



**Public Affairs & Publications
Program Review
December 2009**

A) ABSTRACT

Public Affairs & Publications (PA&P) is a comprehensive college support program that provides services to the entire institution and to the public. In essence, it creates the “face” of the college, and its daily efforts help to positively position the college within its communities. Through a myriad of efforts such as advertising, news releases, media appearances, publications and more, Public Affairs leads all college communication efforts as it seeks to maintain and enhance the college’s reputation and positive image. For its efforts, in May 2004 and 2006 Public Affairs & Publications was selected by the superintendent/president as the Allan Hancock College Department of the Year. Program review 2009 survey results confirm that the vast majority of employees, across all constituencies, believe that Public Affairs consistently represents the college well.

As an example, a comprehensive program review survey sent to all staff in fall 2004 found that overall, 84.5 percent of the 95 respondents believed that Public Affairs is an integral part of the college’s communications and image building process. In 2009, 84.48 percent of the 169 respondents recorded the same sentiment.

In the 2009 program review survey, 89.31 percent of respondents said information in college publications provided by PA&P is accurate; and 91.45 percent believe the quality of work produced by PA&P is professional. Overall, 87 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with Public Affairs’ effectiveness.

Broken down by groups, ratings for accuracy ranged from 79.4 percent from full-time faculty to 94.2 percent from staff. Quality of work survey results ranged from 83.3 percent from part-time faculty to 100 percent from administrators. Overall, satisfaction results ranged from 82 percent of full-time faculty to 100 percent of administrators who believe PA&P is effective.

There were no survey results that provided less than a 70 percent positive response rate to any question, unless it was in an area where respondents had no experience, and therefore gave a neutral response. This information, coupled with the overall positive comments from all facets of the college, concludes that Public Affairs is effectively doing the job. (See survey results.)

B) CURRENT SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Public Affairs & Publications office is responsible for college communication and marketing functions. Through the efforts of one full-time director, one public/sports information specialist, one public affairs assistant, and one public affairs technician, the staff plan, develop, implement and monitor an education marketing, public affairs and media relations program to maintain and enhance the college’s position within the community and ensure communication between and among its constituents. They develop and implement advertising and direct mail, oversee World, Wide Web communications, produce and maintain sports information and coordinate college promotional campaigns. They also serve as a resource to college staff in support of individual department or program marketing and/or staff and student recruitment. The office is

also responsible for preparing and disseminating news releases and information to the appropriate media and maintains responsibility for art direction, development and printing and distribution of all college external publications and most internal publications, including class schedules and brochures. As part of the college's public relations program, the office develops, fosters and maintains positive working relations with and between the college and the community and with the news media. It also provides guidance and direction to college staff in meeting with and responding to media inquiries. Public Affairs & Publications also works directly with the president's office to support a variety of functions including college advocacy efforts in governmental relations and serves in an advisory capacity to the president, senior administrators and staff in all areas of internal and external communications.

The college's Campus Graphics department, which produces more than eight million impressions a year, is also the responsibility of the director of Public Affairs & Publications.

Public Affairs focuses the majority of its effort on communicating college information to students, staff and the public. This is done through a variety of means, including various publications, electronic communiqués, media coverage and paid advertising in various media. No matter how much information is provided, it is always possible to do more. As one measure of effectiveness, in 1998-99, Public Affairs generated more than 14,000 inches of newspaper coverage; in 2007-08, newspaper coverage of college events had increased substantially to more than 20,000 column inches. On behalf of the college, Public Affairs has won regional and national awards for class schedule design, promotional plans, brochures, outreach videos and TV commercials.

C) CURRENT AND PROJECTED DEMAND

Despite a current upswing in enrollment, there is a consistent and growing emphasis on outreach by all college departments and programs. In response, there are tremendous demands on the Public Affairs office to not only promote the college institutionally, but to market individual programs and classes. The added dimension of new grant programs has intensified the demand for services from Public Affairs. In response, the Public Affairs office has initiated several efforts, including an intensive project, funded by CTEA, to create comprehensive Web pages and printed materials for the college's 33 Career Technical Education programs. In addition, in fall 2009, the director is part of the Web team in charge of completely updating and expanding the college's main Web site. Another effort will implement a new athletic Web site in early 2010. Further, the director has been tasked with creating enhanced communications for both students and staff by leading the effort to create staff and student portals. Both are anticipated to be live by February 2010. Other measures of Public Affairs' response to the need for increased outreach and communication include: In 2008-09, the office disseminated 102 news releases in addition to creating numerous and varied promotional materials such as radio, TV and print ads; billboards; theatre ads; etc., and coordinating various community outreach events. In the program review survey conducted in fall 2004, about 30 percent of the respondents believed their need for PA&P services would increase in the next year. In 2009, that need held steady at 26 percent overall.

