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# Decision Making at College Student Newspapers

Roger Kelley

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DECISION MAKING AT COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Roger D. Kelley

May 2012

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Roger D. Kelley

2012

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By

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Approved March 7, 2012

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## ABSTRACT

### DECISION MAKING AT COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPERS

By

Roger D. Kelley

May 2012

Dissertation supervised by Associate Professor Jeffrey T. Bitzer (Chair).

This study provides a literature review of presidential leadership styles, how college presidents communicate with constituencies, shared student governance and independence of student newspapers. The study involved two surveys: one to Pennsylvania college public relations directors and a second to Pennsylvania college student editors. The combined survey results examined whether presidential leadership style affected interactions with faculty, administration and student newspapers. The study concluded that the type of presidential leadership style did not correlate with interactions with student newspapers or the paper's coverage of the president, that there was no correlation between the independence of newspapers and its treatment of the president and that an institution's religious or secular structure had no influence on the president's interactions with the student newspaper.

## DEDICATION

There is a story told that three men met in an inn during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One man talked of conversing with a scientist who was versed in the latest discoveries. A second man talked of talking to a man so accomplished with a violin that he could play effortlessly. A third man talked of meeting a man who was a magnificent architect who had built his own house. It was only later that all three realized they were talking about the same man—Thomas Jefferson.

In dedicating this study, I chose a person who is a skilled attorney and who could field my numerous questions about First Amendment law. I chose a person who had many years as a communications professor and who could give me advice about student newspapers for my study. I chose a person who could write well, nudge me when I was slothful and supportive when I felt overwhelmed. I chose a person who steadfastly supported me at every juncture. All of these individuals are one person, my wife, Patricia T. Waltermeyer. I am eternally grateful for every role she has played in helping me weather the squalls and storms over the years in bringing this vessel to port.

“If ever there comes a day when we can’t be together,  
Keep me in your heart, I’ll stay there forever.”—A.A. Milne

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Victory has a thousand fathers,” John F. Kennedy once noted, “but defeat is an orphan.” Though he might have meant it as a criticism of people who accepted undeserved praise and avoided deserved blame, the quote can also mean that a victory is seldom the doing of one person. That is certainly the case for me.

Following the completion of my doctoral work, I discovered I had stage II colon cancer. The surgery was quick and successful, the chemotherapy protracted and painful, the psychological effects far more enduring. The cohort that had assisted me during the classwork vanished from sight during my second challenge and only a few stalwarts stood by me during this time. It is to the individuals who stood by me through both ordeals and *only* the following individuals that I wish to acknowledge:

First, my wife and family members.

Second, my committee members who combined the wisdom of Solomon with the patience of Job: Drs. Jeffrey T. Bitzer, Joseph Borrell and Gibbs Kanyongo.

Third, from Duquesne, two individuals who offered prayers and comfort and whom I will always cherish: Dr. James Henderson and Ms. Darlene Miller.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Circumstances Leading to the Problem**

“A president does not shape a new and personal vision of America,” President Lyndon Johnson once noted. “He collects it from the scattered hopes of the American past.”

At the college or university level, the institution’s president similarly does not craft his own vision, but draws upon the character of the institution and from constituencies on and off campus. The degree to which a college president relies upon others varies from institution to institution, but the success of his vision depends in large part upon the acceptance and active participation by those constituencies.

There are both internal and external constituencies. Externally, these stakeholders can include alumni who provide financial and moral support, parents of students, the local community that can provide such services as housing and entertainment and that either can serve to enhance or detract from the college experience, and ultimately the board of trustees. For state institutions, the constituencies additionally extend to include state government, which provides funding and taxpayers in general. Internal constituencies have traditionally included faculty and staff. A college president, to be successful, must develop and keep strong lines of communication with all these groups.

The ability to engage and enlist the support of various stakeholders demands strong leadership from the college president. There are different styles of leadership among college presidents. Among these styles, one type of leadership involves leaders

who share their vision with others in an organization and who can both energize and involve them in becoming part of that vision for change.

Senge addressed the importance of a learning organization having a shared vision, which he claims is “vital for the learning organization because it provides the focus and energy for learning. . . You cannot have a learning organization without shared vision. . . Vision establishes an overarching goal. . . A shared vision also provides a rudder to keep the learning process on course when stresses develop (Senge, 1994)

Schwahn and Spady talk of the “visionary leadership domain” as “creating innovative possibilities that shape organizational direction and performance.” They say of visionary leaders that they:

. . . look far beyond the tried and true, develop the future-focused and creative orientation on which their organizations must go and how they must operate to meet the changing and escalating needs and expectations of their customers” (Schwahn, Spady, & American Association of School Administrators., 1998).

In meeting the needs and expectations of an institution’s customers (in a university’s case the students are the customers), however, don’t the customers also need to share the vision of the leader?

Wheatley refers to the process by which an organization achieves a “higher level of complexity” and self-organizes into a “new form of order.” Information, she states, can initiate change if an organization internalizes that information. If it can maintain its identity while still internalizing the information, it achieves the higher level of complexity. “In this way,” she states,

“dissipative structures demonstrate that disorder can be a source of new order, and that growth appears from disequilibrium, not balance” (Wheatley, 2006)

The student body is the variable in a president’s vision. Individual students have a short-term involvement with the institution and may not be viewed as being “invested” in the institution’s future. Most colleges view students as “consumers” in the sense that they are at the institution to purchase an “education.” Once the transaction is completed, the graduate leaves and another takes his place.

For these reasons, students are seldom included as serious participants in the shared vision or shared governance of the institution. What then is the nature of student participation in shared governance and participation in the shared vision of the president?

There are formal and informal sources of power/authority within the student ranks. On a formal level, there is student government with elected student representatives. In the United States, the authority of a student senate is clearly defined and limited. It often extends to doling out funds for various other student activities or being an ombudsman to the administration. There are instances of undergraduate students serving on boards of trustees and other educational governance institutions, but there is no documentation to suggest this level of representation is a widespread trend.

As will be mentioned in Chapter II, student participation in university governance in certain European countries is more common. Students in these institutions are viewed not as consumers, but as bona fide partners in the existence and future of the institution. At the same time, ironically, student political organizations have been banned because of the volatility of political youth organizations in Europe’s not-too-distant past.

Besides the formal power structure for students that is delineated by the institution, an informal source of student power exists in the form of the student media, specifically the student newspaper. No elections from students, no appointments from the administration determine whom the writers and editors of a student newspaper may be. Through articles, student reporters can choose which issues to spotlight and through editorials editors register their support or opposition to the topics of the day, including the president's actions.

Most student newspapers have gone online with their newspaper stories, which means that the student newspaper is available not only to the students and other campus residents, but to the entire outside world. Alumni, local community members and everyone else in the world are potential readers of the student newspaper. The ability to call attention to issues and to reach new audiences has dramatically increased because of the internet. A New York marketing firm conducting a study on college student newspapers reported that 82 percent of students regularly read their student newspapers, a percentage more than double that of many major newspapers ("College Newspapers," 2008). The influence therefore of student newspapers has waxed while the power of the non-academic community newspapers has waned. For this reason, the student media is very much a powerful constituency.

The non-academic news media derive their funding through advertising. While college student newspapers also gain some revenue from advertising, nearly every college publication receives some degree of funding from the college itself. An old and worn joke goes that the definition of the "golden rule" is that "those with the gold make the rules" and in the case of college newspapers, the power of the purse string is

sometimes applied when the newspaper's views conflict with the president's. When the views and interests of student newspapers are in concert with those of the president, each side complements the other. When, however, there is sharp disagreement, the president can and, on occasion, has resorted to harsh retaliation. As is mentioned below in the law cases cited, administrations have sometimes resorted to cutting off or at least reducing funding of newspapers.

Though the potential always exist for confrontation, it is not inevitable. The lines of communication between student newspaper and the president can be strong and the student newspaper can be a cheerleader as much as a critic for the president. While the president of a college or university is usually not in close contact with the student newspaper editors, it does not mean that there is no communication.

When a student newspaper reporter or editor wants to find information, the most natural source is the college public relations office. There are different titles to these offices, including "Office of Communications," "Office of Marketing and Public Relations" and the chief public relations officer may likewise have a variety of titles, including "director" or "vice president," but the function of the office and the role of the officer is the same. The public relations officer provides information and the president's perspective on matters to external and internal audiences, including the student newspaper. While the relationship between the student newspaper staff and the president may be distant because of the nature of the presidency, the connection between student editor and college public relations officer can be close.

What then makes a close connection and what are the implications for the coverage in the student newspaper? Is it enough for a student editor to have access to a

public relations officer? In administration meetings that are not executive sessions, does student media coverage of the events of the meetings influence the nature of the relationship? If the college president creates advisory panels to gain feedback and support for his plans, are student representatives included and could that be a factor in the type of coverage he or she receives?

The history of the student newspaper/administration relationship has been a twisted tale. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the administration and journalists on student newspapers spoke with one voice. Student newspapers were traditionally considered the property of the college where student editors served at the pleasure of the administration. College administrations maintained a tight control over the content of the newspapers (Wilson 2006).

College students remained almost oblivious to events outside their college campuses through World War I, the Roaring Twenties and through the first years of the Great Depression. The only student rebellions during the early 1920s and early 1930s were rebellions against traditional attitudes on fashion and sexual mores. Student newspapers focused their attention on sports events and advice on how to pick the right fraternity or sorority (Cohen 1993).

The first years of the Great Depression did not affect most college students because parents still were able to finance their children's college education, there were government programs and healthy donations from alumni. The only major instance of college student violence was Harvard students celebrating the end of exams too wildly. One college student organization held a hobo costume party where students would appear as unemployed and homeless Americans (Cohen 1993).

In 1932, the effects of the Depression finally penetrated the college cocoon. Enrollments fell noticeably that year and even more so the following year because parents could no longer afford tuition. Governments cut their financial support for colleges. Endowments were off as much as 80 percent. Some students found out first-hand what it was like to be poor, wearing old clothes and going hungry. College administrations responded by cutting programs and cutting faculty salaries. Student newspaper editorials focused on the plight of impoverished students and criticized extravagance (Cohen 1993). The 1930s awakened students and student newspapers to the fact that they were just as susceptible to the world events around them as were any other citizens. This awareness and subsequent activism would resurface three decades later during the Vietnam War.

During the 1960's and '70's, in the period of the Vietnam War and campus protests, Watergate and the Washington Post investigative reporting, college administrations and student organizations were on opposite sides of political issues. There were student demonstrations, including sit-ins and occupations by students of college administration buildings.

## **1.2 Problems between administrations and student newspapers**

While the relations between the college administration and student newspaper began as a tightly cohesive relationship, the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a separation of powers and a divergence of interests between the two. College newspapers in some instances have been harsh critics of college administrations and the administrations in turn have resorted to equally harsh methods to control the student

media. The results in some instances have been lawsuits filed by journalism organizations on behalf of the student newspaper against college administrations.

The advisor to the newspaper is in nearly every case an employee of the college, most often a faculty member. As an employee, the advisor can and has been the subject of intense pressure by superiors to exert tighter control over the content of the newspaper.

Another factor raised in student newspaper-administration relations is the First Amendment. In state-owned colleges and universities, student newspapers have the protection of the First Amendment. Because the First Amendment's protection only relates to the relationship of the media to government, there is no protection for student newspapers at private colleges and universities.

This is not to say, however, that student newspapers at non-public institutions are without protection. Private institutions that accept public funds, such as student loan revenue, can be hard-pressed to argue that they are simultaneously exempt from government interference. While, to date, there have been no student newspapers at private colleges or universities who have argued First Amendment protections because of the institution's acceptance of federal funds, the potential is there.

The California state legislature passed the "Leonard Law," according to the Student Press Law Center (SPLC). The law gave students at private institutions in the state the same constitutional protections (including First Amendment) that existed at California's public institutions ("California Leonard Law," 2006).

Besides the California law, there are other remedies. A college's student handbook has been viewed by the courts as a binding contractual obligation by a college. Language touting student freedoms in such documents have been cited in lawsuits by

students and their representatives as legally binding, and the students with their representatives have prevailed in court (“Legal Guide for the Private Student Press, 2002).

As will be discussed below, the First Amendment has not prevented hostile administrations from trying to lower the boom on defiant newspapers.

The federal judges hearing such a case would obviously not be examining the style of leadership of the college, but whether the administration had violated the First Amendment and whether the protections under that amendment extended to college student newspapers. In nearly every instance, the newspapers have won and the administrations have lost. Below are cases that illustrate how far student dissension and Administrative retaliation can extend.

In the case of *Korn v. Elkins*, 317 F. Supp. 138 (1970), the University of Maryland administration banned the student magazine, *The Argus*, from publishing an issue that featured a burning American flag on the cover. The administration argued the picture violated the state’s prohibition on flag desecration, but a federal court sided with the students (Wilson, 1990).

Texas Tech University, in the case of *Channing Club v. Board of Regents of Texas Tech*, 317 F. Supp. 688 (N.D. Texas 1970), tried to prevent the student newspaper, the *Catalyst*, from publishing an issue because administrators claimed the issue contained “lewd, indecent, and vulgar language.” Since other reading materials admitted on campus contained the same words, the court ruled in favor of the newspaper (Wilson, 1990).

A Colorado federal court sided with a student in *Trujillo v. Love*, 322 F. Supp. 1266 (D. Colo. 1971) in which the managing editor of the student newspaper was suspended after disagreeing with the advisor about censorship. Although the university funded the publication, the court ordered the editor's reinstatement because "the state is not necessarily the unfettered master of all it creates" (Wilson, 1990).

The Massachusetts-based Fitchburg State College administration lost a suit after the student newspaper sued the college president in *Antonelli v. Hammond*, 308 F. Supp. 1329 (D. Mass. 1970). The president had disagreed with the newspaper's content on a particular issue and demanded to have prior approval of the paper by a special two-person advisory committee, a practice known as "prior restraint." The court ruled that administration could not engage in prior restraint and censor expression in order to stop obscenity (Wilson, 1990).

In a U.S. Supreme Court case, *Papish v. Board of Curators of the University of Missouri et al.* the Court ruled that a public university had violated a graduate student's First Amendment rights to free speech. The student had been expelled for distributing an underground newspaper which university officials deemed to be "indecent speech." The Court stated in its majority opinion that "the mere dissemination of ideas on a state university campus cannot be proscribed in the name of 'conventions of decency'" (*Papish v. University of Missouri Curators*, 1973).

Kentucky State University administrators in 1994 seized all copies of a student yearbook. The administrators were not happy with the yearbook's cover. The publication advisor was transferred to a secretarial position after refusing to censor material the administration claimed to be offensive. In the case of *Kincaid v. Gibson*, 236

*F.3d 342 (6th Cir. 2001)(en banc).*, administration officials turned to an earlier U.S. Supreme Court case, *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988) that had dealt with a high school and not a college. In *Hazelwood*, The Court had sided with a high school principal who had prevented publication of a journalism class newspaper. The Court in that case had said that since the project was not open to all students, it did not constitute a “public forum” and therefore the principal was within his rights to restrict content. The Court, however, noted that college publications were not at issue, in part because the students in *Hazelwood* were minors. In *Kincaid*, a federal appeals court overturned previous court decisions that sided with the university and instead sided with the student because: (1) the publication was a limited public forum, (2) university officials did not impose reasonable time, place and manner restrictions by seizing the publication, (3) the *Hazelwood* case was not applicable and (4) because the officials had violated the First Amendment (*Kincaid v. Gibson*, 2001).

While the courts have consistently sided with student newspapers in disputes with administration officials over constitutional rights, the notable exception was *Hosty v. Carter*, 412 F.3d 731 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005). In this case, Governors State University Dean Patricia Carter directed the printer of the student newspaper, the *Innovator*, to withhold publication until the issues were first approved by administration officials (an instance of prior restraint). The newspaper had published news stories and editorials that were critical of the administration, but had refused to also publish letters to the editor from administration officials. Carter’s action also was in contradiction to the university’s own policy that said the student newspaper staff “will determine content and format of their respective publications without censorship or advance approval.” The students filed suit

in federal court, alleging that the administration had violated their First Amendment rights. A federal appeals court, while admonishing the administration for prior restraint, said that Carter needed to first determine whether the publication was a “public forum.” The court said that the Hazelwood standard was applicable to college publications, which ran counter to the statement of the U.S. Supreme Court itself. The Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal, thus letting the decision stand in the 7<sup>th</sup> Federal Circuit that includes Illinois and Wisconsin (*Hosty v. Carter*, 2006).

Other less notable cases decided in the federal courts have established that administration officials cannot: “(1) Censor or confiscate a publication, withdraw or reduce its funding, withhold student activities fees, prohibit lawful advertising, fire an editor or advisor, "stack" a student media board, discipline staff members or take any other action that is motivated by an attempt to control, manipulate or punish past or future content. *Joyner v. Whiting*; *Schiff v. Williams*, 477 F.2d 456(4th Cir. 1973); *Leuth v. St. Clair County Comm. College*, 732 F.Supp. 1410(E.D.Mich.1990)” (Student Press Freedoms, 2009).

Student government officials (such as student senate members) fall under the same First Amendment limitations as college administrators. “They cannot punish a paper's staff or advisor or withdraw a publication's funds for content-based reasons.” (*State Board for Community Colleges v. Olson*,. 1984) (Student Press Freedoms, 2009)

All of these lawsuits show relationships at their absolute worst and display administrations acting in a heavy-handed way to silence criticism. These cases all involve state institutions because of the lack of First Amendment protection in non-public institutions. There is no constitutional issue for courts to resolve at private or religious

colleges. We therefore see only one side of the story. It's hard to believe that at private and religious colleges that relationships between college presidents and student newspapers are any rosier, but the empirical evidence is lacking.

