

**Detailed Assessment Report for
2005 - 2006 News & Information**

MISSION

The Office of News and Information will be a major force in positively enhancing the public image of The University of Texas at Dallas, both in the Metroplex and beyond, largely through interaction with the news media. The office will tell the stories of faculty, student and institutional accomplishments in order to help UTD realize its vision of becoming one of the nation's best public research universities and one of the great universities of the world.

OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES

Outcome/Objective 1:

To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Full Description:

Satisfy the Office of the President's need for communications support.

A Student Learning Outcome? No

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- [III-1](#): Dynamic Change Management
- [VI-4](#): Community Outreach

Institutional Priorities:

- [SP-4](#): Tell UTD's Story Better

Related Measures:

- [M. 1](#): E-mail records and weekly activity reports
- [M. 2](#): media monitoring services
- [M. 3](#): Track interaction with key media

Related Actions:

- [A. 1](#): Improve record keeping
- [A. 2](#): Increased media exposure, proactive placements

Outcome/Objective 2:

To support tuition communication efforts

Full Description:

Continue to provide effective support for tuition communication efforts by Understanding/acceptance by students/general public (based on what they see reported by media) of the need for tuition increases; not necessarily liking

A Student Learning Outcome? No

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- II-1: The Education of Leaders
- II-3: Investment in People

Institutional Priorities:

- COM-2: Protect Enrollment Gains, Access and Student Quality as part of moving toward Tier One Status
- SP-2: Add 5,000 New Students

Related Measures:

- M. 4: Status reports, e-mail records, press releases
- M. 5: E-mail communication
- M. 6: E-mail, release archive, status reports
- M. 7: Monitor media coverage.

Related Actions:

- A. 3: Respond as appropriate to university tuition

Outcome/Objective 3:

Provide media training to key UTD spokespersons

Full Description:

Provide training about how to work effectively with media to key UTD administrators, faculty and staff by improving the competence and streamlined delivery of the university's key messages by UTD spokesperson(s).

A Student Learning Outcome? No

Associated General Education Outcomes:

- 1: Communication

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- VI-4: Community Outreach

Institutional Priorities:

- SP-4: Tell UTD's Story Better

Related Measures:

- M. 8: media training workshop report
- M. 9: news clip reports

Related Actions:

- A. 4: Continue media training
- A. 5: Purchase monitoring service

Outcome/Objective 4:

To promote key research/discoveries of faculty

Full Description:

Support and promote key research discoveries/initiatives of UTD faculty via aggressive media outreach.

A Student Learning Outcome? No

Associated General Education Outcomes:

- 1: Communication

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- I-1: Research Enterprise Initiative
- I-2: The Bio-World
- I-3: Nanotechnology
- V-1: Life Science Health Collaborations
- V-2: Enhanced Quality of Life

Institutional Priorities:

- SP-4: Tell UTD's Story Better

Related Measures:

- M. 10: Press release about discoveries

Outcome/Objective 5:

To manage university crisis communications

Full Description:

Oversee and manage all aspects of the university's crisis communication needs by effectively handle serious communication/public relations challenges presented by unforeseen circumstances; Ensure responsiveness to news media, while protecting the public image of UT Dallas.

A Student Learning Outcome? No

Associated General Education Outcomes:

- [1](#): Communication

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- [VI-4](#): Community Outreach

Institutional Priorities:

- [SP-4](#): Tell UTD's Story Better

Related Measures:

- [M. 11](#): News release archive, e-mails, memos

Related Actions:

- [A. 6](#): Maintain contact/respond to VP Comm.

MEASURES

Measure 1:

E-mail records and weekly activity reports

Measure Full Description:

E-mail records and weekly activity reports. Track responses for News and Information services for president, other senior UTD administrators

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 1](#): To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Target Level:

100 percent responsiveness within expected timeframe

Findings:

100 percent responsiveness within expected timeframe

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 2:

media monitoring services

Measure Full Description:

Utilize media monitoring services, such as Bacon`s, VMS, Factiva.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 1:](#) To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Target Level:

Min of three mentions of president/senior administration per quarter in significant media outlets.

Findings:

More than three mentions of president in local/national media. Example: UTD/UTA president swap was covered in Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Dallas Morning News, local television.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 3:

Track interaction with key media

Measure Full Description:

Track president/administrator interaction with key media (via e-mails, activity reports).

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 1:](#) To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Target Level:

Arrange at least five meetings between Dr. Daniel/senior administrators and key reporters/columnists.