In 2008, the department added a public/sports information specialist (through funding from PA&P and athletics), while at the same time taking on the new responsibility of sports information. The challenge to address all needs—public information, Web and sports-related—continues and requires additional assistance (positions) in the areas of Web content coordination, sports information support and clerical assistance.

D) ASSESSMENT DATA AND ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE ON STATED OUTCOMES TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND SERVICES

What does Public Affairs & Publications contribute to the lives of Allan Hancock College students?

Everything the department does is ultimately in support of students and student learning.

Public Affairs & Publications' expected outcomes are:

- Produce accurate print and Web communications
- Maintain a positive image of the college within the community
- Provide guidance and professional support to college entities
- Maintain effective media relations
- Support college-wide efforts to maintain and enhance the learning environment

Public Affairs is the primary conduit of information to potential students and uses several communication vehicles to connect with current students. Following are details of how Public Affairs meets the college's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

Communication

- Read effectively for many purposes including information gathering, appreciation and analysis.
By providing written materials such as the schedule of classes, catalog, program brochures, etc., PA is helping students to use their analytical skills to be successful within the college.
- Listen actively and analyze the substance of others' comments.
By providing a variety of communication channels: promotional videos, testimonials, orientations, etc., Public Affairs participates in providing students the means to listen actively to gain understanding of college programs, policies, procedures and opportunities.

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

- Generate and explore questions and arrive at reasoned conclusions.
Through a series of Q and A documents, answers to most frequently asked questions, etc., Public Affairs assists students in their quest to seek information and reach appropriate conclusions.
- Evaluate the credibility and significance of sources and material used as support or evidence.
Ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of college information and materials is crucial to student action. Students are able to assess the credibility of the information provided by Public Affairs and act accordingly.
- Identify assumptions, discern bias and analyze reasoning and methods.
It is important that the information Public Affairs provides is truthful and honest. Students need to be able to analyze the information provided and determine its credibility before acting.

Global Awareness & Cultural Competence

- Act with sensitivity, respect and integrity in interactions with individuals and peoples of diverse perspectives, beliefs and values.
Public Affairs strives to represent the true diversity of its staff and students within its materials, not only to celebrate that diversity, but to encourage it.

- Develop an awareness of the importance of civic and community participation.
Public Affairs supports the many efforts of the ASBG and other student activities to effect community interaction and involvement.

Personal Responsibility & Development

- Acquire knowledge and exercise choices that enhance wellness.
Through its efforts to inform both staff and students about wellness opportunities, Public Affairs supports and provides a high profile for those activities as a means of communicating their importance.
- Produce and/or respond to artistic or creative expressions.
Public Affairs regularly publicizes student accomplishments within the fine arts department and beyond. It is hoped that the high profile of these activities will encourage other students to pursue the same. Also, via the director's lead in the Art on Campus committee, it is hoped that students will be inspired by the college's commitments to artistic expression.
- Participate effectively in teams, provide leadership, make decisions and seek consensus when appropriate.
Public Affairs works closely with the ASBG and encourages their participation in decision making across campus.

E) EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE COMPARED TO ESTABLISHED DEPARTMENT OUTCOME MEASURES

The expected outcomes of Public Affairs & Publications are:

- Produce accurate print and web communications
- Maintain a positive image of the college within the community
- Provide guidance and professional support to college entities
- Maintain effective media relations
- Support college-wide efforts to maintain and enhance the learning environment

The effectiveness of these efforts is listed below:

Produce accurate print and web communications

As noted in the 2009 program review survey, 89.31 percent of respondents believed that information in college publications was consistently accurate. A detailed system of publication proofing through Public Affairs and Campus Graphics has created an opportunity to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout most college publications, no matter where they were developed across the district. Additional work now under way to incorporate a new content management system for the new college Web site will allow Public Affairs and all college operations to more easily add and update accurate/current content to our Web site.

