear a greater burden for the  
 funding of higher education and the state's taxpayers a  
 lesser burden.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference  
 between means of the responses to Statement Number Eleven  
 were performed. Table XIII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XIII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON LEVEL OF TUITION

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.410	1.053	.103	1.626	174	.1002
PR Directors	71	3.155	0.966	.115			
Newspaper	68	3.324	1.099	.133	0.962	137	.3378
PR Directors	71	3.155	0.966	.115			
Television	37	3.568	0.958	.158	2.123	106	.0370
PR Directors	71	3.155	0.966	.115			
Television	37	3.568	0.958	.158	0.394	103	.6942
Newspaper	68	3.324	1.099	.133			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--  
 standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom,  
 "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XIII shows that the news media members, with a mean of 3.410, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that tuition charged by state supported institutions is not too low. Television journalists gave more favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 3.568 to 3.324. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Eleven ranked twentieth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.155 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.410.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.626, not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked twelfth in significance at .1002.

The t-tests between the means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .962 and 2.123. The difference between means of the first groups was not significant at the .05 level. The difference between means of the second groups was significant at the .0370 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .394. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twelve on the survey instruments was: "Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state-supported universities." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not there is too great a tendency for Texas governors to reward political allies and campaign contributors by appointing them to the boards of regents of state universities, thus politicizing higher education to too great a degree.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twelve were performed. Table XIV shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON APPOINTMENT OF REGENTS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	1.838	0.921	.090	2.193	174	.0296
PR Directors	71	1.549	0.752	.089			
Newspaper	68	1.897	0.979	.119	2.354	137	.0200
PR Directors	71	1.549	0.752	.089			
Television	37	1.730	0.804	.132	1.156	106	.2505
PR Directors	71	1.549	0.752	.089			
Television	37	1.730	0.804	.132	0.888	103	.3765
Newspaper	68	1.817	0.979	.119			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XIV shows that the news media members, with a mean of 1.838, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents. Television journalists gave responses more unfavorable than did newspaper journalists, 1.730 to 1.897. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twelve was the lowest of any of the twenty-five statements.

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 1.549 to the news media members' actual mean of 1.838.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 2.193, significant at the .0296 level. The statement ranked ninth in significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 2.354 and 1.156. The difference between means of the first groups was significant at the .0200 level. The difference between means of the second groups was not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .888. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Thirteen on the survey instruments was:  
 "State-supported colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not Texas' state-supported colleges and universities are prudent in their expenditure of monies appropriated for higher education by the Texas Legislature or raised in local taxes.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Thirteen were performed. Table XV shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XV

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
 BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
 ON USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.781	0.899	.088	2.365	174	.0191
PR Directors	71	2.423	1.104	.131			
Newspaper	68	2.765	0.916	.111	1.984	137	.0493
PR Directors	71	2.423	1.104	.131			
Television	37	2.811	0.877	.144	1.855	106	.0664
PR Directors	71	2.423	1.104	.131			
Television	37	2.811	0.877	.144	0.255	103	.8031
Newspaper	68	2.765	0.916	.111			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XV shows that the news media members, with a mean of 2.781, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that Texas colleges and universities are inefficient in use of public funds. Newspaper journalists gave more unfavorable responses than television journalists, 2.765 to 2.811. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Thirteen tied for eighth on the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.423 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.781.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 2.365, significant at the .0101 level. The statement ranked seventh in level of significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 1.984 and 1.855. The difference between means of the first groups was significant at the .0493 level. The difference between means of the second groups was not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .255. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Fourteen on the survey instruments was: "State-supported colleges and universities do not provide adequate access for minority students." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not Texas' system of public higher education provides adequate opportunities for entry into the system by minority group students.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Fourteen were performed. Table XVI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XVI

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON MINORITY STUDENT ACCESS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.467	1.084	.106	2.199	174	.0292
PR Directors	71	3.099	1.098	.130			
Newspaper	68	3.500	1.015	.123	2.236	137	.0269
PR Directors	71	3.099	1.098	.130			
Television	37	3.405	1.212	.199	1.330	106	.1864
PR Directors	71	3.099	1.098	.130			
Television	37	3.405	1.212	.199	0.426	103	.6713
Newspaper	68	3.500	1.015	.123			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XVI shows that news media members, with a mean of 3.467, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that there is adequate access into Texas public higher education for minorities. Newspaper journalists gave more favorable responses than did television journalists, 3.500 to 3.405. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Fourteen ranked twenty-second on the ranking of opinions (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.099 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.467.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 2.199, significant at the .0292 level. The statement ranked eighth in level of significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 2.236 and 1.330. The difference between means of the first groups was significant at the .0269 level. The difference between means of the second groups was not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .426. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Fifteen on the survey instruments was: "State community colleges do not do an adequate job of preparing students to transfer to universities." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not Texas' state-supported community and junior colleges adequately fulfill their traditional role of preparing students who wish to earn baccalaureate degrees to transfer to universities.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Fifteen were performed. Table XVII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XVII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	3.267	0.943	.092	1.160	174	.2478
PR Directors	71	3.099	0.943	.112			
Newspaper	68	3.250	1.013	.123	0.912	137	.3632
PR Directors	71	3.099	0.943	.112			
Television	37	3.297	0.812	.133	1.088	106	.2792
PR Directors	71	3.099	0.943	.112			
Television	37	3.297	0.812	.133	0.244	103	.8075
Newspaper	68	3.250	1.013	.123			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XVII shows that news media members, with a mean of 3.267, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that Texas' community colleges do an adequate job of preparing students. Television journalists gave more favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 3.297 to 3.259. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Fifteen ranked eighteenth on the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 3.099 to the news media members' actual mean of 3.267.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.160. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked fifteenth in level of significance at .2478.

The t-tests between means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .912 and 1.088. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .244. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Sixteen on the survey instruments was: "State colleges and universities do not do an adequate job of attracting business and industry to the state." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on whether or not Texas' state-supported colleges and universities are fulfilling their economic roles of acting as forces attracting business and industry to the state.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Sixteen were performed. Table XVIII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XVIII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON ATTRACTION FOR INDUSTRY

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.895	0.929	.091	0.534	174	.5939
PR Directors	71	2.817	0.990	.118			
Newspaper	68	2.926	0.951	.115	0.665	137	.5073
PR Directors	71	2.817	0.990	.118			
Television	37	2.838	0.898	.148	0.108	106	.9145
PR Directors	71	2.817	0.990	.118			
Television	37	2.838	0.898	.148	0.465	103	.6429
Newspaper	68	2.926	0.951	.115			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XVIII shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.895, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, not thinking, as a group, that higher education does enough to attract industry. Television journalists gave less favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 2.838 to 2.926. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Sixteen ranked thirteenth on the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.817 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.895.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .534. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked twenty-first in level of significance at .5939.

The t-tests between means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .665 and .108. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .244. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Seventeen on the survey instruments was: "A state college or university is not an important economic asset to its community." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on the extent to which news media members think that a state-supported college or university represents a positive economic force in the community in which it is located.