Findings:

Scheduled more than five meetings between president and media, including with Bob Miller of Dallas Morning News, Holly Hacker, Dallas Business Journal, CNN and others.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 4:

Status reports, e-mail records, press releases

Measure Full Description:

Status reports, e-mail records, press releases (available through Web site

archive), talking points

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 2](#): To support tuition communication efforts

Target Level:

Share up to date information about tuition policies by writing press releases and talking points to be used by key administrators.

Findings:

At the request of Dr. Daniel, wrote and (selectively) distributed tuition white paper; distribution resulted in coverage in Dallas Morning News with reporter Jim O`Neil.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? No

Measure 5:

E-mail communication

Measure Full Description:

E-mail communication regarding requirement.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 2](#): To support tuition communication efforts

Target Level:

Per UT System, develop UTD tuition Web pages.

Findings:

Web pages developed: <http://www.utdallas.edu/tuition/>

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 6:

E-mail, release archive, status reports

Measure Full Description:

E-mail communication, news release archive, status reports

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 2](#): To support tuition communication efforts

Target Level:

Produce news release describing UTD tuition initiatives, which could/should result in news story.

Findings:

Result (media coverage) expected in late Jan. 2007.

Target Level Achievement: Not Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 7:

Monitor media coverage.

Measure Full Description:

Monitor media coverage.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 2](#): To support tuition communication efforts

Target Level:

Promote through news media new scholarship opportunities for community college transfer students

Findings:

Stories were reported in such media outlets as the PLano Star Courier and the Dallas Business Journal.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? No

Measure 8:

media training workshop report

Measure Full Description:

Report on numbers of key UTD administrators who participate in media training.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 3](#): Provide media training to key UTD spokespersons

Target Level:

Media train at least six top administrators (president, provost, VP business affairs, deans)

Findings:

Coordinated, briefed and participated in media training for key UTD spokespersons, including Dr. Daniel; Larry Terry, vice president for business affairs; Da Hsuan Feng, vice president for research; Bert Moore, dean of the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences; Colleen Ridge, UTD police chief; and Matthew Grief, director of housing operations.

Target Level Achievement: Partially Met

Further Action Planned? No

Measure 9:

news clip reports

Measure Full Description:

News clip reports include daily compilation of news media coverage about UT Dallas. Files are maintained on a daily/monthly/yearly basis.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 3](#): Provide media training to key UTD spokespersons

Target Level:

To have at least one of the university's key messages (which were developed by Office of News and Information) included in a news story where an interview took place.

Findings:

Evaluation process not yet implemented. Process will begin when key messages are updated and distributed to administrators and new media tracking service is purchased. Target is end of FY 2007.

Target Level Achievement: Not Met

Further Action Planned? Yes

Measure 10:

Press release about discoveries

Measure Full Description:

Press releases about faculty research and discoveries. Archived yearly.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 4:](#) To promote key research/discoveries of faculty

Target Level:

Respond in timely manner and as appropriate to faculty research and discoveries as they are reported to News and Information either by the faculty or by a journal.

Findings:

Office of News and Information responds in a timely manner to all faculty/journal queries about research publicity opportunities.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned? No

Measure 11:

News release archive, e-mails, memos

Measure Full Description:

News release archive, e-mails, memos related to crisis situations as they arise.

Related Outcome(s)/Objective(s):

- [Obj. 5:](#) To manage university crisis communications

Target Level:

100 percent responsiveness to media/administration in a timely manner

Findings:

100 percent responsiveness to media/administration in a timely manner. Hurricane Katrina -- Facilitated media response on many levels -- students and faculty who were displaced and came to UTD as a result of the hurricane; student and faculty fund-raising efforts; Dr. Daniel's participation in a Katrina levee review study by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Waterview -- student-on-student crime -- Handled media queries related to Waterview rape case, Waterview improvements. The depth and complexity of News and Information involvement over many months included brokering numerous interviews with the Dallas Observer, trial observation and monitoring UTD's inclusion on the television news program Primetime Live, among other things. Power outages/building issues -- Prepared communications to alert UTD campus community to major infrastructure repairs with potential to disrupt university activity/function.

Target Level Achievement: Met

Further Action Planned?

No

ACTIONS

Action 1:

Improve record keeping

Full Description

Improve record keeping that reflect tasks performed on behalf of the President.