### **1.3 Alternative/Independent Newspapers**

While the vast majority of college student newspapers exist as sanctioned and funded college/ university activities, there is a fledgling number of student newspapers that operate outside the norm. They are not funded nor endorsed by the institution. They often have their own agenda, most political.

A growing political division among students is creating a renewed interest and support for such alternative newspapers with no ties to the institution other than the possible subscribers and writers being students at the institution. Representing the left are progressive organizations.

In an article, Emma Ruby-Sachs and Timothy Waligore observed that: Political opinions are forming and campus newspapers are framing the debate. For students, the campus media are their first and often only news source. For progressive students, the alternative campus media are also an important rallying point. Progressive opinion journals on campus bring students together, creating a movement from a scattering of newly formed notions about how to make the world a better place (p. 27).

On the political right, conservative organizations, such as the "Leadership Institute," are organizing and financially supporting conservative campus groups and alternative/independent student newspapers (Case, 1984). Now not only is the student

newspaper not the mouthpiece for the administration, but there are several student publications that are competing for the hearts and minds of the students.

As each successive president assumes the responsibility of leadership, he/she defines and redefines the vision of the institution's future. As each academic year begins, a new editorial staff begins at a college newspaper and assumes its own role. The nature of the relationship between the president and his agent (the public relations officer) and the student newspaper shifts with the changing currents of events and presidential actions.

From each center of power, the student newspaper editors and the president/public relations officer project their influence. From the litany of lawsuits, it is painfully clear what can happen when these forces clash. The more probing question is what is possible to happen when there is a close and inclusive relationship between the president and his public relations officer on one hand and the student newspaper on the other.

#### **1.4 Central Theme**

The central theme is whether a president's shared vision can extend to students. If a student newspaper exists with no formal power, can the newspaper share in the president's vision?

#### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

The relationship between the college president and the student newspaper editor is not based on a formal power hierarchal structure. It is instead based on relationships, but a relationship that is actually between the student editor (representing the newspaper) and the public relations director (who acts as the agent for the president).

In this respect, the relationship between the student editor and the public relations director is unique. The president can use the formal power of his office in his/her relationships with faculty and with staff, but he/she cannot use it over student editors. When some college presidents have tried to use overt force to compel obedience from student newspapers, as has been noted, presidents have not prevailed when the courts have decided on the legitimacy of such actions.

Is the support by a student newspaper of a president's vision truly a matter of free will? Does, on the other hand, the funding and other logistical support of student newspapers by the college/university enter into the decision-making process by student editors?

The statement of the problem therefore is:

Will there be a correlation between the level of support by the student editors for the college administration and (1) the college president's level of involvement with the student newspaper, and (2) by the degree of independence enjoyed by the student newspaper?

## **1.6 Purpose of the Study**

It would be impossible to study the direct relationship between the college president and the student editors because there is almost never any direct relationship. The college president, as has been stated earlier, depends upon his agent, the public relations director, to disseminate information and present the views of the president. The public relations director becomes the stand-in for the president and so it is the relationship between the public relations director and the student editor that is important.

In studying how a college president interacts with the student newspaper, it is necessary to first get a sense for the type of leadership style the president has with other constituencies. How inclusive (or exclusive) is he/she with faculty and with staff? Does he/she engage them or does he/she run his/her presidency in near isolation from them? Are they included in deliberations or excluded? Once that pattern has been established, the logical question then is does a similar relationship exist with the student newspaper?

If presidents or public relations directors were asked whether they have a good relationship and grant access to the student newspapers, there would most likely be an overwhelming positive response. In some cases, the responses would be accurate and in other cases, it would be exaggerated. The value therefore of such an approach would be limited. If only student editors were asked to evaluate their relationship with the public relations director or president, there is still the possibility that personality issues might influence the response.

If a study looked at this issue from both the perspectives of the public relations director and the student editor from individual colleges/universities and compared the responses, a far more accurate and balanced study could be conducted.

The purpose of this study consequently is to investigate how different styles of leadership impacts the student newspaper (as represented by the editor), whether the administration brings the student newspaper into the “process” of problem-solving or goal-setting and how the student newspaper’s editors respond.

The student newspaper was chosen as the student entity under review because it has a fluid special relationship with the president and his staff. Student governments, while representative of the student body, are formal organizations severely constrained by

their well-defined roles. Student newspapers, conversely have many of the same powers that are commonly attributed to newspapers in general—the power to shine a spotlight on issues and thereby define the issues and the power to muster public opinion.

Beyond examining the style of leadership of a college president and the relationship between public relations officers and student editors, the study would additionally look at whether the institutional support of the college newspaper influences the views of the publication. In this regard, only the student editors can truly respond because they are the only ones in a position to answer this question.

### **1.7 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

At the Theoretical/Conceptual Framework level, there are some basic premises that guide the study. The first premise is that a college/university president enters the office with a vision of what changes he/she wishes to make and where he/she wants to take the institution. The vision differs from president to president, as does the particular style of leadership he/she exhibits.

The second premise is that the president will communicate his/her vision to various groups, using one or more methods of communication. A third premise is that the institution will benefit from the acceptance of the president's vision and the active participation in fulfilling it.

The framework also includes the view that when there is a shared vision that there is a reduction in friction between competing visions. Although individuals have their own personal visions, these individual visions complement the larger institutional vision. In the absence of a shared vision, there at the very least should be competing visions and a disharmony.

## **1.8 Need for the Study**

The question that lingers in the background of any research study conducted is, “so what?” What is the compelling need for such a study and how will its publication advance the general conglomeration of knowledge? It is a fair question.

There have been a myriad of studies done on college presidents that have analyzed leadership styles, interactions with faculty and staff, relationships with the community and trustees. Studies have been conducted on faculty and their relationships with the president. A few studies have been conducted on faculty advisors to student newspapers and how administrations have coerced advisors to bring newspapers to heel. Studies on college student newspapers have dwelt upon First Amendment questions.

No studies have looked at student newspapers as a constituency within the college community and the relationship that exists (or doesn't) between the president (in the form of his/her agent, the public relations official) and the student newspaper (in the person of the editor). If a college president is intent on having different groups embrace his/her shared vision for change, that effort has to extend beyond the traditional and familiar groups of faculty and staff.

This study looks at the same dynamics of administration/student relations from a different perspective, that the issue may not be a matter of press freedoms, but possibly of a lack of shared vision that perhaps might not be communicated and shared by the student newspaper editors. If the conflict or cooperation between student editors and the administration, as represented by the public relations director, is more closely tied to the issue of shared values, then a wholly new explanation could be proffered for fundamental conflicts that arise between the two sides.

It would be absurd to think that even if both the administration and the student editors were sharing the same vision for the institution that all conflict would cease. As Wheatley has observed, however, there is room within an organization for new information that help energize the organization. Viewing the difference between student publications and administration positions as individual visions could assist in reducing the adversarial relationship that may exist on campuses.

### **1.9 Research Questions**

Unlike other studies that focus on responses from one group, this study involves two sets of individuals: (1) the public relations director (or individuals with similar titles, but whose function is the same), and (2) college student editors. As will be explained in greater detail in Chapter III, the public relations director and the student editor from Pennsylvania colleges and universities were asked a set of Likert questions. In the case of the public relations director, the questions pertained to (1) the type of leadership style exhibited by the president, (2) the extent of his/her communications with the student newspaper, (3) the type of treatment he/she and his/her goals have received by the student newspaper, (4) the amount of accessibility the student newspaper staff have to the administration in general and the public relations director in particular and (5) the influence the newspaper staff have in influencing policy decisions.

In the case of the student newspaper editor, the questions involve (1) accessibility to the president and/or public relations director, (2) how clear the president was in enunciating his/her goals, (3) the level of support the paper gave to the president and his/her goals through editorials during the previous year, (4) the influence the paper has

in presidential policy decisions, and (5) the degree of independence the student newspaper has from the administration.

Three of the questions asked of the public relations director and the student editor are virtually identical. In discussing the research questions, the particular survey questions will be referenced. Finally, the question is whether there is any difference in responses because of the institution being religious or secular.

The research questions then are as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between the type of leadership style the college president projects and his/her relationship with faculty, staff and the student newspaper?
2. Is there a relationship between the independence of college student newspapers and the amount of support the newspaper gives the president's goals?
3. Does a relationship exist between how student newspaper editors view their role in the decision-making process and the independence of the student newspaper?
4. Is there a relationship between whether an institution is religious or secular-based and the relationship between the president and the student newspaper?
5. Is there a relationship between whether an institution is religious or secular and the factors indicating independence of a student newspaper?

### **1.10 Objectives**

The study has several objectives. The first is to gain a better understanding of the nature and way in which a college/university president's style of leadership affects

relationships and levels of support by the student press. To accomplish this objective, both the public relations officer and the student editor were asked for their views.

The second objective is to gain a better understanding of whether the support by the student newspaper of the president's goals is related to the degree of independence the newspaper enjoys. In the survey for student newspaper editors, the extent of independence is assessed. Is the advisor to the paper fully compensated by the institution? How frequently do faculty members critique the content of the paper before or after publication? Do students receive credit hours for work on the paper? What percentage of individuals who write and/or edit for the paper are not current students? Do the faculty or administrators participate in the selection of student editors and staff? How much influence does the administration or other officials exert on the editorial content of the paper? All of these questions are posed to the student editors as a way to determine the degree of independence a student newspaper enjoys and whether that degree of independence shades the editorial content of the student publication.

The surveys to institutions include both secular and religious institutions. Another objective is to compare secular and religious institutions and see whether there is a difference in the correlation in the influence (if any) brought to bear on student editors and their relationship with public relations officers.

A final objective is to study how inclusive the president (either directly or through his/her agent, the public relations officer) is in including the student newspaper as a participant in advancing the president's vision.

### **1.11 Assumptions**

There are several assumptions that are part of this study. The study assumes that the college/institution president has developed and communicated a goal, direction or vision and that he/she has communicated it to the public relations officer. The study assumes that there is a college student newspaper on campus and an executive editor. Finally, the study assumes that there is some level of interaction between the editor and the public relations officer.

### **1.12 Limitations**

Within any study, there are limitations. This study is limited to colleges and universities in Pennsylvania with active student newspapers that publish at least once a month during the traditional academic year. Ideally, the respondent institutions should have been grouped into various sized institutions, but because of the small number of respondents, this was not feasible. Respondents, however, did come from some of the largest and smallest institutions.

The study is limited to student newspapers that are officially recognized by the institution as being the institution's student newspaper. "Underground" student newspapers or blogs are not included for the study. The study is limited to institutions that have a designated student editor in charge and a public relations officer who meets with the student newspaper editor.

### **1.13 Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are set forth:

*Alternative Student Newspaper* –A publication not officially recognized by the institution as representing the college/university, which is totally independent of

the college/university control and not receiving any funding or other resource from the institution.

*Administration* – The president of the college/university and all individuals who serve under him/her in a senior-level capacity.

*Branding* – The process by which an institution creates a connection in the mind of an individual between the product or institution and an image.

*Faculty Advisor* – A person designated by the institution to provide guidance to the student newspaper staff.

*Public Relations* – “A distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools” (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 1998).

*Student Editor* – A student serving on the student newspaper who exercises editorial control over the news or editorials produced in the publication.

*Student Newspaper* -- A continuing publication produced at least once a month during the traditional nine-month academic year and which is officially recognized and/or supported by the institution as being the designated student publication. This term does not extend to “underground” publications or other

publications not officially recognized. The term, however, may include electronically produced publications as well as those produced in print. The term does not include yearbook or literary magazine.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In examining the relationship between college student newspapers and the college president (and his/her agents), there are essentially three areas that need to be examined: (1) presidential leadership, (2) communications and (3) the students. It is the president who sets the tone, direction and priorities that will be used to implement his/her vision for the changes, or absence of changes, in the institution. The vision will include not only what he/she wants to accomplish, but how he/she plans to interact with and include the various stakeholders/ constituencies, both internal and external. The second area, the communications, involves the way in which that vision (and others) is conveyed to stakeholders. The third and final area deals with the students and their role, if any, in sharing that presidential vision for the future.

As the research on leadership will show, there are different types of leadership styles, with some being proactive and others being reactive. Some styles emphasize a strong link with internal (campus) stakeholders, to the virtual exclusion of outside interests, while other styles emphasize the reverse. The success or failure of the president to connect with his/her stakeholders helps ensure the success or failure of his vision.

As the research on communications will show, creating a brand for a college or university is not as simple or effective as for a consumer product. The link that colleges and universities hope to create in stakeholders' minds between the university and some emotional response is not always assured. It is not just the college's marketing image

that reaches stakeholders, thus posing a potential problem of what communication is being sent and received.

As the research on students also will show, students try to engage the president and his staff on three different levels: (1) the formal level, which involves student participation in student government, boards of trustees and state governing boards, (2) the non-existent level, in which student activists who feel shut out of the process try to find some common ground to connect with the administration and get their voices heard, and (3) the informal level, in which the student newspaper uses its power of the media to present its views. For all its influence, the student newspaper struggles to maintain its objectivity and independence from the administration, despite being dependent upon the administration for funding and other forms of material support. The research looks at the questions of how independent are student newspapers and what sort of relationship exists between the student media and the administration.

## **2.2 Leadership**

A college president needs both a vision of where he/she wants to take his/her institution and a leadership style to assist him/her in achieving those ends. There have been many books and articles written about styles of leadership, such as transactional and transformational. The style of leadership, though, is not always so easily demarcated. Approaches to leadership can be dependent upon the culture and issues affecting the institution as well as the president's own vision.

Anna Newman and Estela Bensimon conducted a qualitative longitudinal study of presidential leadership that looked at how individuals in leadership positions at 32 colleges and universities set goals, develop agendas, communicate and interact,

communicate values and determine the effectiveness of their approaches. The study involved three-hour interviews of the president and other individuals, including vice presidents, trustees, faculty leaders and student leaders (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

In evaluating the research, Neumann and Bensimon categorized the presidents into one of four “presidential types,” which they referred to as presidential types A, B, C and D. Presidential Type A is usually in a relative stable institution and is focused on external goals, such as making contributions to the community, the state, the country and the world. The college or university, in the opinion of this type person, is a part of the outside world. The type A president considers himself/herself to be a proactive mover who is focused on the future more than the present. To stay connected to the institution, this president creates formal management structures and formal planning structures. The president delegates so he/she is not caught off guard (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

Presidential type B also has a stable institution, but is more focused on the internal organization. He/She considers himself/herself “student centered” and faculty and staff. He/She considers himself/herself as a cheerleader, coach or mentor and views college as a place to develop people. He/She provides positive feedback to those around him. While this type is primarily focused on the internal constituencies, he/she keeps updated on external matters by reliance on executive officers. Like presidential type A, this type also is proactive. Unlike type A, however, he/she avoids formal bureaucratic formalities and instead prefers a more direct hands-on approach (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

Type C president rules at an institution that faces or is expected to face financial crises and these individuals see no simple solutions to the problems. For this type, the

solutions to the institutions' problems cannot be found internally. Instead, the president will focus on looking for external assistance, such as seeking out donors to give gifts for special projects (i.e., new buildings, equipment, scholarships). The leaders are very focused on the image of the institution as seen by outsiders. They are more distant than either type A or B in dealing with internal issues, choosing instead to delegate to academic officers (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

Type D president governs at an institution that is either currently or has just recently faced a financial crisis. Morale of faculty is poor. While type D presidents are focused on internal operations, they do not involve themselves with different constituencies, but instead focus on organizational structure and budget processes. They micro-manage and believe college constituencies should back their efforts. They are distant from those around them, yet expect compliance (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

In studying these different types of leaders, Neumann and Bensimon concluded that presidents who can stay connected to both internal and external spheres (type A and B) are more likely to have a stable institution than those who are focused almost exclusively on either internal or external concerns (type C and D). Based on their distinctive styles of leadership, there are certain principles that these types exude:

Type A—Initiate ideas, be a leader, win friends for the institution and use your administrative team to keep you aware and involved in internal matters;

Type B—Manage unobtrusively, be open and available to people, consult and explain before acting, use the administrative team to deal with impersonal aspects of organizational life, celebrate accomplishments by the institution and create a secure and comfortable environment;

Type C—Be open to opportunity, identify and woo potential donors, promote the institution to resource providers;

Type D—Make the institution efficient by eliminating dysfunctional aspects and make logical choices based on empirical evidence, maintain control and closely monitor institution for any deviations (Neumann and Bensimon, 1990).

From this study, it becomes apparent that a college president can not only channel the resources and attention of the college in a certain direction based on his/her “type,” but he/she can also set the tone for the relationship that exists between the administration and the students. A type B president, for instance, would most likely develop an approach that would welcome exchanges among faculty, administrative staff and students, whereas a type D would be distant and create a potentially hostile and confrontational atmosphere.

It is obvious that different styles of leadership will yield different results. If the goal of a college president is to create a shared vision that is embraced by the various constituencies with whom he/she deals, he/she must motivate both internal and external stakeholders. Focusing on one group to the exclusion of another or obsessing over procedures and ignoring groups is a formula for disaster.

While Neumann and Bensimon offer their views of college presidential leadership, it is by no means the only view. One author counted 350 definitions of leadership in literature about organizational behavior (Hoff, 1999).