T-tests to measure the significance of the differences between means of the responses to Statement Number Seventeen were performed. Table XIX shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XIX

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON ECONOMIC VALUE TO COMMUNITY

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	4.819	0.386	.038	3.238	174	.0045
PR Directors	71	4.549	0.713	.085			
Newspaper	68	4.824	0.384	.047	2.806	137	.0054
PR Directors	71	4.549	0.713	.085			
Television	37	4.811	0.397	.065	2.067	106	.0160
PR Directors	71	4.549	0.713	.085			
Television	37	4.811	0.397	.065	0.160	103	.8730
Newspaper	68	4.824	0.384	.047			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XIX shows that news media members, with a mean of 4.819, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that a college or university is a very valuable economic asset to the community. Newspaper journalists gave more favorable responses than did television journalists, 4.824 to 4.811. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Seventeen ranked at the top of the low-to-high opinion list (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 4.549 to the news media members' actual mean of 4.819.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 3.238. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0045 level. The statement ranked sixth in level of significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 2.806 and 2.067. The difference between the first set of means was significant at the .0054 level, and the difference between the second set of means was significant at the .0160 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .160. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Eighteen on the survey instruments was: "There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities." This statement was intended to yield an opinion on the extent to which news media members thought that having separate governing boards for most universities and for all community and junior colleges is counterproductive and wasteful of state resources.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Eighteen were performed. Table XX shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XX

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON NUMBER OF GOVERNING BOARDS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.781	1.037	.101	3.399	174	.0007
PR Directors	71	2.254	0.967	.115			
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.055	.128	3.238	137	.0015
PR Directors	71	2.254	0.967	.115			
Television	37	2.730	1.018	.167	2.386	106	.0188
PR Directors	71	2.254	0.967	.115			
Television	37	2.730	1.018	.167	0.372	103	.7710
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.055	.128			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XX shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.781, gave unfavorable responses to this statement and thought, as a group, that there are too many separate governing boards. Television journalists gave less favorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 2.730 to 2.809. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Eighteen was tied for eighth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.254 to the news media members actual mean of 2.781.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 3.399. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0007 level. The statement ranked fifth in level of significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper journalists and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 3.283 and 2.386. The difference between the first set of means was significant at the .0015 level, and the difference between the second set of means was significant at the .0188 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .372. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Nineteen on the survey instruments was: "State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that state-supported colleges and universities spend too much money on construction of new physical facilities without making the most efficient use of existing facilities.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Nineteen were performed. Table XXI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXI

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.990	0.976	.095	4.166	174	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.366	0.975	.116			
Newspaper	68	2.897	1.039	.126	3.108	137	.0023
PR Directors	71	2.366	0.975	.116			
Television	37	3.162	0.834	.137	4.225	106	.0001
PR Directors	71	2.366	0.975	.116			
Television	37	3.162	0.834	.137	1.335	103	.1848
Newspaper	68	2.897	1.039	.126			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXI shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.990, gave unfavorable responses to this statement and thought, as a group, that Texas higher education is overbuilt in physical facilities. Television journalists gave favorable responses at 3.162, and newspaper journalists gave unfavorable responses at 2.897. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Nineteen ranked fifteenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.366 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.990.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 4.166. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0001 level. The statement was one of three at this highest level.

The t-test between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 3.108 and 4.225. The difference between both sets of means were significant, the first at the .0023 level and the second at the .0001 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of 1.335. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty on the survey instruments was: "Too many undergraduate university courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that too great a portion of the undergraduate curriculum, particularly lower-division courses, are taught by graduate teaching assistants rather than regular university faculty.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty were performed. Table XXII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON NUMBER OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.429	0.949	.093	1.410	174	.1604
PR Directors	71	2.239	0.746	.089			
Newspaper	68	2.471	1.000	.121	1.550	137	.1235
PR Directors	71	2.239	0.746	.089			
Television	37	2.351	0.857	.141	0.703	106	.4837
PR Directors	71	2.239	0.746	.089			
Television	37	2.351	0.857	.141	0.613	103	.5412
Newspaper	68	2.471	1.000	.121			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXII shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.429, gave favorable responses to this statement and thought, as a group, that too many university courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants. Television journalists gave more unfavorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 2.351 to 2.471. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty ranked fourth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.239 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.429.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.410. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked fourteenth in significance at .1604.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 1.550 and .703. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .613. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty-one on the survey instruments was: "Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that state-supported colleges and universities rely too heavily on graduate teaching assistants from other countries whose spoken English is sometimes so poor as to be unintelligible.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty-one were performed. Table XXIII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXIII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON TEACHING ASSISTANTS' ENGLISH

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.524	0.921	.090	0.694	174	.4889
PR Directors	71	2.620	0.868	.103			
Newspaper	68	2.485	0.872	.106	0.911	137	.3641
PR Directors	71	2.620	0.868	.103			
Television	37	2.595	1.103	.166	0.135	106	.8930
PR Directors	71	2.620	0.868	.103			
Television	37	2.595	1.103	.166	0.579	103	.5637
Newspaper	68	2.485	0.872	.106			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXIII shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.524, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in English. Newspaper journalists gave less favorable responses than did television journalists, 2.485 to 2.595. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty-one ranked fifth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give more favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.620 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.524.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .694. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked eighteenth in level of significance at .4889.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .911 and .135. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .579. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty-two on the survey instruments was: "Academic standards at state-supported colleges and universities are too low." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that state-supported colleges and universities do not require enough of their students in the classroom and that there is not enough rigor to the academic curriculum.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty-two were performed. Table XXIV shows the result of those tests.

TABLE XXIV

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON LEVEL OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.686	1.012	.099	0.218	174	.8298
PR Directors	71	2.718	0.944	.112			
Newspaper	68	2.662	1.002	.121	0.343	137	.7324
PR Directors	71	2.718	0.944	.112			
Television	37	2.730	1.045	.172	0.058	106	.9542
PR Directors	71	2.718	0.944	.112			
Television	37	2.730	1.045	.172	0.327	103	.7442
Newspaper	68	2.662	1.002	.121			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXIV shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.686, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that academic standards in Texas public higher education are too low. Newspaper journalists gave less favorable responses than did television journalists, 2.662 to 2.730. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty-two ranked sixth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give more favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.718 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.686.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .218. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked twenty-third in level of significance at .8298.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .343 and .058. The differences between both sets of means were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .327. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty-three on the survey instruments was: "The system of academic tenure for faculty members should be abolished." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that the system of granting academic tenure to college and university faculty members is outmoded, makes it difficult to terminate ineffective faculty members, and should be done away with.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty-three were performed. Table XXV shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXV

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON SYSTEM OF ACADEMIC TENURE

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.752	1.150	.112	1.586	174	.1146
PR Directors	71	2.479	1.080	.128			
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.162	.141	1.734	137	.0851
PR Directors	71	2.479	1.080	.128			
Television	37	2.649	1.136	.187	0.762	106	.4480
PR Directors	71	2.479	1.080	.128			
Television	37	2.648	1.136	.187	0.680	103	.4980
Newspaper	68	2.809	1.162	.141			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXV shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.752, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that the system of academic tenure for faculty members should be abolished. Television journalists gave more unfavorable responses than did newspaper journalists, 2.648 to 2.809. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty-three ranked seventh in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give more unfavorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.479 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.752.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 1.586. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked thirteenth in level of significance at .1146.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 1.734 and .762. The differences between both sets of means were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .680. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty-four on the survey instruments was: "The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much power." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much control over individual institutions with its power to approve or disapprove all degree programs and most construction.