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 1:](#) To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Related Measures:

- [M. 1:](#) E-mail records and weekly activity reports

Person/group responsible for the action

Director of News and Information

Target date to implement the action

Jan 1, 2007

Priority

High

Action 2:

Increased media exposure, proactive placements

Full Description

Increase exposure for president/senior administrators; increased proactive media placements(at least two proactive placements in 2007).

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 1:](#) To satisfy president's need for comm. support

Related Measures:

- [M. 2:](#) media monitoring services
- [M. 3:](#) Track interaction with key media

Person/group responsible for the action

director, N&I; manager, public affairs

Target date to implement the action

Sept. 1, 2006

Priority High

Additional resources

more advanced media monitoring services; increased staff

Action 3:

Respond as appropriate to university tuition

Full Description

Respond as appropriate to university tuition plans as they are developed/announced.

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 2:](#) To support tuition communication efforts

Related Measures:

- [M. 4:](#) Status reports, e-mail records, press releases
- [M. 5:](#) E-mail communication
- [M. 6:](#) E-mail, release archive, status reports
- [M. 7:](#) Monitor media coverage.

Person/group responsible for the action director, manager

Target date to implement the action FY 2007

Priority High

Action 4:

Continue media training

Full Description

Continue training of high level administrators, purchase advanced media tracking service.

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 3:](#) Provide media training to key UTD spokespersons

Related Measures:

- [M. 8:](#) media training workshop report

Person/group responsible for the action VP, director, manager

Target date to implement the action End of FY 2007

Priority Med

Action 5:

Purchase monitoring service

Full Description

Purchase Bacon`s media tracking service

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 3](#): Provide media training to key UTD spokespersons

Related Measures:

- [M. 9](#): news clip reports

Person/group responsible for the action VP of communications

Target date to implement the action Summer 2007

Priority Med

Additional resources

Funding

Action 6:

Maintain contact/respond to VP Comm.

Full Description

Stay in close contact with and responsive to VP of Communications regarding crisis situations.

Related Objectives:

- [Obj. 5](#): To manage university crisis communications

Related Measures:

- [M. 11](#): News release archive, e-mails, memos

Person/group responsible for the action Director, manager

Target date to implement the action Oct. 2006

Priority High

ANALYSIS

Strength

News and Information to a large extent achieved its stated objectives by supporting the Office of the President when and as needed, including a full array of communications activities around the investiture of Dr. Daniel; completed and distributed to key media a comprehensive white paper on the subject of tuition; arranged media training for five individuals; helped publicize numerous faculty research achievements, including placement of nanotechnology breakthroughs in key national and international media; and responded to university crises, such as a significant crime and various power shortages on campus.

Attention Needed

The intense interest in rising tuition among students, the public and state legislators will require that News and Information continue to monitor the issue closely and respond as appropriate in communicating university initiatives designed to keep a college education affordable to all qualified Texas residents. We must also assure the continued flow of information to News and Information about key research programs and breakthroughs by faculty members so that appropriate measures may be taken to publicize these activities as widely as possible.

ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

The Office of News and Information at The University of Texas at Dallas is responsible for creating and reinforcing a positive public image of the university, largely through its extensive dealings with the news media. The office performs a number of other important duties as well, foremost among them providing communications support to the president, senior administrators, deans and key faculty members, as appropriate.

The office's media relations program – which receives by far the largest share of the staff's time and attention – is well-planned and proactive, and seeks to portray UT Dallas as a respected center of academic excellence that is building toward becoming a Tier 1 institution of higher education and research. Through the news media, of course, we hope to reach key university audiences, including potential students and faculty members, the philanthropic community, government and other funding agencies, legislators and possible research partners, among others.

News and Information utilizes a variety of channels to tell the stories of faculty, student and institutional accomplishments. These include:

- News releases that highlight significant developments such as major research awards and scientific and other breakthroughs that have the potential to become "good news" stories.
- Story pitches to individual reporters, editors and producers.
- Opinion pieces on specific subjects targeted at a particular media outlet.
- Meetings and interviews involving key university personnel and members of the news media for the purpose of strategic story placement, or to deepen vital personal relationships with members of the print and broadcast media.

In addition to proactive outreach efforts, other important aspects of the media relations program include responding to media requests, counseling senior university officials and faculty members on the opportunities and dangers inherent in dealing with journalists and providing media training for spokespersons.