Maintain a positive image of the college within the community

Program review survey results include an 89.68 percent rating that the college is presented with a professional image in public communications from the Public Affairs office. Additionally, the survey respondents indicated a 90.32 favorable response regarding the professional image the college maintains within the media, and 86.89 percent believe that the college is positively represented in news media coverage. Recent newspaper coverage includes informational stories about innovations in distance learning teaching techniques, application of Measure I funding to support a technology "revolution" on campus, coverage of the career exploration day, and consistent coverage of athletics and PCPA activities. (See supporting documents.)

Provide guidance and professional support to college entities

One of the functions of Public Affairs is to provide professional guidance in the areas of communications, marketing and media relations. Survey results indicate that 56.86 percent of the respondents believe Public Affairs provides appropriate liaison between the media and the program or individual (35.29 percent of respondents remained neutral because they had not sought, or had no opinion of, this support). Respondent results showed that 62.16 were satisfied with Public Affairs regarding follow through on their publicity/promotion requests (30.63 percent remained neutral, having not asked for that assistance). Recent support provided for programs or departments include a media event for the women in public safety course, publicity and printed materials for the machine technology open house, support for the new student orientation event, Career Exploration Day and more. (See supporting documents.)

Maintain effective media relations

Maintaining appropriate contact with local media is another mainstay of the Public Affairs office. Survey results, as noted above, indicate respondents believe the college is maintaining positive relations with the news media. To enhance communication through and with the news media, the department added a public/sports information specialist in Nov. 2008; the position is funded by PA and athletics. With the new position came new responsibility for all sports information, a daunting job that requires detailed work on sports programs, stats maintenance and more. Examples of recent successful efforts in sports information include several feature stories, sports programs and media guides which were delivered on time, enhanced media coverage and work with the Boosters organization.

Support college-wide efforts to maintain and enhance the learning environment

Public Affairs, by its very function, is fully involved in all aspects of the college environment and stays focused on the college's efforts to enhance opportunities for students. The director is a member of the Bond Implementation Team, the entity that makes final recommendations regarding Measure I projects. She also heads the Art on Campus Committee and has been heavily involved in the development of the Commons for enhanced student usage. The department also organizes regular student roundtable luncheons hosted by the president to maintain a free flow of information and allow for student interaction with administrators. Campus Graphics has also developed a printing option for students who need color copies, binding and other graphic support.

F) REVIEW IMPACT OF SERVICES RELATIVE TO THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITY

As its name implies, Public Affairs is a conduit to and for the public. All services provided by Public Affairs ultimately supports students as members of our community. In fact, more than 92 percent of AHC students come from the local region. Allan Hancock College is an established member of the community, and as such, provides academic, cultural and recreational opportunities for a wide region of northern Santa Barbara county and southern SLO county residents. As stated above, with specific efforts from the Public Affairs office, the college enjoys a positive reputation in the community. This support is further evidenced by the \$180 million bond (Measure I) passed by the electorate in 2006 to support new facilities and technology across the district. Public Affairs was an integral part of the public information campaign to educate voters about the bond.

G) FUTURE PLANS FOR EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES

Not surprisingly, Public Affairs & Publications, like many other offices, is operating in a facility that is much too small for its needs. The simple act of moving the office and its extensive files, signage and memorabilia to the new administration building (est. 2012) will improve its service. The ability to easily access needed documents, and store outreach materials and oversized

elements such as banners and easels, will make it easier for Public Affairs to quickly and efficiently help others.

There are also plans to integrate the new Banner information system into the communication strategies for Public Affairs. The features within the staff and student portal (myHancock) will allow for both targeted and widespread messaging. The student outreach portion of the student system will also allow Public Affairs to coordinate specific messaging to potential and current students. The ability to track students throughout the college, and to know which offices they have accessed and what services they are using, will be of tremendous benefit as Public Affairs seeks to keep students informed and guided through the education process.

Also, new marketing avenues via the Internet and social media outlets will continue to evolve and become even more beneficial to the college. When the Web site is upgraded to a tool that can truly help users via valuable content, Public Affairs plans to capitalize on that content by driving users to the Web via electronic and more traditional marketing methods. This new focus of the Web being our primary means of information for students, potential students, the public and our own employees will enhance the effectiveness of our communications and reduce the costs of traditional marketing and advertising.