T-tests to measure the significance of the difference between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty-four were performed. Table XXVI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXVI

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON POWER OF COORDINATING BOARD

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	2.810	0.833	.081	0.588	174	.5776
PR Directors	71	2.887	1.008	.120			
Newspaper	68	2.809	0.868	.105	0.491	137	.6242
PR Directors	71	2.887	1.008	.120			
Television	37	2.881	0.776	.128	0.403	106	.6875
PR Directors	71	2.887	1.008	.120			
Television	37	2.811	0.776	.128	0.012	103	.9908
Newspaper	68	2.809	0.868	.105			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.



The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXVI shows that news media members, with a mean of 2.810, gave unfavorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that the Coordinating Board has too much power over higher education. Television journalists and newspaper journalists gave virtually the same responses, 2.811 to 2.809. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty-four ranked tenth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give more favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 2.887 to the news media members' actual mean of 2.810.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of .588. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level. The statement ranked nineteenth in level of significance at .5776.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of .491 and .403. The differences between both sets of means thus were not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .680. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

Statement Number Twenty-five on the survey instruments was: "Higher education is not one of Texas' most valuable resources." This statement was intended to yield an opinion as to the extent that news media members thought that Texas' state-supported colleges and universities constitute a major economic, cultural, scientific, and social resource for the state.

T-tests to measure the significance of the differences between means of the responses to Statement Number Twenty-five were performed. Table XXVII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXVII

SUMMARY OF t-TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN MEANS OF RESPONSES TO STATEMENT  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION AS RESOURCE

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	DF	LS*
Total Media	105	4.495	1.075	.105	2.086	174	.0385
PR Directors	71	4.141	1.150	.136			
Newspaper	68	4.544	1.043	.126	2.163	137	.0323
PR Directors	71	4.141	1.150	.136			
Television	37	4.405	1.142	.188	1.137	106	.2580
PR Directors	71	4.141	1.150	.136			
Television	37	4.405	1.142	.188	0.613	103	.5303
Newspaper	68	4.544	1.043	.126			

\*"N"--number in group, "SD"--standard deviation, "SE"--standard error, "t"--value of t, "DF"--degrees of freedom, "LS"--level of significance.

The range of possible responses was from one to five, and three was the midpoint of the range. Table XXVII shows that news media members, with a mean of 4.495, gave favorable responses to this statement, thinking, as a group, that higher education is one of Texas' most valuable resources. Newspaper journalists gave more favorable responses than did television journalists, 4.544 to 4.405. The news media members' opinion on Statement Number Twenty-five ranked twenty-fourth in the low-to-high opinion ranking (p. 151).

Public relations directors predicted that the news media members would give less favorable responses. The public relations directors' predicted mean was 4.141 to the news media members' actual mean of 4.495.

The t-test between the means of news media members and public relations directors yielded a t-value of 2.086. The difference between means thus was significant at the .0385 level. The statement ranked tenth in level of significance.

The t-tests between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors yielded t-values of 2.163 and 1.137. The difference between the first set of means was significant at the .0323 level. The difference between the second set of means was not significant at the .05 level.

The t-test between the means of newspaper and television journalists yielded a t-value of .613. The difference between means thus was not significant at the .05 level.

### Summary of the t-tests

Research question 1 was: "Are there significant differences, either in the overall opinions or in the opinions on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas and the college and university public relations directors' predictions of those opinions?" The results of the t-tests provide the answers to research question 1.

The level of significance of the difference between the means of the responses of the news media members and the public relations directors to all statements was .0001. The difference between the overall opinion held by news media members and the prediction of that opinion by public relations directors therefore was significant.

The following eleven statements of the total of twenty-five on the survey instruments showed significant differences at the .05 level or greater between the opinions of the news media members and the predictions of those opinions by the public relations directors: (The figure in parentheses is the level of significance.)

"There are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas." (.0001)

"There is too much duplication of academic programs among state colleges and universities." (.0001)

"Faculty workloads are too light." (.0002)

"There are too many foreign students in state-supported colleges and universities." (.0476)

"Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state-supported universities." (.0296)

"State-supported colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds." (.0191)

"State-supported colleges and universities do not provide adequate access for minority students." (.0292)

"A state college or university is not an important economic asset to its community." (.0014)

"There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities." (.0008)

"State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities." (.0001)

"Higher education is not one of Texas' most valuable resources." (.0385)

The levels of significance of the differences between the means of the opinions and the predictions ranged from .0001 to .9494. The three statements for which the levels were .0001 were those on proliferation of institutions, on duplication of academic programs, and on overbuilding of physical facilities. The statement on which the level of significance was least was that on the president's external role. Table XXVIII gives the rank of the statements on level of significance between the means of the opinions and the predictions of those opinions.

TABLE XXVIII  
RANKING OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT STATEMENTS  
BY LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rank	Statement	LS*	Rank	Statement	LS*
1	Proliferation of Institutions	.0001	14	Teaching Assistants	.1604
1	Duplication of Programs	.0001	15	Preparation by Community College	.2478
1	Overbuilding of Facilities	.0001	16	Value of College Degree	.3121
4	Faculty Workloads	.0002	17	Admission Criteria	.3958
5	Number of Governing Boards	.0008	18	Lack of English Skills	.4889
6	Economic Asset to Community	.0014	19	Coordinating Board's Power	.5776
7	Efficient Use of Public Funds	.0191	20	Theory Versus Practicality	.5826
8	Level of Access for Minorities	.0292	21	Attraction of New Businesses	.5939
9	Appointment of Regents	.0296	22	Emphasis on Athletics	.6939
10	Education as State Resource	.0385	23	Academic Standards	.8298
11	Number of Foreign Students	.0476	24	Faculty Publication	.8531
12	State Spending Versus Tuition	.1058	25	External Role of Presidents	.9494
13	Tenure System for Faculty	.1146			

\*"LS"--level of significance.

Of equal interest to the level of significance between the opinions and the predictions was the fact that public relations directors consistently predicted that news media members would have more negative responses than actually was the case. On five out of the twenty-five statements was the reverse the case. All statements on which the prediction

was higher than the actual opinion were in the bottom third of the rankings of levels of significance. Those statements were the following:

"College courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical application."

"Too much emphasis and resources go toward intercollegiate athletics."

"Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English."

"Academic standards at state-supported colleges and universities are too low."

"The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much power."

There did not appear to be a discernable pattern to these statements, although three of the five (theory versus practicality, lack of English skills, and academic standards) could be labeled as academic issues. The other two fall into the realm of finance or governance.