R.G. Owens (1995) defined the transformational leader as one who “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual

stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Hoff, 1999).

Tichy and Devanna (1990) outlined seven characteristics they believed are essential for successful leaders in a transformational atmosphere: (1) consider themselves change agents who intend to make a difference, (2) are prudent risk takers, (3) are sensitive to the needs and strengths of others and who work for true empowerment, (4) who articulate a core set of values and role-model those values, (5) learn from their mistakes, (6) can cope with and frame problems) and (7) not only have a dream but who can share that dream so others can understand (Hoff, 1999).

It might be worthwhile at this point to freeze-frame the categorization of presidents, according to leadership style, and to ask how all of this relates to student newspapers? If a college president had the seven desired traits that Tichy and Devanna enumerated, one would expect to find a president who sought out different constituencies to educate, motivate and energize these groups with his/her vision. If a president reached beyond the traditional groups of faculty and staff to involve student constituencies as well, presumably there would be a relationship where the president’s vision would be fully supported by the student newspaper through its editorials. If the president lacks the qualities that Tichy and Devanna listed, it would be logical to assume that the vision, however magnificent, would never reach its audiences.

The absence of shared governance is a major factor on college campuses. Governance has been defined as “the structures and processes through which institutional participants interact with and influence each other and communicate with the larger

environment” (Birnbaum 1988, p. 4). Governance includes not only the president and vice presidents, but trustees, faculty, administrators and students (Hoff, 1999).

Birnbaum had noted that one problem with shared governance is that different campus constituencies vie for primacy of control, such as faculty wanting more control over curriculum, tenure and promotion decisions. Birnbaum also noted that boards of trustees and upper administration have administrative authority, while faculty members and faculty in general exercise professional authority rooted in knowledge as their foundation (Hoff, 1999).

Governance and power go in tandem. Aside from the traditional types of power (coercive, reward, legitimate, referent and expert) S. Helgesen described in a 1995 book, *The Web of Inclusion*, a type of power she termed, “interactive charisma” that came from being accessible. While command and control charisma, she said, is based on position and perpetuated by distance, interactive charisma comes from influence and is maintained by communication (Hoff, 1999).

Hoff reports leaders at colleges and universities exhibit interactive charisma in a variety of ways:

including university faculty, staff and students in focus groups to identify key institutional issues, holding open forums for brainstorming of possible solutions to those key issues; convening university-wide cross-divisional groups to address issues from a systems perspective; involving people in the creation of shared vision, mission, and core values statements; and communicating this information through the use of listservs, presidential websites, and campus-wide informal celebratory gathering (pp. 322-323).

For an academic institution to be a more collaboratively functioning community, Hoff believes that faculty, staff and student involvement is crucial. “As leaders begin and continue to emerge from all groups within our educational communities,” Hoff noted, “teams will evolve which are led by individuals with the specific expertise needed to accomplish the task for which the team was formed (p. 324).

A leader being able to share a vision with those around him is the cornerstone of Peter Senge’s book, *The Fifth Discipline*. he noted

You cannot have a learning organization without a shared vision. Without a pull toward some goal which people truly want to achieve, the forces in support of the status quo can be overwhelming. Vision establishes an overarching goal. The loftiness of the target compels new ways of thinking and acting. A shared vision also provides a rudder to keep the learning process on course when stresses develop (p. 209).

A first step, Senge noted, in creating a shared vision is realizing that visions are not always announced at the top of an organization or from an organizational planning process. When top management seeks to craft a “vision statement,” Senge notes, there are several problems. The leadership firstly believes it’s a once-and-done process and that no changes are needed. Secondly, the “vision” does not build on other people’s personal visions and most people’s visions are ignored. Finally, there can be the misperception that a vision is a solution to a problem, such as low morale or unclear strategic direction. Simply because a leader occupies a position of authority does not mean that his vision is the organization’s vision (Senge, 1994).

Though a vision might be established by an organization, there is no guarantee that it will be accepted and endorsed by others in the organization. Senge noted that there are several forms of compliance that those in an organization can do:

- (1) Genuine compliance in which the stakeholders see the benefits of the vision, do what is expected and more;
- (2) Formal compliance in which the stakeholders see the benefits of the vision, but do no more than what is expected of them;
- (3) Grudging compliance in which the stakeholders do not see the benefits of the vision, but comply for fear of losing jobs;
- (4) Noncompliance in which the stakeholders do not see the benefits and have no intention of doing what is expected of them;
- (5) Apathy in which the stakeholders have no opinion of the vision and no interest nor energy (pp. 219-220).

Margaret Wheatley in her book, *Leadership and the New Science*, likened organizations to scientific phenomena and to the scientific theory of Chaos. In her book, Wheatley advances the belief that change in an organization can be renewing and that power can come from a multitude of different parts of the corporate organism.

“If we believe,” Wheatley states, “that there is no order to human activity except that imposed by the leader, that there is no self-regulation except that dictated by policies, if we believe that responsible leaders must have their hands into everything, controlling every decision, person, and moment, then we cannot hope for anything except what we already have—a treadmill of frantic efforts that end up destroying our individual and collective vitality” (p. 25).

...in creating a vision,” Wheatley continued, “we are creating a power, not a place, an influence, not a destination. . . We also would know that vision must permeate through the entire organization as a vital influence on the behavior of all employees.. . We would become an organization of integrity where our words would be seen and not just heard (pp. 55-56).

Wheatley says that in science, life needs a constant flow of information to keep growing. If there is no new information or what information is generated only confirms what is already known, the result is death. Yet, she states, most organizations’ believe that, “Management’s task is to enforce control, to keep information contained, to pass it down in such a way that no newness occurs” (pp. 96-97).

At all levels and for all activities in organization,” Wheatley writes, “we need to challenge ourselves to create greater access to information and to reduce those control functions that restrict its flow. We cannot continue to use information technology and management systems as gatekeepers, excluding and predefining who needs to know what. Instead, we need to evoke contribution through freedom, trusting that people can make sense of the information because they know their jobs, and they know the organizational or team purpose. Restricting information and carefully guarding it doesn’t make us good managers. It just stops good people from doing good work (p. 107).

Leadership, from Wheatley’s perspective is not a top-down structure, but a multi-faceted organism from which ideas and information as well as vision come from many levels and sources. The Latin phrase, “E Pluribus Unum” (From many, one) that appears on American currency could just as easily summarize Wheatley’s approach to leadership.

Successful leadership, then, comes from an interaction with the multiple constituencies and stakeholders at a university or college. It comes from a shared vision that the various constituencies and stakeholders embrace. It comes from interactive charisma where leaders involve various stakeholders in the constituencies in the process by being available, open and maintaining lines of communication. Lastly, it comes from leaders who are involved in both the internal and external communities and who can involve them in the vision.

### **2.3 Communication**

The word, “branding,” has become popular in modern parlance. It is a term that marketers use to refer to a name, a symbol or a design that separates and distinguishes one product from another one. It’s easy to spot branding when one is talking about chocolate bars or laundry detergent, but it becomes more involved when the subject is a university or college.

According to McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten, a “brand community” is the “product of social relationships among users of a brand, regardless of their geographical location, who recognize their commonality and who share rituals, traditions, and a sense of responsibility toward the brand” (p. 108).

In a study, entitled, “Building Relationships of Brand Community in Higher Education: A Strategic Framework for University Advancement,” Authors James H. McAlexander, Harold F. Koenig and John W. Schouten, conducted an empirical study to determine whether the brand community construct is relevant to higher education. If it is relevant, the study was looking to see whether alumni’s experiences at the university created branding types of relationships with the product, (education), the brand

(university name, logo, mascots), the institution (faculty and staff) and other alumni (McAlexander,, Koenig and Schouten, 2006).

The study involved surveying 1,673 alumni from a college at Western University. Of the surveys, the researchers received 497 responses for a response rate of 30 percent. The study measured four customer-centric relationships: (1) alumni/product; (2) alumni/brand; (3) alumni/institution and (4) alumni/other alumni. The items were measured with a seven point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree (McAlexander,, Koenig and Schouten, 2006).

The alumni/product relationship questions were aimed at determining the alumni's feelings about their degree, skills and abilities and whether their degree helped shape who they became. The alumni/brand relationship questions tried to determine the connection between the alumni and the university brand and such things as the mascot. The alumni/institution relationship questions sought to measure the alumni's views about the institution, such as the level of concern for students and the alumni's views about individuals (i.e., professors) with whom they spent significant time during the alumni's student years. The questions about the alumni/alumni relationship with other alumni sought to measure feelings that the alumni had toward one another (McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten, 2006).

The study used regression analysis and all hypotheses were determined to be statistically significant. The most favorable responses in the survey were statements about how well the alumni liked the institution, their willingness to participate in alumni groups and consider making a donation. The lowest scoring responses relating to

wearing university logo clothing and returning for continuing education (McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten, 2006).

The study, according to the authors, included an important implication that the “demonstration of the strategic values . . . comes from viewing a university’s connections with its students and alumni both broadly and holistically. Traditional approaches to interactions with alumni that neglect the diverse connections that form a university brand community may be shortsighted and result in lost opportunities” (McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten, p. 115).

While the choice of alumni as the subject of the survey may seem off-point to this study, it is important to remember that alumni are former students who have gone through the entire degree process and have formed relationships with the college and the faculty/staff/other alumni at that institution. A survey of first-year or second-year undergraduates would most likely not yield the same wealth of information because they are still new to the institution and its values.

Some question whether an institution of higher learning can use branding at all. In an article entitled, “Branding higher education: illusion or reality,” University of London Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Paul Temple challenged the whole notion of branding values as “pretty flaky” (Temple, 2006).

To have an effective brand, Temple states, a product must have three things: an effective product, a distinctive identity and added values. Absent one or more of these elements, it becomes impossible to create and sustain a brand. What, Temple asks, might an effective product mean in terms of higher education? The problem, Temple says, is that unlike other products and services, the “outcomes of education, and particularly

higher education, are heavily dependent on the abilities, motivations and interactions of the students themselves, individually and as groups” (Temple, 2006).

The “product” of education is being produced by the customers (students) themselves, who have presumably changed from the date they began to the date they graduated (Temple, 2006).

Brand values, Temple says, have to be unique, but what is the “word” that a college or university might use? “. . .the search for knowledge as an end in itself, and the need for the university to sell itself in the marketplace, are two conflicting views of what the university should be trying to do. . .For a university, engaged in a constant struggle for understanding, a lack of definition is the definition, providing the conceptual space needed to develop new ideas” (Temple 2006).

. . .we have seen that quite a few problems arise. These stem from the fact that universities are unusual organizations: ‘customers’ do most of the work, and end up, if it all works out, as different people from the ones who first came through the door (so can it truly [be] said that they got what they asked for?); an array of ever-changing products is on offer; and there is little or no shared understanding among the workforce about what it is the organization should be trying to achieve (social justice? Producing employable graduates? remaining solvent?). Given all this, and more, what would the brand look like? What word should the university aspire to own? – ‘chaos’? (p. 18).

A more apropos approach, Temple concluded, would be to think of what the college does, not as branding, but as reputation management or public relations. While the reputation of a college is important, Temple says, “it is about having a “realizable

strategic vision for the institution, and managing it as a totality to achieve that vision, or something like it. It involves intervening to change real things so as to achieve better teaching, physical facilities, and all the rest—the serious management of the university in fact” (p. 18).

Branding is a controlled marketing campaign by a college administration. The message is carefully shaped and honed to reach the intended audiences. There is however, another voice which resonates on the campus, in the nearby community and among alumni, and which is outside the control of the administration. That voice is the student newspaper.

As was mentioned earlier, a marketing firm, “Alloy Media + Marketing.” conducted an online 2008 survey of 1246 college students and 250 faculty/staff from 200 universities. While the purpose of the survey was to determine how well students responded to advertisements in the student papers, the survey contained some interesting statistics about student readership. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said that they have read a print version of their student newspaper within the last 30 days. In cases where student newspapers were published daily, the percentage rose to 92 percent readership. Online versions of the newspapers garnered only 18 percent readership. There was a 2.8 percent margin of error for students and a 6.2 percent margin for faculty/staff (“College Newspapers,” 2008).

Eighty-two percent of all students in the survey ranked the editorial content of the paper as important or very important to the campus community. This figure, according to the survey, reaches 87 percent at large universities with enrollments of 20,000 or more (“College Newspapers,” 2008).

As more college newspapers are produced online, the potential readership goes beyond the college community to include anybody with internet connection. The publics courted by the college in its marketing and public relations campaigns are all potential readers of online student college newspapers. For that reason, the student newspaper helps shape the image or brand of the college.

The fact that the student newspaper, through its ability to reach well beyond the boundaries of a college campus, can affect a brand can be a troubling prospect for college public relations and marketing departments. Unlike carefully crafted marketing campaigns or well-tuned public relations efforts, the student newspaper cannot be so easily manipulated. If, for instance, a college public relations/marketing campaign is touting the institution as a quality source of education and the student newspaper is parading its shortcomings for all to see, the brand does not succeed. It is only when the student newspaper's voice echoes and affirms the claims of the institution that the brand takes on a ring of truth.

Having a student newspaper as a loose cannon can cause frustration and irritation in the ranks of the administration. It is not difficult to understand why some college presidents might seek to use force to bring a newspaper into line, to use force rather than persuasion. Can there be a better approach to coercion?

#### **2.4 Students and shared governance**

In examining the topic of shared governance, what we are really talking about is shared power. What, however, is student power and what is its role in higher education? Students are often regarded in colleges and universities as consumers of a product—education. The promotional materials assembled by colleges and universities to attract

prospective students treat potential students as buyers. Administrators are dismissive of student concerns because the students are only temporary participants in the process. Given this approach, it's hardly a leap to see how students come to expect not only an education but good grades as part of the package deal and how institutions sometimes participate in grade inflation in order to remain competitive.

Yet, if we instead look at the relationship between student and administration as a partnership where both have a vested interest in the institution's survival and prosperity, then student power takes on a whole new look. Student power becomes not a force to extract concessions, but rather a constructive force to build and improve an institution that provides quality education to its students. The extent of shared governance and the type of student power can consequently vary from institution to institution.

There are various ways in which student power is represented on college campuses.

Student government enjoys a formal relationship with the college administration. This relationship is built upon explicitly defined powers and duties. Its relationship to the college administration and to the students is clearly defined.

First, there is the formal relationship of student governance to the college. This is important because we can see the inter-relationships between the college president and his/her agents on one hand and the students, on the other hand.

Student organizations can trace their history back to the early 1900's and were created not as an organization to empower student leaders, but rather as an instrument for the administration to use in communicating to students (Laosebikan-Buggs, 2006). To have a voice in change, students formed organizations outside of the traditional structure

of the institution. Fraternities developed because of institutional mismanagement of residence halls. Literary societies and guilds were formed to overcome poor teaching. Clubs formed around book collections were created because of poor library collections (Miller and Nadler , 2006).

There was little or no campus unrest until 1932. Despite the plummeting of the stock market and the first years of the Great Depression, colleges and universities remained unaffected. In the fall term of 1931, the University of Berkeley's student newspaper, the *Daily Californian*, was concerned not with the economic plight of millions of Americans nor the state of the nation's economy, but instead in counseling students to pledge the proper Greek house and to decide whether to participate in sports, dramatics or publications. Student newspapers dealt with such weighty issues as fraternity life and football (Cohen, 1993).

A total of 77 percent of female students and 54 percent of male students were totally dependent upon their parents for tuition, the Depression caused no immediate hardship. Enrollment actually increased nationwide by 4.4 percent in the 1929-30 school year and 4.9 percent the following year. The only major student disturbance occurred at Harvard University in 1930 when thousands of students engaged in wild celebration and vandalism in celebration of the conclusion of exam week. During the same period, the University of Kansas students staged a "Hobo" costume party in which students were encouraged to dress like vagrant, unemployed Americans (Cohen, 1993).

In 1932, colleges and universities first felt the effects of the Great Depression. There was a four percent drop in enrollments because parents could no longer afford to send their children to college. This was accompanied by a sharp cut in government

funding and a 80 percent drop in gifts by alumni and others. In the following year, 80,000 fewer young people enrolled in college. This dramatic drop in income led colleges to slash programs, cut faculty and sharply raise tuition. The students who did remain on campus also felt the pinch with less funds from parents—food and clothing became scarcer (Cohen, 1993).

Student newspaper editorials, which earlier had focused only on the lighter side of college life, now turned their attention to the newly impoverished students and the economy. When Vassar held an expensive prom affair, the college's student newspaper criticized the event, even after the promoters offered to donate part of the proceedings to the local poor (Cohen, 1993).

The rude awakening for student newspapers in the 1930s was not because of any actions by the college presidents or the administration, but by economic factors outside the control of both students and administrations. Students became acutely aware of the conditions outside their world and became more motivated for social action.

The next period of major student unrest occurred three decades later during the Vietnam War. Political opposition to the Vietnam War led to student unrest on campus, such as the Kent State University shootings and demonstrations in various college campuses. There was a lack of student participation in college policy formation and decision-making, which encouraged national activist organizations to view student "power" as a way to advance political agendas (Miles and Miller, 2006).

Since the mid-1970s, students became more formally involved in faculty and administrative decision-making structures throughout the country. Student participation developed into a more formal political activity. The inclusion of students into the

decision-making process reduced tensions because now students were part of the process. Students could no longer blame the administration or faculty because the student governance representatives were part of the process. Including students in the governance process meant that student representatives had the burden of anticipating and reacting to the needs of the student population. The student representatives also needed to represent the broad and diverse spectrum of all the students (Miles and Miller, 2006).