H) FACILITY NEEDS

As noted above, the need for additional work preparation and storage spaces has reached the critical point. Public Affairs is slated to move into the new administration building, set to begin construction in early 2010. This new space will not only alleviate the storage issues, but provide appropriate work spaces for the director, specialist, technician, assistant and student employee. Until that building is completed, Public Affairs will continue to operate in hallways, overcrowded, makeshift work areas, and in a building whose heating and cooling functions do not work properly.

I) CURRENT AND FUTURE STAFFING LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

Public Affairs & Publications will continue to tell the college's story through a variety of media and with focused campaigns to targeted audiences. To help in this process, a permanent public/sports information specialist was hired in November 2008. Funds were made available by savings from printing and from the athletics department. This position brings the total number of permanent employees to four. However, it also brought with it the enormous task of supporting all needs of sports information. Therefore, the additional position has not relieved the existing workload. If anything, it has added to it. Therefore, there is a need to split the position to allow for a full-time sports information position and a full-time public information specialist.

Additionally, and critically important, is the need for a permanent Web content coordinator. All indications are that the Web will continue to gain prominence as the college's first and most important marketing tool. The Web site is only as good as its content. Although a new content management system portends to bring easier access and updates by individual departments, it will remain Public Affairs' concern and responsibility to ensure that the Web site best represents the college. That means we need a professional to help maintain the information, ensure it is navigable, and maintain diligence in its presentation and innovation.

Also needed is an additional clerical support position to handle phones, filing, front desk traffic and more.

Until these support personnel are in place, the office is severely hampered in its ability to truly cover the breadth of college marketing and communication needs.

J) DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Every improvement Public Affairs initiates is in direct or indirect support of student learning. The Public Affairs director's active participation on the Bond Implementation Team and Art on Campus committee means that she has a direct impact on the facilities the college creates for students, the landscape environments they develop, and ultimately the sense of pride students and the community take in the college and its physical plant. Additionally, Public Affairs is the guardian of the college image and reputation. It is that positive reputation that allows and encourages students to continue their educations at AHC, and to feel confident in their decisions to choose Allan Hancock College.

Based on survey results, PA will continue to address all avenues to ensure accuracy and currency of publications, which in turn support student learning and services. Additionally, the new Banner system will give students (and employees) a whole new level of access to information and the ability to "self serve" in ways that will save them time and aggravation—another means of supporting student learning.

ACTION PLAN AND FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT CYCLE IDENTIFYING ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR EACH STATED SERVICE OUTCOME INCLUDING DESCRIPTION OF LINKAGES BETWEEN THE PLAN AND THE DISTRICT'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Assessment plan/timeline and action plan

- **2009/10: Maintain a positive image of the college within the community**
(Strategic Plan 2.2.1, 4.2)
Method of assessment: media coverage is significantly more positive than negative as gauged by editorials/story coverage/letters to the editor; response from questions from advisory groups; survey results
Measurement criteria: survey results show 75 percent or better agree; advisory groups provide overall positive responses; editorials and coverage are at least 75 percent positive and supportive, showing little discord between the college and community (articles about cosponsorships, etc.)

- **2010/11: Produce accurate print and web communications**
(Strategic Plan 1.2, 3.3)
Method of assessment: survey of opinion, response from users, student satisfaction survey
Measurement criteria: survey results show 75 percent or higher believe print and Web are accurate; 75 percent of students from satisfaction survey believe they are accurate

- **2011/12: Provide guidance and professional support to college entities**
(Strategic Plan 4.2.1)
Method of assessment: Survey results, survey testimonials/comments
Measurement criteria: survey comments trend more positive than negative; number of brochures/special events, other support efforts is substantial

- **2012/13: Maintain effective media relations**

(Strategic Plan 1.2)

Method of assessment: newspaper clippings; survey results

Measurement criteria: column inches of coverage, number of news releases and other communication modes equal or surpass previous year

- **2013/14: Support college wide efforts to maintain and enhance the learning environment**

(Strategic Plan 2.2.3, 3.4)

Methods of assessment: participation in college wide decision making for facilities and technology; survey results; student satisfaction survey results; Campus Graphics efforts to provide support to students through printing/coursepacks, etc.

Measurement criteria: new facilities planned; results of art on campus efforts; response by students to new facilities