Likewise, there did not appear to be any pattern when the statements on which there were the lowest levels of significance were examined. Of seven statements for which the levels of significance were lower than .5000, three dealt with academic issues, two with governance issues, and two with finance issues.

A pattern was apparent, however, when the statements at the other end of the rankings were examined. There were six

statements for which the levels of significance between the opinions and the predictions exceeded the .01 level. Five of those six (proliferation of institutions, duplication of programs, overbuilding of facilities, number of governing boards, and economic importance to the community) dealt with economic issues. The remaining statement was on the amount of faculty workload.

The means of the responses of the news media members to the statements on the survey instrument ranged from a low opinion of 1.838 to a high opinion of 4.819, the range of possible responses having been from one to five. The means of the responses to fifteen of the statements were lower than 3.0, which was the midpoint of the range. This was unexpected in view of the fact that the mean of the responses to all statements was somewhat above the midpoint of the possible range. The means of the responses to individual statements tended to cluster about the midpoint. A single mean was lower than 2.0, and two means were in excess of 4.0. There were three means between 2.0 and 2.5, and there was one mean between 3.4 and 4.0. Therefore, there were eighteen means bunched between 2.5 and 3.5. Table XXIX gives the ranking of the statements on the survey instrument based upon the means of the responses to those statements given by news media members.



TABLE XXIX  
RANKING OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT STATEMENTS  
BY OPINIONS OF NEWS MEDIA MEMBERS

Rank	Statement	Mean	Rank	Statement	Mean
1	Appointment of Regents	1.838	14	Faculty Workloads	2.962
2	Emphasis on Athletics	2.105	15	Overbuilding of Facilities	2.991
3	Theory Versus Practicality	2.305	16	External Role of Presidents	3.038
4	Teaching Assistants	2.429	17	Admission Criteria	3.067
5	Lack of English Skills	2.524	18	Preparation by Community College	3.267
6	Academic Standards	2.686	19	Proliferation of Institutions	3.400
7	Tenure System for Faculty	2.752	20	State Spending Versus Tuition	3.410
8	Number of Governing Boards	2.781	21	Number of Foreign Students	3.429
8	Efficient Use of Public Funds	2.781	22	Level of Access for Minorities	3.467
10	Coordinating Board's Power	2.810	23	Value of College Degree	3.638
11	Duplication of Programs	2.838	24	Education as State Resource	4.496
12	Faculty Publication	2.886	25	Economic Asset to Community	4.819
13	Attraction of New Businesses	2.895			

As with the levels of significance, the means of the opinions of news media members on specific issues in higher education tended somewhat to reflect academic concerns on one end of the scale and strongly to reflect economic concerns on the other. Of the six issues on which the news media members had the lowest opinions, four are concerned with academic matters, one (appointment of regents) with

governance, and one (emphasis on athletics) with a mixture of the academic and economic. Of the six issues on which the means of the responses of news media members were highest, four are concerned directly with the economic value of higher education. The remaining two (access for minorities and number of foreign students) are concerned with the mission of higher education, although the issue of the number of foreign students has economic overtones.

#### Tests of Correlation

To assess the relationship between the opinions of news media members toward public higher education in Texas and the number of years they had worked as journalists, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated. Separate coefficients were calculated for newspaper journalists, television journalists, and total media. To assess the relationship between the opinions of news media members and the dichotomous variables of educational level, newspaper or television affiliation, and proximity to a state college or university, point biserial correlation coefficients were calculated. Separate coefficients were calculated for newspaper journalists, television journalists, and total media on the variables of educational level and proximity to a state college or university. Table XXX shows the results of the tests of correlation between the news media members' overall opinion and the four aforementioned variables.

TABLE XXX

SUMMARY OF TESTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN OPINIONS  
OF TOTAL MEDIA AND VARIABLES OF EDUCATION,  
AFFILIATION, PROXIMITY, AND SERVICE

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	r*	Level of Significance
Education	**	**	-0.039	.6934
Affiliation	**	**	0.062	.5316
Proximity	**	**	-0.086	.3822
Service	15.851	9.488	-0.096	.3285

\*"r"--correlation coefficient.

\*\*Dichotomous variable; no mean or standard deviation is possible.

Note: number in group = 105.

The range of possible correlation coefficients is from +1.0 for perfect positive correlation to -1.0 for perfect negative correlation. Table XXX shows that the four correlation coefficients yielded by these tests ranged from -.096 to .086. These extremely low coefficients indicate that there is virtually no correlation between the news media members' opinions and the independent variables of educational level, newspaper or television affiliation, proximity to a state college or university, or length of service.

Correlation coefficients were calculated for newspaper journalists between overall opinion toward public higher education in Texas and the independent variables of edu-

cational level, proximity to a state college or university, and length of service. Table XXXI shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXXI

SUMMARY OF TESTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN OPINIONS  
OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISTS AND VARIABLES OF  
EDUCATION, PROXIMITY, AND SERVICE

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	r*	Level of Significance
Education	**	**	0.068	.5791
Proximity	**	**	-0.124	.3119
Service	17.441	10.221	-0.008	.9504

\*"r"--correlation coefficient.

\*\*Dichotomous variable; no mean or standard deviation is possible.

Note: number in group = 68.

The range of possible correlation coefficients is from +1.0 for perfect positive correlation to -1.0 for perfect negative correlation. Table XXXI shows that the three correlation coefficients yielded by these tests ranged from -.008 to .068. These extremely low coefficients indicate that there is virtually no correlation between the newspaper journalists' opinions and the independent variables of educational level, proximity to a state college or university, or length of service.

Correlation coefficients were calculated for television journalists between overall opinion toward public higher

education in Texas and the independent variables of educational level, proximity to a state college or university, and length of service. Table XXXII shows the results of those tests.

TABLE XXXII

SUMMARY OF TESTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN OPINIONS  
OF TELEVISION JOURNALISTS AND VARIABLES OF  
EDUCATION, PROXIMITY, AND SERVICE

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	r*	Level of Significance
Education	**	**	-0.248	.1383
Proximity	**	**	0.000***	1.0000
Service	12.162	6.862	-0.297	.0741

\*"r"--correlation coefficient.

\*\*Dichotomous variable; no mean or standard deviation is possible.

\*\*\*All television journalists reported the presence of a state college or university in their telecast area.

Note: number in group = 37.

The range of possible correlation coefficients is from +1.0 for perfect positive correlation to -1.0 for perfect negative correlation. Table XXXII shows that the three correlation coefficients yielded by these tests ranged from -.297 to 0.0. No correlation was possible using the variable of proximity because all television journalists reported that a state college or university exists in their immediate telecast area. The correlation coefficients of -.248 and -.297 for the variables of level of education and length of

service, while the most statistically significant of any in this study, must be considered in light of the fact that only three of the thirty-seven respondents reported that they do not have a baccalaureate degree.

### Multiple Regression

Multiple regression analyses of variance were performed on data collected from the news media members to assess which factors, if any, seemed to play more important roles in opinions toward higher education. Table XXXIII shows the results of the tests between the criterion variable of opinion of news media members and the predictor variables of television versus newspaper affiliation, length of service, educational level, and proximity to a state college or university.