The inclusion of students in positions of governance has added a new element to the decision-making mix. In such a situation, students become a special interest group lobbying to influence decision-making processes (Miller and Nadler, 2006).

It was during the 1950s and 1960s, colleges and universities created boards of trust, governing boards and statewide coordinating boards. Students became more involved in campus committees and by the end of the 1960s, there was a movement to include students on boards of trustees. A 1969 Indiana University survey showed that 2.7 percent of college and university boards had student representation (Davis, 2006).

Despite a growing movement to include students on boards of trustees, their role has remained marginal. An analysis of trustee involvement by Birnbaum and D'Heilly showed that only 55 percent of student trustees (who responded to the survey) said their committee assignments were significant and held potential for reform. Another study by McGrath in 1970 showed that student trustees rarely held more than one or two committee positions, that it created an illusion of student involvement and was tokenism at best and disingenuous power politics at worst (Davis, 2006).

A more recent study in 2000 by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research dealing with governance and coordination of higher education showed that

students still have limited membership on governing boards and still are not given enough weight to their voting privileges. In a national inventory of governance organizations, of 53 statewide regulatory coordinating boards and consolidated governing boards, there were 30 student members, of whom 25 were voting members. A total of 22 states had central higher education boards with at least one student member with voting privileges (Davis, 2006).

Davis conducted a study of 55 higher education governing boards based on their inclusion on the website for the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). The 55 governance bodies represented a total of 765 board positions with an average membership size of 13.9 members. The study found that of the 765 positions, 41 positions (5.4 percent) were held by students. Only 33 of the 41 positions (4.3 percent) were students who had voting powers. The average size of the board increased when students were participants (12.6 members with no students versus 15.1 members on boards with students). Davis concluded that “student influence is limited at best and their presence on the boards is perhaps only tokenism” (Davis 2006).

The role of students in formal governance positions is limited and their impact marginal. A study by Ropers-Huilman, Carwile and Barnett in 2005 looked at how student activists outside of the loop perceived the administrators and their relationship with them. Far from being a sign that a university is in trouble, the presence of activists may be seen instead as another voice seeking to be heard (Ropers-Hullman, Carwile and Barnett, 2005).

The study Ropers-Hullman, Carwile and Barnett conducted was a qualitative study in which 26 students were interviewed. They represented 20 different academic

majors and five different political party affiliations. The researchers, through the interviews, learned that the activists could distinguish between faculty and staff, but that they had no clear understanding of who was part of “the system.” The activists indicated that “administrators” wielded a great deal of power, they were interested in keeping that power, but that they were somehow constrained by their own system (Ropers-Hullman, Carwile and Barnett, 2005).

Student activists interpreted opposition from “the administration” as an attempt to disempower students by either ignoring them or withholding important information. As proof of their claims, they pointed to the unwillingness of administrators to listen to them or to seriously take their views into consideration (Ropers-Hullman, Carwile and Barnett, 2005).

Summarizing their study, the researchers concluded:

. . .we learned that student activists perceived administrators as gatekeepers, antagonists, supporters and absentee leaders. We also learned that our participants would like to have greater access to administrators so that they could be an integral part of improving the university environment itself as well as the university’s effects on society. Through our interactions with student activists who participated in this study, we learned that many of these students’ primary purpose for their involvement was to learn to engage fully in a society governed by democratic principles. A critical piece of this participation in their college years, they felt, was through ongoing interaction with others about critical social issues as they took shape locally, nationally, and internationally. Yet as we discuss here, these interviews revealed that students were often unable to find

ways to effectively participate in decision-making processes on campus (pp. 307-308).

Among the conclusions of the researchers in the study was that student activism could assist in the university fulfilling its mission. There had to be collaboration, however, for this to happen and that the collaboration required an active communication among the participant groups (Ropers-Hullman, Carwile and Barnett, 2005).

To this point, the discussion regarding students has focused on the formal power arrangement involving shared governance with student governmental representatives. The research has indicated that while there are academic institutions giving positions of authority to students that these positions have little power. There has been a study about student activists who have no formal or informal authority and who want to be part of the process, but feel shut out and unable to find a way to participate. This leaves lastly the student newspaper, which has informal power in the form of persuasion and focusing attention on issues.

The student newspaper enjoys an informal relationship with the college administration and while the organization of the paper may also be clearly delineated in the college or university's organizational documents, its power is undefined and comes from the content of its publications. Its responsibility is twofold: (1) to inform through news articles and (2) to persuade, both through the choice of topics highlighted and also by editorials.

College student newspapers have a peculiar relationship with those in power. The student newspapers that are the "official" publications of the university or college are dependent upon institution funding. The advisor to the paper is often in the employ of

the college or university. The facilities used by the newspaper staff are most often on campus and institution-owned. Because of all these factors, colleges and universities can, if they choose, exert control over college newspapers.

The lingering question is whether such efforts to control the student newspaper exist and whether they impact the independence of the student newspaper. John Bodle, in a 1994 article, entitled, “Measuring the Tie Between Funding and News Control at Student Newspapers,” published the results of a survey of advisors to student newspapers that involved three primary research questions:

- (1) To what extent do administrators attempt to influence news selection or content through their financial support of the student newspaper, and how successful are they?
- (2) How frequently do administrators threaten advisors with job dismissal or strongly pressured them because they ran—or considered running—a news story?
- (3) Similarly, to what extent do advisors attempt to influence news selection or content through their financial support of the student newspaper, and how successful are they? (Bodle, 1994).

Bodle conducted a mail survey to 449 advisors and received 233 replies, constituting a 52 percent response rate. When asked how strong a tie there was between institutional funding of the newspaper and control of news selection or content, 12.2 percent of advisors indicated the two were strongly linked and another nine percent indicated the two were somewhat linked (Bodle, 1994).

While 76.8 percent of the advisors at public colleges/universities and 58.9 percent of advisors at private universities responded that they did not believe there was a link between institutional funding and control of news content, those at private institutions were significantly more inclined to conclude a relationship did in fact exist. Nearly one of five private university advisors said funding was either strongly linked (nine percent) or somewhat linked (10.7 percent) to news selection. This was in comparison to fewer than one in 10 advisors (7.4 percent) saying there was some link while none said that there was a strong link (Bodle, 1994).

Advisors were asked whether in the last year they had been specifically asked by a college or university administration to not publish a story or photograph or to not report on an issue, 85.8 percent of the respondents indicated they had never been asked. If they had been asked, 95.7 percent indicated they never complied. When asked how often they had been requested to publish certain news items, 71.1 percent said never and 80.4 percent said they never would comply with such a request (Bodle, 1994).

Bodle reported that there was no significant difference between public and private or between two-year and four-year institutions when it came to advisors receiving requests not to publish certain news items (Bodle, 1994).

Finally, when asked whether they had been threatened with job dismissal because of a story that was run or that was considered being run, 79.7 percent of respondents said they had never been either pressured strongly by administrators or threatened with dismissal. At private institutions, the percentage who had been pressured (23.1 percent) was slightly higher than at public institutions (19.5 percent). Bodle concluded that while

it was disturbing that so many had in fact been pressured, it was also reassuring that so many resisted requests not to publish news items (Bodle, 1994).

Another survey, conducted by Michael Ryan and David Martinson, polled college newspaper advisors on their views regarding censorship of student newspapers. This study focused on six research questions:

1. Do advisors think it is more important for the campus newspaper to be free of censorship than for the college/university to protect itself from what it considers damaging or embarrassing articles?
2. Do advisors think a campus newspaper that accepts funds from a college/university should accept some censorship?
3. Do advisors think a campus newspaper should publish articles critical of a college/university faculty or administration?
4. Do advisors think a campus newspaper should be more of a learning tool than a vehicle for expressing student opinion?
5. Do advisors' views of censorship vary by six individual demographic characteristics: age, sex, highest degree earned, years of media experience, years of advising experience or years of teaching experience?
6. Do advisors' views of censorship vary by type of institution (public vs. private) or by characteristics of the publication: frequency of publication, circulation size or funding source? (Ryan and Martinson, 1986).

The research questions were sent as part of a mail survey to College Media Advisors. A total of 200 advisors were mailed questionnaires, cover letter and self-addressed return envelopes. Of that number, 123 persons responded for a total return rate

of 61.5 percent. Respondents were given a Likert scale questionnaire in which (1) indicated strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neutral, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. Undecided and no opinion responses were treated as missing data (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

In response to the first question regarding whether advisors felt it more important to be free of censorship than for the institution to be embarrassed, nearly half of the advisors strongly agreed that it is more important for the paper to be free of censorship. Nearly 33 percent agreed. Those advising in public institutions agreed significantly more strongly than those at private institutions (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

In the case of items 2 and 3, almost 60 percent believed the student newspaper should be allowed to print a story it can prove even if it embarrasses the institution, while almost 34 percent chose “agree.” Seventy-two percent strongly disagreed that a college or university has the right to stop publication of articles it considers harmful while nearly 18 percent simply agreed. For question 2, those who advised at public institutions agreed significantly more strongly than those at private institutions. For question 3, individuals who advised at public institutions disagreed significantly more strongly than those at private institutions (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

For questions 4, 5 and 6, half of the survey respondents strongly disagreed and nearly 26 percent disagreed that a college or university that pays a portion of the publication bills should have some control over what is printed. More than 21 percent strongly disagreed and half simply disagreed that a student press that wants to be free of censorship should refuse funding from the institution. More than 35 percent strongly disagreed and nearly 29 percent simply disagreed that a student newspaper that wants a

“privileged position” as a college/university supported monopoly must accept some control because it is not subject to marketplace competition (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

For items 4 and 5, those who advised newspapers at public institutions disagreed significantly more strongly than those who advised at private institutions. The biggest difference between advisors at public institutions and those at private institutions came in response to item 6 that said a student newspaper must accept some control if it is given a monopoly status. Advisors at private institutions agreed slightly with the statement, while advisors at public institutions moderately disagreed (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

The authors concluded from the study that while most advisors reject censorship, a substantial minority believe that some censorship is acceptable under specific conditions. The fact that even a minority of the advisors are willing to accept some controls, the authors noted, is significant (Ryan and Martinson 1986).

How independent is a student newspaper and what exactly constitutes independence? Is independence simply refusing to bow to pressure by the administration to print a story or must independence involve something more basic, such as the severing of any dependence upon the institution?

Louis E. Inglehart had written a book, entitled *Student Publications: Legalities, Governance and Operations* in 1993 produced a list of 26 criteria a student newspaper needed to have in order to be considered, “independent.” Nine of the criteria involved financial separation from the parent college or university:

1. The publication had to be incorporated, but not as a non-profit educational corporation;
2. The publication could not receive any student fee funds;

3. The publication could not receive direct or indirect college or university funds;
4. The publication could not use campus facilities or space;
5. The university could not pay the debts or postpone bankruptcy of the publication;
6. The publication could not be given preferential treatment in the distribution or sales of the paper;
7. The newspaper could not qualify for second-class educational mailing permits;
8. The newspaper could not publish a page of university notices and claim it was advertising;
9. The newspaper could not receive mail through the university system (Bodle, 1997).

Seven of Inglehart's criteria dealt with the instructional process:

1. The publication could not have a university advisor;
2. The newspaper could not have any relationship to any instructional program;
3. Membership on the newspaper staff could not be limited to or specify a student status;
4. The university could not give placement assistance to the newspaper staff or give course credits for work done on the paper or require enrollment in university courses;
5. The university could not require a minimum GPA for students to work on the paper;

6. The university could not participate in the selection or dismissal of staff members or take disciplinary action against members.
7. There could be no overt or covert efforts by any university person to affect the publication content. (Bodle, 1997).

The remaining 10 of Inglehart's criteria dealt with financial and instructional details:

1. The publication could not enter into any publishing agreements with the university;
2. The university could not supply technical assistance or advice;
3. No university or college staff person could be on the publication's board of directors;
4. There could be no provisions of any sort in the incorporation charter of the paper that tied it to the university;
5. Readers could not be confined primarily to students;
6. The name of the publication could not contain the name of the college or university;
7. There could be no relationship between the publication and the student government;
8. Content of the publication could not be confined to or dominated by university-related material;
9. The university can in no way participate in any legal proceedings involving the publication;
10. The newspaper could not be licensed by the university. (Bodle, 1997).

The laundry list of what constituted an “independent” student newspaper was so extensive that Ingelhart himself could only find two student newspapers among 3,000 that met his standards. Others adopting a slightly more liberal approach found five percent that might pass muster. One researcher noted that of 85 college dailies who announced they were independent, only about 10 could truly be called such (Bodle 1997).

Bodle did a study of 101 student daily newspapers to see exactly where on a continuum they would land. He boiled Ingelhart’s long list down to seven basic questions:

1. Whether advisors or managers had any portion of their salary paid from university (non-advertising) sources;
2. Whether an instructional relationship existed through faculty critiques of the newspaper;
3. Whether non-students were allowed to work on the paper;
4. Whether course credit was granted;
5. The extent to which faculty or administrators participated in the selection of student editors and staff;
6. Whether respondents believed any university person or agency was able to influence the publication’s editorial content.

The survey was sent to advisors and managers of student newspapers. Bodle received 96 percent response, which he stated made the study more of a statistical census since the sampling error could not be above .04 level. The survey was conducted by telephone (Bodle 1997).

Of the 97 survey responses, 72.2 percent of the advisors/managers indicated they believed their publication was independent (without first being told of Inglehart's criteria), while 8.3 percent said their publication was laboratory or curriculum bases, 17.5 percent said their publication was a mix or neither and 2.1 percent chose not to respond. A full 20.6 percent debated with the researcher over what was meant by independent or curriculum-based (Bodle 1997).

One third of the advisors/managers indicated they received salary compensation from the university. One in 10 respondents said the paper was critiqued by faculty, either before or after publication and more than half said the paper was critiqued after distribution (Bodle 1997).

On the matter of student participation in the paper, 76.3 percent of the respondents said only students were permitted to work on the paper. Nearly a third of the respondents (30.9 percent) said that course credit was given for work on the paper (Bodle 1997).

On the question of the extent to which university faculty or administration participate in the selection of newspaper staff members, 79.4 percent said they never participate and 9.3 percent said they only rarely participate. One third of respondents said editors were usually or always selected with the participation of faculty or administrators (Bodle 1997).

On the matter of whether any university person or university agency was able to influence the content of the student newspaper, nearly all said the university personnel could not participate (81.4 percent) or rarely participated (14.4 percent) (Bodle 1997).

The author concluded by saying that there was a major difference between the ability of university faculty or administrators to influence content and a desire to exercise that sort of control. While most of the advisors believed their papers were independent, many were not, in the opinion of the author. The power of the purse string is such, Bodle indicated, that there is always the potential for abuses (Bodle 1997).

If it is the financial link that determines independence of a student newspaper, technology help lessen the tie that binds. Jacob Rooksby, writing a 2011 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education entitled “Beyond the Press: Collegiate Journalism’s Uncertain Future,” maintained that using cost-effective electronic publishing could change the relationship between a college administration and the student media (Rooksby, 2011).

Ever-expanding modes of online content delivery (through, for example, blogs, Facebook, and RSS feeds) and ease of electronic readability (on iPads, Kindles, and other e-readers) now make student media independence much simpler than it used to be. While student journalists are unlikely to have printing presses in their dorm rooms, many know the latest in computer programming and technology and apply those skills, free, to their journalistic endeavors. The relative simplicity of electronic content distribution and readability will very likely change the perceived need for student newspapers to seek or maintain government allocations, or administrative bequests—is the chief reason student newspapers seek official recognition by institutions. Free use of office space and equipment and mail services are other perks that officially recognized

student newspapers often enjoy. But online-only publication is much cheaper and requires fewer of those perks. The cost of domain-name registration and renewal, Web hosting, and Web-site design can probably all be covered by fees generated from sales of online advertisements, unlike hard-copy operations, for which ad fees seldom cover total costs. In short—and as the Supreme Court recently recognized in a case involving a student group denied recognition by a public law school—private groups can easily ‘maintain a presence at universities without official school affiliation,’ and the advent of electronic media and social-networking sites facilitates their presence (Rooksby, 2011).

Attempts to control the content or otherwise influence the control of the newspaper is an obvious heavy-handed approach by administrators. It signals that there is the potential for an adversarial relationship between the president or his/her agents and the student newspaper. Is this, though, the only gauge to determine the nature of the relationship between the student newspaper and the administration?

One approach might be to look at the relationship that exists between a student newspaper and various administrative officials when it comes the newspaper seeks information from the administration. Do administration officials trust student reporters’ accuracy? What sort of access do student reporters have to officials? What are the implications of a relationship where there is cooperation and trust or the opposite?

Dr. Liz Watts and Robert Wernsman did a 1996 study, entitled “College and University Administrators’ views about serving as news sources for student reporters.” The researchers identified 405 colleges and universities in the 1994-95 AEJMC directory

that offered journalism or mass communications courses. Five college or university officials (presidents, vice presidents of student affairs, deans of arts and sciences, vice presidents of academic affairs and vice presidents of public relations/public information) were chosen to receive a survey questionnaire. There were 2,025 potential respondents. Using a systematic random sample to select every other officer, the list was reduced for a total of 1500 administrators. Of that number, the usable completion response was 510 responses or 34 percent. Of the number, 334 were from public colleges or universities and 176 were from private colleges or universities. Of the respondents, 80 were presidents/presidential assistants, 37 were provosts, 21 were chancellors, 113 were deans, 143 were vice presidents and 116 were directors, assistant directors or chairs. About 24 percent were affiliated with student affairs and 23 percent were affiliated with public relations or public information offices (Watts and Wernsman, 1996).