Hundreds of times a year, the office is contacted by reporters seeking information on a wide array of topics. Often, such queries present an opportunity to connect the reporter with a subject matter expert on the university's faculty or staff. Many times, those experts become an integral part of a story, heightening the university's visibility among the public and reinforcing the image of UT Dallas as a center of knowledge and learning in many fields. To exploit such opportunities, the News and Information staff must be (and is) prepared to respond quickly to reporters that are nearly always on deadline – usually sometime that same day – and be able to offer an information source, even when that source may be difficult to reach. The office has built a solid reputation as a staff of professionals who can be relied upon to quickly and effectively assist the news media in the gathering of information.

Not all media calls are about positive subjects, of course. They may concern a crime committed on campus, a lawsuit filed against the university or a serious charge leveled against a faculty member or administrator. In such instances, News and Information staff must be responsive to the needs of the news media, while protecting the public image of the university.

News and Information routinely provides media relations counsel to senior administrators and others to help spokespersons better represent the university. This advice can and does include preparation for interviews, discussion of key university messages and how and when to deliver them and identification of those media opportunities worth pursuing – as well as those that might better be declined. The office also arranges for and participates in media training for key spokespersons, utilizing an outside consultant. Included in the sessions are mock interviews and techniques for incorporating the university's key messages in exchanges with the news media.

News and Information responds to periodic requests from the president and others for communications support. This has included writing speeches, memos, letters and other communications vehicles aimed at both internal and external audiences.

The Office of News and Information is an important, enthusiastic partner with both the academic and administrative sides of the university in the pursuit of UT Dallas'

stated goal of joining the ranks of the nation's top institutions of higher education.

Contributions to the Institution

The Office of News and Information is an active participant in ensuring that the UT Dallas story is better told, both in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and beyond. The unit does this primarily through its day-to-day interactions and relationships with news media. The Office of News and Information utilizes a variety of channels to tell the stories of faculty, student and institutional accomplishments, including news releases, story pitches and opinion pieces. The office also employs advanced search techniques to locate stories that have been written and/or published about the university. Another important task the Office of News and Information performs is to provide communications support to the president, senior administrators, deans and key faculty members. The Office of News and Information is dedicated to community outreach, and its staff are committed to ensuring that the university becomes one of the nation's best public research universities and one of the great universities of the world.

Highlights

During the 2005-06 academic year, the office has been very successful in raising the visibility of UT Dallas in the local, regional, national and even international press. Significant story placements about the university have been made in highly visible and respected media outlets like the New York Times, Le Monde (France), National Geographic and the Discovery Channel, among numerous others.

During the academic year, the office was involved in helping manage the communications aspects of a number of crises or potential crises, including the impact on and involvement of UT Dallas in Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, a significant student-on-student crime in the Waterview Park university housing and power outages on campus.

In the past year, training sessions were conducted for five individuals, including the president.

Finally, in addition to handling assignments from the president, the office has worked proactively since his arrival in June 2005 to introduce Dr. Daniel to key members of the news media and pursue opportunities to showcase him as an intelligent, articulate, energetic educator and leader.

Teaching Activities

News and Information routinely provides media relations counsel to senior administrators and others to help spokespersons better represent the university.

- Preparation for interviews.
- Discussion of key university messages.
- How and when to deliver key messages.
- Identification of media opportunities worth pursuing, as well as those that might better be declined.
- Office arranges for and participates in media training, utilizing an outside consultant. Included in the sessions are mock interviews and techniques for incorporating the university's key messages in exchanges with the news media.

Research and Scholarly Activities

N/A

Public/Community Service

Jenni Hufferberger participated in the 2005 Corporate Challenge event for UT Dallas. She served as head coach of the UT Dallas tennis team and participated as a contestant in the 5k race.

International Activities

N/A

Challenges

With the retirement in November 2005 of the former executive director and the resulting decision not to fill the vacancy at this time, News and Information's media relations staff has been reduced by a third – from three persons to two. This development has significantly impacted the amount of work the office is able to handle, forcing us to become more selective in choosing what news to publicize and how to publicize it. If not addressed, we view the shortage of staff as a serious impediment to plans to increase media coverage of UT Dallas in the future.

While News and Information has a history of success in penetrating the print media, it has not been nearly as active in dealings with the broadcast media, particularly television. At the request of the president, the office has become more aggressive in seeking placement opportunities in TV news. The staff is also cognizant of the growing importance of the Internet as a source of news and information for many. As a result, we have increased our focus on key, visible web sites as targets for story placement.