TABLE XXXIII  
SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES OF VARIANCE  
BETWEEN NEWS MEDIA OPINION AND VARIABLES OF  
AFFILIATION, SERVICE, EDUCATION,  
AND PROXIMITY

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t	LS*
Affiliation	1.166	2.009	0.580	.5629
Service	-0.084	0.100	-0.835	.4055
Education	-1.458	3.261	-0.447	.6558
Proximity	-3.977	3.728	-1.067	.2887

\*"t"--value of t, "LS"--level of significance.

The adjusted r-square of the model of the multiple regression analyses of variance in this case was  $-0.016$  on a scale from  $+1.0$  to  $-1.0$ . The closeness of the adjusted r-square to zero indicated that there is extremely little relationship between the opinions of news media members and the predictor variables of affiliation, length of service, educational level, and proximity to a state college or university.

This indication is borne out when the t-values for each predictor variable are studied. The t-values range from  $-1.067$  to  $.580$ , and none of the variables were significant at the  $.05$  level. The specific levels of significance were  $.5629$  for newspaper or television affiliation,  $.4055$  for length of service,  $.6558$  for educational level, and  $.2887$  for proximity to a state college or university.

Multiple regression analyses of variance were performed on data collected from newspaper journalists to assess which factors, if any, seemed to play more important roles in opinions toward higher education. Table XXXIV shows the results of the tests between the criterion variable of opinion of newspaper journalists and the predictor variables of length of service, educational level, and proximity of a state college or university.

TABLE XXXIV  
SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES OF VARIANCE  
BETWEEN NEWSPAPER JOURNALIST OPINION  
AND VARIABLES OF SERVICE,  
EDUCATION, AND PROXIMITY

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t	LS*
Service	-0.084	0.112	-0.084	.9336
Education	0.449	4.039	0.449	.6549
Proximity	-3.597	3.771	-0.954	.3438

\*"t"--value of t, "LS"--level of significance.

The adjusted r-square of the model of the multiple regression analyses of variance in this case was -0.027 on a scale from +1.0 to -1.0. The closeness of the adjusted r-square to zero indicated that there is extremely little relationship between the opinions of newspaper journalists and the predictor variables of length of service, educational level, and proximity to a state college or university.

This indication was reflected in the t-values for each predictor variable. The t-values were -0.084 for length of service, 0.449 for educational level, and 0.954 for proximity to a state college or university. None of the variables was significant at the .05 level.

Multiple regression analyses of variance were performed on data collected from television journalists to assess which factors, if any, seemed to play more important roles in



opinions toward higher education. Table XXXV shows the results of the tests between the criterion variable of opinion of television journalists and the predictor variables of length of service, educational level, and proximity to a state college or university.

TABLE XXXV

SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES OF VARIANCE  
BETWEEN TELEVISION JOURNALIST OPINION  
AND VARIABLES OF SERVICE,  
EDUCATION, AND PROXIMITY

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t	LS*
Service	-0.345	0.221	-1.559	.1283
Education	-6.482	5.484	-1.182	.2454
Proximity	0**			

\*"t"--value of t, "LS"--level of significance.

\*\*No analysis was possible since all television journalists reported presence of a state college or university in immediate telecase area.

The adjusted r-square of the model of the multiple regression analyses of variance in this case was .073 on a scale of +1.0 to -1.0. The closeness of the adjusted r-square to zero indicated that there is extremely little relationship between the opinions of television journalists and the predictor variables of length of service, educational level, and proximity of a state college or university.

This indication is reflected in the t-values for each

predictor variable. The t-values were -1.559 for length of service and -1.182 for educational level. No analysis was possible on proximity of a state college or university since all television journalists reported the presence of a college or university in their immediate telecast areas. Neither of the variables on which analyses were possible was significant at the .05 level.

#### Summary of the Tests of Correlation and Multiple Regression

Research Question 2 was: "To what extent are the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalist, and the proximity of a state college or university related to news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas?" The results of the tests of correlation and the multiple regression analyses of variance provide the answers to Research Question II.

The tests of correlation indicate that there is virtually no correlation between news media members' opinions and the four dependent variables. The multiple regression analyses of variance indicate that there is almost no relationship among the four variables that would make it possible to predict the news media members' opinions.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

The problem addressed by this study was that of whether or not differences exist between the opinions members of the news media have toward higher education and the predictions of those opinions by public relations directors in public colleges and universities in Texas. The study had two purposes.

The first purpose was to determine if significant difference exists between the overall opinion news media members hold toward public higher education in Texas and the prediction of that opinion by the public relations directors. Included in the first purpose was the determination whether or not significant differences exist between the opinions on specific issues in Texas public higher education and the predictions of those opinions.

The second purpose was to assess to what extent the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalist, or proximity to a state college or university are related to news media members' opinion.

Research question to be answered by this study were as follows.

1. Are there significant differences, either in the overall opinions or in the opinions on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas and the college and university public relations directors' predictions of those opinions?

2. To what extent are the factors of educational level, television or newspaper affiliation, length of experience as a journalist, and the proximity of a state college or university related to news media members' opinions toward public higher education in Texas?

Participants in the study were those persons at daily newspapers and at television stations in Texas who have the primary responsibility for the coverage of higher education or who have responsibility for assigning such coverage and the public relations directors of Texas' state-supported colleges, universities, and technical institutes.

To collect the data necessary to answer the research questions, survey instruments were formulated and validated. The survey instruments consisted of twenty-five statements on issues in Texas public higher education. Each statement was intended to yield an opinion on that specific issue, and it was intended that the mean of the responses to all statements would give the respondent's overall opinion of higher education. News media members were asked to respond to each

statement on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Public relations directors were asked to respond as they thought most media members would. The survey instrument for news media members contained, in addition, demographic questions designed to collect the data necessary to answer Research Question 2.

Survey instruments were mailed to ninety-two public relations directors and to 163 news media members. Completed instruments were received from seventy-one public relations directors and from 105 news media members. The overall rate of return was sixty-nine per cent.

To answer Research Question 1, t-tests for the significance of difference between means were performed on the means of the public relations directors and the news media members on the total responses and for each individual response. Similar tests were performed between the means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors and between the means of newspaper and television journalists.

To answer Research Question 2, tests of correlation and multiple regression analyses of variance were performed between the news media members' opinions and demographic data collected from the survey instruments. Similar tests also were performed between the opinions of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and the demographic data.

### Summary of the Findings

It was found from the collected data that the mean length of experience of the 105 journalists who returned the survey instruments was 15.85 years. Of the 105 respondents, sixty-eight were from daily newspapers and thirty-seven were from television stations. Eight respondents reported that they do not hold a baccalaureate degree, and seven reported that they do not have a state college or university in their immediate circulation or telecast area.