Forty-eight percent of the respondents were contacted frequently about one or two times a month as sources. Another 26 percent were contacted regularly, at least once a week, while about 26 percent were seldom or ever contacted. About 55 percent of the respondents had a news story or news release for a student newspaper frequently (1-2 times a month) or regularly (once a week). Nearly 77 percent of the respondents said they always agreed to do an interview (Watts and Wernsman, 1996).

According to the researchers, the survey indicates a high amount of cooperation between the administrators and the student reporters . . . While there was no apparent relationship between interest in being interviewed and the frequency of being asked to be a source, a relationship did emerge between the frequency of being

contacted to be a source and the administrators' rating of their total experiences with student reporters. The more frequently they were asked, the more satisfactorily the administrators rated their experiences. (p. 10).

To this point, we have looked at institutions where there has been at least some degree of cooperation. As was mentioned in Chapter One, however, there are a few instances where there is a total collapse in cooperation where administrations have sought to use force instead of persuasion and where student newspapers have sought judicial relief rather than submit. Court cases are the result of a presidential vision that has not been shared, governance not been extended and an ultimate breakdown in communications.

It has been traditionally held that First Amendment protection could only be claimed by student newspapers at public colleges and universities for the simple reason that the First Amendment offers protection against government encroachment. The lines, however, have become less distinct between public and private institutions because of the increasing role that government plays in the educational process.

Federally-backed student loans have allowed many students to attend college, but a side effect of the federal funding has been to create a land-bridge linking government to private colleges and universities. Private colleges and universities cannot claim independence while simultaneously accepting federal funds. Does the presence of federal monies on private campuses mean that student newspapers can claim First Amendment protections? It's an intriguing concept, but to date no such legal challenges have been raised.

The California state government enacted a state law that extended the same First Amendment legal protections to private institutions that public institutions enjoy. While it is a monumental decision, it is limited to that state alone.

Other ways student newspapers have sought to assert their rights has been by claiming contractual rights under institutional publications, such as a student handbook. Sweeping generalizations of student freedom can be used by students as proof of a contract that institutions formed when students first chose to attend.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The research on leadership illustrates that there are several styles of leadership, but the one that offers the most promise for success is the one where a college president involves stakeholders in the process of formulating and implementing a shared vision for change. Presidents who become caught up in procedures, micro-managing or focusing on either an internal or external audience are likely to fail. It is instead the president who views leadership as involving constituencies in the process that is likely to succeed.

The research on communications suggests that creating and sustaining a brand that makes an emotional connection to stakeholders in the way that people view consumer products is dubious. Moreover, the communications that help shape the image of the institution may not be coming exclusively from the president's marketing and public relations operations.

In approaching different constituencies/stakeholders to be part of the vision, one significant group is the students. They are the purpose for which the universities and colleges exist; they are the consumers of the educational product and they want to have a hand in shaping how their institutions are run. The research, though, is not very

optimistic in looking at how students interact with the administration on three different levels: (1) formal, in which students are part of the formal governmental process; (2) non-participative in which students are excluded from the process altogether and become activists and (3) informal in the relationship that the student newspaper staff have as observers, reporters and critics of the process. Many who go the formal route and become part of the political process feel as though they are merely tokens and have no real power. The activists feel as though their voices are being ignored and they are unable to connect. It is really only the informal approach that seems to offer any real hope for a connection between the students and the administration and an opportunity to become a real part of the process.

Other researchers have focused on the independence of newspapers by interviewing advisors and how effective student reporters are at reporting the news. The research in this study, however, looks at the relationship between the student editors and the agents of the president, the public relations officers, to see if student journalists have been included in the process of defining and shaping the presidential vision. Can the student journalists succeed where other student groups have failed? Choosing the student editor instead of the advisor gives the clearest picture of how student newspapers interact with the public relations operations of the college. The public relations officers are not only the agents of the president, but the torch-bearers for promoting the vision of the president to various stakeholder groups. So, while other studies have interviewed presidents, this study looks to the public relations directors. By comparing and contrasting the responses of both student editors and public relations officers at different colleges and universities, this study aims to answer the questions of whether the student

newspapers are independent, whether they are included in the constituencies/stakeholders of the president and whether they in fact share that vision.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

The purpose of the study, as was mentioned in Chapter I, is to investigate how different styles of leadership impacts the student newspaper (as represented by the editor), whether the Administration brings the student newspaper into the “process” of problem-solving or goal-setting and how the student newspaper’s editors respond.

Specifically, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the type of leadership style the college president projects and his/her relationship with faculty, staff and the student newspaper?
2. Is there a relationship between the independence of college student newspapers and the amount of support the newspaper gives the president’s goals?
3. Does a relationship exist between how student newspaper editors view their role in the decision-making process and the independence of the student newspaper?
4. Is there a relationship between whether an institution is religious or secular-based and the relationship between the president and the student newspaper?
5. Is there a relationship between whether an institution is religious or secular and the factors indicating independence of a student newspaper?

In the remaining sections of this chapter, the following areas will be covered:

*Participants*, which cover the number of public relation director and student editors chosen for this particular study.

*Instrumentation*, which discusses the surveys used for this study, their validity and reliability.

*Variables*, the variables that were measured and used in this study.

*Procedure*, which includes the procedures followed in conducting the survey.

*Research Ethics*, which details the procedures followed to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

*Hypotheses*, which will state the specific null and alternative hypotheses tested in this study.

*Data Analysis*, which discusses the statistical analysis used in this study.

### **3.1 Participants**

Participants in this study were public relations directors (or individuals with similar titles) and student newspaper editors in Pennsylvania. This study focused on four-year institutions that had a monthly publication during the normal academic year. Newspapers produced as part of class assignments or courses were excluded from the survey.

There were 77 student newspapers originally identified that were considered to have fit the qualifications, but eight were later determined to not have met the necessary criteria. Of the nine, five papers stopped publishing because of student apathy. In one case, one paper served two institutions and was therefore counted twice in the number. Another institution lost its funding from the university and stopped publishing; attempts to contact the administration regarding the background of the case were not successful. One newspaper converted to a magazine format and published infrequently. The final sample size was made up of 69 institutions.

A total of 41 institutions was represented in the survey. In the case of student editors, the response rate was 49.28 percent; for public relations directors, the response rate was 47.82 percent; for the institutions, the response rate was 59.4 percent.

### **3.2 Instrumentation**

There were two distinct surveys compiled for this study—one for the public relations director and one for the student editor. In terms of content validity, the study instruments were validated by a team of experts in the field.

In terms of reliability, there were two survey studies. For the survey sent to public relations directors, the Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items was .65. The first question for the public relations director, was excluded from the factoring because it did not relate to the topic of the survey, but was instead demographic background information.

The survey study for editors presented some unique issues. The reliability test essentially measures internal consistency among the questions and the responses to gauge the reliability.

With the student editors, there were three diverse areas of questions that yielded responses which when reviewed collectively produced a very low alpha score. The three areas of the editor survey dealt with: (1) relations with the president/, (2) view of their own efficacy as a body and (3) how independent they viewed their own institution. The multiple themes of the student editor were responsible for an somewhat low Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items was .50.

The survey, as was mentioned above, asked editors questions in several areas instead of one area with a common theme. It is therefore not surprising that the responses to questions dealing with one topic should be at odds with those of another topic.

Both surveys used a Likert-style survey. The survey given to public relations directors consisted of 11 questions. The survey provided to student editors was also 11 questions. Of these questions, however, only three were closely similar in wording and subject matter. The other questions for both the public relations directors and the student editors dealt with specific subject areas for which only they could answer.

### **3.3 Settings**

The initial contacts to determine potential interest for the survey were conducted by mail and by FAX, but later by telephone. There were no formal “settings” in the sense of specific geographical locations where the interviews would occur.

### **3.4 Variables**

There were numerous variables based on the surveys submitted to the public relations directors and student editors. There were three key variables that were correlated with the others to determine whether a correlation existed.

The first key variable is the *presidential leadership style*. Public relations directors were asked to describe the leadership style of their president. Originally, there were seven different categories chosen, but there was an overlap among the categories. For simplicity, the seven categories were grouped into three categories that were more clearly delineated.

The first style of leader would be one who is very inclusive. This leader (1) has a vision, enlists supporters through interaction, and (2) spreads responsibility and

empowers others. The second style of leader is one who confines his/her interaction to only a select few. This leader (1) limits participation to a small team and (2) has a structured chain of command with formal rules. The third type of leader relies upon himself/herself and would be transactional. He/she (1) chooses the best options for himself/herself, (2) relies upon his/her own personality and charm and (3) relies mostly on his/her own judgment.

The second key variable is *the independence (or lack of it) of the student newspaper*. There are six questions posed to student editors regarding different logistical and operational aspects of the student newspaper. These include compensation of advisor, frequency of faculty review of the paper (before or after publication), credit hours students receive for working on the paper, percentage of staff/editors who are currently students, extent to which faculty or administration participate in selection of newspaper editors and staff and finally, the extent to which administration attempts to influence editorial content.

The third key variable is the designator of *whether an institution is religious or secular based*.

The other variables included (1) the president's level of involvement with administrative staff, faculty and student newspaper staff, (2) administration relationship with the student newspaper staff, (3) coverage of the president and his/her goals by the student newspaper, from both the public relations director and student editor's vantage points, (4) amount of input that student editors have in policy decisions if they serve on advisory panels, (5) relationship between public relations director and student editors, (6) office(s) that disseminate information to the student newspaper, (7) percentage of

administrative meetings open to the newspaper staff, (8) accessibility by the student newspaper staff to the president and public relations director

### **3.5 Procedure**

The initial step was to identify the student newspapers that existed in Pennsylvania. The list was drawn from a directory of newspapers produced by the Pennsylvania Newspapers Publishers Association and from various search engines. When possible, the names of the student editors were accessed from contact information on online newspapers. In other cases, the names and phone numbers of editors was accessed by calling directory information, faculty advisors or faculty in the college/university's communications department.

If a college or university was identified as having a student newspaper, the institution's website was checked to determine who the most appropriate person in the public relations section (i.e., public relations department, public relations & marketing) would be. The person chosen was ideally the one who had the most direct contact with the student newspaper.

Students and public relations directors were contacted by phone to determine if there was any interest in participating in the study. If there was interest, the individuals were emailed three documents: (1) a cover letter that outlined in layman's terms the nature of the dissertation, the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality and a review of the survey, (2) the survey itself and (3) the consent to participate form. Subsequently, the individual was contacted by phone to see if the person would be interested.

The survey itself was conducted either almost entirely over the telephone, or occasionally by email. Emailed surveys and other relevant correspondence were printed,

deleted from the computer and stored with other responses. At the beginning of the process, a personal FAX line was used, but technical difficulties and expense made other choices desirable. Because the consent form necessitated signatures by both respondents and myself, two copies of the forms were sent (with my signature) to the respondents for their signatures. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was enclosed.

Responses were coded and tabulated on my personal computer in an Excel sheet with each institution having a coded number known only to myself. The responses were then placed in a SPSS file. At no time was the identity of the institution or the participants ever listed in the SPSS document. Original responses to the surveys were kept in a locked container in my personal residence.

### **3.6 Research Ethics**

Before conducting the study, approval was obtained from Duquesne University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Individuals contacted for possible participation were advised of their rights at several stages: in the initial telephone conversation, as an accompanying email to the materials sent to them and finally, in the hard copy form sent to them for their signature.

### **3.7 Hypotheses**

This study was guided by the following hypotheses:

1.  $H_0$             There is no correlation between a presidential style of leadership and the president's relationships with faculty, staff and the student newspaper staff.  
 $H_1$             There is a correlation between a presidential style of leadership and the president's relationships with faculty, staff and the student newspaper staff.

2.  $H_0$             There is no correlation between the independence of college student newspapers and their level of support for the president's goals.
- $H_1$             There is a correlation between the independence of college student newspapers and their level of support for the president's goals
3.  $H_0$             There is no correlation between how student newspaper editors view their role in the decision-making process and variables associated with the independence of a student newspaper.
- $H_1$             There is a correlation between how student newspaper editors view their role in the decision-making process and variables associated with the independence of a student newspaper.
4.  $H_0$             There is no correlation between whether an institution is religious or secular-based and the relationship between the president and the student newspaper.
- $H_1$             There is a correlation between whether an institution is religious or secular-based and the relationship between the president and the student newspaper.

5.  $H_0$  There is no correlation between whether an institution is religious or secular and the factors indicating independence of a student newspaper.
- $H_1$  There is a correlation between whether an institution is religious or secular and the factors indicating independence of a student newspaper.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using the statistical software SPSS version 20. Correlation analysis was used for this study to measure the nature and the strength of the relationship between presidential leadership style and relationships with the student newspaper, independence of student newspapers and support of the president's goals, and religious/secular nature of institutions and both presidential leadership and student newspaper independence. Specifically, Spearman correlation was obtained because the variables were not measured on a truly continuous scale. Coefficient of determination was calculated for each pair of relationships to measure the amount of variance that was accounted for by each variable. The use of the correlation analysis allows the user to project the course that a relationship will take. For the analysis, the nature and the strength of the relationship between the following variables of presidential leadership style and relationship with the student newspapers, independence of student newspapers, support by the student newspaper for the president's goals and religious/secular nature of institutions was established. This study measured the nature and strengths of the relationships among these variables.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Of 69 colleges and universities that met the qualifications for this study, individuals from 41 institutions (59.4 percent) participated in the study. In some instances, however, either a public relations director or a student editor would participate, but not both. There were 34 student editors (49.27 percent) who did participate and 33 public relations directors (47.8 percent) who also agreed.

This study, as was mentioned earlier, looks at the relationship between a college president and a student editor from a couple different vantage points—from the student editor and from the public relations director, who is the agent of the president. There were two surveys. Additionally, there was the question of whether an institution being secular or religious would be a factor in influencing this relationship.

There were three important variables that emerged. The first was the presidential style of leadership. Whether a college president is transformational, reliant on a small, inside group or dependent upon himself or herself colors the relationships he/she has with numerous constituencies. The second variable is the independence of a college newspaper. Whether a newspaper is (or not) of a college administration can conceivably affect its own actions. The third variable is the secular or religious nature of a college institution. Is there a correlation between the secular/religious structure of an institution and the president-student newspaper relationship?

The assumptions for the Spearman Test were that (1) the variables are ordinal, interval or ratio, (2) there is a monotonic relationship between the variables, (3) there is no assumption of normal distribution or linearity and (4) there is little sensitivity to outliers.

#### **4.1 Presidential Leadership Styles and Relationships**

Presidential leadership style. In the survey, there were seven different gradations of leadership, but in using the leadership as a variable, the number was condensed to three distinct groupings. The first grouping included the type of characteristics most closely associated with transformational leadership. The president has a vision, spreads responsibility and empowers others. The second grouping includes characteristics of a president who is more transactional. This president limits participation to a small team and has a structured chain of command where decisions are made top-down. The third group includes characteristics of a president who relies upon himself/herself to make decisions. This president relies on his/her own judgment, personality and charm, and ultimately chooses the best option from those before him/her.

The following frequency table shows the type of response. According to public relations directors, the college presidents were more transformational than transactional.

**Table 4.1 Presidential Leadership Style**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Has vision, enlists supporters, spreads responsibility, empowers others	13	31.7	39.4	39.4
Valid	Limits participation to small team and structured command chain	10	24.4	30.3	69.7
	Relies on own judgment, personality and charm and chooses best option	10	24.4	30.3	100.0
	Total	33	80.5	100.0	
Missing	System	8	19.5		
	Total	41	100.0		

The correlations, however, measured whether there was a correlation between any type of presidential leadership and the various relationships. In other words, a strong correlation would show that presidential leadership style, regardless of its type, was an important factor. Conversely, a weak correlation would show that in the particular correlation with the presidential leadership style that presidential leadership was not really a factor at all.

The presidential leadership variable is really the centerpiece for most of the study. So much emphasis has been made about the importance of transformational leadership that the expectation would be that because so many presidents were transformational or quasi-transformational that the correlations regarding involvement with other groups would be significant.

The next step then is to look at the extensive correlations between presidential leadership style and the various relationships to see what level of correlation there really is. While the number and extent of the correlations listed below is extensive and may seem somewhat tedious, it is nonetheless important to see how presidential leadership correlates with the many types of relationships within a college.

The first set of relationships involved the presidential leadership style and the president's level of involvement with faculty, the administration staff and finally the student newspaper staff. In terms of administration staff, there was a *statistically significant correlation* between the leadership style and involvement with the administration ( $r_s = .379$ ,  $p = .030$ ,  $r^2 = .14$ ). With a coefficient of determination at .144, 14.4% of the variability in the presidential leadership style can be explained by the presidential involvement with the administration. The remaining 85.6% of variability is due to other unexplained factors.

**Table 4.2 Correlation with Administration**

		Pres leader style	Pres involvement with Admin
Pres involvement with Admin	Correlation Coefficient	.379*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.
	N	33	33

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that there is a positive relationship between presidential leadership style and presidential involvement with administration. Based on how these variables are measured, this means the presidents who possess traits in the

transformational category (vision, spreads responsibility and empowers others) are likely to also possess traits in the category, “presidential involvement with administration” (communicates extensively, seeks advice and support).