The mean of news media members on the responses to all twenty-five statements combined was 75.610. The midpoint of the possible range of combined responses was 75.0. A mean higher than the midpoint indicated a favorable opinion toward higher education. Public relations directors predicted that the news media members' mean would be 69.493. The difference between the means was shown to be significant at the .0001 level. The differences between means of newspaper and television journalists, respectively, and public relations directors also were significant. The difference between the means of television and newspaper journalists was not significant. The overall means of television and of newspaper journalists were slightly above the midpoint.

The means of the responses of news media members to the individual statements showed that the journalists hold very unfavorable opinions (means lower than 2.5) on the following

important matters and concerns in public higher education in Texas.

1. The extent to which partisan politics plays a role in the appointment of members of boards of regents of state universities.

2. The emphasis placed upon and the extent of the resources going to intercollegiate athletics.

3. The extent to which college courses deal with the theoretical rather than with practical applications.

4. The number of undergraduate courses in universities taught by graduate teaching assistants rather than by full-time faculty.

Public relations directors accurately predicted the news media members' opinions on these issues, with the exception of the one dealing with the appointment of regents. On this issue, the difference between means was significant, the public relations directors predicting that the news media members would have an even more unfavorable opinion.

The predictions by public relations directors of the opinions of news media members on these four issues were lower than the actual means, with the exception of the issue of emphasis on intercollegiate athletics. This was one of only five issues on which the public relations directors thought the news media members had a more favorable opinion than was actually the case. The difference between means,

however, was not significant. This issue of intercollegiate athletics was the only one on which there was a significant difference between the means of television and newspaper journalists, the television journalists having a more favorable opinion.

The means of the responses of news media members showed that the journalists hold very favorable opinions (means higher than 3.5) on the following significant issues and concerns in public higher education in Texas:

1. The value of a college degree;
2. The importance of higher education as a state resource; and
3. The importance of a state college or university as an economic asset to its community.

The predictions by public relations directors of the opinions of news media members on these three issues were accurate only in the case of the value of a college degree. The differences between the means on the issues of higher education as a state resource and the economic value of a college or university to its community were significant, and in both cases, the news media members had a much more favorable opinion than predicted.

There was consistency in the direction of the difference between the means of the news media members' opinions and the public relations directors' predictions. On twenty of the twenty-five issues, the news media members had a more favor-



able opinion than had been predicted by the public relations directors. All eleven of the statements on which there were significant differences between the means were favored more by the journalists than had been predicted.

The differences between the means of the opinions of news media members and the means predicted by public relations directors were significant on the following issues (level of significance in parentheses):

1. The number of state-supported colleges and universities in Texas (.0001);
2. Duplication of academic programs in state colleges and universities (.0001);
3. Overbuilding in terms of physical facilities (.0001);
4. The workloads of college and university faculty (.0002);
5. The number of separate governing boards for public higher education in Texas (.0008);
6. The importance of a college or university as an economic asset to its community (.0014);
7. Efficiency in use of public funds by higher education (.0191);
8. The level of access for minority students into Texas public higher education (.0292);
9. The role played by politics in the appointment of regents of state universities (.0296);
10. Higher education as a state resource (.0385); and

11. The number of foreign students enrolled in state colleges and universities.

Of these eleven issues, six (proliferation of institutions, duplication of programs, overbuilding of facilities, economic asset to community, efficient use of public funds, and education as a state resource) deal with the economics of Texas public higher education. In addition, three others (faculty workloads, number of governing boards, and appointment of regents) have economic overtones.

#### Summary of the Tests of Correlation and Multiple Regression

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and point biserial correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the relationship between the opinions of news media members toward public higher education in Texas and the dependent variables of educational level, length of service, newspaper or television affiliation, and proximity to a state college or university. The most significant correlation coefficient found in any of the tests was  $-.297$ , a fairly low coefficient, and most were in the  $+0.1$  to  $-0.1$  range, extremely low coefficients. This indicated virtually no correlation between the opinions and the four variables.

Multiple regression analyses of variance were performed to assess which variables of educational level, length of service, newspaper or television affiliation, and proximity to a state college or university or which combination of

variables would best predict the opinions of news media members. Calculations were performed for total media, for newspaper journalists, and for television journalists. The highest r-square value for any of the tests was a very low .073, indicating almost no relationship among the variables. No single variable had a level of significance as a predictor higher than .2400.

#### Answers to the Research Questions

The series of t-tests provided the answers to Research Question 1. The data showed that there are significant differences, both in the overall opinion and in the opinions on specific issues, between the news media members' opinions and the prediction of those opinions by public relations directors.

The tests of correlation and multiple regression analyses of variance provided the answers to Research Question 2. The data showed that there is virtually no relationship between the four factors of educational level, length of experience as a journalist, television or newspaper affiliation, or proximity of a state college or university and the opinions of news media members toward public higher education in Texas.

### Conclusions

The conclusions which were derived from the analyses of the data and from the findings are as follows.

1. Journalists directly involved in the coverage of higher education have very strongly favorable opinions on the fundamental issues dealing with the basic worth of higher education--value to the state as a resource, value to the community as an economic asset to the community, the value of the college experience to the individual student.

2. These very strong favorable opinions on a few, basic issues outweigh more numerous unfavorable opinions on issues which, although serious, are less fundamental and more solvable--such issues as the language ability of graduate teaching assistants, overemphasis of intercollegiate athletics, and similar issues. Because of the few, very favorable opinions, the overall opinion is slightly favorable.

3. College and university public relations directors consistently overestimate the negative opinions held by news media members on most issues, but they underestimate the very positive opinions held by news media members on the basic issues concerning the value of higher education to society.

4. Insofar as their opinions toward public higher education are concerned, journalists are a homogenous population. There is virtually no difference between the opinions held by television journalists and those held by

newspaper journalists. Demographic factors will not be useful in predicting the opinions of individual journalists.

### Implications of the Study

The findings of this study and the conclusions drawn from the analyses of the data and from the findings suggest that college and university public relations directors may have somewhat lost touch with the news media members with whom they work and upon whom they depend to disseminate much of the information from which the general public forms its opinion of higher education. The word "may" should be emphasized, because any opinion survey is but a snapshot of the opinions of the group surveyed at that particular time. Opinions change, predictions of opinions change, and issues grow and shrink in importance. Further research is needed to determine whether or not the difference between media opinion and public relations director prediction is moving in one direction or the other.

If the difference remains significantly wide or grows even wider, there exists the danger that public relations directors will furnish the news media members with information which they think is vital to the understanding of higher education, but which is considered of little importance or, worse, is considered a negative aspect of higher education by the journalists. If the journalists interpret this information to the public in the light of their own

predispositions and opinions, serious misunderstandings could occur that could negatively affect the esteem in which higher education is held by the general public and the willingness of the public to give its support to higher education.

Is the gap between opinion and prediction of opinion confined to public relations directors and news media members? The possibility must be admitted that this difference may be symptomatic of a lack of understanding between all of higher education, in general, and its various publics. The danger of a polarization of views is more serious in this event that if the lack of understanding involves only one aspect of higher education and one constituency. As the review of the literature showed, the news media play only one part in the formation of public opinion. The fact that the news media members think one way about higher education and public relations directors think the journalists think another way can lead to the dissemination of information detrimental to higher education, but it would be unlikely that this information, by itself, could severely damage higher education in the public eye. However, if there is a basic lack of understanding between higher education and the public that it serves, much more serious consequences could result.