The second correlation essentially seeks the same correlation between presidential leadership style and the faculty, but here the correlation is not significant. There is still a moderate, positive correlation, but it does not rise to the same level as the presidential leadership style and administration ( $r_s = .309$ ,  $p = .091$ ,  $r^2 = .0954$ ). The correlation between presidential leadership style and faculty is weaker. A total of 9.54% of the variability in presidential leadership style can be explained by the involvement with faculty. The remaining 90.45% is due to other unexplained factors.

The third correlation compares the same presidential leadership and involvement with the student newspaper. Here the correlation is still weaker ( $r_s = .241$ ,  $p = .200$ ,  $r^2 = .058$ ), which is not significant. So while there is a clear correlation between the presidential leadership style and administration where the president who is transformational is also very involved with the administration, there is less of a connection between transformational presidents and involvement with faculty and even less with student newspaper staff. A total of 5.8% of the variability in the presidential leadership style can be explained by the involvement with the student newspaper. The remaining 94.2% is due to other unexplained factors.

There is an even smaller, positive correlation ( $r_s = .142$ ,  $p = .446$ ,  $r^2 = .020$ ) between the presidential leadership style and the administration’s relations with the student newspaper. A total of 2.0% of the variability can be explained in the variability

in the presidential leadership style can be explained by the administration's involvement with the student newspaper.

The next area for review is what sort of correlation might exist between presidential leadership style and the treatment the president and his/her goals and actions received from the newspaper. This same question was asked of both the public relations director and the student newspaper editor to get both perspectives.

In looking at the public relations director's vantage point, there was a small, positive and statistically insignificant correlation between the presidential leadership style and the coverage the newspaper provided the president ( $r_s = .264, p = .138, r^2 = .070$ ). Here a positive correlation would indicate that transformational presidents (group 1 of the presidential leadership style) receive the strongest support from the student newspaper while transactional leaders receive opposition from the student newspaper. However, the correlation is not significantly positive and therefore the connection does not rise to that level. There are indications, but not enough to warrant a significant level of support.

Contrasting the correlation based on the public relations director's views, there was a small, negative and statistically insignificant correlation between presidential leadership style and the student editors' responses regarding the newspaper's coverage of the president ( $r_s = -.138, p = .492, r^2 = .019$ ). From the students' vantage point, there is a slight inverse relationship where a transformational leadership style receives diminished support. Once again, though, the correlation is so small that very little can be concluded, other than to say that there is a disparity between how public relations directors and student editors view the correlation between presidential leadership style and support from the student newspaper.

What is interesting to note is that while the transformational president is involved with the administration through communicating extensively, he/she is less so with the faculty and far less so with the student newspaper. One plausible explanation is that the president is not as involved with the faculty and even less so with the student newspaper than he/she is with the administration.

Two of the survey questions posed to the public relations director dealt with how influential the student newspaper was. One question asked if student newspaper representatives sit on any administration advisory panels, what degree of input would they have in policy decisions? The second question asked what percentage of administration meetings were open to the student newspaper.

In a correlation with the first question (student newspaper representatives sitting on administration advisory panels) and presidential leadership style, the result was a small, positive, but statistically insignificant correlation ( $r_s = .231$ ,  $p = .289$ ,  $r^2 = .053$ ). A significant, positive correlation would show that with transformational presidents, student editors who serve on advisory panels would have a significant input in decisions with their views included in policy decisions. With a transactional president, student editors would have little or no input and be mere observers. Yet, here there is a small, positive correlation upon which no conclusion can be made. The correlation is in this direction, but not significant enough to make such a conclusion.

In a correlation with the second question (percentage of meetings open to the student newspaper), the correlation was also small, positive, but statistically insignificant ( $r_s = .212$ ,  $p = .253$ ,  $r^2 = .045$ ). In the first question, there was 94.7 percent variability that could not be attributed to presidential leadership and 95.5 percent not attributed to

presidential leadership in the second question. Here a significant positive correlation would show that with transformational presidents that a greater percentage of administration meetings would be open to student newspaper staff and editors. With transactional presidents, far fewer meetings would be open. While positive and pointing in this general direction, the correlation is not significant and so once again no firm conclusion can be reached.

Two of the questions posed to the public relations directors related to their own interaction with student newspaper editors. The first question dealt with how the public relations director characterized his own level of accessibility to student newspaper staff. The second question dealt with whether the public relations director was the principal source for student newspaper staff or whether he/she was one of many sources. Once again, the presidential leadership style was a key variable.

In terms of editor accessibility to the president and public relations director, there was a small, positive and insignificant correlation with presidential leadership style ( $r_s = .060, p = .739, r^2 = .003$ ). A strong and significant positive correlation would have shown that with transformational presidents that student editors have easy access to the president and/or the public relations director, while with transactional presidents that it would be exceedingly difficult for student editors to gain access. In this case, however, the positive correlation is so weak that no conclusion can really be ascertained about whether any presidential leadership style has any correlation with access by the student newspaper to the public relations director or the president. Only .3% of the correlation could be explained by presidential leadership style, while 99.7% was unattributed.

In terms of the public relations director being the principal source for information, the correlation with presidential leadership style was small, negative and statistically insignificant ( $r_s = -.302, p = .099, r^2 = .091$ ). Only 9.1% of the public relations director being the principal source of information could be tied to the presidential leadership style, while 90.9% was tied to unattributed factors. A strong, positive and significant correlation would show that with transformational presidents (group 1 of the presidential leadership style) that student editors and staff went exclusively to the public relations director for information, while with transactional presidents they went to many sources. Here, however, there is a very weak negative correlation which essentially shows there is little correlation between where a student newspaper editor or staff gets their information has anything to do with the presidential leadership style.

In terms of the correlation between presidential leadership style and the accessibility by editors/staff to the president (from the editors' perspective) and/or the public relations director, the correlation was small, positive and insignificant ( $r_s = .178, p = .375, r^2 = .141$ ). Only 14.1% of the accessibility by editors to the president/public relations can be tied to presidential leadership style, while 85.9% is due to other unexplained factors.

In terms of correlation between presidential leadership style and the clarity of the president's goals (from the editors' perspective), there is a small, positive, insignificant correlation ( $r_s = .205, p = .305, r^2 = .093$ ). Only 9.3% of the clarity of goals (from the editors' perspective) can be tied to presidential leadership style, while 90.7% is due to other unexplained factors.

In terms of correlation between presidential leadership style and treatment of the president and his/her goals by the student newspaper over the past year (from the editors' vantage point), there is a small, negative, insignificant correlation ( $r_s = -.138$ ,  $p = .492$ ,  $r^2 = .242$ ). A total of 24.2% of the treatment of the president and his/her goals can be tied to presidential leadership style, while 75.8% is due to other unexplained factors.

In terms of correlation between presidential leadership style and how much input the student paper has in helping to create or change the direction of change at the college/university (from the editors' perspective), there is a small, positive, insignificant correlation ( $r_s = .111$ ,  $p = .590$ ,  $r^2 = .348$ ). A total of 34.8% of the student input can be tied to presidential leadership style, while 65.2% is due to other unexplained factors.

In terms of correlation between presidential leadership style and how much of a factor participation in decision-making processes of formulating goals would have in influencing support for the president's goals (from the editors' vantage point), there was a small, negative, insignificant correlation ( $r_s = -.193$ ,  $p = .356$ ,  $r^2 = .127$ ). A total of 12.7% of the influence of decision-making influence on editorial support can be tied to presidential leadership style, while 87.3% is due to other unexplained factors.

In these correlations dealing with presidential leadership style, nearly all have been statistically insignificant, with the exception of the correlation between the presidential leadership style and the president's involvement with the administration. Nearly all of the correlations have been positive, suggesting that there might be the smallest of correlations between transformational leadership and relations with the student newspaper, but none of the correlations have risen to the level of significance.

The absence of any significance in these relationships suggests that there is a disconnect in the relationship between the president and the student newspaper. It is not a question of what type of leadership best relates to the student newspaper because none of the correlations are strong and significant enough to offer that suggestion. It is the absence of any coherent direction that offers its own explanation: no interaction or very little.

While there was a significant correlation between the presidential leadership style and the administration, there was no significant correlation between the presidential leadership style and either the faculty or the student newspaper. Taken collectively then, the null hypothesis is supported:

H<sub>0</sub>            There is no correlation between a presidential style of leadership and the president's relationships with faculty, staff and the student newspaper staff.

#### **4.2 Independence of Newspapers as a Variable**

The second variable is the independence of student newspapers. These variables were based upon the categories chosen by Inglehart and Bodle. The challenge is to determine whether these six particular variables, all of which have been used collectively as a litmus test for newspaper independence, have any correlation with certain actions by the student newspaper. The six variables are: (1) the extent to which the student newspaper advisor's salary is dependent upon the college or university, (2) the frequency with which faculty members critique the newspaper, either before or after publication, (3) the number of credit hours (if any) that are given to student newspaper staff or editors, (4) the percentage of individuals working on the paper (other than the advisor) who are

current students, (5) the extent to which faculty and administrators participate in the selection of staff and editors, and (6) the extent to which administrators and others use their positions to influence the editorial content of the student newspaper.

There are two areas involving the student newspaper in which these six variables are important. The first is whether there is a correlation between these variables and how positively the student newspaper has treated the president and his/her goals during the previous year. The second area is whether these variables would show a correlation with a hypothetical situation—if student newspaper editors/staff were participants in a decision-making process in formulating goals, would that involvement affect the amount of support a student newspaper gave the president?

If there would be a strong set of correlations for the first area (coverage of the president for the past year), it would suggest that there is a relationship between these criteria of independence and the student press' coverage of the president. If, conversely, there was a weak correlation, it would suggest that whether a newspaper meets these criteria really makes no difference in terms of how a paper treats the president.

In the second area, assessing whether participation in decision-making impacts editorial coverage, a strong correlation among these variables would suggest that there is a connection between the variables showing newspaper independence and the influence of power sharing upon editorials. Conversely, a weak correlation would suggest that whether a paper is judged “independent” is irrelevant to whether such participation would impact editorials.

Before turning to the correlations, it's important to note through a frequency chart how student editors viewed the coverage of the president over the past year. A total of 60

percent of the respondents believe their papers have been either highly or somewhat supportive of the president’s goals and directions over the previous year.

**Table 4.3 Paper treatment of President**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly supportive of Pres goals & direction	6	14.6	17.1	17.1
	Somewhat supportive of Pres goals & directions	15	36.6	42.9	60.0
	Neutral	9	22.0	25.7	85.7
	somewhat unsupportive of Pres goals & directions	4	9.8	11.4	97.1
	Highly unsupportive of Pres goals & directions	1	2.4	2.9	100.0
	Total	35	85.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	14.6		
	Total	41	100.0		

In using the treatment of the president variable, the first and strongest response would be that the newspaper was highly supportive of the goals and direction taken by the president. The second and “weaker” choice would be “somewhat supportive of the goals and directions.” The third response would be “neutral” (meaning the paper has not acted either positively or negatively. The fourth choice would be “somewhat unsupportive” and the last and “weakest” response would be “highly unsupportive.”

The first correlation in the paper’s treatment of the president involves the salary of the faculty advisor. For the salary of the advisor, the first and strongest response would be that all of the compensation for an advisor comes from the college or university and the last and “weakest” response would be that none of the compensation comes from

the college or university. The correlation between the paper's treatment and the advisor's salary was small, negative and insignificant ( $r_s = -.338$ ,  $p = .134$ ,  $r^2 = .114$ ). A total of 11.4% of the variability in the paper's treatment of the president can be explained by the salary of the faculty advisor. The remaining 90.6% is due to other unexplained factors.

This correlation shows an inverse relationship between salary of the advisor and paper's treatment of the president, although it is not significant and therefore no real conclusions can be reached.

The second correlation involved using the variable of the review of the student newspaper by faculty and correlating it with the paper's treatment of the president. In the survey choices for review of the student newspaper by faculty, the first and strongest response would be "often," followed in descending order by "occasionally," "seldom" and "never." A strong, significant and positive correlation would suggest that there is a connection between frequent faculty review of the paper and a positive coverage of the president. Yet, the resulting correlation was small, negative and insignificant ( $r_s = -.002$ ,  $p = .993$ ,  $r^2 = .000004$ ). A total of .0004% of the variability in the review of the paper by faculty can be explained by the paper's treatment of the president. The remaining 99.9996% is due to other unexplained factors. The correlation was so incredibly weak that no conclusion could be reached regarding the correlation between these two variables.

The third correlation involved using the variable of number of credits for work on the college newspaper. with the paper's treatment of the president. In the survey of student editors, the first choice would be "more than six credit hours," followed in descending order by "six credits," "three credits," "one or two credits" and finally, "no

credits.” A strong, positive correlation would show that there was a correlation between six credits being given and positive treatment of the president. The ensuing correlation, however, was small, positive and insignificant ( $r_s = -.002$ ,  $p = .993$ ,  $r^2 = .000004$ ). Nearly 100% of the variability in the number of credits for work on the college newspaper with the paper’s treatment of the president was due to other unexplained factors.

The fourth correlation involved using the variable of percent of writers who are students with the paper’s treatment of the president. For the survey question regarding the percentage of students, the first selection would be all of the staff and editors are current students. The ranking would be in descending order so that the last selection would be none of the writers and editors are students. A positive, strong and significant correlation would show that there is a connection between all of the editors and staff being students and the positive coverage given the president. The correlation, however, was small, negative and insignificant ( $r_s = -.257$ ,  $p = .196$ ,  $r^2 = .066$ ). A total of 6.6% of the variability of the writers who are students can be explained by the paper’s treatment of the president. The remaining 93.4% is due to other unexplained factors. No conclusions can therefore be drawn.

The fifth correlation involved using the variable of faculty, administration selection of student newspaper staff and editors and the paper’s treatment of the president. In the survey question for faculty and administrators’ selection of student editors and staff, the ranking of responses ran from the first selection (often) to the fourth selection (never). A strong, significant and positive correlation would suggest that there is a correlation between the frequent selection of staff and editors and the support given to the president. The correlation, however, was small, negative and insignificant ( $r_s = -$

.075,  $p = .709$ ,  $r^2 = .005$ ) The correlation was slightly inverse, but so weak a correlation that there is no real correlation shown. A total of .5% of the variability of faculty and administration selecting student newspaper staff and editors can be explained by the paper's treatment of the president. The remaining 99.5% was due to other unexplained factors.

The sixth correlation involved using the variable of frequency of attempts by administration and others to influence editorial content and the paper's treatment of the president. The survey responses for the frequency of attempts by administration and others to influence ran from the first choice (extensively influences the content) in descending order to the fourth choice (never influences the content). A strong, significant and positive correlation would suggest that there is a relationship between administrators frequently influencing content and the level of support given to the president. The correlation, however, was small, negative and insignificant ( $r_s = -.325$ ,  $p = .237$ ,  $r^2 = .105$ ). A total of 10.5 % of the variability of the frequency of attempts to influence content can be explained by the paper's treatment of the president. The remaining 89.5% was due to unexplained factors. No conclusions can therefore be assumed from this correlation.

Taken collectively, there is no correlation between the factors indicating independence and the newspaper's treatment of the president. It cannot be said that a paper's support (or lack of it) is connected in any way to the criteria given for independence.

The null hypothesis is thus supported:

H<sub>0</sub> There is no correlation between the independence of college student newspapers and their level of support for the president's goals.

The next key variable is whether an editor participating in a decision-making process in formulating goals would have an impact on the level of support the newspaper gave the president and is there a correlation with the various indicators of independence? Once again, the same set of variables used in the above correlations are used here. It may seem far-fetched to try and draw a connection between, on one hand, the level of support editors would give presidents if they served in a decision-making process and, on the other hand various criteria, such as the student newspaper advisor's salary. It's important to remember that the various criteria correlated against the goal-setting are the standards associated with declaring a student newspaper independent. Therefore, a strong positive and significant set of correlations would say where there is an independent student newspaper there are situations where editors who participate in decision-making processes give editorial support to the president.

**Table 4.4 Editors help formulating goals**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant Effect	4	9.8	12.5	12.5
	Positive effect, but not significant	18	43.9	56.3	68.8
	Little Effect	6	14.6	18.8	87.5
	No effect	4	9.8	12.5	100.0
	Total	32	78.0	100.0	
Missing	System	9	22.0		
Total		41	100.0		

Editors believed, for the most part, that they would have somewhat of an input on the process. A total of 68.8% believed that participating in decision-making would influence the support they gave to the president in his/her goals.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and the salary of the academic advisor, there was a moderate, insignificant positive correlation ( $r_s = .035, p = .869, r^2 = .001$ ). A strong, positive and significant correlation would show that there is a correlation between the advisor earning all of his compensation from the university or college and editors' input. In point of fact, the correlation is extremely weak. A total of .1% of the variability between editors formulating goals and the academic advisor, could consequently be explained by the correlation while 99.9% of the variability is due to other unexplained factors.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and review of the student newspaper by faculty, there was a moderate, insignificant negative correlation ( $r_s = -.319, p = .080, r^2 = .101$ ). Only 10.1% of the variability between editors formulating goals and review of paper by faculty could be explained by the correlation while 89.9% of the variability is due to other unexplained factors. Here there is a moderate negative response, but not significant, that suggests an inverse relationship between the two correlations.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and the number of credits assigned for work on the newspaper, there was a small, insignificant positive correlation ( $r_s = .037, p = .841, r^2 = .001$ ). Only .1% of the variability between editors formulating goals and the number of credit hours assigned for work on the newspaper could be explained by the correlation while 99.9% of the variability is due to other

unexplained factors. The weak correlation shows no correlation between editors formulating goals and number of credit hours.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and the percent of writers on the newspaper who are students, there was a small, insignificant, positive correlation ( $r_s = .183$ ,  $p = .315$ ,  $r^2 = .033$ ). Only 3.3% of the variability between editors formulating goals and the percentage of writers on the newspaper who are students could be explained by the correlation while 96.7% of the variability is due to other explained factors. Once more, there is a very weak correlation.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and faculty and administration who select newspaper staff and editors, there was a small, insignificant, negative correlation ( $r_s = .127$ ,  $p = .489$ ,  $r^2 = .016$ ). Only 1.6% of the variability between editors formulating goals and the percentage of faculty and administration selecting newspaper staff and editors could be explained by the correlation while 98.4% of the variability is due to other unexplained factors.