Why does the difference between media opinion and public relations director prediction exist? The data shows that

news media members, while they had unfavorable opinions on fifteen of the twenty-five issues addressed in the survey instruments, nevertheless had an overall opinion slightly favorable toward public higher education in Texas. The conclusion was that the journalists' slightly to moderately negative opinions on a number of issues dealing with how higher education operates--use of graduate teaching assistants, emphasis on publication by faculty, use of the tenure system, and so forth--are more than balanced by extremely favorable opinions on issues dealing with the inherent worth of higher education--the value of the degree and the economic importance to the state and to individual communities. This suggests that the news media members, while concerned about a number of relatively minor issues, maintain a strong belief in the value to society of our system of higher education. The opinions of news media members on specific issues were consistently higher than predicted. This indicates that many of these issues dealing with the organization, governance, and operation of colleges and universities are not as important to the media as thought. This is perhaps a natural result of the public relations directors' direct involvement in and their knowledge of higher education. The flaws are much more apparent to those involved in higher education on a day-to-day basis and may take on an importance out of proportion to their actual impact. The fact that the news media members have a higher

opinion toward higher education than predicted by the public relations directors may be because the journalists are able to maintain a perspective between basic issues and secondary issues, whereas the public relations directors are so bogged down in minutiae that they are unable to take a wider, gestaltist view.

The tendency to overestimate the extent of a public's unfavorable opinions could lead to an overly defensive posture on the part of public relations directors and all professionals in higher education. If the feeling is that the media and, by extension, the general public, hold very low opinions on significant issues, the reaction could be the formation of an us-against-them siege mentality. One aspect of such a development could be that higher education, as it seeks to win public support, will spend too much time and effort combating what it perceives to be major negative issues while neglecting to give adequate emphasis to the positive side. Taken to an extreme, such a defensive posture could result in a withdrawal of higher education into itself, a public-be-damned attitude which could have disastrous implications for the partnership between higher education and the public interest that has characterized the American system.

Finally, while the news media members' opinions on the basic worth of higher education are high, attention should be paid to those specific issues on which the opinions are



very low. Such issues as political appointment of regents, emphasis on athletics, an overemphasis on theory in teaching, and a heavy reliance on the use of graduate teaching assistants may not be the most important in the long run, but the low opinions on them should not be ignored. Higher education needs to examine such issues to determine whether or not the now opinions derive from misunderstanding of the facts, ignorance or the necessities for some policies and procedures, or whether some practices are, indeed, detrimental to its mission and goals.

#### Recommendations

Based upon the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. A periodic repetition of this study or a similar study should be made to assess trends, both in the opinions of news media members toward higher education and in the perceptions of those opinions as revealed by predictions of college and university public relations directors.

2. Similar studies should be undertaken by other segments of higher education to assess how well they know the opinions of their respective publics. Studies might be done on alumni association directors and alumni, governmental relations directors and legislators, or fund raisers and donors, for example.

3. College and university public relations directors should realize that the news media members' basic opinion of higher education is a positive one and should not go too much on the defensive in their selection of issues on which to attempt to enhance public opinion through dissemination of information to the news media.

4. Public relations directors should direct their energies to finding as many ways as possible to present the picture of their institutions as contributing to the economic well-being of the institution's graduates, the local community, and the state.

5. Public relations directors should attempt to disseminate material, not only on successful students, but also on successful alumni. Positive stories or articles on alumni who are successes in their careers would emphasize the value of a degree and also would help counter the notion that college courses deal too much with theory and do not prepare students for careers.

6. Public relations directors should attempt to find examples which, if publicity about them were received, would tend to counter some of the low opinions on specific issues in higher education. Examples might be regents who display an exceptional knowledge of, involvement in, and commitment to their institutions, graduate teaching assistants who are honored for their teaching abilities, or varsity athletes who excel in the classroom as well as on the playing field.

7. No attempt should be made to vary the emphasis of material going to newspapers as opposed to that going to television stations since the opinions of the journalists of both media are substantially the same.

## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

### LETTER TO MEMBERS OF VALIDATION PANEL

April 7, 1987

Dr. Wendell Nedderman, President  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
P.O. Box 19125  
Arlington, TX 76019

Dear Dr. Nedderman:

Thank you very much for agreeing to be a member of a panel to assist in the validation of the survey instruments to be used in my doctoral dissertation.

The title of the dissertation will be "Opinions of News Media Members Toward Public Higher Education in Texas and Predictions of Those Opinions by College and University Public Relations Directors." I hope to find whether or not there are differences between how the media view higher education and how we think they view us.

Enclosed, you will find a draft of a survey instrument including a list of statements. News media members will be asked to respond as to the extent with which they agree or disagree with each statement. PR directors will be asked to respond as they think the media will. The instruments are identical except in the instructions and in that no demographic data is being requested from the PR directors.

I need for you to answer four questions for me:

1. Do each of the statements reflect an important issue in Texas public higher education which would be of news media interest? If some, in your opinion, do not, please indicate which.
2. Are there any important issues not addressed by these statements that should be included? If so, please list.
3. Will the mean of the responses to all statements yield a valid over-all opinion of public higher education in Texas?

4. Are all statements and instructions clearly and correctly worded? Are any ambiguous?

Also, please feel free to add any comments you wish. Please return your answers and comments to me in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

Once again, thank you for your help in this important part of my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Bill Lace

## DRAFT OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Instructions for Public Relations Directors

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each of the following statements the way that you think most members of the news media will respond to an identical questionnaire. Remember, don't put down what you think but what you think the media will think. The scale is:

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

The completed questionnaire should be returned to William W. Lace, 3405 Somerset Drive, Arlington, TX 76013. Thanks for your participation.

Instructions for News Media Members

INSTRUCTIONS: Please give your opinions on the following statements dealing with public higher education in Texas. The scale is:

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

The completed questionnaire should be returned to William W. Lace, 3405 Somerset Drive, Arlington, TX 76013. Thanks for your participation.