In running a correlation between editors formulating goals and frequency of attempts to influence the content by administration or others, there was a small, insignificant negative correlation ( $r_s = -.012$ ,  $p = .959$ ,  $r^2 = .0001$ ). Only .01% of the variability between editors formulating goals and the percentage of frequency of attempt to influence the content by the administration or other could be explained by the correlation while 99.99% of the variability is due to other unexplained factors.

Taken collectively, the statistics shown above clearly indicate that there is no significant correlation between the factors associated with independence of a college newspaper and the extent of support a student newspaper would give a president if the

newspaper editors served at the request of the president to be part of the decision-making process.

The null hypothesis is consequently supported:

H<sub>0</sub> There is no correlation between how student newspaper editors view their role in the decision-making process and variables associated with the independence of a student newspaper.

### 4.3 Religious/Secular Designation as Variable

The last area of the study was whether there would be a correlation between an institution being either religious or secular and the various relationships between the college president and the relationships mentioned above. To determine this, participating institutions were coded either as 1 for religious or 2 for secular.

**Table 4.5 Type of college**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Religious institution	18	43.9	43.9	43.9
Valid Secular institution	23	56.1	56.1	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

There is nothing to suggest that religious or secular institutions are superior or inferior to each other. Since the arrangement of responses to the survey questions has been from strongest to weakest or best to worst, however, it's important to note that a strong correlation would indicate a stronger connection with secular institutions and a

negative correlation would indicate a stronger connection with religious institutions. A weak correlation would indicate no connection with either type.

Most of the following correlations are insignificant, showing that there is little correlation between the designation of an institution as either religious or secular and the particular relationship. There are, however, notable exceptions.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and presidential leadership style ( $r_s = .137, p = .446, r^2 = .019$ ) where only 1.9% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 98.1 percent is due to other unexplained factors. A significant, positive correlation would have shown a correlation between a transformational presidential leadership style with a religious institution. The absence of either a significant positive or negative correlation not surprisingly shows that there is no correlation between either a religious or secular institution and a presidential leadership style.

There was an insignificant, small, negative correlation between the type of college and the level of presidential involvement with the administration ( $r_s = -.004, p = .982, r^2 = .000016$ ). Only .0016% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.9984% is due to other unexplained factors. Once again, there was no real correlation with either religious or secular institutions.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and the level of involvement between the president and faculty ( $r_s = .243, p = .188, r^2 = .059$ ). Only 5.9% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 94.1% is due to other unexplained factors. There was little difference here, either.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between type of institution and the relations between the president and the newspaper ( $r_s = .023$ ,  $p = .900$ ,  $r^2 = .0005$ ). Only .05% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.95% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between type of institution and the paper's coverage of the president (from the public relations director's vantage point) ( $r_s = -.077$ ,  $p = .728$ ,  $r^2 = .006$ ). Only .6% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.4% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between type of college and the significance of the editor's input in an advisory panel (from the public relations director's vantage point) ( $r_s = .077$ ,  $p = .728$ ,  $r^2 = .006$ ). Only .6% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.4 percent is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between type of institution and the public relation director's relationship with the newspaper ( $r_s = .060$ ,  $p = .740$ ,  $r^2 = .004$ ). Only .4% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.6% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was a significant, moderate, negative correlation between the type of college and whether the public relations director was the primary source of information for the student newspaper editor ( $r_s = -.361$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $r^2 = .139$ ). A total of 13% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 87% is due to other unexplained factors. If there had been a significant, positive correlation, it would have shown that religious institutions had a stronger correlation with reporters and editors using a public relations office for most of the information while at secular institutions student

newspaper staff and editors would opt for more diverse sources of information. A significant negative correlation, however, shows an inverse relationship. Student newspaper staff at secular institutions and religious institutions would be more inclined to opt for diverse sources instead of going to the public relations director for the information.

**Table 4.6 Correlations**

		Type of college	Primary source for info
	Correlation Coefficient	-.361*	1.000
Primary source for info	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.
	N	31	31

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was an insignificant, small, negative correlation between type of institution and the percentage of administration meetings open to student newspaper editors ( $r_s = -.287, p = .118, r^2 = .082$ .) A total of 8.2% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 91.9% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, negative correlation between type of institution and the editor's accessibility to the public relations director and the president ( $r_s = -.013, p = .943, r^2 = .0002$ .) A total of .02% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.98% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, negative correlation between the type of college and the clarity of the president's goals ( $r_s = -.044, p = .803, r^2 = .007$ .) A total of .002% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.8% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small negative correlation between the type of college and the paper's treatment of the president (from the editor's vantage point) ( $r_s = -.039$ ,  $p = .823$ ,  $r^2 = .002$ ). A total of .2% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.8% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small negative correlation between the type of college and the significance of the degree to which the student newspaper has in creating or changing the direction at the university ( $r_s = -.098$ ,  $p = .583$ ,  $r^2 = .010$ ). Only 1.0% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.0% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, medium, negative correlation between the type of college and whether the level of editorial support in the paper would change if student newspaper editors were included in the decision-making process significant ( $r_s = -.303$ ,  $p = .092$ ,  $r^2 = .092$ ). Only 9.2% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 90.8% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and the advisor's salary ( $r_s = .081$ ,  $p = .690$ ,  $r^2 = .007$ ). A total of .7% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.3% of the variability is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and review of paper by the faculty ( $r_s = .231$ ,  $P = .196$ ,  $r^2 = .053$ ). A total of 5.3% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 89.7% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and the number of credit hours for work at the paper ( $r_s = -.042, p = .811$ ). Coefficient of Determination = .002). Only .2% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.8 % is due to other unexplained factors.

There was a significant, moderate, negative correlation between the type of college and the percent of writers who are students ( $r_s = -.375, p = .026, r^2 = .141$ ). A total of 14.1% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 85.9% is due to other unexplained factors. A strong, positive, significant correlation would have shown that secular institutions are more inclined to have reporters and staff who are not students (the survey question on student reporters/staff goes in descending order from full-time students to no full time students). A significant negative correlation, however, shows an inverse relation. Both types of institutions have full-time students as reporters/staff.

**Table 4.7 Correlations**

	Type of college	Percent of writers who are students
Percent of writers who are students	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026
	N	35

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There was an insignificant, small, positive correlation between the type of college and the faculty and administration's selection of student newspaper's staff and editors ( $r_s$

= -.006,  $p = .972$ ,  $r^2 = .00003$ ). A total of .003% of the variability could be explained by the correlation and 99.997% is due to other unexplained factors.

There was an insignificant, medium, positive correlation between the type of college and the frequency of attempts to influence the newspaper's content ( $r_s = .017$ ,  $p = .939$ ,  $r^2 = .0003$ ). A total of .03% could be explained by the correlation and 99.97% is due to other unexplained factors.

Taken collectively, there is no significant difference in whether a student newspaper is more or less independent of either a religious or secular institution. Thus, the null hypothesis is supported:

H<sub>0</sub>                    There is no correlation between whether an institution is religious or secular and the factors indicating independence of a student newspaper.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In each of the three areas discussed in this study, the null hypothesis has been proven.

There is no correlation between a president's leadership style and the relationships he/she has with administration, faculty and student newspaper, although the relationship with the administration was significant by itself. What conclusions can be drawn from this particular correlation?

There are clearly college presidents with different leadership styles and those who are transformational enjoy a special relationship with the administration where there is active dialogue. The transformational president shares and interacts with the administration. As the correlation extends outward, those presidents who are more reclusive and less inclined to rely on others are less likely to have a strong connection with the administration. This is only logical.

With faculty, there was not a significant positive correlation, but there was a positive correlation. Because it was not significant, it would be an overstatement to make the same claims about the president/faculty relationship that are made about the president/administration relationship. It is a positive one, so the correlation is headed in the same general direction, but it is not nearly as strong. This too would make sense because the president is doubtlessly closer with his own administrative staff than with the faculty.

The study, however, is less concerned with the president's relations with these groups than with the student newspaper. What the study in this case shows is even less of a relationship than the president enjoys with the faculty. There is little interaction, even among transformational presidents and their respective student newspapers.

In fact, throughout this area of the study, the presidential leadership style really becomes an insignificant issue altogether when it comes to the student newspaper. The relations with the public relations director is unaffected by the presidential leadership style. The decisions the student newspaper, including the level of support are unaffected by the presidential leadership style. In short, there is a total disconnect between the presidential leadership style and the student newspaper.

If style was a factor, there should have been a strong, significant positive correlation that showed transformational presidents actively engaging the student newspaper staff and editors, making them part of the decision-making process, sharing their goals with the student newspaper staff and making their administrative meetings open to them. This, however, is not the case.

This is not an indictment of transformational leadership, to be sure, but it does reinforce other studies that show real student participation in the governance process does not really occur.

Turning to the second area of the study, here the issue was whether the factors identified by Inglehart and Bodle as signs of an independent student newspaper would have a correlation with two key areas of student newspaper operation: the level of support given to the college president over the past year, and whether support for the president would be affected by student newspaper editor/staff participation in the decision-making process.

In none of the indicators for independence was there a significant correlation. If the designators of a student newspaper's independence are to be considered valid measurements of newspaper independence, then there is no connection between how "independent" a newspaper is from administration and the support it renders the president.

Although this study did not cover this particular area and additional research would be valuable, one conclusion might be that whether a newspaper is "independent" is not an issue for student writers and editors. Student reporters and editors may not really care whether (1) an advisor receives his full compensation from the institution, (2) whether faculty members and others critique the paper, before or after publication, (3) whether they receive course credit for their work, (4) whether the reporters/staff are full-time students, (5) whether faculty and others participate in the selection of editors and staff, or (6) whether the administration and others use heavy-handed persuasion to influence editorial content.

It is hard to reach any other conclusion that would create such a disconnect between policy decisions and the “independence” of the student newspaper. Yet, if independence is not such a big deal for college student newspapers, then what does that say about the relationship between student newspapers and administrations? How can that be reconciled with the instances where administrations and newspapers have fought in federal courts? If there would have been a strong correlation here, it would have suggested that student newspapers care about independence and that it affects their decision. One possible explanation is that the relationship between most college presidents/administrations and student newspaper is not confrontational any more than it is collegial. To use the words of the late Patrick Moynihan, the attitude of the president/administration to the college newspaper may be “benign neglect.”

Finally, there is the issue of religious and secular institutions and their relationships with the student media. Here there were two significant correlations that related to the student newspapers, but they were both moderate, negative correlations that showed there was an inverse relation between the religious/secular designator and the salary of the advisor and the percent of writers/staff who are students.

One may be able to generalize that religious-based institutions are more conservative than their secular counterparts, but there is little else that could be concluded. Fundamentally, religious institutions behave very similarly to their secular counterparts. The college presidents have the same type of relationships with their respective internal constituencies that secular institution presidents have.

There is one interesting note here, something that could be an area for future research. The grouping of secular institutions for this study included both private, secular

institutions and those owned or affiliated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The student newspapers at institutions affiliated with the government enjoy First Amendment protection, while student newspapers at other institutions, religious and secular, have a weaker claim to legal protections.

The First Amendment was not an area of review in this study, largely because in Pennsylvania the number of government-owned colleges and universities is not large enough a sample size. Yet, there is a lingering question whether the First Amendment rights (or absence of such rights) of student newspapers has any effect on relationships with college presidents.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Theory

Leadership is critical to the success of any organization. During World War II, when women replaced men in factories across the nation, women refused to accept the same management-labor relationship that men had taken. There were suggestion boxes installed and the relationship between workers and bosses became a team effort. Production and quality soared. When the war ended and returning veterans replaced women, the old style of management-worker returned and the production and quality returned to pre-war levels. It was an early and dramatic example of two types of leadership—transformational and transactional.

Under transformational leadership, as was discussed in Chapter II, the leader is a servant leader. The leader enables. Ideas flow not just from top to bottom, but in all directions. A leader's vision is not some hollow verbiage that is crafted at the top, but a belief system that is shared at all levels. In contrast, there is transactional leadership, which is all too familiar where the boss dictates policy, where decisions are made at the top and implemented by the lower echelons. There is no discussion, no debates, no attempts at sharing a vision—just a reward system based on money, power and a punishment system based on threat of firing.

The transactional leadership is a style that few admire, but that many practice. Transformational leadership, exemplified by Toyota and other forward-thinking organizations, is the lauded model of success, according to countless books, a few of

which were already mentioned in Chapter II by people like Senge and Wheatley. It has been tried in numerous organizations, all with success.

What would transformational leadership look like in an educational institution and how far could it extend? This was the underlying question of this study. The presumed answer forms the theory behind this study. A transformational college president, using the standards discussed by others, would presumably be a leader who seeks to engage those around him/her, to share power, to exchange ideas and to welcome new ideas from wherever they may come. A transformational president would be an enabler, a servant leader who seeks to empower others. It would not be enough for a transformational president to confide in a few close associates. A transformational college president would seek to share his/her vision with others throughout the college campus—with administration, with faculty and even with the students.

Contrast that with what a transactional college president might resemble. A transactional president would most likely have a close group of administrators around him/her and would seek to ensure his/her own power base. There would be little interaction with internal constituencies, except perhaps to ensure compliance. In regards to student organizations, the transactional college president would not be interested in shared governance. If students served as trustees on a board, their power would be purely symbolic. Student newspapers would most likely be kept at a distance, with limited access to the president. Where there was disagreement with the student newspaper over editorials, a transactional president would seek to control the paper through a variety of means, such as shutting off funding, pressuring faculty advisors, having administrators select who serves as editors and staff, as well as other means.

The theory behind this study is that transformational leaders will create the sort of close relationships with not only administration and faculty (the traditional internal constituencies) but also with student organizations, principally the student newspaper. A transformational leader would put principle into practice by sharing his/her vision for change with the student newspaper. It would not necessarily mean that the student newspaper would endorse each and every goal of the president, if the president were transformational, but it would mean that there would be an open dialogue. Generally speaking, though, one would expect that the student newspaper would most likely support most of the president's goals. There would be no attempts by the president to pressure student newspapers, even if there was disagreement. Transformational presidents would clearly present the goals for what they believed to be the future. In a transactional leadership, one would expect either a confrontational relationship or a remote one where the president and student editors speak at each other (in writing or in person) rather than with each other.

The key element to this study then has been to take the presidential leadership style as a key variable and to look at how that leadership style correlates with various other relationships, most importantly the student newspaper's. Another key variable in the study was independence of a student newspaper and how closely that corresponded with decisions the paper made regarding support of the college president. In a sense, it was looking at the same issue of presidential leadership from a different angle—whether traditional methods of pressuring student newspapers corresponded to the support the paper showed (or didn't show) to the president. The last key element to the study was the

religious/secular nature of institutions and whether there was a connection with the presidential leadership style.

## **5.2 Historical perspective and literature review**

In Chapters I and II, there was a review of the past relationships between college presidents and student newspapers. In their earliest days, college student newspapers were little more than mouthpieces for the administration. This was transactional leadership in its purest form. The flurry of lawsuits in the 1980's by student newspapers against college administrations also showed transactional college leadership, as administrations tried different heavy-handed approaches to stifling criticism and silencing dissent. There were not many lawsuits, but the ones that were filed in federal court were prominent and the verdicts almost always favored the newspapers.

When Inglehart and later Bodle conducted their studies regarding independence of student newspapers, Inglehart apparently set out to establish a type of litmus test that would determine whether a newspaper was independent. Bodle surveyed faculty advisors to the paper to determine whether the student newspapers were in fact independent. The conclusions from both studies were that few were independent. The importance of independence was whether student newspapers could be free from transactional presidential leaders who would seek to intimidate the newspapers' editors and influence the content. In both the court cases and in the field studies, there was evidence aplenty that college presidents had been transactional.

The literature review not only looked at student newspapers, but also the wider scope of relations with other groups of students. In formal power sharing where students actually became trustees of the college, they reached the inner sanctum of a college's

power base. Yet, even here students at this level believed they were effectively excluded from any power sharing. This was yet another example of transactional leadership, masquerading as transformational leadership. Student activists, effectively excluded from the process altogether, was still another example.

### **5.3 Results of the study**

Student newspapers offered a different possibility. Here there was no formal power distribution. The “power” that a student newspaper wielded would not be measured in titles, but in its ability to persuade, to shine a light on particular issues and to focus public attention and debate around selected topics. Here a transformational president could have an informal relationship and success would be measured in access, lack of coercive tactics and a meeting of the minds on most issues.

It became vital as part of the study to determine first whether college presidents were in fact transformational. To ask the president whether he/she was transformational or transactional would not likely generate many objective responses. To ask public relations directors, individuals who worked for the president and could better assess the president’s style, was the better choice. Most believed that their respective presidents were transformational or close to it. Few believed their presidents were transactional.