- |   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Faculty members spend too much time writing for publication and doing research and not enough in teaching. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. There are too many state colleges and universities in Texas.   | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Admission criteria at state universities are too low.  | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. There is too much duplication of academic programs at state colleges and universities.                     | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Faculty workloads are too light.   | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

6. The value of a college degree is overrated. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
7. College courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical application. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
8. Too much emphasis and resources go toward intercollegiate athletics. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
9. College presidents spend too much time on external affairs (lobbying, public relations, fund raising, etc.) and not enough on managing the institution. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
10. There are too many foreign students in Texas' colleges and universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
11. Tuition is too low in proportion to the amount of state appropriations spent on higher education. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
12. Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
13. State colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
14. State college and universities provide adequate access to higher education for minority students. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
15. State community colleges do an adequate job of preparing students to transfer to universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
16. State colleges and universities should no longer compete with private institutions for contributions from private sources. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
17. State colleges and universities do a good job of attracting business and industry to Texas. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
18. A state college or university is an important economic asset to its community. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )



19. There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

20. State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

21. Too many undergraduate courses in universities are taught by graduate teaching assistants. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

22. Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

23. Academic standards for graduation from state colleges and universities are too low. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

24. The system of academic tenure for faculty members should be abolished. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

25. The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much power. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

26. There is too much emphasis on the earning of graduate degrees rather than on-the-job training. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

27. Universities should not be teaching remedial-type courses. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

28. Higher education is one of Texas' most valuable resources. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

29. Because of scholarships and financial aid available, cost is not a barrier to an education at a state college or university. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

30. Colleges and universities are too lenient toward drug and alcohol abusers. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

#### Demographic Questions for News Media Members

Are you affiliated with a (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper

\_\_\_\_\_ television station

How many years have you been employed as a journalist? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you hold a bachelor's degree? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a state university or a state-supported junior college, community college, or technical institute in the immediate circulation or telecast area of your newspaper or television station? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

LETTER AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT MAILED  
TO NEWS MEDIA MEMBERS

June 15, 1987

Doug Williams, Managing Editor  
Abilene Reporter-News  
P.O. Box 30  
Abilene, TX 79604

Dear Mr. Williams:

I need a moment of your time--and I assure you that it will be only a moment--in helping me to collect the data I need to complete my doctoral dissertation at North Texas State University.

The title of the paper is "Opinions of News Media Members Toward Public Higher Education in Texas and Predictions of Those Opinions by College and University Public Relations Directors." I am trying to find out if there are differences between what the media think of higher education and what the public relations directors think the media think.

Enclosed is a questionnaire consisting of several statements concerning public higher education in Texas. Representatives of each daily newspaper and television station are asked to give their opinions on each statement. College PR people are being asked to respond in the way they think the media will respond.

I need your assistance in getting this questionnaire to the proper person. It should be answered by the person on your staff having primary responsibility for the coverage of higher education. If no specific person is assigned to that beat, the questionnaire should be filled out by that person who assigns what coverage of higher education there is.

Please ask the appropriate person to answer as honestly (and as soon) as possible and to return to completed survey to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you very much for your help in this project.

Sincerely,

William W. Lace

PS. You will notice a number in the corner of the questionnaire. This is so that I can identify which media have responded so that, if a second mailing is needed, it need not go to those who already have replied.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEWS MEDIA MEMBERS

INSTRUCTIONS: Please give your opinion on the following statements dealing with public higher education in Texas. The scale is:

- 1 = Strongly agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Uncertain
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

The completed questionnaire should be returned to William W. Lace, 3405 Somerset Drive, Arlington TX 76013. Thanks for your participation.

- |   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Faculty members spend too much time writing for publication and not enough in teaching.      | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. There are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas.                       | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Admission criteria at state-supported colleges and universities are too low.                 | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. There is too much duplication of academic programs among state colleges and universities.    | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Faculty workloads are too light.   | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. The value of a college degree is overrated.  | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 7. College courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical applications.        | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8. Too much emphasis and resources go toward intercollegiate athletics.                         | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 9. Presidents spend too much time on external affairs, such as lobbying, PR, fund raising, etc. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 10. There are too many foreign students in state-supported colleges and universities.           | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

11. Tuition is too low in proportion to the amount of state spending on higher education. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
12. Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state-supported universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
13. State-supported colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
14. State-supported colleges and universities do not provide adequate access for minority students. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
15. State community colleges do not do an adequate job of preparing students to transfer to universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
16. State colleges and universities do not do an adequate job of attracting business and industry to the state. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
17. A state college or university is not an important economic asset to its community. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
18. There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
19. State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
20. Too many undergraduate university courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
21. Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
22. Academic standards at state-supported colleges and universities are too low. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
23. The system of tenure for faculty members should be abolished. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

24. The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has too much power. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

25. Higher education is not one of Texas' most valuable resources. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

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Are you affiliated with a (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper

\_\_\_\_\_ television station

How many years have you been employed as a journalist? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you hold a bachelor's degree? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Is there a state university or a state-supported junior college, community college, or technical institute in the immediate circulation or telecast area of your newspaper or television station?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No



## APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

LETTER AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT MAILED  
TO PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

June 15, 1987

Steve Lestarjette, Public Information  
San Jacinto Junior College District  
4624 Fairmont Parkway, S-201  
Pasadena, TX 77505

Dear Mr. Lestarjette:

I need a moment of your time--and I assure you that it will be only a moment--in helping me to collect the data I need to complete my doctoral dissertation at North Texas State University.

The title is "Opinion of News Media Members Toward Public Higher Education in Texas and Predictions of Those Opinions by College and University Public Relations Directors."  
I'm trying to find out if there are differences between what the media think of higher education education and what the PR people think the media think.

Enclosed is a questionnaire consisting of several statements concerning public higher education in Texas. Representatives of each daily newspaper and television station are asked to give their opinions on each statement. You are asked to respond in the way you think the media will respond.

Please fill out the questionnaire as soon as you can and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thanks very much for your help in this project.

Sincerely,

William W. Lace

P.S. You will notice a number in the corner of the questionnaire. This is so that I will know who has responded so that, if another mailing is needed, it need not go to those who already have responded.

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each of the following statements the way that you think most members of the news media will respond to an identical questionnaire. Remember, don't put down what you think, but what you think the media will think. The scale is:

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

The completed questionnaire should be returned to William W. Lace, 3405 Somerset Drive, Arlington, TX 76013. Thanks for your participation.

- |   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Faculty members spend too much time writing for publicaition and not enough in teaching.     | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. There are too many state-supported colleges and universities in Texas.                       | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Admission criteria at state-supported colleges and universities are too low.                 | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. There is too much duplication of academic programs among state colleges and universities.    | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Faculty workloads are too light.   | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. The value of a college degree is overrated.  | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 7. Colleges courses deal too much with theory and not enough with practical applications.       | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8. Too much emphasis and resources go toward intercollegiate athletics.                         | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 9. Presidents spend too much time on external affairs, such as lobbying, PR, fund raising, etc. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 10. There are too many foreign students in state-supported colleges and universities.           | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

11. Tuition is too low in proportion to the amount of state spending on higher education. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
12. Politics plays too great a role in the appointment of regents of state-supported universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
13. State-supported colleges and universities are inefficient in their use of public funds. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
14. State-supported colleges and universities do not provide adequate access for minority students. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
15. State community colleges do not do an adequate job of preparing students to transfer to universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
16. State colleges and universities do not do an adequate job of attracting business and industry to the state. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
17. A state college or university is not an important economic asset to its community. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
18. There are too many separate governing boards for state colleges and universities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
19. State colleges and universities are overbuilt in terms of physical facilities. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
20. Too many undergraduate university courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
21. Too many graduate teaching assistants lack adequate ability in spoken English. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
22. Academic standards at state-supported colleges and universities are too low. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
23. The system of tenure for faculty members should be abolished. ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

24. The Coordinating Board, Texas  
College and University System, has too  
much power.

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

25. Higher education is not one of  
Texas' most valuable resources.

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

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