In doing a correlation analysis, it’s important to stay within the boundaries of what it shows. Correlation analyses do not show that one thing caused another thing. Therefore, a study involving a correlation analysis cannot show, for instance, that a type of presidential leadership style caused the president to act a certain way. It can merely look at two factors and study the similarities between the two and suggest a connection.

What the study showed was very few significant correlations. While the initial reaction might be to assume that the study consequently was a failure, it was quite the contrary. By the absence of most correlations, there were some conclusions that could be reached. These conclusions involved the leadership style, student independence and religious/secular nature of institutions.

In terms of presidential leadership, the only significant correlation was between the president's leadership style and administration. It was a positive correlation, which meant that transformational presidents had close relationships with administration, the people who work closely with the president. Transactional presidents had a more distant relationship with their administrations. This was precisely the result one would expect, but the result was limited to administration. The further the distance from the president, the less the correlation between the presidential leadership style matched the level of involvement with the group—faculty further from the administration with less of a correlation, and student newspaper further from faculty with the lowest correlation. In nearly every pairing, the presidential leadership style showed a small correlation. This was not the relationship that was expected from a transformational leader, but it was what might be expected from a transactional leader. If it was possible to be transformational with certain groups, such as the administration, and transactional with others, then this is what unfolded.

With such a low correlation between presidential leadership style and the relationships with student newspaper, the study suggested that the relationship was far more remote than respondents believed. Taken by itself, the study might have been a surprise, yet coupled with the literature about shared governance involving students in

formal positions of powers, a familiar theme resonated. Students in trustee positions had been excluded from real decision-making. Student newspaper editors were kept at a distance with little involvement from the president. In short, students are not part of the decision-making process at any level—formal or informal.

The second area of the study, student newspaper independence, presented a more perplexing set of conclusions at first. There were six different criteria used by Bodle that were indicators of student newspaper independence. The six elements in the study were matched with the level of support the newspaper gave the president's goals over the past year and secondly whether being included in the decision-making process would positively influence the level of support the paper gave the president. Once again, there was a lack of significant correlations. If the independence of the paper was so critical, as Bodle and Inglehart had believed, there should have been a strong correlation between these elements and the two variables dealing with the level of support, yet there was none. There was no connection between whether a newspaper was "independent" and the level of support it gave the president.

This raised some interesting possibilities. Was the lack of a connection because there was no pressure exerted by administrations to influence the content of the paper and therefore the issue of independence never became an issue? Was the lack of connection because of student reporter/editor apathy about being dependent upon the administration for financial support? Was the lack of connection because so many of the newspapers surveyed were online publications that did not need the financial backing of the administration? These questions are something that future studies could address.

It is this last possibility, that online student newspapers may not need the administration, that offers the most interesting possibility. The way in which college administrations have been able to control student newspapers has often been through the power of the purse string. When student newspapers published only in print format, withholding funds could prevent the paper from ever being produced. Yet online newspapers do not need a place on campus for staff and editors to meet. Newspapers do not need funding when they are published online. They do not need faculty advisors if they are seceding from being the officially sanctioned newspaper. They do not need anything, in short, and thus are immune from the possible threats of an administration. The standards that Inglehart and Bodle created are not necessarily wrong—they are just outdated.

This does not answer the recurring question of what motivates the student editors to not see a connection between independence and support of the president. If the presidents had actively sought to control the student newspapers, it would be a sign of a transactional leadership. In that case, one would expect to see a strong correlation. The absence of such correlation, however, does not necessarily suggest a transformational leadership relationship, though. It could be that the relationship between the president and the student newspaper might be, in the words of the late New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a case of “benign neglect.”

The final area of the study dealt with whether an institution’s religious or secular status had any connection with presidential leadership style, student newspaper independence or other areas of correlations. Though there were two significant correlations, they were negative and related to two of the elements used to determine

newspaper independence. The expectation would be that religious-based institutions are most likely more conservative, but even if that was the case, it did not affect the president's leadership style or his relationships with the different internal constituencies. Transformational or transactional leadership is not related to an institution's philosophical foundation.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

In looking at the study and at accompanying literature, there are some conclusions that can be reached and some observations that can be made. The first conclusion is that transformational leadership, if it truly does exist on college campuses, does not permeate to the relationships between college presidents and students. The implications of this conclusion is that students are most likely not perceived as being truly part of the institution because they do not have the same investment that others have in the time spent at the institution. Students are there for four years (or more) and then are gone, to be replaced by another set of temporary stakeholders. College presidents and others may not wish to invest the time and energy to establishing relationships with individuals who have only a fleeting connection to the institution. If this is the case, then students will most likely be considered as consumers rather than co-equals in the shared governance of the institution.

The second conclusion is that if transformational leadership at colleges and universities does not exist beyond the administration level, then colleges and universities have not really progressed very far at all from the 1980s and earlier. The dramatic changes that have been ascribed to organizations with transformational leadership, such as Toyota, are most likely absent at college campuses. If indeed this is the case, the great

irony would be that transformational leadership training is taught at colleges and universities but not practiced.

This study looked at transformational leadership and how presidents and student newspapers relate to one another. The literature review had shown a stormy and litigious relationship between newspapers and administrations intent on silencing opposing viewpoints. Ultimately, though, technology is changing the balance. In Pennsylvania, one publication aimed at students serves two different institutions and is therefore not tied to any one college. At other institutions in the Commonwealth, administrations have closed off funding for student newspapers, but the papers have continued online and outside the control of the administration. Pennsylvania is most likely not unique in this area.

One of the basic benefits of transformational leadership is that it allows participants to share in a common vision, to be part of the process. Closing off student newspapers from that participation does not silence student newspapers. It merely creates a situation where student publications go their own way, find their own vision of what they believe should be the future of the college or university and reach the same audiences as the institution does.

College presidents have a real opportunity to forge new relationships with student newspapers, to establish new connections. The surveys have shown that student editors would welcome the opportunity to be part of the process, but until there is truly shared governance, there is little prospect of a shared vision.

There is a positive note to this study. Student newspapers are the training grounds for future journalists. Newspapers have prided themselves on their objectivity and their

ability to be the watchdogs of government. If student newspapers eventually secede from college administrations and are able to continue reporting, they will have greater freedom and more objectivity in their coverage of college administrations. The metamorphosis from being an extension of the administration to being an objective observer in the span of a century is quite a feat in itself. Perhaps if this occurs, student journalists will have earned a greater education than they imagined.

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## APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire for Public Relations Director (Please Print)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position Title \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Institution \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Length of service in position:
  - a. Less than two years
  - b. Between two and four years
  - c. Between 4.1 and six years
  - d. More than six years.
  
- 2 How would you best characterize the current university/college president's style of leadership?
  - a. Relies principally on personality and charm.
  - b. Involves others in decision-making process, but limits participation to a small team.
  - c. Uses well-defined, structured chain of command with clear expectations set for subordinates.
  - d. Has developed a vision and enlists supporters through interaction.
  - e. Chooses the best approach based on the options before him.
  - f. Relies principally on his own judgment.
  - g. Tries to spread responsibility and seeks to empower others by helping them achieve their goals.
  
- 3 How would you describe the President's level of involvement with Administrative staff?
  - a. Communicates extensively, seeks advice and support.
  - b. Communicates occasionally, either personally or through written correspondence, and periodically seeks support.
  - c. Communicates generally, but seldom seeks feedback or support.
  - d. Rarely communicates and depends upon his own judgment.
  - e. Never communicates or seeks support.
  - f. Don't know
  
- 4 How would you describe the President level of involvement with faculty?
  - a. Communicates extensively, seeks advice and support.
  - b. Communicates occasionally, either personally or through written correspondence, and periodically seeks support.
  - c. Communicates generally, but seldom seeks feedback or support.
  - d. Rarely communicates and depends upon his own judgment.
  - e. Never communicates or seeks support.
  - f. Don't know
  
- 5 How would you describe the President's level of involvement with students from the student newspaper?
  - a. Communicates extensively, seeks advice and support.
  - b. Communicates occasionally, either personally or through written correspondence, and periodically seeks support.
  - c. Communicates generally, but seldom seeks feedback or support.
  - d. Rarely communicates and depends upon his own judgment.
  - e. Never communicates or seeks support.
  - f. Don't know

- 6 How would you characterize the relationship in general between the administration and the student newspaper staff?
  - a. Communicates extensively, seeks advice and support.
  - b. Communicates occasionally, either personally or through written correspondence, and periodically seeks support.
  - c. Communicates generally, but seldom seeks feedback or support.
  - d. Rarely communicates and depends upon his own judgment.
  - e. Never communicates or seeks support.
  - f. Don't know
  
- 7 How would you characterize the general treatment of the President and his goals/actions by the student newspaper over the past year?
  - a. Highly supportive of the goals and direction taken by the president.
  - b. Somewhat supportive of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  - c. Neutral in its support of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  - d. Somewhat unsupportive of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  - e. Highly unsupportive of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  
- 8 If representatives from the student newspaper sit on any advisory panels for the administration, how would you characterize the amount of input that student media representatives have?
  - a. Significant input with views included in policy decisions.
  - b. Some input with views occasionally included in policy decisions.
  - c. Some input, with views rarely included in policy decisions.
  - d. Little input, with views almost never included in policy decisions.
  - e. No input, with students acting more as observers than participants.
  
- 9 How would you characterize your own relationship with the student newspaper staff?
  - a. Very open and friendly, with easy access to your office.
  - b. Easy access to your office, but with a more formal relationship.
  - c. Occasional meetings with the student newspaper staff, if there is a particular reason.
  - d. Rare meetings with the student newspaper staff, with a strictly formal relationship.
  - e. No meetings and distant relationship with the student newspaper staff.
  
- 10 How is information disseminated to the student newspaper about actions involving the administration (check as many as are applicable)?
  - a. Principally from your office.
  - b. From various Administrative offices.
  - c. From campus police or other campus services.
  - d. From other sources.
  
- 11 What percentage of administration meetings are generally open to the student newspaper staff?
  - a. 75-100 percent
  - b. 50-74 percent
  - c. 25-49 percent
  - d. 0-24 percent

## Presidential Leadership Style and Student Newspaper

### Survey Questionnaire for Student Newspaper Editor

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Your Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College or University \_\_\_\_\_  
(please indicate your selection by placing an X before the chosen response)

- 1 How accessible would you say the President and/or the Public Relations Director for the college/university is in speaking with you or your staff?
  - a. Very accessible (will quickly respond to requests).
  - b. Somewhat accessible (will respond most of the time in a reasonable period of time).
  - c. Accessible (will respond sometimes, but within a reasonable period of time).
  - d. Somewhat inaccessible (difficult to arrange meetings with or the response time is long).
  - e. Very inaccessible (very difficult to meet with either individual).
  
- 2 How clearly have the President's goals for changes at your college or university been presented?
  - a. Very clearly (they are explicit and understood).
  - b. Somewhat clearly (they are published in a statement or generally understood..
  - c. Somewhat unclear (there is a vague idea of what the President wants to accomplish).
  - d. Very unclear (I have no idea what the President wants to do in the way of changes and there is no explanation).
  - e. Not sure
  
- 3 How would you characterize the general treatment of the President and his/her goals/actions by the student newspaper over the past year?
  - a. Highly supportive of the goals and direction taken by the president.
  - b. Somewhat supportive of the goals and directions.
  - c. Neutral.
  - d. Somewhat unsupportive of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  - e. Highly unsupportive of the goals and directions taken by the president.
  
- 4 How much input would you say that the student newspaper has in helping to create or change the direction of change at your college/university?
  - a. A great deal (our views are taken into consideration).
  - b. Somewhat (occasionally our views are heard).
  - c. Seldom (our views are only rarely taken into consideration).
  - d. Almost never or never.
  - e. Not sure
  
- 5 If the newspaper editors and/or staff were asked by the President to be part of the decision-making process in formulating goals, how much of a factor do you believe this would have in the level of support the newspaper would give for the President's goals?
  - a. It would have a significant effect.
  - b. It would have a positive effect, but not significant.
  - c. It's unclear.
  - d. It would have little effect.
  - e. It would have no effect.

6. The advisor or business manager of the student newspaper normally receives compensation for his/her work with the paper. If we don't count advertising income, how much of the advisor or business manager's compensation for his/her work with the paper comes from the university or college?
  - a. all of the compensation.
  - b. a large percentage
  - c. a small percentage
  - d. none of the compensation
  - e. not sure
  
7. How frequently do faculty members critique the content of your paper, either before or after publication?
  - a. Often
  - b. Occasionally
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
  - e. Don't know
  
8. How many course credit hours are given to students for working each semester on the student newspaper?
  - a. More than six credits per semester.
  - b. Six credits
  - c. Three credits
  - d. One or two credits
  - e. No credits
  
9. What percentage of individuals work in the writing or editing of your paper who are not current students at your university or college, excluding your advisor?
  - a. All of the individuals who write or edit for the paper are students
  - b. Most of the individuals who write or edit for the paper are students
  - c. About half of the individuals who write or edit for the paper are students
  - d. Few of the individuals who write or edit for the paper are students.
  - e. None of the individuals who write or edit for the paper are students.
  
10. To what extent does faculty or administrators participate in the selection of student editors and staff?
  - a. Often
  - b. Occasionally
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
  - e. Don't know.
  
11. To what extent do you believe your university/college administration or other officials are able to use their office(s) to influence the newspaper's editorial content?
  - a. Extensively influences the editorial content
  - b. Occasionally influences the editorial content
  - c. Seldom influences the editorial content
  - d. Never influences the editorial content
  - e. Unsure

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

- TITLE:** Decision Making at College Students' Newspapers
- INVESTIGATOR:** Roger D. Kelley  
1001 Valley Street  
Enola, PA. 17025  
717/732-4663
- ADVISOR:** Dr. Jeffrey T. Bitzer.  
(717) 477-1512  
This is in fulfillment of an Ed.D. from Duquesne University
- PURPOSE:** Each college/university president has a specific style of leadership. As part of that process, the president interacts with different segments of the administration, faculty and staff. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between the president's leadership style and the level of support by the college's student newspaper and also to determine whether that level of support is affected by the level of college/university control of the newspaper.
- YOUR PARTICIPATION:** To determine the nature of the relationship between the Administration and the Student Newspaper, surveys have been created for the Public Relations Director of the college/newspaper and for the editor-in-chief of the student newspaper. Your participation will only extend to completing the survey. The survey will be sent to you and you can complete it in your office or other location of your choice. It would be appreciated if the survey could be completed within a week of receipt. I anticipate that completion of the survey should take approximately 15 minutes to half an hour.
- RISKS AND BENEFITS:** Because no respondent will be identified by name or institution and because of the nature of the survey questions, there are no foreseeable risks associated with this survey. In terms of benefits, other than the information assembled from the dissertation and provided to interested parties, there are no foreseeable benefits to respondents.
- COMPENSATION:** There is no compensation associated with completion of these surveys.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All responses will be maintained in a locked box, pending their destruction. Code numbers will be assigned for each institution. A separate code number of 1 or 2 will be used to reference the public relations director or student-editor-in-chief, respectively. The data will be available only to the principal researcher (Roger D. Kelley) and to the assistant researcher (Dr. Patricia T. Waltermeyer). The survey forms will not be converted to alternate forms, such as computer image.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be withdrawn as well. To withdraw, all that will be needed is a phone call or email indicating your decision.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

If you wish, a summary of the results will be provided to you, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326). I may additionally contact Roger Kelley at 717/732-4663 (email: [Univguy1@verizon.net](mailto:Univguy1@verizon.net)) or Dr. Jeffrey T. Bitzer at (717) 477-1512.

\_\_\_\_\_ initials

\_\_\_\_\_ date

SIGNATURES: Both the researcher and subject should sign, and each should hold a copy with original signatures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Table 1

*Correlation between presidential leadership style, secular religious designation and involvement with groups*

Measure	Secular/Religious Designation	Involvement with Administration	Involvement with Faculty	Involvement with Student Newspaper
Presidential Leadership Style	.137	0.379*	0.309	0.241
Secular/Religious Designation		-0.004	0.243	0.023

Note \*p < .05

Table 2

*Correlation among student newspaper independence factors, newspaper relations with president, and type of institution*

Measure	Advisor's Salary	Review of paper by faculty	No. of credits for editor/staff	Percent of full-time staff	Selection of editors/staff	Frequency of attempts to affect paper
Paper's treatment of president	-.338	-.002	-.002	-.257	-.075	-.325
Editors helping to formulate goals	.035	-.319	.037	.183	.127	-.012
Religious/secular nature of institution	.081	.231	-.042	-.375*	-.006	.017

Note \*p < .05

Table 3

*Correlation between presidential leadership style and religious/secular designation regarding institution's view of student paper.*

Measure	Relationship between admin. and paper	Paper's coverage of president (p.r. perspective)	Amount of editor's input if editor is on advisory panel	P.R. director's relationship with editor	Source of info	Percent of meetings open to paper
Presidential leadership style	.142	.264	-.138	.060	-.302	.253
Religious/secular nature of institution	.023	.077	.077	.060	-.361*	-.287

Note \*p < .05

Table 4

*Correlation between presidential leadership style, religious/secular institutions and editors' views of relationship with president*

Measure	Editor's accessibility to Pres./P.R. Dir.	Clarity of goals (Editor's view)	Paper's treatment of Pres. (editor's view)	Student input on changing college direction	Effect of participation in decision making on support for president's goals
Presidential leadership style	.178	.205	-.138	.111	-.193
Religious/secular nature of institution	-.013	-.044	-.039	-.098	-.303

Note \*p < .05